Van Gogh

Raquel Ball is a mother of five from Wooster, majoring in nursing.

Gordon R. Beals of Dalton is a student at Wayne College taking classes in a variety of subjects.

Beth Borham of Orrville works full time in the community and is pursuing a degree in Social Services Technology. She has a supportive husband and son and loves to write.

Jean L. Calvert is a social work major, loves to write fiction and non-fiction, essays, etc. She is a Student Ambassador, a member of the Psych. Club, Student Senate, and Distinguished Students program, is the mother of 6, grandmother of 6, and writes for the Wayne Mirror.

Kim Coffey

Chris Courtney of Wooster is a comedian/musician, majoring in history.

Fred del Guidice is an artist/educator with over 25 years of experience. He is the father of five wonderful children.

Heather DeMali of Marshallville is a postsecondary student majoring in biology.

Melissa DeMiglio is a sophomore at Wadsworth High School.

Kevin Engle is an Assistant to the Dean of Wayne College.

Chris Gehring is a freshman from Medina, Ohio. He plans on going into secondary education.

Jackie Hart is an Organizational Communications major employed at Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine, and former Office Assistant in the Smucker Learning Center.

Susanna K. Horn is Waynessence co-advisor. She loves to talk with students about their literary and visual work!

Melissa Horner is a high school and college student.

Mindy A. Howell is majoring in Interior Design. With this major my eyes for the art-world are being exercised. I'm hoping to find my hidden abilities and talents that God has given me and exercise them to be the person he's made me to be.

Tanya Johnson is an adjunct faculty member at Wayne College, a graduate student at Antioch University, and owner of Johnson Consulting Services.

John Lorson is an Admissions Counselor at Wayne College.

Melinda Neuhauser is a wife and mother of two, majoring in English/creative writing.

Tracy Rupp is a social work student who resides in Smithville with her 8-year-old daughter, Emmakene. They own and operate "Spirit Horses Trading Post" and the Native American Resource and Outreach Center.

Denise Stauffer is a second year student majoring in special education.

Tessa Lynn Walters is a wife, mother and Sunday School teacher from Rittman, Ohio. She is majoring in Health Care Office Management and is the president of Student Senate.

Cody White is a student at Orrville High School and is also a postsecondary student at Wayne College.

Waynessence is the literary magazine of The University of Akron Wayne College. It is published for the campus community to provide an audience for aspiring writers and artists. All materials are published with the consent of the contributors, who accept full credit for their work. All rights to the writing and artwork presented here are retained by the authors/artists. Artists, photographers, and writers have produced their own work independently. Their proximity in Waynessence does not necessarily reflect the intentions of authors or artists.

Each fall, all poems submitted to Waynessence are entered into our poetry contest. Each spring awards are given to the artwork or photographs that appear on the Spring Waynessence front and back covers.

Waynessence is a registered student organization at The University of Akron Wayne College. Registration shall not be construed as approval, endorsement, or sponsorship by The University of Akron Wayne College, of the student organizations publications, activities, purposes, actions, or positions.

"As practice makes perfect, I cannot but make progress; each drawing one makes, each study one paints, is a step forward." Van Gogh
Special Acknowledgments from the Staff

God, for guiding us
Susanna Horn
John Lorson
Carolyn Freelon
Dean Jack Kristofco
Fred del Guidice
All the Writing Instructors
SOPAC
Everyone who submitted to Waynessence

Editor's Note

It was such a pleasure to work with everyone this semester. I truly enjoyed all of the ideas from the staff. I would like to thank everyone for their help and I would especially like to thank everyone who submitted work to make Waynessence so great. This spring Waynessence will be introducing greeting cards made from past and present submissions. The greeting cards will be a new adventure for Waynessence and something all should look forward to. I would like to extend a very special thank you to Sue Horn and John Lorson for all of their help and guidance. It has been a rewarding experience working with everyone. Thank you all so much.

Susanna K. Horn, Waynessence co-advisor

Co-Advisor's Notes

Each semester, Waynessence depends upon many individuals to make the magazine a reality. This edition is no exception.

• Danielle Sobczyk has completed an outstanding first semester of leadership as Waynessence editor-in-chief.
• This year’s unusually large staff has given serious time and talent to the production of Waynessence.
• Carolyn Freelon continues to devote countless hours to turn the staff’s vision for Waynessence into reality, as you can see from our new format.
• Of course, the superior written and visual pieces in this edition are due to our contributors -- Wayne College students and staff who have willingly shared their best with the College.
• It has been a delight to work with everyone this semester. I truly enjoyed all of the ideas from the staff. I would like to thank everyone for their help and I would especially like to thank everyone who submitted work to make Waynessence so great. This spring Waynessence will be introducing greeting cards made from past and present submissions. The greeting cards will be a new adventure for Waynessence and something all should look forward to. I would like to extend a very special thank you to Sue Horn and John Lorson for all of their help and guidance. It has been a rewarding experience working with everyone. Thank you all so much.

Danielle Sobczyk, Waynessence editor

• One of the most frightening yet thrilling things a person can do is share their creation of art, poetry, photography or prose with the world. It’s a lot like being on a roller coaster. Thank goodness for a college community that has so many folks willing to step up for the ride.
• This semester we’ve been abundantly blessed with the contributions of many, put forth for the enjoyment of all. Special thanks must go to our Editorial Staff: Danielle, Molly, Brandon, Mike, Steve and John, for their tireless efforts in putting it all together. Thanks, especially to Susanna Horn for inviting me into the fold, and Carolyn Freelon who is far more patient with me than I deserve!
• It has been a great pleasure to get to know everyone and work side-by-side to produce a publication we can all be proud of.
• If you like what you see, tell us. If you’d like to be a part of it, join us! Face your fear. Find your thrill. Get yourself published!

John C. Lorson, Waynessence co-advisor

...And I personally thank all of you for an exceptional publication!

Susanna K. Horn, Waynessence co-advisor

A Crossing of Water
by Heather DeMali

Crystal Waters
by Heather DeMali

A prince of high and lofty rank
With a sea of armies reigns
His hand is strong; his mind is sharp
And love his heart contains
A promise sure and true has come
From long ago and far away
Through lonely nights, and desert sun
"Those who long to leave, don't have to stay"
A prison cold, remote and dark
Too many have enslaved
But walls of stone and weapons sharp
Will never make our prince afraid
A petition true, a cry for help
Is all that must be made.
The Prince will come and fears shall melt
For one more will be saved.

Night was falling. Maria’s heart was aching for something she had never known. For the first time, she wanted to leave. This wasn’t a castle; it was a prison. “My Prince,” she moaned as she staggered to her feet. Tears streamed down her face. With all her heart, she wanted to leave. Thrusting her face against the crack in the stone, Maria cried out with everything she had.

“Rescue me!” Silence. Maria collapsed. Though she didn’t see him, she knew he was coming.

In another world, the Prince leaped on his horse with a desperate cry that echoed through the golden streets. “Maria!” The armies of heaven rushed through the pearl gates. Tonight Maria was free.

Staff

Editor-In-Chief
Danielle Sobczyk

Editorial Staff
Molly Pierson
Brandon Leatherman
Mike Vamos
Steve Reutter
John Calvey

Creative Genius
by John Lorson

"Art is not what you see, but what you make others see." – Edgar Degas

Note: The Waynessence staff reserves the right to choose and edit written submissions as well as art and photography based on length, technical accuracy, and audience considerations.
The sun crept into the sky. Maria didn’t see it. It’s not that she couldn’t see it, if she had wanted to. Her dungeon did have a high, small window, not more than a crack in the boulders really. If she had pressed her face against the dirty glass, she could have glimpsed the world she had forgotten; the far-off mountains that reached bravely into the sky, the soft fog lifting from the spring flowers of the surrounding valley, and the river that flowed lazily by from distant lands. As Maria’s days passed as slowly as the river, she forgot what life was like outside her four walls. Perhaps it was because she had stopped looking out the window. She had discovered long ago that every time she looked at beauty through the window, her prison became harder to bear. It was easier to be satisfied. It was easier to forget.

Maria didn’t remember all the details of being imprisoned, it had happened so long ago. As she sat looking at the pile of rags she used for a blanket, she seemed to remember something about being invited to the castle. Yes, a castle, with a huge beautiful gate, glass chandeliers, royal robes, banquet every day, and an unceasing stream of famous, lovely guests. At least that was what she had been told. She had left her home gladly at the time, excited for life in the big castle. But what had been a castle on the outside was now her prison.

Some days, she still liked it in a way. If the sun shone through the cracks just right, her chains attached to the ceiling glimmered like a chandelier. When the thunder roared outside, Maria imagined an amazing company of horses and carriages bringing nicely dressed gentlemen and ladies to spend time with her. The rags were almost soft enough to be robes, if she closed her eyes and thought long enough. As she touched her fingers to the cold stonewalls, she could almost see rooms made out of the purest marble. On the best days, Maria had herself convinced that her prison was rather lovely, not exactly deserving that harsh word “prison.” Or maybe those were the worst days.

A prince. The thought startled her. She jumped and then immediately winced with pain as the chains dug deeper into her wrists. For the first time since coming to the prison she thought, “What would it be like to live without these?” But there was more, there were stories. Stories the people in her village lived by.

A prince. A promise. How did it all go? As she sat propped against the wall, a soft breeze blew through the cracks and fragrance surrounded her. Remember what flowers are? She had tried to forget so many times, but now she wanted desperately to remember. Not just the flowers, the stories.

A prince. A promise. A prison. Now that sounded familiar. She shivered and hugged her rags closer. They were not enough to cover her. How many nights had she been satisfied with them? Well, she wasn’t anymore. She wasn’t made for this… this… prison. As the water dripped, the chains scraped and the jagged stone pressed against her back, the stories began to return to her. She would never find what she was looking for in this place. Some days she had seen it as lovely. Today it was hideous.
Repair
by Cody White

Jacob Whitley has made a terrible mistake. He has gotten himself in too deep and he knows that he is about to pay for it. As he clutches a thick envelope, he thinks “Oh, god, why did I have to do this? It was just one time, one freakin’ time. I mean, did it do any harm? Did it hurt somebody at all?” In fact, it did hurt somebody, just not in a way that most people would have sympathy for. What Jacob did was he hurt a very powerful man, someone who has connections everywhere. What Jacob did was something that, shall we say, was “beyond repair.”

Jacob never meant for this. In fact, he isn’t the type of person that would normally do such a thing. You see, Jacob is just a normal working man who lives in a small town in Northeast Ohio. He is a husband and father of one who does construction work in the Cleveland area. In fact, it was through his construction work that he met him. Mr. Salvatore, a very successful man who worked in real estate. Mr. Salvatore is a very powerful man, someone who has connections everywhere. He is known by many names: Mr. Salvatore to his business associates, just Sal to his friends. To his “rivals,” however, he is known simply as “the Reaper.” Today, Jacob has a meeting with Mr. Salvatore, a.k.a. the Reaper, to see if they can correct what is “beyond repair.”

Today, Jacob has the day off from work, but is headed up to Cleveland for a “union meeting.” Jacob insisted that it was urgent. On his way out, his wife asked him if he could look after their son that morning and take him to the park. Reluctantly, Jacob took his son with him and they headed out.

Jacob took his son to a clean, safe park, a rarity in Cleveland. As his son and some other kids frolicked on the jungle gym, Jacob looked lovingly at the innocence of their youth while he sat on an old wooden bench. He knew how Mr. Salvatore could possibly know where he is and he doesn’t want to know. He just wants to get this over with.

Thirty minutes passed and a nervous sickness filled his stomach with every passing minute as he still clutched to the thick envelope. Finally, a sleek, yet discreet, black car pulled up and Jacob felt his stomach flip over. Out stepped a tall, thick man who wore a long black coat and had gray, slicked back hair. It was Mr. Salvatore. It was the Reaper.

With everything he did, as he walked, as he sat down on the bench, even as he looked at Jacob, Mr. Salvatore had an air of confidence and aggravation about him. This man meant business. “Mr. Whitley,” Salvatore said with a deep gravely voice. “I trust that you came with the funds.”

“Yes sir, I did,” said Jacob as he looked at the envelope.

“Good, good. That’s good to hear. I hope that we can possibly come to common terms on this mistake-your mistake.”

Skinwalkers: Dirty Ghost
by Tracy Rupp

I can no longer float unseen
unassimilated
amidst the domineering culture
my white sheet is frayed
it is brown and heavy with pungent oils
and sacred sweat
and the windblown soils
of the ancestors
It swings a bittersweet cadence
like the fraying muscles
of the aging trace-dancer
It flaps too loudly
like the open tipi of the Poco-princess
after the ‘nine
in its heft
it betrays a clumsy drumbeat
too loud to ignore
yet too muffled to name

Young As Spring
by Gordon Beals

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"I swear sir, I didn’t think that things would’ve gotten that out-of-hand," Jacob said meekly.

“Well, they did, Jacob, and you should know that as a business man, I want-no-need things to be in a nice, neat order. Everyone does their part, no one gets out of line. So when something happens that is…unexpected, well, I very well can’t stand for that. So do you know what I have to do then, Mr. Whitley?"

“N-no, sir.” Jacob was shaking with nervousness, but was trying his hardest to keep himself under control. He couldn’t shake the feeling, however, that something was going to go terribly wrong.

“Well, Mr. Whitley,” Salvatore said, “I have to find the source, the reason for what went wrong. Once I find that, I establish that reason as being a problem. And once the problem is clear…"

Mr. Salvatore then flashed out a pocketknife and fiercely jammed it into the wooden bench. “I must cut the problem out of the picture.”

Jacob was on the verge of a breakdown at this point. He looked around and saw several people nearby. No one saw Salvatore pull out his knife.

“Sir, you can’t honestly believe that you could harm me here and get away with it!”

“Well, why not?” asked Salvatore as he cracked a dry smile. “I own the legal courts, and the police department is practically in my pocket. Why should anything happen to me?” Jacob felt hopelessly defeated at this point.

“Now, why don’t you just hand over the envelope and follow me to my car? We can discuss this matter further at my office—by the docks.”

“No, no, no. I can’t. My son is here!”

“Well, I’m sure we can find a place for your son to be properly taken care of. Now hand me the envelope.”

Jacob lifted up the envelope, which felt like a huge rock in his shaking hands, and slowly handed it to Mr. Salvatore. When Salvatore happily took the envelope, however, a word struck his ear that he hadn’t heard in a while and that he hoped he would never have to hear: “FREEZE!!!”

At that moment, all of the bystanders that were nearby pulled out their guns and demanded that Salvatore lay down on the ground. As they handcuffed Salvatore and read him his Miranda Rights, Jacob felt a humongous sigh of relief. He got up and rushed over to his son, who was looking on with a quizzical look on his face. He picked up his son and kissed him a dozen times on the face, and that he hoped he would never have to hear: “FREEZE!!!”

The Mill Restaurant
by Chris Gehring

There is much to say about this place,
My home away from home,
The old wooden stools and green countertop greets my entrance,
Servants of the people roam from table to table,
Cloaked in their blue and pineapple glory.

Walking into the doors of the food factory,
I see the cooks running back and forth,
Preparing the eggs, grilling the burgers, and frying the fish,
Around the corner,
I glance at the lord of dishland,
Consuming the leftovers from the plates,
He sends them through to be cleansed of the past life.

Walking out the doors into the diner,
I see the King of Kings,
My personal Jesus,
Strutting his arrogant self around,
Serving his children refills of coffee and smiles,
A Sheppard to his sheep.

With old blue on my back and a smile on my face,
I go into the field of battle,
Clear out the enemy from the tables,
And make it holy for its next host,
A duty and sacrifice I do not just for the customers,
Or for my comrades,
But for the glory and honor of the Mill Restaurant.

Untitled
by Kendy Louanglath

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it jumped forward, her mouth open in that silent scream. The face retreated, spinning away until Sarah couldn’t see it anymore. Sarah didn’t believe her eyes; it had to be because the glass was so old and probably distorted with age. Reaching out to touch the glass, she hesitated, and then went ahead anyway. It felt as though a surge of energy ran up her arm, like lightning. Startled, she stepped back and shook her hand to get rid of the nasty feeling.

A sudden realization hit her. It was not just an artifact, it was an abomination. It was a gateway, a portal, a dead cell waiting to be juiced up. The mirror had been biding its time; waiting to spring to life when activated with negative emotions, growing stronger, and she felt it wanting her, wanting to add her to the frame, wanting the essence of who she was. Her face would be added to the collection, just one more tiny brown face, a screaming visage, frozen in time.

Sarah couldn’t draw her eyes away; it felt as though the mirror was pulling her closer. The tiny faces embedded in the framework almost imperceptibly shifted, twisting to the left and right, eyes blinking, closing and opening. Their mouths screamed, opening and closing also. Sarah couldn’t put a name to what was happening. It was a nightmare, something out of Lovecraft. Sarah closed her eyes, willing it to go away. Feeling her fright traveling down deep within herself, it went lower until it was no longer a palpable thing. Her fear went to the place where all the bad things went, to a no-zone, an empty spot in her soul where all of her rage, anger and despair rested. When she opened her eyes the faces were still there, still twisting, colliding with one another, horror painted on each brown face. Would they ever stop? Feeling sick and dizzy, she wanted to pass out. Forcing herself to focus, Sarah took a deep breath, but her heart was still racing and she wanted to run out the door…the mirror held her; she was rooted by fear, by a magnetism she could not comprehend. Willing her legs to move, she couldn’t take a single step. Sarah desperately wanted the mirror to clear; to able to see what she really was. Everyone should see Sarah as she saw herself, beautiful, rich and desired. The swirling mists pulled her in closer.

There was no rational thought now. The mirror was her friend, wasn’t it? Feeling this way was bad. Hundreds of tiny wooden faces were screaming. Stop! she commanded. Sarah covered her ears, but she still could still hear them screaming. Were they warning her? Her parents had been rushing home to warn her; to warn her…this seemed like fact now. In their haste to save her soul, they had sacrificed themselves. They had given themselves to a different beast so she could live. She leaned closer and closer. The mirror was the car skidding on the wet asphalt, the crunching metal, the breaking glass. The mirror was the fear of the dark, the tree crashing down in the blinding rain, the unfulfilled life, the lost hopes and dreams…the predatory nature of the beast, the jungle, the bloodhunt, oh god, the mirror, the mirror was the beast, the night, the dark, the killer…Thousands of years of collective memories flooded into her. It was Mubulu, Tikoloshe, Bori, the collector of souls and the keeper of the eternal torment. It was the silent stalker of prey, the force that would steal her beating heart, to add to the power of another, something so alien, some magic, so powerful, so ancient, stop looking, stop looking, stop looking, stop looking, looking…stop…looking…

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was an important part of his collection: a rare piece that added value to the total worth of the artifacts. Jonathan had stated in his will that the mirror would stay if Gwen or Sarah lived in the home. Their tragic deaths settled the argument, once and for all.

Following another long argument, her parents had driven away, off to a university dinner, and on the way home they had been killed in a terrible thunderstorm. ... always wondered why they were racing home on such a night. Had they been hurrying home to tell her something, good news?

The rest of the estate, including the fetish dolls, ritual masks, sacrificial bowls, knives and fertility statues had been a link to her past; she could almost hear the chanting and the drums, smell the rich and pungent night air, laced with a floral and green miasma, vibrating with life, death and decomposition. Sarah could almost imagine the stealthy night predators, deadly swift and ... their lives, food to fuel their beast. Their tiny hearts had to stop beating to keep another heart pulsating and alive.

Most living things had no real control over their lives, only a sense of control. Everyday Sarah felt like she was living in a jungle. Her career and her personal life were held together by spit and baling twine. One shift in her carefully arranged matrix and everything would come crashing down around her ears. Looking at the mirror gave her a sense of control. On the “murky” days she knew to watch out, danger and predators at every turn. Her beating heart could be taken to fuel another beast, larger and stronger than herself. On those kinds of days, what was the point? No matter what she did, it was all out of her control. The “clear” days, the good days were full of hope and the possible promise of good things to come.

Lately, she had come to rely on the mirror more and more. It really was a bizarre habit; she felt guilty doing it. Sarah would rationalize; she felt she should be able to do what she wanted to do in the privacy of her own home. She spent more and time looking at the mirror. Walking out the door she would pause to check in the mirror and then almost disappear within her mind for a few minutes, then snap out of it, wondering how long she had been standing there. At least she felt like her time disappeared. Once, startled, she had checked her watch and realized that she had lost five minutes. Sarah couldn’t remember what she had been doing during that time; she just remembered stopping in front of the mirror. Sarah assumed she had just lost track of time and she had entertained the thought of covering the mirror. Leaving it hanging was the only logical thing to do.

Sarah couldn’t get through the day without looking at the mirror. She supposed this was some kind of maladaptive habit that she had developed; as a psychiatrist, she was worried about her state of mind. It was the not being able to stop looking at it that worried her. It made her feel both good and dirty. The psychiatrist in her told her that this wasn’t very logical. One morning when Sarah was leaving for her job at the college, she stopped to check how she looked in the mirror. Wasn’t this the anniversary of her parents’ death? Pushing this date to the back of her mind seemed the safe, comforting thing to do. So she continued walking, and then stopped at the mirror. The mirror didn’t look too cloudy but as she was turning to go, she sensed something at the corner of her eye. Turning back to look she saw the glass was very cloudy, so Sarah leaned in closer. There were actual swirls of white, spinning and turning around and around. Drowning, her face was drowning! Then

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**Mirrors**
by Chris Courtney

I’m trapped in the land of broken mirrors
Shattered glass surrounds me
I search for my true reflection;
But all that I see is splintered

Unending webs of lies, betrayal, loneliness
Memories I don’t have the strength to face
I squint, searching harder
The light changes, everything becomes
More distorted
Can’t find anything true or clear
The light goes out, darkness arrives
Images vanish

I strain my eyes harder, seeing nothing
Without light, there is no outward reflection
Suddenly I realize
That which I seek
The mirror holding my true reflection
Is deep within my soul
It is a mirror
Which needs no light at all.

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**Autumn**
by Kendy Louanglath

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Following another long argument, her parents had driven away, off to a university dinner, and on the way home they had been killed in a terrible thunderstorm. It had been called a “freak accident,” a tree toppling over onto their car during a summer storm, killing them instantly. Jonathan and Gwendolyn had been driving too fast for the conditions. They had been almost home, so close; Sarah never saw them alive again. Since their deaths she had always wondered why they were racing home on such a night. Had they been hurrying home to tell her something, good news?

The rest of the estate, including the fetish dolls, ritual masks, sacrificial bowls, knives and fertility statues had been a link to her past; she could almost hear the chanting and the drums, smell the rich and pungent night air, laced with a floral and green miasma, vibrating with life, death and decomposition. Sarah could almost imagine the stealthy night predators, deadly swift and silent, creeping through the jungle; the pointless scurrying of their prey. Weren’t they going to get trapped and killed, eaten anyway? Their little limbs ripped asunder? No control over their lives, food to fuel their beast. Their tiny hearts had to stop beating to keep another heart pulsating and alive.

Most living things had no real control over their lives, only a sense of control. Everyday Sarah felt like she was living in a jungle. Her career and her personal life were held together by spit and baling twine. One shift in her carefully arranged matrix and everything would come crashing down around her ears. Looking at the mirror gave her a sense of control. On the “murky” days she knew to watch out, danger and predators at every turn. Her beating heart could be taken to fuel another beast, larger and stronger than herself. On those kinds of days, what was the point? No matter what she did, it was all out of her control. The “clear” days, the good days were full of hope and the possible promise of good things to come.

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Artifact
by Jean L. Calvert

The glass shimmered, milky and opaque; then clear and smooth. Each time Sarah walked past the antique mirror hanging in the foyer, its properties seemed to change. Chameleon-like, the mirror adapted to her moods or maybe her moods made the mirror change. Some days the glass seemed to swirl with currents and eddies, an underlying tone of hidden menace; a sandy shoal waiting to suck her down into its watery depths. It could have been a deception visus, a fallacy of vision, like a mirage. On those days, Sarah’s reflection seemed distorted, a bad funhouse mirror image; stretched and pulled; taffy in a taffy puller. Sarah felt like that sometimes, pulled in all directions, not enough of her to go around? When she looked at herself on those days, Sarah thought she looked like Munch’s “The Scream.” She felt like she was silently screaming, no one to hear her cries for help, wailing in agony for all of eternity. There were people in the background of the painting, but they were not helping the Screamer, were they?

On better days, she would glance at it, checking her appearance on the way out. The person looking back at her was confident, full of poise and grace, ready to conquer the world. Her eyes sparkled, her complexion creamy and glowing, her long auburn hair shiny and full. Sarah would smile at her reflection — on those better days — and the other “Sarah” would smile back. Sarah felt more secure in herself, and then the self-assurance would pass; replaced by doubt.

Sarah wondered exactly when she had started doing this, perhaps as long as she could remember. Sarah’s father, Jonathan, had brought the mirror back from Africa when she was a little girl. It had been hanging in her family home since then, a memento to her father’s anthropology career. Sarah had been so young, she couldn’t remember what region her father had brought it home from. Newspaper articles that she had stumbled across led her to believe that the mirror had come from somewhere in Zimbabwe. There was some nasty business allegedly linked to a dig started there around 1895. Rumors of rituals, witchcraft and sacrifices; from that day on, the dig had acquired a bad reputation.

The mirror itself had a frame of teak or mahogany or something. Carved into the frame were hundreds of tiny faces, contorted in grief, pain and torment. Sometimes Sarah would peer closely at the faces, almost sensing their anguish. Sarah wondered if they were taken from life or just brought forth from the artist’s mind’s eye. Macabre — to be sure — nonetheless, Sarah was comforted by its presence because it was a reminder of her father’s work. Jonathan had been dead for many years and he was but a vague image in Sarah’s memory now. The mirror was all she had left of him.

Other than the mirror, his vast collection of artifacts had been sold to cover debts owed. Sarah had inherited the house and the mirror. How had primitive tribes made such a thing? The archaeologists had wondered the same thing, and many other relics discovered in situ had only served to deepen the mystery. It must be European or something, Sarah thought. Her mother had never liked the mirror; she appreciated it aesthetically, but it unnerved her on a visceral level. Gwendolyn had attributed human qualities to the mirror, calling it “Machiavellic,” as though it had the ability to scheme and plot to commit evil deeds. Of course, dying prematurely had ended Gwen’s tirade about the mirror. Sarah remembered the heated arguments that were about the mirror. Her father insisted that it...
Sheldon leaned in closer. “Listen,” he whispered threateningly, “either you join the new club, or we disband the French-fries.” He had laid down the law. The days of the French-fries were numbered. We had to join.

Ten minutes later found the Stauffer children all sitting in a circle on the patio. Sheldon was smug with his newly found leadership success. Dennis and I were still smoldering about the compromise we had been forced to make. Sheri and David were simply delighted at the thought of being in an actual club. It only took us a couple minutes to come up with a name: the Snowshoe Gang. Then Sheldon quickly jotted a list of the members. There it was. Official.

The Snowshoe Gang never actually did much, and the French-fries continued on for years undisturbed. But somehow, everything was better. No matter who got mad, or who was crying, or who was being a jerk, we would always remind each other that we were all part of the Snowshoe Gang. It was the “family gang” and everyone belonged, forever.
The Family Gang
by Denise Stauffer

“The Sugar Creek Gang isn’t just any old gang . . .” We had turned the radio on at just the right time. The deep baritone of our favorite theme song surged from the speakers. My sister, three brothers and I adored the Sugar Creek Gang. We listened to their program every night. We had all their books. We could even sing the theme song word for word. Gangs and clubs were a way of life for us. It is a universal truth that everything is more fun if a gang does it.

The most envied gang in our family was the French-fries. It had a rather small membership, only my younger brother Dennis and me, but we were highly developed in many areas. Our Recreation Department had invented a new game with an indoor version for rainy days. The Fine Arts Department boasted several play performances and many original songs. We also had a keen interest in Science until most of the animals we caught started dying. Our other siblings did fun things too, but it wasn’t “officially” fun unless the French-fries were doing it.

While Dennis and I were sitting around pledging our undying commitment to the French-fry club, our siblings were getting a little annoyed. Who said the French-fries got to have all the good times? My oldest brother Sheldon decided it was time to end the French-fry monopoly on fun. He marched bravely up to our newest fort.
“Come to the patio, guys, we’re having a meeting.”
“Why? We’re not finished building yet.”
“We’re starting a new club with everybody, that’s why.”
I glared at him and picked up a new piece of wood.
“Well, we don’t need to be in another club because the French-fries are the best.”

Cornerstone
by Jean L. Calvert

Isn’t it funny how I always have a million things to say? Those brittle pieces of a compliment, they sound good in my head, great in my heart-of-hearts, wonderful on paper, oh my!

When they (these brittle thoughts), come out; oh yes they do come out at the worst times, I try to compliment you in my weak ineffectual way. Trying to tell you that you’ve been my catalyst, my fulcrum, my prism ... my colleague and my comrade-in-arms. Trying to tell you what an inspiration, mentor and role model you’ve been to me.

Trying to tell you all of these things, I should just simply call you friend.

Dedicated to Diane Alberts
Identity
by Melissa DeMiglio

his eyes breathed emerald
blinked and sang colors
and my own,
cavernized by his,

branched ice fingers
from the strings of my pupils
his voice, heavy like
tympanities of rain,
crept through my teeth
and left an aftertaste of wind
in my heart
his mouth dripped with gems
i fancied with my tongue
let taste the smell of clocks
his pendulum thump
of breath
every beat that brought us farther from God
closer to the mingling of our souls
sounding like cigarettes
and we’ll paint ourselves with violins
devoting our lustful mosaics
to the mechanical failure of our airplane ride of love
deft, pleased, and ending

Here I Am
by Gordon Beals

his eyes breathed emerald
blinked and sang colors
and my own,
cavernized by his,

branched ice fingers
from the strings of my pupils
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tympanities of rain,
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Burned By the Moon
by Melissa DeMiglio

and yet they remain!
like rows of ill-begotten teeth
from a cadavered dentistry
a rusted enamel of twine and tangle
skeletons, all laid in their best suits
softly tapping their meatless toes
and covering their hollowed cheeks in deep red Indian carpets
their eyes are silent screams, are breezeless airs, oppressed and desperate
spiraling some inches into shallow ponds
dotted with lily pad brains and trapeze swings of retina
here, they clap, a cacophony of clanking white chords, fingers dropping like beads
their applause like elderly perfume-stale, leaving us with a salty aftertaste of death
jaws snapping; fruitless venus fly-traps oozing the nectar of decay
those grinding, gnashing mouths grappling to the intestines of the living
laughing like saxophones, eyes wide and staring, walls ripe with entrail and rock
clawing, scratching with curled brown nails
up the rocks of pregnant pink worms
and leaping gay like cured lepers into the burgeoning baths of sunlight
finally! loose from the governments of soil and grave! the flushed remnants of rot and ruin! and, cautious like supple birds,
our skeletons will raise a mangled fist
in a sea of bone and proletariat
and piss in thick veins on the stones of our mothers and fathers, proving there will be a world beyond law

The Emperor
by Susanna K. Horn

First prize in high school division of the 6th annual Wayne College Student Writing Awards.
Lakota Blood
by Tracy Rupp
In our Lakota language there is no word for me
A fact confirmed by the dominant society
Yet I exist just the same
A sienna-skinned boy with burning eyes
And a question that sears a tattooed brand
Inside heart and head, is my culture dead?
Or is it just that they don’t understand
I’m not a ghost of history but a child
With needs
Who bleeds
The exact same sticky bright red mix
Of whales and snails
Of rocks and sticks
Their own boys tinge the gravel with
Though chances are better
That sooner than never
The rumbling volcano that is me
Will go
I will feel my own red-hot lava flow, then ebb
Too soon
Etching too-short memories
Over twisted steel and broken glass
Filling prairie air
With the thick iron smell of blood-set-free
Diluted by White Clay beer and salty tears
My mother’s
Who with banshee shrieks burns her fingertips
As she seeks to still
The erupting tide

A Moment’s Pause
by Melinda S. Neuhauser
She stops short, beneath the shade of giant, swaying elms. There ahead, is the low hanging cottonwood tree under which she has lost her quarry. With a sigh, thinking of laundry, she kneels low in the forest’s damp earth and crawls beneath the dew laden branches. Yes, there is laundry, and dishes, and a thousand other things that call to her this morning: the vacuuming should not be put off again today, as she has done all week. Pausing, she smells the clean air around her. When was the last time she stopped, hidden from the world? This thought brings her back to now, to the present, and she looks around beneath the natural canopy that surrounds her. The tree’s branches are hung so low, that they sweep the ground, but high enough in the center to form a conical tent. How strange to think of an entire new world in her own backyard. Yet she knows she has been here before, as a child.
“A whole new ecosystem beneath a tree.” She whispers to herself. She touches the smooth, graying bark, and feels the cool relief beneath her palm. Then, on her own accord, she sits in the grass, in the dew, and just breathes.
A tiny tree frog, the color of a new lime stares at her unblinkingly; pressed hard and knotted like a walnut at the tree trunk’s base. Without reservation she reaches, strokes cool, clammy skin with a finger; then retreats, hoping she has not overstepped her boundaries.
A bird sits above her, singing its warbling song. A robin? She thinks so by the familiar tune of her childhood. Her mother had sat on a log, about the same age she is now. But with all the patience in the world.
“There see, in the tree.” And the child she had been, had reared back her head, blonde hair spilling, blue eyes squinting.

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Yes, I see!” The bird, head thrown back to show red breast.
“Singing for spring, for his love.” Her mother had said, and the child had snuggled close in the love of her mother’s narrating voice. What of life now? What has happened to that child’s wonder, and the thought of singing for love, singing for joy? The idea of it has left her life. As in many things, all good things must end. But what marked the end of her own soul? Was it the demanding mortgage, or his midlife crisis that had led her to this new chapter. The divorced, the selling of the big town house. Perhaps it was the return to her late mother’s small house on large acreage. Far away from the city, and another life. The small house that was now hers.
She runs her hand, now devoid of gold bands through the silky grass. She breathes the sweet air, unburdened by smog, exhaust and anger. Then, she closes her eyes and feels her heart beginning to beat again. A cadence to childhood, her own childhood, most of which she has forgotten.
When her eyes flicker open, they are blue, and her golden hair tumbles over her shoulders, and she is back. With a turn of her head, she spies the red ball, of which in search for she entered this haven to begin with. She lifts the ball in her hand. A voice. Then another, both silk and chirping.
“Mommy, did you find the ball?” They sound like young robins, and they sing for her love. She takes one last look, at least for now. For she will return, but next time with her own brood, a brood who share silky blonde hair, and blue eyes full of wonder. She thinks of showing them this, of being nature’s narrator. After all, it is her turn. And before she stands and answers, she smiles.
Fall
by Denise Stauffer

I fall to the ground
Seeking a place you can be found
I've been running hard lately
I need to hear your words plainly now
I need you to catch me
But I find myself still falling down
What can I do when your words I can't hear?
Where can I go when I find myself here?
Teach this sparrow how to rest in the hands that made the heavens.
Teach this child to trust the King of her world
Teach these blind eyes how to see the way you have for me
Help me to know you are near
Jesus, I need you here.

Human Touch
by Beth Borham

Our quality of life doesn’t (shouldn’t) stop after we become ‘a certain age’. Humans need to laugh and cry and feel the touch of someone who cares. From infancy one needs, and thrives on, being touched and caressed. We hear about infants who die from lack of being held. I believe this need lasts a lifetime.

I have been spending my summer at a local nursing home working toward a certificate in therapeutic activities. When I tell people I am doing a practicum at a nursing home, the response I can count on is usually a shudder, followed by the statement, "Isn’t that a depressing place to be?" When the guilt of being politically incorrect kicks in, this statement is often followed by congratulations for being “that special kind of person.”

As I’m taking residents who participated in a rousing card game back to their rooms, I see her. She is sitting at the table in the hall. The other residents can hear her crying. They explain they have tried to say hello to her, but the weeping continues. Her frail body is attached to an IV. It is impossible not to notice how busy the workers are around her.

Her sobs are raspy from crying a long time.
Her face is wet from tears and mucus. Red-rimmed eyes stare at nothing. The sound coming from her reaches the memory part of my heart. I feel a remembered pain of loss and grief.

When my duties are complete, I go to her. I sit between the frail, tall, thin weeping lady in the wheel chair and a more active elderly woman with delightful golden shoes. As I rub the weeping lady’s back, the harried nurse reminds me to be careful of her IV.

"It’s ok, Mary. Jesus loves you," the lady with the golden shoes says to the weeping woman. She then looks at me. "It’s like the little boy who is crying and his mother tells him not to cry because Jesus loves him. The little boy sniffs and says he needs someone with skin." She gives me a meaningful look. "You are the skin," she states.

Throughout the exchange, the pitiful weeping continues. I lean closer to the sad lady’s ear and tell her how sad I am to see her so unhappy. She stays still in my embrace but I continue to stroke her arm. After a time the crying lady, Mary, makes eye contact with me. Her tears stop and start and stop again.

The sounds of her quieter cries speak of her losses, her hurts, her pain and (perhaps) her loneliness. My gut reaction is to give comfort. I rub her back and stroke her arm. As time passes I feel her relax, lean towards me. She tries to speak, and I try to understand. At this we are unsuccessful. Our communication is on the basic human level.

To distract the table of people, I grab a large print edition of the Readers Digest. I flip through and read the funny little bits people have sent in.

I pause only when my sad companion, Mary, moves toward me or tries to speak. The golden shoed lady grabs my hand and comments on my warmth; her fingers are icy cold despite the heat of the room. My menopausal body heat is causing rivers of sweat to run down my hair.

We sit together companionably as the staff members bring more residents for their lunch. Mary has stopped crying. Her body is relaxed. I reluctantly leave. I want to tell the staff to call me if she needs me again. But I do not. I am afraid to make a promise I cannot keep.

In my heart I carry her frustration. My empathy over her sadness has dissolved into sympathy… I am again amazed by the power of human touch. We need it from birth until death. It cost so little of my time to give, and the reward I felt as Mary relaxed and trusted me enough to lean into my arms will stay with me…

When people ask me if it is depressing to work with the frail elderly, I cannot find the words to explain that it is not. I feel blessed to have a bit of myself to give. I feel rewarded by a relaxed body, a smile, and watching the tears stop for a moment. I am awed by the opportunity to be the skin.
Mommy’s Little Boy
by Tessa Lynn Walters

It seems like only yesterday you were born.
I held you in my arms and felt so torn.
“We aren’t sure if he will make it,” the doctors say,
I don’t think my heart can take it, so we’ll go day by day.
Years later we are, and I hold you even closer to my heart.
As I watch you grow it never ceases to amaze me,
The bright young man you are growing up to be.
I Love You more and more each day,
I am more proud of you than I could ever say.
You are my greatest miracle,
You are my greatest joy,
You are so much more than just mommy’s little boy.

Mother and Child
by Gordon Beals

To Pastor Joe B. Anderson on the Anniversary of his Homegoing

We Remember
by Tanya Johnson
(2006)

The flowers have faded. The candle gone out.
The tears dried up. And thank yous sent.
Memories replace sadness. And we remember.

Your friendship, Your fellowship;
Your instruction, Your prayers;
Your preaching, Your singing;
Your love for the Lord.

Nearly ten years passed as you answered your call
To Shepherd this flock, Trying to reach one and all.

Make Us One In Christ was the choice for your theme.
Leading by example was the style you displayed.

When your name was called, You boarded your ship.
She knew the way home, It was time for your rest.

Your friendship, Your fellowship;
Your instruction, Your prayers;
Your preaching, Your singing;
Your love for the Lord.

Memories replace sadness. And we remember.
Serpent-Bound Cross
by Chris Courtney

Wind rushes through the trees
Just like that summer breeze
On that night so long ago
We rested in the grass
It seemed like peace at last
But then you left me all alone
And Hell became home.

Love’s a serpent-bound cross
The night within the day
It seems to keep you safe
But there’s a price to pay
Love can keep you from hell
It can also condemn you there
You have to take the chance
Just take the chance
I had my own weight to bear
But you made me wear
This twisted cross forevermore
I couldn’t bear the nails
Now my heart’s in jail
Love’s put me in a cage
And all I can do is rage.

Love’s a serpent-bound cross
The night within the day
It seems to keep you safe
But there’s a price to pay
Love can keep you from hell
It can also condemn you there
You have to take the chance
Just take the chance
O, can I last
The pain of my past
Will I step up and live
Will I lie down and die
I guess I’ll look to the sky

Time To Rest
by Gordon Beals

Aller Planter Ses Choux
by Jean L. Calvert

I crouched alone in my unworthiness,
Face in a corner, thinking old thoughts.
Punishing myself with those old thoughts,
Until I met you.

You also had dark thoughts,
sorrow you wore like a heavy, wool overcoat,
Regardless of the season.
You wore your threadbare coat like a badge of honor.
You asked me, “Can you stand in that corner forever?”
I asked you “Aren’t you tired of wearing that old coat?”
I saw a sliver of light around the corner, shining into the corner; I stepped out to reach it,
To touch it,
and have not turned back since.

Circling each other, with hope in our hearts, we have met in the middle,
Complete.
Work of Art
by Melinda S. Neuhauser

He lay in my arms, his tiny fists clenched, new and warm against my skin. His brow was wrinkled and his eyes held an inquisitiveness that I was only just beginning to know. I held this foreign little person closer, memorizing his smell, and his warmth. The way his face curved against my breast as I nursed him. All of the exhaustion of a twenty-six hour labor, and the difficult birth of my nine and a half pound son, faded into another world as I held him. I was only just becoming aware of how much my life had changed that cold February morning of 1999.

I believe that every child changes a mother’s life, but none so much as her first born. Evan’s arrival into my life has definitely changed mine. When he learned to walk, those first toddling steps, I developed the eyes of an artist. Everything took on a new context when experienced through the eyes of my son. The tiny lines that graced his palm were suddenly visible in spring’s new leaves, marking the newness of life, in the world and in myself. I learned to watch carefully for the works of art, and the masterpieces that the same small hand began to point out to me. A spider web glistening in the morning dew, or the reassurance of the rain as it pounded the metal roof of my mother’s farmhouse. I had lost sight of these wonders until I rediscovered them through the eyes of my child.

There have been the challenges along the way that have tested my strongest convictions. The hospital stay of four days, when Evan contracted rotovirus, redeemed my belief in God. He was so sick, so drained of fluid and life, that he could not get out of bed. At three and a half, he was completely at the mercy of modern medicine. I sat in the recliner by his bedside, swollen and pregnant with his baby sister, and I begged God to heal him. For otherwise, how could life go on? I watched the IV drip life back into his veins all night. I watched the nurses work and witnessed his recovery. Four days after his discharge, I handed him his newborn sister. That day was the answer to my prayers.

Never has my social conscience been more acute. Now, when I throw the plastic bottle into the trash, there are the questioning green eyes of my son. “Shouldn’t I that go in the recycling bin, Mom?” Snapshots of memories fill my mental attic, one of Evan coming home from school, full of conviction and pride. He had questioned a classroom guest, a local farmer, on his use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Then, he informed the grown man of the benefits of organic farming. How many seven year olds are so full of conviction that they can do that? The way my son wept when he fully realized the impact of global warming and, in the next instant, his determination that someday he would make a difference. The hope of our world truly does belong in the hands of our children.

Just this summer, my family took our annual vacation to the beaches of North Carolina. As I walked the beach with my son, I again saw the world differently. How he compared the small crescent of a seashell to a newborn’s thumb. The physics of how pelicans dive for fish. The acoustic science of how military jets break the sound barrier, and the beauty of being seven hundred miles from home, and having Grandma as his bunkmate. Later that night, we sat on the upper deck of our beach house and watched a storm rolling in over the ocean. That is the kind of moment in which we do our most serious talking, about life, and God, and family. And never, have I had a more respected conversation than the ones I share with Evan.

My son is seven. He has changed my life in ways that I cannot begin to name, even in the words that flowed through my mind as I wrote this. But most importantly, is the change he has made in my determination to make our lives better. My decision of returning home from the beach, and pursuing a career in writing came largely from the inspiration I have derived from raising this child. And the energy to keep going, that comes from his hugs, and his goodnight words of, “Goodnight, mom, I am proud of you.” What better motivation is there in this world?

Yes, my son has shown me how to look at the world through a child’s eyes. He has shown me how to view nature as a work of art, and how to keep trying even when the odds are stacked against me. For in the white blonde hair that frames his beautiful face, and in the green eyes and priceless smile that bless me every morning, I have also discovered a truth that can never be questioned. In this child, lies my masterpiece,
Ghost of Carlisle Indian School, circa 1879
by Tracy E. Rupp

Shove me in the direction I’m ‘spose to go,
Tell me what I’m ‘spose to …
Why’s my black braid layin’ there on the floor?
Ennit ‘spose to be on my…
Where’s that cloth ‘use-ta cover up my behind?
Guess they chose to unveil me
In all my glorious 10-year-old warrior’s pride;
Hope Head Master don’t nail me…

‘Ennit true what they’re sayin’?
Or don’t I understand?
In the frame on the wall,
Someone took the time to stitch by hand:
“Kill the Indian, Save the Man”
“Kill the Indian, Save the Man”

Don’t think I’ll ever make it home again,
‘cuz if they kill the Indian
They will kill the man.

Cracked my fingers for sayin’ I wanna go home,
‘cuz it wasn’t in English;
Miss my friends and my sisters and Dad and Mom,
But they won’t let me visit;
All these clothes make me itch in my get-alongs,
And these walls are a prison;
Spend my days askin’ God what I did so wrong
That he made me a Red-man.

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They have killed the man.

The Corner
by Denise Stauffer

Your eyes light up and a smile breaks across your crooked face
Amazed by the people, the lights, the beautiful displays
On feeble legs you step out, eager to experience them all
But someone’s arm holds you back
“No,” they say, “you must go over here, in the corner.”

Your mind is confused by the swirling activity, the sudden change in your plans
You try to understand what just happened
But your mind can grasp the situation no better than your rigid fingers can grasp a pencil.
All you know is that the fearful looks, the heartless comments
make you stay in the corner.

Everything goes on around you, past you, in spite of you
People fear what they do not understand
They glance at you and then return their gaze to the floor.
You try to say hello or smile before they look away
But they all pass you by, in the corner.

But I haven’t come here to see the rest of them; I’ve come to see you.
I’ve come for the light in your eyes, the love in your touch, the joy in your laugh.
The scrambled words, the peculiar gestures, they are all precious to me
Like a beautiful secret message.
Maybe someday they’ll all take the time to see you shining, in the corner.
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Don’t think I’ll ever make it home again,
‘Cuz if they kill the Indian
They have killed the man.

The Corner
by Denise Stauffer

Your eyes light up and a smile breaks across your crooked face
Amazed by the people, the lights, the beautiful displays
On feeble legs you step out, eager to experience them all
But someone’s arm holds you back
“No,” they say, “you must go over here, in the corner.”

Your mind is confused by the swirling activity, the sudden change in your plans
You try to understand what just happened
But your mind can grasp the situation no better than your rigid fingers can grasp a pencil.
All you know is that the fearful looks, the heartless comments
make you stay in the corner.

Everything goes on around you, past you, in spite of you
People fear what they do not understand
They glance at you and then return their gaze to the floor.
You try to say hello or smile before they look away
But they all pass you by, in the corner.

But I haven’t come here to see the rest of them; I’ve come to see you.
I’ve come for the light in your eyes, the love in your touch, the joy in your laugh.
The scrambled words, the peculiar gestures, they are all precious to me
Like a beautiful secret message.
Maybe someday they’ll all take the time to see you shining, in the corner.
Work of Art
by Melinda S. Neuhauser

He lay in my arms, his tiny fists clenched, new and warm against my skin. His brow was wrinkled and his eyes held an inquisitiveness that I was only just beginning to know. I held this foreign little person closer, memorizing his smell, and his warmth. The way his face curved against my breast as I nursed him. All of the exhaustion of a twenty-six hour labor, and the difficult birth of my nine and a half pound son, faded into another world as I held him. I was only just becoming aware of how much my life had changed that cold February morning of 1999.

I believe that every child changes a mother’s life, but none so much as her first born. Evan’s arrival into my life has definitely changed mine. When he learned to walk, those first toddling steps, I developed the eyes of an artist. Everything took on a new context when experienced through the eyes of my son. The tiny lines that grace his palm were suddenly visible in spring’s new leaves, marking the newness of life, in the world and in myself. I learned to watch carefully for the works of art, and the masterpieces that the same small hand began to point out to me. A spider web glistening in the morning dew, or the reassurance of the rain as it pounded the metal roof of my mother’s farmhouse. I had lost sight of these wonders until I rediscovered them through the eyes of my child.

There have been the challenges along the way that have tested my strongest convictions. The hospital stay of four days, when Evan contracted roto-virus, redeemed my belief in God. He was so sick, so drained of fluid and life, that he could not get out of bed. At three and a half, he was completely at the mercy of modern medicine. I sat in the recliner by his bedside, swollen and pregnant with his baby sister, and I begged God to heal him. For otherwise, how could life go on? I watched the IV drip life back into his veins all night. I watched the nurses ... out of relief. Four days after his discharge, I handed him his newborn sister. That day was the answer to my prayers.

Never has my social conscience been more acute. Now, when I throw the plastic bottle into the trash, there are the questioning green eyes of my son. “Shouldn’t I that go in the recycling bin, Mom?” Snapshots of memories fill my mental attic, one of Evan coming home from school, full of conviction and pride. He had questioned a classroom guest, a local farmer, on his use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Then, he informed the grown man of the benefits of organic farming. How many seven year olds are so full of conviction that they can do that? The way my son wept when he finally realized the impact of global warming and, in the next instant, his determination that someday he would make a difference. The hope of our world truly does belong in the hands of our children.

Just this summer, my family took our annual vacation to the beaches of North Carolina. As I walked the beach with my son, I again saw the world differently. How he compared the small crescent of a seashell to a newborn’s thumb. The physics of how pelicans dive for fish. The acoustic science of how military jets break the sound barrier, and the beauty of being seven hundred miles from home, and having Grandma as his bunkmate. Later that night, we sat on the upper deck of our beach house and watched a storm rolling in over the ocean. That is the kind of moment in which we do our most serious talking, about life, and God, and family. And never, have I had a more respected conversation than the ones I share with Evan.

My son is seven. He has changed my life in ways that I cannot begin to name, even in the words that flowed through my mind as I wrote this. But most importantly, is the change he has made in my determination to make our lives better. My decision of returning ... to make our lives better. My decision of returning to school, and pursuing a career in writing came largely from the inspiration I have derived from raising this child. And the energy to keep going, that comes from his hugs, and his goodnight words of, “Goodnight, Mom, I am proud of you.” What better motivation is there in this world?

Yes, my son has shown me how to look at the world through a child’s eyes. He has shown me how to view nature as a work of art, and how to keep trying even when the odds are stacked against me. For in the white blonde hair that frames his beautiful face, and in the green eyes and priceless smile that bless me every morning, I have also discovered a truth that can never be questioned. In this child, lies my masterpiece,

The Changing of Seasons
by Raquel Ball

Looking outside of my window, I see a leaf just lying there on the porch; it’s just stuck to the porch because of the rain. While sitting there listening to the rain hitting my window, I notice that the leaves are all beginning to change. The air is different; it’s sharper, and as I walk outside, I feel the brisk wind hit me. I continue to hear the rain drumming on my windshield. It’s then when I realize the season is now changing and fall is among us.

I walk outside. I see leaves falling off the trees, and they are many different colors. There are yellow leaves, red leaves, and some have all three colors. As I begin to drive down the street, I see the beautiful trees on the side of the roads. I am just really amazed at how wonderful it is to be able to see the seasons change. Just watching the leaves go from a bright green to a beautiful red, orange, or yellow, even all three at times. The rain is not only for April to bring May flowers but also for October to get us prepared for winter. The rain waters my flowers for the last time, giving me the chance to see the beauty of my flower garden. Then I have to wait till spring to see the beauty again. When winter comes and goes and we enter spring again, we are happy, and then we look forward to seeing the green leaves and flowering buds. Just to do it all over again, seeing the seasons change is a beautiful experience both for a child and an adult.

October Bliss
by Kevin Engle

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Serpent-Bound Cross
by Chris Courtney

Wind rushes through the trees
Just like that summer breeze
On that night so long ago
We rested in the grass
But then you left me all alone
And Hell became home.

Love’s a serpent-bound cross
The night within the day
It seems to keep you safe
But there’s a price to pay
Love can keep you from hell
It can also condemn you there
You have to take the chance
Just take the chance

I had my own weight to bear
But you made me wear
This twisted cross forevemore
I couldn’t bear the nails
Now my heart’s in jail
Love’s put me in a cage
And all I can do is rage.

Love’s a serpent-bound cross
The night within the day
It seems to keep you safe
But there’s a price to pay
Love can keep you from hell
It can also condemn you there
You have to take the chance
Just take the chance

O, can I last
The pain of my past
Will I step up and live
Will I lie down and die
I guess I’ll look to the sky

Love’s a serpent-bound cross
The night within the day
It seems to keep you safe
But there’s a price to pay
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Just take the chance

Aller Planter Ses Choux
by Jean L. Calvert

I crouched alone in my unworthiness,
Face in a corner; thinking old thoughts.
Punishing myself with those old thoughts,
Until I met you.

You also had dark thoughts,
sorrow you wore like a heavy, wool overcoat,
Regardless of the season.
You wore your threadbare coat like a badge of honor.
You asked me, “Can you stand in that corner forever?”
I asked you “Aren’t you tired of wearing that old coat?”

I saw a sliver of light around the corner, shining into the corner; I stepped out to reach it,
To touch it,
and have not turned back since.

Circling each other, with hope in our hearts, we have met in the middle,
Complete.

Time To Rest
by Gordon Beals
Mommy's Little Boy
by Tessa Lynn Walters

It seems like only yesterday you were born.
I held you in my arms and felt so torn.
"We aren’t sure if he will make it," the doctors say,
I don’t think my heart can take it, so we’ll go day by day.
Years later we are, and I hold you even closer to my heart.
As I watch you grow it never ceases to amaze me,
The bright young man you are growing up to be.
I Love You more and more each day,
I am more proud of you than I could ever say.
You are my greatest miracle,
You are my greatest joy,
You are so much more than just mommy’s little boy.

Mother and Child
by Gordon Beals

To Pastor Joe B. Anderson on the
Anniversary of his Homegoing

We Remember
by Tanya Johnson
(2006)

The flowers have faded. The candle gone out.
The tears dried up. And thank yous sent.
Memories replace sadness. And we remember.

Your friendship, Your fellowship;
Your instruction, Your prayers;
Your preaching, Your singing;
Your love for the Lord.

Nearly ten years passed as you answered your call
To Shepherd this flock, Trying to reach one and all.

Make Us One In Christ was the choice for your theme.
Leading by example was the style you displayed.

When your name was called, You boarded your ship.
She knew the way home, It was time for your rest.

Your friendship, Your fellowship;
Your instruction, Your prayers;
Your preaching, Your singing;
Your love for the Lord.

Memories replace sadness. And we remember.
**Fall**

by Denise Stauffer

I fall to the ground
Seeking a place you can be found
I’ve been running hard lately
I need to hear your words plainly now
I need you to catch me
But I find myself still falling down

What can I do when your words I can’t hear?
Where can I go when I find myself here?

Teach this sparrow how to rest in the hands that made the heavens.
Teach this child to trust the King of her world
Teach these blind eyes how to see the way you have for me
Help me to know you are near
Jesus, I need you here.

**Human Touch**

by Beth Borham

Our quality of life doesn’t (shouldn’t) stop after we become ‘a certain age’. Humans need to laugh and cry and feel the touch of someone who cares. From infancy one needs, and thrives on, being touched and caressed. We hear about infants who die from lack of being held. I believe this need lasts a lifetime.

I have been spending my summer at a local nursing home working toward a certificate in therapeutic activities. When I tell people I am doing a practicum at a nursing home, the response I can count on is usually a shudder, followed by the statement, “Isn’t that a depressing place to be?” When the guilt of being politically incorrect kicks in, this statement is often followed by congratulations for being “that special kind of person.”

As I’m taking residents who participated in a rousing card game back to their rooms, I see her. She is sitting at the table in the hall. The other residents can hear her crying. They explain they have tried to say hello to her, but the weeping continues. Her frail body is attached to an IV. It is impossible not to notice how busy the workers are around her.

Her sobs are raspy from crying a long time. Her face is wet from tears and mucus. Red-rimmed eyes stare at nothing. The sound coming from her reaches the memory part of my heart. I feel a remembered pain of loss and grief.

When my duties are complete, I go to her.

I sit between the frail, tall, thin weeping lady in the wheel chair and a more active elderly woman with delightful golden shoes. As I rub the weeping lady’s back, the harried nurse reminds me to be careful of her IV.

“It’s ok, Mary. Jesus loves you,” the lady with the golden shoes says to the weeping woman.

She then looks at me. “It’s like the little boy who is crying and his mother tells him not to cry because Jesus loves him. The little boy sniffs and says he needs someone with skin.” She gives me a meaningful look. “You are the skin,” she states.

Throughout the exchange, the pitiful weeping continues. I lean closer to the sad lady’s ear and tell her how sad I am to see her so unhappy. She stays stiffly in my embrace but I continue to stroke her arm. After a time the crying lady, Mary, makes eye contact with me. Her tears stop and start and stop again.

The sounds of her quieter cries speak of her losses, her hurts, her pain and (perhaps) her loneliness. My gut reaction is to give comfort. I rub her back and stroke her arm. As time passes I feel her relax, lean towards me. She tries to speak, and I try to understand. At this we are unsuccessful. Our communication is on the basic human level.

To distract the table of people, I grab a large print edition of the Readers Digest. I flip through and read the funny little bits people have sent in.

I pause only when my sad companion, Mary, moves toward me or tries to speak. The golden shod lady grabs my hand and comments on my warmth; her fingers are icy cold despite the heat of the room. My menopausal body heat is causing rivers of sweat to run down my hair.

We sit together companionably as the staff members bring more residents for their lunch. Mary has stopped crying. Her body is relaxed. I reluctantly leave. I want to tell the staff to call me if she needs me again. But I do not. I am afraid to make a promise I cannot keep.

In my heart I carry her frustration. My empathy over her sadness has dissolved into sympathy. I am again amazed by the power of human touch. We need it from birth until death. It cost so little of my time to give, and the reward I felt as Mary relaxed and trusted me enough to lean into my arms will stay with me…

When people ask me if it is depressing to work with the frail elderly, I cannot find the words to explain that it is not. I feel blessed to have a bit of myself to give. I feel rewarded by a relaxed body, a smile, and watching the tears stop for a moment. I am awed by the opportunity to be the skin.
Lakota Blood
by Tracy Rupp

In our Lakota language there is no word for me
A fact confirmed by the dominant society
Yet I exist just the same
A sienna-skinned boy with burning eyes
And a question that sears a tattooed brand
Inside heart and head, is my culture dead?
Or is it just that they don’t understand
I’m not a ghost of history but a child
With needs
Who bleeds
The exact same sticky bright red mix
Of whales and snails
Of rocks and sticks
Their own boys tinge the gravel with
Though chances are better
That sooner than never
The rumbling volcano that is me
Will go
I will feel my own red-hot lava flow, then ebb
Too soon

Etching too-short memories
Over twisted steel and broken glass
Filling prairie air
With the thick iron smell of blood-set-free
Diluted by White Clay beer and salty tears
My mother’s
Who with banshee shrieks burns her fingertips
As she seeks to still
The erupting tide

She stops short, beneath the shade of giant, swaying elms. There ahead, is the low hanging cottonwood tree under which she has lost her quarry. With a sigh, thinking of laundry, she kneels low in the forest’s damp earth and crawls beneath the dew laden branches. Yes, there is laundry, and dishes, and a thousand other things that call to her this morning: the vacuuming should not be put off again today, as she has done all week. Pausing, she smells the clean air around her. When was the last time she stopped, hidden from the world? This thought brings her back to now, to the present, and she looks around beneath the natural canopy that surrounds her. The tree’s branches are hung so low, that they sweep the ground; but high enough in the center to form a conical tent. How strange to think of an entire new world in her own backyard. Yet she knows she has been here before, as a child.

“A whole new ecosystem beneath a tree.” She whispers to herself. She touches the smooth, graying bark, and feels the cool relief beneath her palm. Then, on her own accord, she sits in the grass, in the dew, and just breathes.

A tiny tree frog, the color of a new lime stares at her unblinking; pressed hard and knotted like a walnut at the tree trunk’s base. Without reservation she reaches, strokes cool, clammy skin with a finger; then retreats, hoping she has not overstepped her boundaries.

A bird sits above her, singing its warbling song. A robin? She thinks so by the familiar tune of her childhood. Her mother had sat on a log, about the same age she is now. But with all the patience in the world.

“There see, in the tree.” And the child she had been, had reared back her head, blonde hair spilling, blue eyes squinting.

“A Moment’s Pause
by Melinda S. Neuhauser

She runs her hand, now devoid of gold bands through the silky grass. She breathes the sweet air, unburdened by smog, exhaust and anger. Then, she closes her eyes and feels her heart beginning to beat again. A cadence to childhood, her own childhood, most of which she has forgotten.

When her eyes flicker open, they are blue, and her golden hair tumbles over her shoulders, and she is back. With a turn of her head, she spies the red ball, of which in search for she entered this haven to begin with. She lifts the ball in her hand. A voice. Then another, both silk and chirping. “Mommy, did you find the ball?” They sound like young robins, and they sing for her love.

“Singing for spring, for his love.” Her mother had said, and the child had snuggled close in the love of her mother’s narrating voice. What of life now? What has happened to that child’s wonder, and the thought of singing for love, singing for joy? The idea of it has left her life. As in many things, all good things must end. But what marked the end of her own soul? Was it the demanding mortgage, or his midlife crisis that had led her to this new chapter. The divorce, the selling of the big town house. Perhaps it was the return to her late mother’s small house on large acreage. Far away from the city, and another life. The small house that was now hers.

Yes, I see!” The bird, head thrown back to show red breast.

“Mommy, did you find the ball?” They sound like young robins, and they sing for her love. She takes one last look, at least for now. For she will return, but next time with her own brood, a brood who share silky blonde hair, and blue eyes full of wonder. She thinks of showing them this, of being nature’s narrator. After all, it is her turn. And before she stands and answers, she smiles.

A moment’s pause.

A Day in Michigan
by Heather DeMali
Burned By the Moon
by Melissa DeMiglio

and yet they remain!
like rows of ill-begotten teeth
from a cadavered dentistry
a rusted enamel of twine and tangle
skeletons, all laid in their best suits
softly tapping their meatless toes
and covering their hollowed cheeks in
dep深 red Indian carpets
their eyes are silent screams, are
breezeless airs, oppressed and desperate
spiral深 spiraling some inches into shallow ponds
dotted with lily pad brains and
trapeze swings of retina
here, they clap, a cacophony of clanking
white chords, fingers dropping like beads
their applause like elderly perfume-stale,
leaving us with a salty
aftertaste of death
jaws snapping; fruitless venus fly-traps
oozing the nectar of decay
those grinding, gnashing mouths
grappling to the intestines of the living
laughing like saxophones, eyes
wide and staring, walls
ripe with entrail and rock
clawing, scratching with curled brown nails
up the rocks of pregnant pink worms
and leaping gay like cured lepers into
the burgeoning baths of sunlight
finally! loose from the governments of
soil and grave! the
flushed remnants of
rot and ruin! and, cautious like supple birds,
our skeletons will raise a mangled fist
in a sea of bone and proletariat
and piss in thick veins on the stones
of our mothers and fathers, proving
there will be a world beyond law

Identity
by Melissa DeMiglio

his eyes breathed emerald
blinked and sang colors
and my own,
cavernized by his,

branched ice fingers
from the strings of my pupils
his voice, heavy like
tympanites of rain,
crep through my teeth
and left an aftertaste
of wind
in my heart
his mouth dripped with gems
i fancied with my tongue
let taste the smell of clocks
his pendulum thump
of breath

every beat that brought us
farther from God

closer to the mingling of
our souls

sounding like cigarettes
and we’ll paint ourselves with violins
devoting our lustful mosaics
to the mechanical failure of
our airplane ride of love
deft, pleased, and ending

Here I Am
by Gordon Beals

his eyes breathed emerald
blinked and sang colors
and my own,
cavernized by his,

branched ice fingers
from the strings of my pupils
his voice, heavy like
tympanites of rain,
crep through my teeth
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sounding like cigarettes
and we’ll paint ourselves with violins
devoting our lustful mosaics
to the mechanical failure of
our airplane ride of love
deft, pleased, and ending
Isn't it funny how I always have a million things to say?
Those brittle pieces of a compliment,
They sound good in my head,
Great in my heart-of-hearts,
Wonderful on paper, oh my!

When they (these brittle thoughts), come out; oh yes they do come out at the worst times,
I try to compliment you in my weak ineffectual way.
Trying to tell you that you've been my catalyst, my fulcrum, my prism ... my colleague and my comrade-in-arms.
Trying to tell you what an inspiration, mentor and role model you've been to me.

Trying to tell you all of these things,
I should just simply call you friend.

Dedicated to Diane Alberts
Sheldon leaned in closer. "Listen," he whispered threateningly, "either you join the new club, or we disband the French-fries." He had laid down the law. The days of the French-fries were numbered. We had to join.

Ten minutes later found the Stauffer children all sitting in a circle on the patio. Sheldon was smug with his newly found leadership success. Dennis and I were still smoldering about the compromise we had been forced to make. Sheri and David were simply delighted at the thought of being in an actual club. It only took us a couple minutes to come up with a name: the Snowshoe Gang. Then Sheldon quickly jotted a list of the members. There it was. Official.

The Snowshoe Gang never actually did much, and the French-fries continued on for years undisturbed. But somehow, everything was better. No matter who got mad, or who was crying, or who was being a jerk, we would always remind each other that we were all part of the Snowshoe Gang. It was the "family gang" and everyone belonged, forever.
Shambles
by Jackie Hart

a soul split wide open by intruders on a mission
jousting spikes within holy grounds as sacred rituals have been broken
seeping secrets become vulnerable to interpretation
twisting the knife that pierces yet no longer bleeds
damning the darkness and heaviness of those unspoken moments of betrayal
masking the truth with wrongdoers for self preservation
slapping the face of realism and slapping it again as it laughs back

Artifact
by Jean L. Calvert

The glass shimmered, milky and opaque; then clear and smooth. Each time Sarah walked past the antique mirror hanging in the foyer, its properties seemed to change. Chameleon-like, the mirror adapted to her moods or maybe her moods made the mirror change. Some days the glass seemed to swirl with currents and eddies, an underlying tone of hidden menace; a sandy shoal waiting to suck her down into its watery depths. It could have been a deception visus, a fallacy of vision, like a mirage. On those days, Sarah’s reflection seemed distorted, a bad funhouse mirror image; stretched and pulled; taffy in a taffy puller. Sarah felt like that sometimes, pulled in all directions, not enough of her to go around? When she looked at herself on those days, Sarah thought she looked like Munch’s “The Scream.” She felt like she was silently screaming, no one to hear her cries for help, walling in agony for all of eternity. There were people in the background of the painting, but they were not helping the screamer, were they?

On better days, she would glance at it, checking her appearance on the way out. The person looking back at her was confident, full of poise and grace, ready to conquer the world. Her eyes sparkled, her complexion creamy and glowing, her long auburn hair shiny and full. Sarah would smile at her reflection — on those better days — and the other “Sarah” would smile back. Sarah almost expected her other self to wave back with a gesture of encouragement. For a fleeting moment, Sarah felt more secure in herself, and then the self-assurance would pass; replaced by doubt.

Sarah wondered exactly when she had started doing this, perhaps as long as she could remember. Sarah’s father, Jonathan, had brought the mirror back from Africa when she was a little girl. It had been hanging in her family home since then, a memento to her father’s anthropology career. Sarah had been so young, she couldn’t remember what region her father had brought it home from. Newspaper articles that she had stumbled across led her to believe that the mirror had come from somewhere in Zimbabwe. There was some nasty business allegedly linked to a dig started there around 1895. Rumors of rituals, witchcraft and sacrifices; from that day on, the dig had acquired a bad reputation.

The mirror itself had a frame of leak or mahogany or something. Carved into the frame were hundreds of tiny faces, contorted in grief, pain and torment. Sometimes Sarah would peer closely at the faces, almost sensing their anguish. Sarah wondered if they were taken from life or just brought forth from the artist’s mind’s eye. Macabre — to be sure — nonetheless, Sarah was comforted by its presence because it was a reminder of her father’s work. Jonathan had been dead for many years and he was but a vague image in Sarah’s memory now. The mirror was all she had left of him.

Other than the mirror, his vast collection of artifacts had been sold to cover debts owed. Sarah had inherited the house and the mirror. How had primitive tribes made such a thing? The archaeologists had wondered the same thing, and many other relics discovered in situ had only served to deepen the mystery. It must be European or something, Sarah thought. Her mother had never liked the mirror; she appreciated it aesthetically, yet ranted about the mirror. Sarah remembered the heated arguments that were about the mirror. Her father insisted that it
was an important part of his collection: a rare piece that added value to the total worth of the artifacts. Jonathan had stated in his will that the mirror would stay if Gwen or Sarah lived in the home. Their tragic deaths settled the argument, once and for all.

Following another long argument, her parents had driven away, off to a university dinner, and on the way home they had been killed in a terrible thunderstorm. It had been called a "freak accident," a tree toppling over onto their car during a summer storm, killing them instantly. Jonathan and Gwendolyn had been driving too fast for the conditions. They had been almost home, so close; Sarah never saw them alive again. Since their deaths she had always wondered why they were racing home on such a night. Had they been hurrying home to tell her something, good news?

The rest of the estate, including the fetish dolls, ritual masks, sacrificial bowls, knives and fertility statues had been a link to her past; she could almost hear the chanting and the drums, smell the rich and pungent night air, laced with a floral and green miasma, vibrating with life, death and decomposition. Sarah could almost imagine the stealthy night predators, deadly swift and silent, creeping through the jungle; the pointless scurrying of their prey. Weren't they going to get trapped and killed, eaten anyway? Their little limbs ripped asunder? No control over their lives, food to fuel their beast. Their tiny hearts had to stop beating to keep another heart pulsating and alive.

Most living things had no real control over their lives, only a sense of control. Everyday Sarah felt like she was living in a jungle. Her career and her personal life were held together by spit and bailing twine. One shift in her carefully arranged matrix and everything would come crashing down around her ears. Looking at the mirror gave her a sense of control. On the "murky" days she knew to watch out, danger and predators at every turn. Her beating heart could be taken to fuel another beast, larger and stronger than herself. On those kinds of days, what was the point? No matter what she did, it was all out of her control. The "clear" days, the good days were full of hope and the possible promise of good things to come.

Lately, she had come to rely on the mirror more and more. It really was a bizarre habit; she felt guilty doing it. Sarah would rationalize; she felt she should be able to do what she wanted to do in the privacy of her own home. She spent more and time looking at the mirror. Walking out the door she would pause to check in the mirror and then almost disappear within her mind for a few minutes, then snap out of it, wondering how long she had been standing there. At least she felt like there was a chance time disappeared. Once, startled, she had checked her watch and realized that she had lost five minutes. Sarah couldn't remember what she had been doing during that time; she just remembered stopping in front of the mirror. Sarah assumed she had just lost track of time and she had entertained the thought of covering the mirror. Leaving it hanging was the only logical thing to do.

Sarah couldn't get through the day without looking at the mirror. She supposed this was some kind of maladaptive habit that she had developed; as a psychiatrist she was worried about her state of mind. It was the not being able to stop looking at it that worried her. It made her feel both good and dirty. The psychiatrist in her told her that this wasn't very logical. One morning when Sarah was leaving for her job at the college, she stopped to check how she looked in the mirror. Wasn't this the anniversary of her parents' death? Pushing this date to the back of her mind seemed the safe, comforting thing to do. So she continued walking, and then stopped at the mirror. The mirror didn't look too cloudy but as she was turning to go, she sensed something at the corner of her eye. Turning back to look she saw the glass was very cloudy, so Sarah leaned in closer. There were actual swirls of white, spinning and turning around and around. Drowning, her face was drowning! Then
“Craving”  
by Jean L. Calvert

Our love was like chocolate,  
White and light,  
Dark and bittersweet,  
Running down our throats,  
A balm for our burning souls.

I craved the sweetness,  
An addiction I could not suppress or deny.  
The richness of our lovemaking tasted like the sweetest candy in the world,  
Soothing the palates of our desire,  
Completely, utterly.

I deny myself craving now,  
Remembering the sweetness,  
Remembering the burning,  
Remembering the delicious melting,  
Remembering…

Oh Spider  
by Jackie Hart

Spider, Oh Spider  
Why do you hinder my window’s view  
With silky strands that encapsulate the width  
Brilliance highlighted by daylight’s glorious rays  
Masterfully woven and sitting with ease  
My focus is impinged by your presence  
Yet adds dimension to the outer world  
Where butterflies flicker about  
And grasshoppers prance and climb  
Branches and leaves move in synchronization  
Harmoniously as they appear  
As if I were the outsider looking in  
On second thought Spider, Oh Spider  
Reside as long as you can
I swear sir, I didn’t think that things would’ve gotten that out-of-hand,” Jacob said meekly.

“Well, they did, Jacob, and you should know that as a business man, I want- no- need things to be in a nice, neat order. Everyone does their part, no one gets out of line. So when something happens that is... unexpected, well, I very well can’t stand for that. So do you know what I have to do then, Mr. Whitley?”

“N-no, sir.” Jacob was shaking with nervousness, but was trying his hardest to keep himself under control. He couldn’t shake the feeling, however, that something was going to go terribly wrong.

“Well, Mr. Whitley,” Salvatore said, “I have to find the source, the reason for what went wrong. Once I find that, I establish that reason as being a problem. And once the problem is clear...” Mr. Salvatore then flashed out a pocketknife and fiercely jammed it into the wooden bench. “I must cut the problem out of the picture.”

Jacob was on the verge of a breakdown at this point. He looked around and saw several people nearby. No one saw Salvatore pull out his knife.

“Sir, you can’t honestly believe that you could harm me here and get away with it!”

“Well, why not?” asked Salvatore as he cracked a dry smile. “I own the legal courts, and the police department is practically in my pocket. Why should anything happen to me?” Jacob felt hopelessly defeated at this point.

“Now, why don’t you just hand over the envelope and follow me to my car? We can discuss this matter further at my office—by the docks.”

“No, no. I can’t. My son is here!”

“Well, I’m sure we can find a place for your son to be properly taken care of. Now hand me the envelope.”

Jacob lifted up the envelope, which felt like a huge rock in his shaking hands, and slowly handed it to Mr. Salvatore. When Salvatore happily took the envelope, however, a word struck his ear that he hadn’t heard in a while and that he hoped he would never have to hear: “FREEZE!!!”

At that moment, all of the bystanders that were nearby pulled out their guns and demanded that Salvatore lay down on the ground. As they handcuffed Salvatore and read him his Miranda Rights, Jacob felt a humongous sigh of relief. He got up and rushed over to his son, who was looking on with a quizzical look on his face. He picked up his son and kissed him a dozen times on the face, all while his son laughed and said, “Daddy, that tickles!”

Meanwhile, the cops escorted Salvatore to a police cruiser, but were halted by the chief of police, who wanted to see Salvatore arrested for himself. “What’s tha matter, cherty? I didn’t pay you goons enough this time around?”

“No, Sal, we were just sick of your money altogether,” said the chief with a sly grin. As Salvatore was put into the cruiser kicking and screaming, the chief walked over to Jacob and his son. “Mr. Whitley,” said the chief, “I want to thank you for helping us put a wanted criminal behind bars. I hope your life will have some normalcy returned to it.”

“I can only hope, chief, I can only hope.”

“Daddy, did you make an ‘oopsy’,” asked Jacob’s son.

“Yes, son. Daddy made an ‘oopsy’. But Daddy made it all better now.”

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The Mill Restaurant

by Chris Gehring

There is much to say about this place, My home away from home, The old wooden stools and green countertop greets my entrance, Servants of the people roam from table to table, Cloaked in their blue and pineapple glory.

Walking into the doors of the food factory, I see the cooks running back and forth, Preparing the eggs, grilling the burgers, and frying the fish, Around the corner, I glance at the lord of dishland, Consuming the leftovers from the plates, He sends them through to be cleansed of the past life.

Walking out the doors into the diner, I see the King of Kings, My personal Jesus, Strutting his arrogant self around, Serving his children refills of coffee and smiles, A Sheppard to his sheep.

With old blue on my back and a smile on my face, I go into the field of battle, Clear out the enemy from the tables, And make it holy for its next host, A duty and sacrifice I do not just for the customers, Or for my comrades, But for the glory and honor of the Mill Restaurant.

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Untitled

by Kendy Louanglath
Repair
by Cody White

Jacob Whitley has made a terrible mistake. He has gotten himself in too deep and he knows that he is about to pay for it. As he clutches a thick envelope, he thinks “Oh, god, why did I have to do this? It was just one time, one freakin’ time. I mean, did it do any harm? Did it hurt anybody at all?” In fact, it did hurt somebody, just not in a way that most people would have sympathy for. What Jacob did was he hurt a very powerful man, someone who has connections everywhere. What Jacob did was something that, shall we say, was “beyond repair.”

Jacob never meant for this. In fact, he isn’t the type of person that would normally do such a thing. You see, Jacob is just a normal working man who lives in a small town in Northeast Ohio. He is a husband and father of one who does construction work in the Cleveland area. In fact, it was through his construction work that he met him. Mr. Salvatore, a very successful man who worked in real estate. Mr. Salvatore is a very powerful man, someone who has connections everywhere. He is known by many names; Mr. Salvatore to his business associates, just Sal to his friends. To his “rivals,” however, he is known simply as “the Reaper.” Today, Jacob has a meeting with Mr. Salvatore, a.k.a. the Reaper, to see if they can correct what is “beyond repair.”

Today, Jacob has the day off from work, but is headed up to Cleveland for a “union meeting.” Jacob insisted that it was urgent. On his way out, his wife asked him if he could look after their son that morning and take him to the park. Reluctantly, Jacob took his son with him and they headed out.

Jacob took his son to a clean, safe park, a rarity in Cleveland. As his son and some other kids frolicked on the jungle gym, Jacob looked lovingly at the innocence of their youth while he sat on an old wooden bench. He doesn’t want to know how Mr. Salvatore could possibly know where he is and he doesn’t want to know. He just wants to get this over with.

Thirty minutes passed and a nervous sickness filled his stomach with every passing minute as he still clutched to the thick envelope. Finally, a sleek, yet discreet, black car pulled up and Jacob felt his stomach turn. It was Mr. Salvatore. It was the Reaper.

With everything he did, as he walked, as he sat down on the bench, even as he looked at Jacob, Mr. Salvatore had an air of confidence and aggravation about him. This man meant business. “Mr. Whitley,” Salvatore said with a deep gravely voice. “I trust that you came with the funds.”

“Yes sir, I did,” said Jacob as he looked at the envelope.

“Good, good. That’s good to hear. I hope that we can possibly come to common terms on this mistake-your mistake.”

Skinwalkers: Dirty Ghost
by Tracy Rupp

I can no longer float unseen
unassimilated
amidst the domineering culture

my white sheet is frayed

it is brown and heavy with pungent oils
and sacred sweat

and the windblown soils
of the ancestors

It swings a bittersweet cadence
like the fraying muscles
of the aging trace-dancer

It flaps too loudly
like the open tipi of the Poco-princess
after the ‘nine

in its heft
it betrays a clumsy drumbeat
too loud to ignore
yet too muffled to name

Young As Spring
by Gordon Beals

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The sun crept into the sky. Maria didn’t see it. It’s not that she couldn’t see it, if she had wanted to. Her dungeon did have a high, small window, not more than a crack in the boulders really. If she had pressed her face against it, she could have glimpsed the world she had forgotten; the far-off mountains that reached bravely into the sky, the soft fog lifting from the surrounding valley, and the river that floated lazily by from distant lands. As Maria’s days passed as slowly as the river, she forgot what life was like outside her four walls. Perhaps it was because she had stopped looking out the window. She had discovered long ago that every time she looked at beauty through the window, her prison became harder to bear. It was easier to be satisfied. It was easier to forget.

Maria didn’t remember all the details of being imprisoned, it had happened so long ago. As she sat looking at the pile of rags she used for a blanket, she seemed to remember something about being invited to the castle. Yes, a castle, with a big beautiful gate, glass chandeliers, royal robes, banquet every day, and an unceasing stream of famous, lovely guests. At least that was what she had been told. She had left her home gladly at the time, excited for life in the big castle. But what had been a castle on the outside was now her prison.

Some days, she still liked it in a way. If the sun shone through the cracks just right, her chains attached to the ceiling glimmered like a chandelier. When the thunder roared outside, Maria imagined an amazing company of horses and carriages bringing nicely dressed gentlemen and ladies to spend time with her. The rags were almost soft enough to be robes, if she closed her eyes and thought long enough. As she touched her fingers to the cold stonewalls, she could almost see rooms made out of the purest marble. On the best days, Maria had herself convinced that her prison was rather lovely, not exactly deserving that harsh word “prison.” Or maybe those were the worst days.

The thought started her. She jumped and then immediately winced with pain as the chains dug deeper into her wrists. For the first time since coming to the prison she thought, What would it be like to live without these? But there was more, there were stories. Stories the people in her village lived by.

A prince. A promise. How did it all go? As she sat propped against the wall, a soft breeze blew through the cracks and fragrance surrounded her. Remember what flowers are? She had tried to forget so many times, but now she wanted desperately to remember. Not just the flowers, the stories.

A prince. A promise. A prison. Now that sounded familiar. She shivered and tugged her rags closer. They were not enough to cover her. How many nights had she been satisfied with them? Well, she wasn’t anymore. She wasn’t made for this … this … prison. As the water dripped, the chains scraped and the jagged stone pressed against her back, the stories began to return to her. She would never find what she was looking for in this place. Some days she had seen it as lovely. Today it was hideous.
A prince. A promise. A prison. A petition. A petition... for what? Even as she asked, the stories began to stream through her mind.

A prince of high and lofty rank
With a sea of armies reigns
His hand is strong; his mind is sharp
And love his heart contains

A promise sure and true has come
From long ago and far away
Through lonely nights, and desert sun
"Those who long to leave, don’t have to stay"

A prison cold, remote and dark
Too many has enslaved
But walls of stone and weapons sharp
Will never make our prince afraid

A petition true, a cry for help
Is all that must be made.
The Prince will come and fears shall melt
For one more will be saved.

Night was falling. Maria’s heart was aching for something she had never known. For the first time, she wanted to leave. This wasn’t a castle; it was a prison. “My Prince,” she moaned as she staggered to her feet. Tears streamed down her face. With all her heart, she wanted to leave. Thrusting her face against the crack in the stone, Maria cried out with everything she had. “Rescue me!” Silence. Maria collapsed. Though she didn’t see him, she knew he was coming.

In another world, the Prince leaped on his horse with a desperate cry that echoed through the golden streets. “Maria!” The armies of heaven rushed through the pearl gates. Tonight Maria was free.

Ride the Wind
by Gordon Beals

Creative Genius
by John Lorson

"Art is not what you see, but what you make others see." – Edgar Degas

Note: The Waynessence staff reserves the right to choose and edit written submissions as well as art and photography based on length, technical accuracy, and audience considerations.
Special Acknowledgments from the Staff

God, for guiding us
Susanna Horn
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Carolyn Freelon
Dean Jack Kristofco
Fred del Guidice
All the Writing Instructors
SOPAC
Everyone who submitted to Waynessence

Editor’s Note

It was such a pleasure to work with everyone this semester. I truly enjoyed all of the ideas from the staff. I would like to thank everyone for their help and I would especially like to thank everyone who submitted work to make Waynessence so great. This spring Waynessence will be introducing greeting cards made from past and present submissions. The greeting cards will be a new adventure for Waynessence and something all should look forward to. I would like to extend a very special thank you to Sue Horn and John Lorson for all of their help and guidance. It has been a rewarding experience working with everyone. Thank you all so much.

Susanna K. Horn, Waynessence co-advisor

Co-Advisor’s Notes

Each semester, Waynessence depends upon many individuals to make the magazine a reality. This edition is no exception.

- Danielle Sobczyk has completed an outstanding first semester of leadership as Waynessence editor-in-chief.
- This year’s unusually large staff has given serious time and talent to the production of Waynessence.
- Carolyn Freelon continues to devote countless hours to turn the staff’s vision for Waynessence into reality, as you can see from our new format.
- Of course, the superior written and visual pieces in this edition are due to our contributors -- Wayne College students and staff who have willingly shared their best with the College.
- It has been a delight to work with everyone this semester. I truly enjoyed all of the ideas from the staff. I would like to thank everyone for their help and I would especially like to thank everyone who submitted work to make Waynessence so great. This spring Waynessence will be introducing greeting cards made from past and present submissions. The greeting cards will be a new adventure for Waynessence and something all should look forward to. I would like to extend a very special thank you to Sue Horn and John Lorson for all of their help and guidance. It has been a rewarding experience working with everyone. Thank you all so much.

- Danielle Sobczyk, Waynessence editor

One of the most frightening yet thrilling things a person can do is share their creation of art, poetry, photography or prose with the world. It’s a lot like being on a roller coaster. Thank goodness for a college community that has so many folks willing to step up for the ride.

This semester we’ve been abundantly blessed with the contributions of many, put forth for the enjoyment of all. Special thanks must go to our Editorial Staff: Danielle, Molly, Brandon, Mike, Steve and John, for their tireless efforts in putting it all together. Thanks, especially to Susanna Horn for inviting me into the fold, and Carolyn Freelon who is far more patient with me than I deserve! It has been a great pleasure to get to know everyone and work side-by-side to produce a publication we can all be proud of.

If you like what you see, tell us. If you’d like to be a part of it, join us! Face your fear. Find your thrill. Get yourself published!

John C. Lorson, Waynessence co-advisor

Crystal Waters
by Heather DeMali

A Crossing of Water
by Heather DeMali
As practice makes perfect, I cannot but make progress; each drawing one makes, each study one paints, is a step forward.

—Van Gogh

Writers' and Artists' Biographies

Raquel Ball is a mother of five from Wooster, majoring in nursing.

Gordon R. Beals of Dalton is a student at Wayne College taking classes in a variety of subjects.

Beth Borham of Orrville works full time in the community and is pursuing a degree in Social Services Technology. She has a supportive husband and son and loves to write!

Jean L. Calvert is a social work major, loves to write fiction and non-fiction, essays, etc. She is a Student Ambassador, is a member of the Psych Club, Student Senate, and Distinguished Students program, is the mother of 6, grandmother of 6, and writes for the Waynessence.

Kim Coffey of Wooster is a comedian/musician, majoring in history.

Fred del Guidice is an artist/educator with over 25 years of experience. He is the father of five wonderful children.

Heather DeMali of Marshallville is a postsecondary student majoring in biology.

Mindy A. Howell is majoring in Interior Design. With this major my eyes for the art-world are being exercised. I’m hoping to find my hidden abilities and talents that God has given me and exercise them to be the person he’s made me to be.

Tanya Johnson is an adjunct faculty member at Wayne College, a graduate student at Antioch University, and owner of Johnson Consulting Services.

Melinda Neuhauser is a wife and mother of two, majoring in English/creative writing.

Tessa Lynn Walters is a wife, mother and Sunday School teacher from Rittman, Ohio. She is majoring in Health Care Office Management and is the president of Student Senate.

Cody White is a student at Orrville High School and is also a postsecondary student at Wayne College.

Waynessence, the literary magazine of The University of Akron Wayne College, is published for the campus community to provide an audience for aspiring writers and artists. All materials are published with the consent of the contributors, who accept full credit for their work. All rights to the writing and artwork presented here are retained by the authors/artists. Artists, photographers, and writers have produced their own work independently. Their proximity in Waynessence does not necessarily reflect the intentions of authors or artists.

Each fall, all poems submitted to Waynessence are entered into our poetry contest. Each spring awards are given to the artwork or photographs that appear on the Spring Waynessence front and back covers.

Waynessence is a registered student organization at The University of Akron Wayne College. Registration shall not be construed as approval, endorsement, or sponsorship by The University of Akron Wayne College, of the student organizations publications, activities, purposes, actions, or positions.

“As practice makes perfect, I cannot but make progress; each drawing one makes, each study one paints, is a step forward.” —Van Gogh