The **Waynessence** of
The University of Akron Wayne College
Fall 2009

*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.
**Special Acknowledgments From the Staff**

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

**From the Editor**

I cannot really put into words how I truly feel about this major work. Without the help of the *Waynessence* team, I know for a fact that everything would be futile because "two heads and more are better than one." Furthermore, this edition would not have been possible without the submissions from our authors and artists, for they make up this magazine. No matter what, all of you made this masterpiece come alive. From the bottom of my heart, I thank all of you!

Mike Vanos, *Waynessence* editor-in-chief

**Co-Advisors' Notes**

I am constantly amazed at the talent we have here at Wayne College. Thank you to all who contributed visual and written creations to *Waynessence*!

It is a privilege to work with our editor-in-chief, Mike Vamos, and our creative staff – not to mention our word processing and publishing genie, Carolyn Freelon. They all deserve a loyalty award!

As readers thumb through this semester’s *Waynessence*, they may notice that there are color images inside! For this milestone in the evolution of *Waynessence*, we offer special thanks to SOPAC, who supported our efforts to present the works of the Wayne College community in the best light possible!

As you enjoy this semester’s *Waynessence*, consider contributing to the Spring 2010 edition. We would love to publish your work!

Best wishes to you all.  
Susanna K. Horn, *Waynessence* co-advisor

---

In the film classic *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy—incredibly well-constructed farmhouse and all—is carried away from her sepia tone world to be deposited in the Technicolor paradise known as Munchkinland. With this issue, *Waynessence* makes a similar journey *sans tornado* from cover-to-cover black and white to a land of similarly stunning color. It is our sincerest hope, however, that there will be no melancholy clicking of heels on your adventure through these pages! Thanks, as always, goes to a great staff led by fearless Editor-In-Chief Mike Vamos.

John C. Lorson, *Waynessence* co-advisor
Dedication

The Waynessence staff would like to remember Mark Tickton, who passed away unexpectedly on May 6, 2009.

Mark was a Wayne College student, a member of the spring Waynessence staff and Interim President of the new Wayne College Nursing Club. A many-talented man of courage, Mark was able to pull up roots and begin again in another place, another career.

His dedication and enthusiasm for Wayne College and Waynessence will be missed.

May we be inspired by the memory of Mark to be open to new learning experiences, wherever life leads us.
Violin Guy .................................................Jason Miller ................. front cover
Mia Bella ..............................................Misty Poehler .................. title page
Inside Looking Out ..............................Darlene Mullett ................ staff page
Untitled ..............................................Heather Christie ............. 1
I suppose it could happen. .....................Joshua Friedt ................. 1
Kinship (dedicated to Forrest Smith) ......Darlene Mullett ................. 2
Times Two ..............................................Darlene Mullett ............. 2
Suzie-Q ................................................Sarah Kitzmiller ............... 3
Lead Us Through the Night .................Eli Donahue ..................... 3
The White Abyss a.k.a. Writers Block ....Joshua Friedt ................. 4
My Way or the Highway .......................John C. Lorson ................. 5
I .........................................................Jacob Lawrence Crislip ....... 5
There is a Place .................................Clint Hale ..................... 6
Time Travel .........................................John C. Lorson ................. 6
Little Ones ...........................................Denise Roth ................. 7
No Title ...............................................Matthew Kreis ............... 8
All in a Day's Work ...............................Misty Poehler ................. 9
Frog in My Pond ................................Kim Coffey .................... 9
Aging ..................................................Vicki Koster ................. 10
Simple Beauty .....................................Latasha Smith ............... 10
It comes tonight ...................................Jacob Lawrence Crislip .... 11
Smokey Mountains ..............................Katie White ................. 12
willow ...............................................Corinda Putt ................. 12
Faces from the Past ............................Katie White ................. 13

EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS
1st Place - Bradbury Days...............Darlene Mullett ................. 14
Honorable Mention - Untitled.........Rebekah Miller ................. 14
Runner Up - a lawn worth mowing.....Mark Solars ................. 15

A Miracle Named Ellie .................Stacy Coblentz ..................... 16
Mia Bella ..............................................Misty Poehler ................. 17
Added .............................................Theresa Mountel ............. 18
Historic Truss Bridge .......................Kevin Engle ................. 18
Mid Summer Memories ......................Gordon R. Beals .............. 19
It Will Come ......................................Theresa Mountel ........... 20
I am your shoulder. . . lean upon me ..Joshua Friedt ............. 20
Rain ..................................................Taylor Fike ................. 21
Dawn Red Wood .................................Gordon R. Beals ............. 21
A Child .............................................Denise Roth ................. 22
Colorado Sunset ...............................Katie White ................. 23
Clouds ...............................................Clint Hale ................. 23
One Happy Frog .................................Gordon R. Beals ............. 24
The Stranger .....................................Jacob Lawrence Crislip .... 24
The Mansion ......................................Nonya Stallnaker ......... 25
Hooked ..............................................Benjamin Stewart ......... 27
Coquette ..............................................Darlene Mullett ........... 28
The Cathedral ..................................Rebekah Miller ............. 29
What Have I Done? ............................Nonya Stallnaker .......... 30
crash dummies .................................Mark Solars ................. 31
Blue Heron ......................................Katie White .......... back cover
I suppose it could happen. . .

Why is your door wide open?
You won’t let me in
I’ve tried to enter
Through your door, wide open.

Let me in, let me in
Let me carry you
Through this opening
Let me calm you
With my tranquil words.

If you don’t want me here
Close your door
Lock it tight.

I suppose it does happen.
Darlene Mullett

Kinship

Startled by the bond-cold night
Following the blood-hot day,
She shuddered.
Gazing skyward she searched,
No sinking sun, only
Far flung stars
In unfamiliar formations.
But, oh, the glory of the number.

Today she will caress
Casts of ancient bones
Amassed by others.
As she eases slowly into a
Plastic chair, made for
More supple limbs,
Her body aches, but she is content.
There is kinship in old bones

Dedicated to: Forrest Smith
Wayne College

Times Two

Darlene Mullett
Suzie-Q
Sarah Kitzmiller

Lead Us Through the Night
Eli Donahue
The White Abyss a.k.a. Writers Block

staring at the blank page
wishing it would fill
with amazingly descriptive words.
the more i stare,
the more empty it appears…
why am i finding it so hard
to write
eight short lines?
I

I rebel
To cast away my chains
Chains which bind me to this plastic world

I
deny
The motives of the weak of mind, the chosen few
Who, from ivory towers, set the world ablaze, and bemoan its fate

I
refuse
To accept a lie for truth
To find the truth in lies, a more noble pursuit

I
accept
That nothing is as it seems
The world can change, if only in a dream
Clint Hale

There is a Place

There is a woeful place
Where daylight rests its weary head
And not a touch of earth
Is free from the falling rain

The droplets linger longingly
To share their dreams with the soil
They speak in currents of wishful words
That only the ghosts of men may hear

Petals weep to memories
Knelt before marble colored lives
They endure the chill of November’s sleep
While searching for stars upon a grieving sky

But their colors are soon to fade
For a fragile sorrow has fallen with the rain
And in sleepless dreaming a man lies still
Too far away to notice, too long alone to care

John C. Lorson

Time Travel
Little Ones

Jesus loves me I am special,  
that’s what I heard them say
But my heart is breaking, my body’s aching  
Will I be safe when he comes home today?
A few short years and so many fears,  
but I heard them say that

Jesus loves the little children  
All of them to Him belong
But all I know is that I am hurting  
And this road, it is so long

Jesus loves me I am special,  
that’s what I heard you say
But daddy didn’t come home tonight  
Don’t know who was wrong or right.
Was it my fault they fight?  
An empty bed, a hanging head,  
is it true what they say?

Jesus loves you, you are special  
And I know that it’s true
I see His presence all around  
And I know He’s holding onto you
In all your fears, through all your years  
He’ll be with you because

Jesus loves you little children  
All of you to Him belong
You are precious in His sight  
When you are weak, then He is strong.
No Title

The formerly bright green maple trees fade slowly to black as dusk falls over the peaceful neighborhood. The sky above is divided in half. To the north and west, lights from the nearby commercial district and invisible sun create shades of purple, pink and orange on the swirling clouds. In the opposite hemisphere, the Earth’s natural satellite hides and reappears behind the same migrating clouds, although now of ash, indigo and white hues that match the dropping temperature. Abruptly, the eerie rainbow of the early night sky mutates into the charcoal zigzag of treetops creating a sporadic horizon.

From the darkness of the trees, crickets and cicadas sing their never-ending chorus. Their monotonous song nearly drowns the drone of the tractor-trailers and commuters on the nearby highway. Five shadowed houses, each with a single rectangle emitting a soft yellow glow, surround the small concrete and grass backyard. The largest of the five, at the immediate right on this panorama, creates a symbol of the season. Painted a dark shade of yellow and perfectly symmetrical, the duplex resembles a giant winking jack o’ lantern. A faint waft of fireplace smoke from a nearby chimney completes the seasonal illusion.

On the grassy side of the divided backyard, the faint light of the moon reveals yet another dissection. An eight-foot strip of lawn looks unkempt next to the pumpkin house’s perfectly manicured quadrangle. Dora, a tiny Rat Terrier, prances back and forth across the uneven turf occasionally sniffing the crisp fall air. She pauses for a moment to consider the location of the owner of a distant bark. After deciding the other canine lives too far away to have any fun, the pint-sized pup shivers, then darts past in a blur of black and white fur up the cold concrete sidewalk, heading for home.

The chilly temperatures, gently falling leaves, and ominous moon views create the feel of autumn. Now that a jack o’ lantern lives next door where a house used to sit and the scent of hot apple pie seeps out of its open eye, fall also creates itself.
All in a Day’s Work
Misty Poehler

Frog in My Pond
Kim Coffey
Aging

The fence stands alone in the early morning sun. It stretches as far as the eye can see. In the winter the fence is barren; it serves no useful purpose, only a trap for blowing snow or litter left behind by the winter winds. But, in the spring the vines are searching for something, anything sturdy to cling to, to take hold of, so they can flourish, and they find the fence. The vines begin to grow, clinging to the fence, soaking in the morning dew and pulling moisture from the ground. The moisture is surging through the vines to reach the leaves that are beginning to sprout from every bud. The vines have intertwined themselves into the fence and the leaves are becoming so plentiful that the fence is barely visible. Clusters are beginning to form beneath the leaves. At first, it looks as if it is only little berries, but as the sun and the moisture nourishes them, the little berries begin to thrive. They are growing into plump juicy little fruits, each connected to the other by the vine, but each beginning to take on its own individual look and size. They are turning purple and swelling from the moisture. Soon they will be full grown grapes, aging to perfection. The best of the best are being plucked away, taken to continue their aging, not as a grape, but to be preserved as a fine red wine aging on to perfection to be the oldest old of the grapes. The juicy plump fruits left behind are still thriving, growing older gracefully until they are plucked from the vines and taken to a place where they will bring much enjoyment to someone special, being perfect specimens because they survived on the vine in perfect health. Looking through the vines I notice a break in the fence. The rough edges of the fence have caused a snag in the vine, tearing at its flesh, giving disease an opening to invade this beautiful fruit. Moisture is struggling to breach the gap and continue through the vine to the fruits, but very little is getting through. Most of the liquid is dripping down the vine onto the ground, leaving the fruits neglected, and they are beginning to shrivel. The vine is beginning to droop and the fruit is no longer visible to the sun. The precious fruits are still alive, but they are no longer thriving. They are barely surviving; without the sun and moisture, they are beginning to wrinkle and dry up. Soon they will not be the beautiful fresh fruits that they had hoped to become, merely raisins suffering from disease and neglect. They have grown old way before their time.
It comes tonight

It comes tonight.

It has waited for a very long time.

I could lock the doors and windows if I wanted, but it wouldn’t do any good. If it wants in, it will find a way. It will not be detoured. I could try to fight it; I have a knife. But that would only make it angry. Perhaps if I go to it peacefully, the end will be quicker. Although, I find that part of me wants it to take it’s time, do things right, and take it slow.

These thoughts disturb me. I turn the TV to a comedy I like and try to put it out of my mind. I stare at the screen and laugh absentmindedly.

Later, I’m startled to find that I’ve fallen asleep. I look at the clock on the wall. How late it has become! My stomach rumbles noisily. I go to the kitchen and prepare myself some Ramen Noodles. As I eat I wonder to myself, will I taste like Ramen now? I hope so.

Slurp! Mmm…. good!

After I eat, I take a nice hot shower. I like my showers scolding hot, and I stay in until my skin is wrinkled and the water begins to grow cold. I dry off and put on my favorite suit. It has a hole in the armpit, and I can’t seem to get my tie just straight, but I don’t think it will mind. After all, it’s the thought that counts.

I drink coffee and smoke cigarettes while I wait. After an hour or so, I hear something brush the side of the house, its touch as gentle as a lover's caress. Minutes later something knocks a flower pot off of one of the tables outside on the patio. I imagine I can hear its breath.

I sit Indian style on the floor with my hands on my knees and wait. In the minutes before the door crashes open, I begin to hum.

It comes.
Smokey Mountains

Katie White

Corinda Putt

willow

falling in all directions, parallel, crooked, straight; lines in directions, all go and go.
lines in your hair, changing
light in my eyes, changing
lines on your face, the tiny tips of your twindling toes, changing.
colors across leaves, changing, drying and dying, floating, falling, and rising, like me, awake and asleep, cold and warm, dreaming, dreaming, in all directions, moving.
oh, let’s not talk of things so fleeting. watch stagnancy mock movement, let sediment fall to stone, firmly compressed into permanence, and nothing less.

oh, to want nothing less than not to keep you from your seasonal distraction, your anticipation of another prospective spring flower; her sight, her smell, her color and texture. and less than nothing less than what her allure awakens in you—all previous regretfully misguided distractions aside. yes, in this we’d find the beauty of wonder, the innocence of fascination. beauty and innocence and relief. Oh relief! Relief—not dreams, not whimsical optimism. relief would lead me away weeping, perhaps to find a match to my steady solitude in the shade of a weeping tree, weeping more deeply and truly than this human with so few limbs could ever weep given infinite time. you’ll find me there still, dreaming, dreaming, floating, falling, rising, not fleeting you’ll find me there still

12 WAYNESSENCE
Bradbury Days

Ah, Douglas Spaulding, you with
The spatter-free new sneakers,
Spring high with the gazelles
And run face first into the wind gusts
To collect your journal of being.
My scuffed shoes, weighed down
By ochre clay and mountains scaled,
Anchor me to my chair
As I stir dreams of days done
Into sweet dandelion wine.

Untitled

The bombs burst daily, screeching banshees
Blasting smoke and dust into the city
Skies. The natives huddled in their houses.
Outside explosions grabbed the land and shook
It like a rag. Katasha’s kitten died.
She found the body in the ditch one day
When quarrels had quieted enough to bring
The people from their homes and holes. Tash washed
The muddy body with her tears. She trudged
Home through the ruins oozing sludge and muck.
And Tasha’s eyes dripped sorrow for the innocence
She lost. At home, she wrapped her arms around
Her father’s solid legs and held him tight.
“I want to be like you, daddy,” she said,
“When I grow up I want to be alive.”
a lawn worth mowing

mow me the lush
gaggily green
rye grass, yellow-headed dandelions,
kentucky blue, gill-over-the ground, crabgrass, hawkweed,
plantain, clover, violets,
sorrel, wild onions,
lamb’s quarters, mustard garlic, something that looks like wire,
and others that have yet to be named
or discovered as a cure for cancer.

who are these anxious perennials that rise up in rebellion?

today is my dominion
me and swift, deadly swirling blades of steel -
a 12-hour ordeal
over ant colonies and ground hornets;
trees that require me to bow below their lowest limbs
as a humble subject to his king.

a savage imagination
can pretend to be a barber
carrying on polite conversations avoiding
religion and politics. “i used to cut your
father’s and grandfather’s hair last summer.”
or
i can be
a famous botanist
published in the latest journal as a
discoverer of countless new perennials
never before looked upon
by the eyes of man
thriving in this country yard
or
i can be the judge sentencing
the dandelions (in early may)
to capital punishment
and the executioner having their heads cut off
or
i can play a preacher
asking my growing congregation
to please keep their heads bowed in prayer
for another week
or,

like genghis khan
and his mongol hordes,
sweep across the continent
wielding blades against blades
conquering another uprising
witnessing the lawn fall before us
in waves
or
when i have finished mowing
and line trimming,
the park ranger
who ceremoniously greets visitors with
“welcome to green acres national park.
enjoy the damn tour.”

i can be a mystic
guiding folks
to the crop circles in the crabgrass
covered orchard, but...
most often am i a writer rewriting history,
erasing all of my life’s mistakes and faux pas
making the world like me
a little
and maybe
i mow the lawn every week
for
these reasons
and don’t complain too much.
On April 2, 2004, a doctor walked in to the emergency room where my husband and I sat with our daughter, Ellie, then nine months old. Overwhelmed by fear, I forced myself to breathe. What the doctor said next would not only shatter my safe world, but change the course of my life. From that moment on, determination became my mantra. Fighting for my daughter became my purpose.

Nine months earlier on a warm sunny day in June, my husband, Mark, and I excitedly welcomed Ellie into our lives. Ellie, being the only girl in a line up of three older brothers, was sure to have a significant impact on our family. How great the impending impact would be escaped us. In the months following her birth, I noticed subtle signs of a lack of development. Uninterested in her surroundings, and not interacting with the family, Ellie seemed content to exist but not participate in our daily routine. These signs eluded most people yet were alarming to me. Not finding confirmation from other people, I wondered if I was mistaken. Could Ellie truly be a well child, or was there a grim diagnosis looming in her future?

When Ellie was six months old, my sister and I ventured to China to bring home her adopted baby girl. Upon seeing my daughter after this two-week stint, what were once subtle signs became alarmingly apparent. My sister’s adopted child, the same age as Ellie, seemed more alert and responsive. A frantic sense of urgency and dread washed over me. I knew I had to fight for my daughter’s diagnosis and fight for Ellie’s life.

Within the week, Ellie saw our family doctor for her six-month check up. Hopeful that he would understand my trepidation, I expressed concern about her well-being; Ellie did not roll over both ways, and she did not sit up or seem to notice toys placed in front of her. Anxiety washed over me as the doctor brushed off my concerns assuring me that in the next few months Ellie would achieve these milestones, not to worry.

Worry I did. For another three months, I worried to the point of delirium, losing sleep and becoming more frantic by the day. I implored with my friends and family to understand my fears about Ellie. The day I burst into tears at my own surprise birthday party I knew I had to do something more productive than fretting.

Knowing that Early Intervention was a required entity in every county, I called their office located in the Mental Retardation and Developmental Disability (MRDD) building for an appointment on that fateful day in April. I dragged Ellie, along with her three brothers (ages two, four, and six), into a therapy center. Greeted by a service coordinator, a physical therapist, and an occupational therapist, I was summoned to help Ellie perform certain tasks. I desperately, yet unsuccessfully, tried to coax her to sit up, roll over, and grasp objects with one or both hands. While the therapists were compassionate towards us and complimentary of Ellie’s fighting spirit, I could see concern written on their faces, a concern that would soon become apparent.

As our meeting concluded, I took my children home. Not yet settled, the phone rang.

“Stacy, this is Steve Hoffman, the physical therapist you just met.” He explained that he was finished working for the day, yet could not get Ellie off his mind.
He spoke hesitantly, “I don’t want to alarm you, but something is very wrong with your daughter. I think her brain may be bleeding. If it is, it could kill her at any moment.”

Trying to grasp his “not wanting to alarm you” and my daughter “dying at any moment,” I did the only thing I knew to do.

“What?” I yelled! I could not have been more alarmed had my head fallen off and rolled across the floor.

Repeating this news more deliberately, he added, “Stacy, take your daughter to the ER, and don’t come home without a CAT scan.”

I do not remember how I got someone to watch my boys, or who that person was. I do vividly remember sitting on a hospital bed with my daughter nuzzled against me, wondering if she would die. Nine months was not enough time with her. The doctor, displaying defeat, reluctantly strode into the room. His foreshadowing demeanor was paralyzing to me.

He proceeded to tell us that our daughter had suffered a massive stroke in utero. Entering this world missing 95% of the left hemisphere of her brain, he was certain she would be speechless, immobile and severely mentally retarded. A normal existence did not coincide with his diagnosis.

He did not account, however, for her spirit and her desire not only to exist, but to live life to its fullest. He did not consider a Heavenly Father who had other plans for her life.

Against all odds and with the healing power of God, Ellie has achieved more than we ever imagined she could. Hope and opportunity fill her future. Her non-stop chatter, her ability to run and hold her own with three older brothers, and the cognitive skills she displays daily continue to inspire me as well as those who hear her story.

I desire to champion for kids with special needs, a desire which has led me on this college path. I will forever be inspired by a miracle named Ellie.

Ellie has her own Web site. Be sure to sign her guest book. She loves to read that! www.elliesstory.com

Mia Bella
Misty Poehler
WAYNESENSE 17
Theresa Mountel

**Added**

Breath breaks the fog  
Whited heat  
Smiles bring me home  
Happied retreat  
Path leads to heart  
Emotioned relief  
Embrace takes me away  
Newed belief

Kevin Engle

**Historic Truss Bridge**

The only Fink Through-Truss Bridge known to exist in United States. Located at Camp Tuscazoar, Ohio, and built in 1868.
Mid Summer Memories

Gordon R. Beals
It Will Come

That floor is my ceiling
It creeks and I’m feeling
Alone with what I’m dealing
I count on your healing

I know it will come

But my patience is thinning
The thoughts are all spinning
It’s you I am winning
I anticipate the beginning

And I know it will come

Joshua Friedt

I am your shoulder. . .lean upon me
Rain

A depressing feeling falls over everything on the dry, hardened ground. The sun becomes swallowed up by heavy dark clouds. For a short period of time, an unbreakable silence overcomes everything covered by the fully visible clouds. All the life forms in the area know what natural event is about to happen.

Slowly, the icy, cold rain starts to fall from up above. It feels unexplainable as the rain falls hard; but when it touches the skin, it becomes so soft. The rain water refreshes the thriving grass and other plants. The new rain finds the skinny creek in the dark green forest to the immediate right and makes it rush with more excitement. A lonely squirrel, harvesting his winter dinner, seems unaware of what is happening. He quickly changes his reaction to the rain when he leaves the safety of the giant oak tree’s leaves. The squirrel, then, sprints up to his nest and hides as if he fears the water would cause him great harm.

Thunder cracks with tremendous force. Following the massive noise, a yellow and white streak of lightning flashes brightly. The wind picks up to challenge the strength of buildings and trees, and making the short moments unbearable. The wrath of the storm is beyond frightening. The treacherous noises and the fluorescent colors fade, again, leaving only the easy falling rain.

Slowly, the sun forces its way through the dark, dreary clouds to bless the ground with its bright grace. The clouds travel away and the glimmering sun, again, dominates the sky. Now that the sun controls the sky again, the ground is warmed, pleasing all of its inhabitants. The world’s normality is restored.

Gordon R. Beals

Dawn Red Wood
A Child

A child
Made up of so
Many pieces, so many
stories, so many
Reasons
To be
Just who they are today
Hoping that you’ll like them
Hoping that you’ll stay close
They sometimes push or run
Or fight. But if you show
Love, they may
Hold you tight and
Always look to your eyes
To find their place
To know they belong
To feel they are
Safe. Right here
With you.
Clouds

I fall awake
Beneath clouds that promise rain
Outlined shapes traced in air
Scanning eyes across the sky

“It can’t all be like this.”
We must have been chosen
To feel the dreams we do
To see these sights from unknown angles
The Stranger

Cast upon the earth to roam
Nowhere can he call his home
Suffering his only friend
He walks alone until the end

Stalking through the halls of man
Through his hands drift grains of sand
Keeper of the Outer Mind
Within his eyes the stars unwind

Guardian of lies impure
Against his spite man must endure
Plotting always with his might
To bring about eternal night

Harbinger of dark delights
Feeding on our hate and fright
Mirror of our darkest sins
Death to those who let him in

With his footsteps growing nearer
The Stranger fills my dreams with fear
With his time come round at last
The final die will soon be cast
The Mansion

It had been me and Mom for the first six years of my life. My father was not around and my mom had dated only casually. When I was seven years old, my Mom met a man named John. All of a sudden, there was this long-haired, Jesus-looking man around all the time. For the next 21 years, this man was the closest thing to a father I was going to get. I’m not sure whose hair was longer, the art major from the University of Akron or my peace, love, and rock-n-roll Mom. While there were always people around that loved me, it was a little unconventional. That all changed when they decided to marry.

The service was held in the parlor of his parents’ house. I was convinced it was a mansion. The family that occupied this “mansion” consisted of Grandma, Grandpa and the six siblings: Beth, John (my stepdad), Kim, Beth-o, Bubby, and Lisa. Beth, the oldest, had already gone to Arizona State.

The “mansion” had more rooms than I had ever seen under one roof. There was the parlor, as Grandma called it (fancy name for a living room), with a glass table and a curio cabinet that had delicate knickknacks in it. There were three bathrooms, a downstairs with a family room (that later had a fireplace, brand new couches and recliners), a laundry room, and a closet that was as big as some bedrooms I’d had.

That closet was full of prom and bridesmaid’s dresses. The bedroom closest to this huge closet belonged to the two middle girls, Kim and Beth-O. Kim and Beth-O were finishing high school and getting ready to move away to college. This bedroom was amazing to me: each girl had a dressing table with lights, and make-up, and a shelf above that had tiaras, dried flower bouquets, trophies and fabulous stuff. I was awe-struck. Since Mom and I moved around a lot when I was little, the idea of a house that people lived in for their whole childhood was new to me.

The main level of this “mansion” was just as glamorous as the downstairs. The parlor had a piano and an organ; I had never seen either except for a piano at school, and I had surely never touched one. But in the mansion I was allowed to sit down and play. The piano had little cards that labeled the notes, and I was eventually able to play “Yesterday” by the Beatles. The organ was always fun, too, with its Rumba, Mamba, Cha Cha, and tempo switches.

There were three bedrooms on this level; a master suite that was Grandma and Grandpa’s (who ever heard of a bedroom with its own bath?), a room full of thousands of Lego’s that belonged to the mentally handicapped uncle named Bubby, and the youngest siblings’ room, Aunt Lisa. Bubby may have been a bit of an idiot savant. He had an uncanny ear for music. He could hear any song once and be able to play it moments later on the organ or piano.

This room of Lisa’s was pretty normal until they remodeled it while she was visiting Beth. I was always jealous of Lisa; she was the closest to my age. She was prettier and dressed better than I could ever hope to. I immediately started getting her hand-me-downs. These clothes were bought in mall stores and were more beautiful than I can convey. Every year I got two stacks of school clothes, one from the trip my Grandma would take me on to Gold Circle and one from Lisa’s hand-me-downs (and whatever other aunt happened to be home for the summer). I guess I kind of got off the subject, but you know how girls and clothes are.

Lisa’s bedroom got remodeled the same year the family room downstairs got remodeled. Besides getting new wallpaper and the coolest popason chair I had ever seen, they got rid of her dresser and put a dressing table and storage bins inside the closet. I was flabbergasted; I just knew she had to be the luckiest girl I’d ever meet.

continued on page 26

WAYNESSENCE 25
My grandpa, a doctor, had a practice that was about a block away. He had a study off the kitchen; he would come home, go to his study and listen to classical music until we all sat down at the kitchen table for dinner (everyone at the same time, at the same table). His study had a component stereo system that I thought must be the most technically advanced thing in the universe (then cd players came out, and he had one in the car, unheard of!). He was always out on the riding mower on the weekends in his goofy hat. I remember one day getting him to jump into the pile of leaves in the backyard with me. Here was this doctor, this man of means, and this eight year old raga muffin kid jumping into a pile of leaves in the biggest back yard I had ever seen. For years this quiet man with a thing for classical music was an absolute marvel to me. I’m not sure he ever knew how safe he made me feel.

My grandma was a Catholic ball of energy. I cannot explain the impact this woman had on my life. I knew from the day those two crazy hippies married I was part of the family, and this woman who spent all her time in the kitchen or the laundry room was my biggest fan. I can’t count the talks we had over the ironing board, kitchen counter, or dinner table. My mom told me once, “Don’t argue so much with her,” but I had to. Grandma was my sounding board for everything. I would say something, she would give me her opinion, and off we’d go. Mom hated the confrontation, but those discussions taught me so much. My mom and I have a great relationship; we talk a lot, and did so at that time too, but as I’ve said, she was a bit of a free spirit, and my grandmother’s traditional views were a great contrast.

Looking back, I see where it all started. The wedding was an event unto itself. Not really the wedding, but the reception. Besides the people who lived in the mansion, there was an unending list of aunts, uncles, and cousins (the next to the luckiest kids I had ever met). There was a fight, a lot of drunken guys, and so many people I couldn’t comprehend what they were all doing there. My life was never the same. Right now all I can think of is how lonely my life would have been without all of them. They showed me what it was like to have a family. I don’t mean to say it was ideal, but they showed me that families eat together, do the dishes, mow the lawn, fight, forgive each other, and share responsibilities. I’d like to think I would have learned all this on my own, but I’m glad they were there to show me.

Today, that “mansion” is not so big and grand, it’s just a middle class house in a middle class town, but the impact it and the people inside of it had on my life is astounding. To this day, my kids and I sit at the table almost every day for dinner. I’ve done this since my youngest was born. When I was a child, Grandma’s house on the weekend was the only place and time I didn’t eat by myself. I’ve made sure that’s not how it is for my kids. I try to keep an open dialogue with my kids so that they have a sounding board for anything they want to talk about. Some things I say they’d rather not hear, but I say them anyway, because that’s how Grandma was with me. Even if they don’t listen at the time, I know they heard what I said. I know this, because that’s how I was with what my Grandma said. I may not have acted like it at the time, but her words were (and still are) always in the back of my mind.

My mom divorced that long haired man after 21 years of marriage, and during the last five years all contact has ceased. John is remarried, and his new wife and step-kids enjoy that loving family. I miss them every day and even though they are no longer in my life physically, they influence everything I am and everything I do.
Hooked

It was early in the morning, the sun was shining, and my dad and I were riding our bikes on a trail in West Virginia. The trail was surrounded by forest and brush on one side, and on the other side we could see the Cranberry River. Our plan was to go fishing (or I could say it was my dad’s plan because he would usually make me go fishing). At the time I was about 10 years old and didn’t enjoy fishing mainly because the best time to fish is very early in the morning, so whenever my family went on vacation to West Virginia, my dad would get me up long before anyone should ever have to wake up on a vacation, and we would go fishing. The ability to catch fish is also important when it comes to enjoying the whole fishing experience, which if I’m completely honest, when I was younger I wasn’t very good at catching fish.

So, while I was thinking about all the other things I would rather be doing (namely sleeping) my father found a place where he wanted to stop and fish. At this location we could see a small creek that flowed into the other side of the Cranberry River. While most of the time I stayed near the trail, my dad went to the other side of the Cranberry to fish the creek. We weren’t catching anything, and I remember my father telling me he was ready to leave. Upon hearing this, I was terribly excited and said I was ready to stop fishing too, but that excitement was short-lived when he responded that he just wanted to move to a different spot up river.

Right before we left, my dad decided that he wanted to fish farther up the little creek. I decided that I was done fishing and was getting my fishing equipment together on the opposite side of the Cranberry. My fishing pole was in my hand and the hook of the lure that I had used was attached to the eyelet, which is a little metal circle near the handle of the fishing pole. While I was standing there holding my rod, it slipped through my hand. I gripped it tighter so I wouldn’t drop my rod, but when I looked at the top of the handle near the eyelet, the hook was in my thumb so deep that the barb not only penetrated the skin, but the end of the hook punctured its way back through the skin of my thumb.

I was stunned; it had happened so quick. I could barely feel it at first, but it seemed that the more I looked at my thumb the more pain I felt. My father still hadn’t come back, so at 10 years old I was a little worried. Then I saw someone walking on the trail heading toward me, but when I asked the man for help, he gave me a strange look and kept walking. I was flabbergasted and completely astounded that he had just walked by. Well, at that point I could think of no better recourse then to start yelling for my dad. To my surprise, while looking across the river, there was my father with his fishing vest on and his rod in his hand, running through the river at full speed, slipping and half killing himself to get to me.

When he finally saw me, he asked what was wrong, so I showed him the hook that was in my thumb. He looked at me almost bothered and said the way I was yelling, he thought a bear was chewing on me. Needless to say, I was pretty embarrassed because it was just a hook. My father tried to find a way to get the hook out of my thumb while we were there, but he didn’t have the tools. Our only option was to head back to my Grandpa’s house in Richwood where we were staying.

Riding my bike with the hook in my thumb for miles on the trail back to where we had parked was something I had to do, which didn’t hurt as much as I thought it would. When we got back to the house, I walked up the continued on page 28
stairs and knocked on the door. My mother opened the door, and I told her what happened. At first she thought it was just a practical joke, but when she found out that it was true, she was very surprised.

I went into the house, my dad found all the tools he needed. Then I took some Ibuprofen, and he started to work on me. The plan was to push the hook further through my finger until the barb punctured the skin, then cut off the barb with clippers. After cutting off the barb, the hook would slide right out. Things didn’t really go according to plan. My dad failed to pull the barb through my skin, so he only succeeded in cutting the end of the hook and completely missed the barb!

When he did pull on the hook, he ended up tearing it out of my thumb! After the hook was out of my finger, my dad told me a story about my uncle Jack and one of my cousins who went fishing with each other. My cousin got a hook stuck in his finger, so my uncle Jack told him to get closer so he could see it. When my cousin showed Jack the hook, he reached down and ripped the hook right out of his finger! When my uncle was asked why he did it, he said he didn’t want my cousin to ruin his fishing trip. After hearing that story, I was so thankful that when the hook was stuck in my thumb, I wasn’t fishing with my Uncle Jack.

Darlene Mullett

Coquette
The Cathedral

With slow step, I entered. I savored the taste
Of the sea ripened spray awash in that place.
My unfettered toes sank into the soft floor
Sifting granules of sand and shell specks galore.

The pews up ahead seemed to dance with delight
As they foamed and they clapped. Just like a spring kite
They leaped till they crashed in the arms of the wind.
On the breezes I fancied the strains of a hymn.

I lifted my head—ah, you never have seen
Such a glorious painting. A silvery sheen
Edged the pinks, grays, and blacks that the master
Had brushed in broad strokes, swirling slowly, then faster.

To my left through the cloaks of the darkening room
A flickering candle beamed hope through the gloom.
I worshiped. I splashed with mad joy through the surf,
Inhaling the scent of the Lord of the earth.
What Have I Done?

Getting old sucks! Not only do you feel like you’ve lost a part of yourself, you begin to see the effects of your actions. So many paths not taken and so many I wish I had not. I have come to the conclusion that I have not been the kind of person I want my kids to be.

I am guilty of the same laziness and selfishness that has made our country what it is today. I’m scared for my kids, myself, and the rest of the world, for that matter. I worry about what kind of society and what kind of world my kids are growing up in. As worried as I am that I’ve failed my children, I see just as clearly the rest of the world has failed them too. Whatever I have managed to show them about being a good person, society contradicts every day. I teach them tolerance and peace, and every day the news, music, and TV show them the opposite – violence and hate. Criminals are glorified today – whether they are white collar criminals or thugs on the street. My kids see how easy it is to get stuff without doing an honest day’s hard work. It’s hard to teach myself the value in an honest job well done when there are so many easy ways out of it. Our government, big business, TV, movies, and news show kids every day that the little guy doesn’t matter, and the most important thing is money and power.

I don’t know how to show my kids the value in doing the right thing when all around them the people who are not doing the right thing prosper. The world is so full of contradictions today. I want my kids to have tolerance and be able to enjoy the world around them, but at the same time they have to stand up, be their own person, and maybe even make a difference.

I’ve made a lot of mistakes as a parent, but the older I get, I see that the worst mistake has been the way I’ve lived my life. The bad things in society that I am most scared of I have helped perpetuate. Being a drug addict and realizing the effects on my family has made me more aware of what that life style does to the world. I spent more than half of my oldest daughter’s life being an active addict, and I can see the difference in her attitude and behavior compared to my 10 year old twins. I’ve gotten clean and changed my life, and I see what a big difference it has made in my ability to care or monitor what my younger girls are exposed to. I’m scared for them in a way I never have been before. I’ve always been scared for them physically, but today I’m scared for them morally and financially. Today, I go to college and hope they see that my reason for doing so is to make a better life for us. The only way to make enough money to survive is to get all the education you can. This may be the only good thing I’ve shown my kids.

I want my kids to be aware of their world in a way I have not been. I think to this day I am failing them by not standing up and doing the right thing all the time. I see the state of our government and society and know in my heart that I should be doing something to help… protesting, writing letters, something. Many of us bitch about the world and do nothing. I’ve come to realize the best way to teach is by example. I don’t think either society or my past life has done a good job.
crash dummies

the lab rats
and lab chimps
could only envy and admire
the u.s. national highway traffic safety administration
crash dummies
that had finally reached the tipping point.
when the suits and engineers
had gone home for the night,
vince and larry drove a test car through a
plate glass window onto the city streets.
life was real
and freedom had an intoxicating effect.

passing on the shoulders,
swerving across the double yellows,
wrong ways on one ways,
running the red lights,
howling tires,
flagrant disregard,
officers in pursuit,
and
no seatbelts.
anarchy has a way
of freeing the spirit.
and the dummies
would finally show us all.
Gordon R. Beals of Dalton is a student at Wayne College taking courses in a variety of subjects. (gbeals99@yahoo.com)

Heather Christie of Wooster works part-time at Factory Card Outlet and Taco Bell. She plans on majoring in photography. (lnc5@uakron.edu)

Kim Coffey

Stacy Coblentz of Walnut Creek is the mother of four.

Jacob L. Crislip is a prep chef at Marie's Pizzeria in Wadsworth. He is majoring in early childhood education. (jlc143@zips.uakron.edu)

Eli Donahue is a young man who enjoys life and is majoring in art. (xx44thunder@aol.com)

Kevin Engle works at Wayne College as Assistant to the Dean.

Taylor Fike of Smithville is a junior at Smithville High School attending Wayne College as a postsecondary student. (tfkey@ssasnet.com)

Joshua Friedt of Rittman is a desk assistant in the Smucker Learning Center. He is majoring in English. (jpf9@zips.uakron.edu)

Clint Hale of Wooster is an English major.

Megan Judd

Sarah Kitzmiller of Apple Creek enjoys art, singing, and running. She is majoring in art education. (sarahk7398@yahoo.com)

Vickie Koster of Wooster, Ohio, is the grandmother of fourteen, returning to school and majoring in social work. (vck3@uakron.edu)

Matthew Kreis resides in Wooster with his wife and two daughters. He is majoring in middle school education. (mlk70@uakron.edu)

John Lorson is the Coordinator of the Wayne College Holmes County Higher Education Center in Millersburg. (lorson@uakron.edu)

Denise Miller of Dalton teaches grade school part-time and is majoring in art education.

Jason Miller is from Wadsworth and is interested in graphic design. (jrmasu@yahoo.com)

Rebekah Miller teaches grade school part-time and is majoring in art education.

Theresa Mountel lives in Wooster with her three children. She is majoring in education.

Darlene Mullett of Doylestown is a retired biology teacher who enjoys traveling in Africa and taking classes.

Misty Poehler is a full-time student, mother of three, majoring in Early Childhood Education. (mkp22@uakron.edu)

Corinda Putt is the Student Senate representative for Waynessence. (corindadp@yahoo.com)

Denise Roth is in her senior year as an Intervention Specialist. She enjoys writing and helping hurting kids. (djs58@zips.uakron.edu)

Joseph Shalala from Norton is a full-time postsecondary student majoring in graphic design. (jns49@uakron.edu)

Latasha Smith of Wooster is a graphic design major.

Mark Solars is a sixth grade teacher, husband to a very special woman for 30 years, and father of three. (traveldad@ohio.net)

Nonya Stalnaker is the mother of three girls and is majoring in health care office management. (nrs27@zips.uakron.edu)

Benjamin Stewart of Doylestown is a full-time student at Wayne College.

Katie White of Wooster is majoring in photography. (nazzgirl@hotmail.com)