

The background of the cover is a watercolor wash in shades of green and blue, with a paperclip visible in the center. The text is overlaid on this background.

The
IvyQuill

a compilation of sorts

Forte

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“The story I am writing exists, written in absolutely perfect fashion, some place, in the air. All I must do is find it, and copy it.” ~Jules Renard

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Uncaged Bird

By: Farai Gotora

And just like that
It went away
Like a once caged bird
Unwilling to stay.
With the morning vapor and mist
It evaporated
And I ushered in semi bliss.
For some days you held me captive
For a time I was a remote with buttons
That you handled
Often dismantled, re-arranged
Then placed on a mantle
To be ignored
Like you abhorred the sight of me
And the sound of my vocal chords.
As if you were doing me a favor,
You being the royal
And I a simple laborer!
Never admitting to a mess up,
Always demanding that I 'fess up!
The hypocrite
With honey drenched lips.
Stealing my common sense
With a touch and a kiss.

These Words Mean Nothing

By: Eman Alkotob

These words feel as if knives strike
My heart inside which beats quickly.
Only then do I feel like
A vulnerable one who is sickly.
These words mean nothing.
This person doesn't matter.
Yet, their words try to tell me who I am.
These words contradict and disagree
And come from the weak.
They find joy from telling me
Words that play an emotional hide and seek.
These words mean nothing.
This person doesn't matter.
Yet, their words try to tell me who I am.
To overcome such a trial
Takes strength to pull through.
Yet, the pain makes me in denial
That these false words are true.
These words mean nothing.
This person doesn't matter.
Yet, their words try to tell me who I am.
Humanity can be mean,
Humanity can be nice.
But, one can never guarantee
Where lands the odds of that dice.
These words mean nothing.
This person doesn't matter.
Yet, their words tell me who I really am

An Accidental Family

By: Ron Wood

The LaSalle High School Class of 1977 came together for no other reason than our families lived within some imaginary boundary on a map drawn by a group of bureaucrats hidden in an office of the School Corporation building in downtown South Bend. They didn't know us, our likes or dislikes. We were simply dots on a map.

We came from many different backgrounds: every nationality, religion, and skin color represented by the population of our county were included. At the time, LaSalle was noted as the most culturally diverse student population in the school district. We came from ten different grade schools which merged into four different Junior High Schools.

We first met when we were put together in the old Central High School for our freshman year of high school. This school had history! Most of us had parents, aunts, uncles, even grandparents and beyond who attended high school in that building. For most of us, it never quite became home. Some of us were there since 7th grade and perhaps they had grown to feel at home, but it takes more than one year to feel like you belong somewhere.

Our early childhoods were spent in some very turbulent times. We started Kindergarten the fall after the assassination of JFK. Martin Luther King and RFK were killed around the end of our 3rd grade year. On the TVs of our childhood was constant coverage of the Viet Nam War and protests, for civil rights and anti-war. We had Woodstock, Kent State, Wounded Knee and Watergate as the sound track of our childhood. We weren't strangers to dissension or racism. We saw religious war being waged in Ireland.

In September 1974 we strolled through the doors of what was to become our home. We were put together into a class that numbered about 500 people. We had our differences, but in spite of that, perhaps because of that, we did become a family. We saw on television, read in the newspaper, and in some cases heard from others that we shouldn't trust "them" because "they" were different. Still we became a family. We didn't see colors or religions, we saw, us. We saw that we were in this together. We were one.

Now, many years have passed since we graduated from the building that was the "Lions' Den," yet, the Class of '77 is alive and well. We no longer have our building, teams, or the studies that bound us. In some cases we no longer have the friends who have since been laid to rest. We do, however, have our Class. We recently held our 35th Class Reunion. Once we were in that room together, the feelings of camaraderie returned. We were, once again, The Lions.

We had a very diverse group attend. For the most part, we looked more like the

teachers that had helped mold us into the people we are than the students that we were. But in that room, there was more than the LHS Class of '77, more than the Lions. There was a love permeating the room. We were surrounded by Family.

I wish love, good health and good fortune to all of my family, The LaSalle High School Class of 1977.

Ron Wood



AZ Saguaro—Kathleen English

The Craziiness of Family

by Kim Hively

We all have our idiosyncratic family situations. The idea that a family is two parents and 2.5 children, who live behind that white picket fence, with the mother in the kitchen preparing a meal in pearls and heels, is just ridiculous. Let's face it, even if women ventured into the kitchen in pearls and heels, it would most likely signify a mental break down. We are in the kitchen in jeans and sweatpants or a sweatshirt. We are just too tired, after all the other things we have done today, to be dressed any differently.

Personally, I have never had to worry about being that mom, in the kitchen, rushing to prepare a meal for a family, that was well balanced and on the table at a reasonable time. I could have a bowl of cereal at nine pm, do a little more work, and then wander off to bed. All of that disappeared three months ago with the presence of a child. I didn't get the cute little cuddly baby that would require feeding every two to four hours. Instead, I got a slightly used fifteen year old who came complete with an attitude and still required feeding every two to four hours.

It has been quite a transition. First, I had to set up a bedroom and a space. Teenagers need their own space and their own things. Let's be honest, I need my space back, from time to time, so I needed to have somewhere to send her off. So, we got the bed and the dressers and painted and decorated. Now, there are new colors that I would never pick myself, but I don't have to live in it. What I do have to live with is the paint smears and drips, that mysteriously ended up in almost every room in the house, on several items of my clothing and on a half a dozen or more hand towels. I have been painting for years and for the life of me still cannot figure out how the paint got spread out so far and neither, of course, can the teenager.

If this was the only transition, then life would be wonderful, but this was only one of many. When she first arrived, she was still on summer vacation, but within a couple of weeks it was the beginning of a new school year. This began the negotiations for the bathroom and showers so that we could both get ready in the morning. Thankfully, she had to be up and ready before I did, so by the time I was ready to start getting ready, she was dressed and ready to walk out the door. The problems started subtly, as most problems generally do. First it was the makeup left on the back of the sink, eyeliner and mascara, usually. But, as time passed, the mess got worse. It was if there had been an explosion in the women's department with all the things strewn all over the bathroom. There were bobby pins, flat irons, lotions and body sprays. I did not have enough room on the edge of the sink to set down my toothbrush. I can live with some clutter, but this was well beyond just a little clutter and then there was the whole issue of the mascara. It was everywhere! There was obviously some on and in the sink, but it was also on the shower curtain, the shower wall, and worst of all the mirror. So here I am, trying to imagine how in the world you could get all that mascara in so many places

and trying to figure out a way to make it stop. When the child arrived home from school, I asked her if she was working on an audition as an acrobat for the circus. She gave me the, "have you lost your mind" look and then said no. I just looked at her and said, "Well, a circus audition was the only reasonable explanation that I could come up with to explain how all that mascara gets all over the bathroom. I thought maybe you were throwing the brush up in the air and doing cartwheels and flips trying to get the brush to hit you in the eye. So, if that's not it, then how in the name of God do you get mascara on the shower curtain and the mirror?" Apparently, there is no reasonable explanation.

The bathroom is only part of the overall mess that my house has become. There are socks all over the place. There is even one by the dog food bowl. I asked when the dog started wearing socks. Again, there was no reasonable explanation. And those bobby pins are everywhere. They are stuck in the carpet, on the kitchen counters and laying on every flat surface imaginable.

Besides all the mess and the clutter, there are always other children in my house. They show up after school, snacking on everything they can put their hands on, leaving shoes and bags everywhere. If they show up on a Friday after school, they stay for dinner and the entire weekend. The usual pickup time is 5 pm on Sunday. I have several questions on this front; Where are their parents? Why don't their parents want them home? And when is it my turn to get rid of my kid for the entire weekend, instead of them all coming over here?

I was beginning to get really stressed out about the whole thing, then an amazing thing happened. A couple of friends of mine began talking about their kids and all of their stress (I am pretty sure they told their tales of woe because I was new at this full time parenting thing and they were trying to reassure me). One of my friends, whose daughter had a child young, is still trying to raise her own children and now has a grandchild and a baby daddy thrown into the mix. She assured me that there are days when she wants to run away from home, leaving her own children behind, but taking the grandchild with her. My other friend has a child in the home with OCD, who is seeking his control with the food in the house. He has taken on the chore of grocery shopping and watching everyone's food intake. The refrigerator and freezer have never been more clean, or more empty. He has also taken on the task of packing his sisters lunch. He counts out the number of carrots and grapes that will keep her diet well balanced.

The rest of the family, of course, has other ideas about what they want in their diet. Things like pizza and cookies and pie. All of this is not on the designated list, so when the child with the OCD finds any of this he disposes of it quickly. No one in the house has gotten desperate enough to go dumpster diving for their favorite food, however, there is a genius plan in place. They each sneak in a variety of their favorite food and hide it in one of the other kids closet. Currently in the closet there are two pizzas and a variety of cookies and cakes. This is the system they have worked about amongst themselves. On a small piece of paper, they write

down what they want from the closet. They rap twice on the door, slide the piece of paper through the key hole and wait 30 seconds, then the food of choice slides from beneath the door. Then the food is concealed until they reach a bedroom, where the food is then consumed.

As stressed as I feel sometimes about my situation, I do not want to run away from home and I don't have pizza hidden in my closet. I do, however, have candy hidden in the basement and I do want to escape for a few hours, so apparently I have not reached bottom, just yet. I don't know whether to feel better about my situation or to be afraid of where my life might be heading. And for the many times when I have just wanted to join another family, I am rethinking that. My family may not be ideal, but I haven't met one yet that is. We all have our little bit of crazy.



Bicycle I—Allen Stenberg

Admiration

(a text)

By Anthony R. Gray

A Beautiful woman is more than
a perfection of visual beauty.

She is a female who gives off the light
of physical grace. An inner elegance of
sassy classy-ness without trying. Who
has an intelligent and sensible mind to
go with her sharp witty and humorous,
personality, and passionate heart. And
that is what I see in you every time that
I am blessed with the honor of read-
ing your text messages, listening to her
voice entering my ear on a phone call;
and looking into your eyes when you
allow me to receive the gift of being in
your presence.

My feelings for you are truly more than
words or action. They are tattooed in-
side my heart, by cupid's arrow. Which
leaves me with continuous running
thoughts. Of how I can bring you to,
your highest point of romantic pleasure
and happiness.

Oh,

And by the way, Good morning.

Passions Prison

By: Tashaun Massey

I am devoted to the idea of you and I.
That myth the mind creates to survive after its pulse
has been threatened.

Grasping for hope, even if it's a lie.

I'm wrapped in the cold embrace of your affection.

Trapped in passions prison,

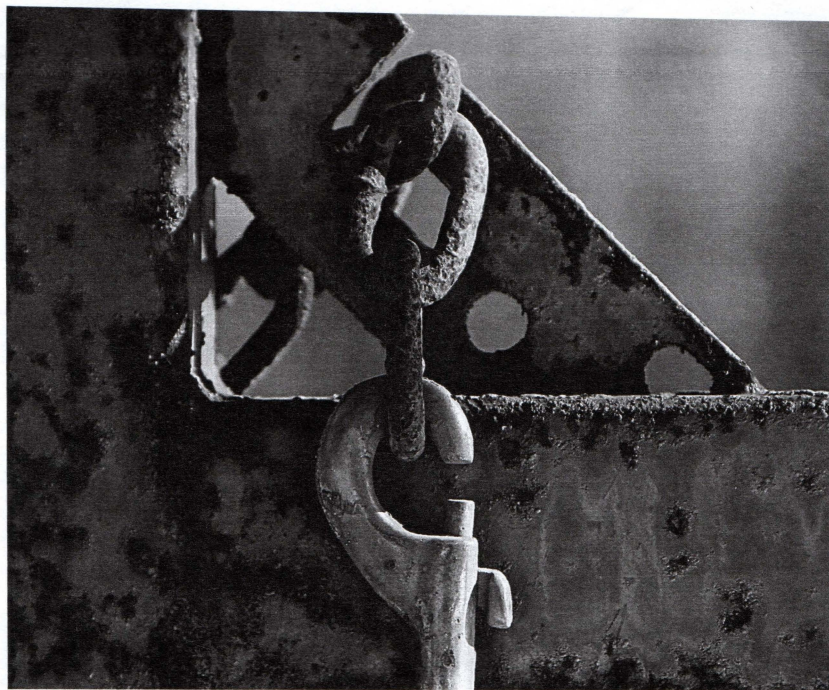
pinned up against a putrid wall of our design.

To adore you will soon be the death of me.

Walk the Limestone Line

By: Claire Roof

Walk the limestone line of sidewalk,
Find the key to the hidden cottage,
And, even in the darkness, the key will work...
And in this space, rug and chairs and coffee cups
Greet me in a clanking of yes.
I somehow taste the dreams of us.
Dahlias deliver in full magenta across the windows
Zinnias pop like party favors along the cottage edge,
Until winter howls its bitter perfect winds
And winter does not seep through this small space.
Christmas comes in a tiny morning of wonder
Of cinnamon rolls and candied walnuts
The green and gold carpet,
The yellow and blue bedspread,
The red and gold striped chairs...
This is the shelter place of love
Fitted with tiny pieces of my soul
That otherwise could slip and fly too far.



Rust—Darci Young

More

By: Tracy Brooks

If I could I'd run & scream,
Hurts like hell to lose this dream.
Didn't you just beg me to stay?
Now why are you pushing me away?
Did you really take my heart...
Just so you could rip it apart?
We both die a little each passing day,
Is this the price we're willing to pay?
Seems happiness is always just out of reach,
To us what is life trying to teach?
Is there a reason for this fall?
We refuse to read the writing on the wall.
We struggle just once to get it right,
For this tainted love we continue to fight.
Expecting burnt ashes to rise to the top,
Show me you love me, don't stop!
Still has to be more than skin we bare,
Your soul is what I want you to share.
Still more than showing me tears,
Tell me all your secrets & fears.
Take me to your darkest place,
Don't pull away and hide your face.
Mistakes we've made still don't know how,
Doesn't matter if we're here now.
To try again we are not wrong,
Forgiveness will make us strong.
We agree that we're both crazy,
Our judgment just a little hazy.
No need to speak what we already know,
Disappointment, no need to show
There is so much more that you can't see,
Love us, or hate us, just let us be.
Bring on the rain, so that we can dance,
Releasing the pain, with this final chance.

The Spelling Bee

By: Sarah Zentz

Stomach churning. Internal pressure rising. Tension felt and seen, not only by yourself, but by every other middle-schooler in the room. They whisper or laugh nervously (but quietly), as you clasp and unclasp your hands in your lap. Waiting is hardest: the hours of preparation float by unseen and unfelt. They are not real anymore: the weighty moments are present and overpowering. You are a stranger in your companions' midst. All of them are used to clustering crowds of their peers. Not you. The competition a month ago only included five or six competitors, but the stakes were lower then. Since then, many more hours were dedicated to study.

As you wait, the memories slowly drift by—memories of your parents patiently pronouncing words, correcting your misspellings, and going over the contest rules with you. You remember your younger sister curled up in the chair next to you as she runs over the spellings lists with you yet again: her patience helping to calm your nerves and make the practices fun.

You snap back to the present. The card hung on your neck feels queer. You are labeled as the representative of your school, but the accompanying number makes you rather feel like an inconsequential horse at an auction. The chair is not meant for long periods of sitting. It is hard and unyielding: you feel like leaning forward in it. It makes you feel like a sprinter at the start of the race—bracing yourself on the starting block, ready to jump into action at a moment's notice. The judges and pronouncer are there, calmly going through their papers or looking over their sheets in advance. The stage lights have been on for awhile, causing the audience in the auditorium to be almost invisible: the "sea of faces" is indistinct and anonymous. The M.C.'s voice suddenly booms out through the microphone, welcoming the contestants and their families, commenting on the effort that has been put into this night by the students, and thanking various reporters for attending.

Finally, the spelling bee begins. You breathe a quick prayer to the Lord for peace and help doing your best at spelling. At first the rounds seem incredibly long. But that is only to be expected with forty-seven contestants. As the bee proceeds, the audience, the lights, and the whole auditorium vanish from consciousness. Only the word to be spelled matters. Closing your eyes in concentration, you visualize each word as it is given. It is visible on some subconscious blank screen—each group of letters or whole syllables steadily coming into focus.

As time passes on, you remain unaware of photographers just below the stage flashing their bulbs and capturing the tense expressions of the fortunate unscathed few. A fierce love for competition has swelled in your heart, and you strive to do your utmost. You feel an inward shudder as a competitor spells a word (correctly) with which you would have struggled. Or worse, they misspell it and are

eliminated: you are so glad it was not your word! These challengers include “ecclesiastical,” “nexus,” and “stroganoff.”

Suddenly, you realize you are competing against only one other person. The contest becomes more personal now. You are the runner in the final, desperate burst towards the wire. He hesitates in the pronunciation of his next word, “gazpacho.” Your heart leaps: you know this word! You can sense his uncertainty, hear it in his voice, see it in his puckered brow. As he falteringly misses it, you take a deep breath: it is your turn to spell it. Calmly, slowly, you clearly enunciate each letter. Making this word, you get the chance at one more to clinch your victory. The final fateful word is pronounced. A picture does not flash into your mind, but somehow, you feel how to spell it.

The letters slip effortlessly from your tongue.

The Dangerous Concept

By: Jonathon Smith

Once or twice I feel its bite, the demon within as it takes its flight.
It grabs a hold of my very soul and digs its voice in echoing deep within my mind.
So far within my soul I can feel it bite and gnaw inside my brain looking to settle a score.
My bones and muscles cringe to its movements as it penetrates deeper within my soul looking for my core.
I feel this demon growing within me.
I feel its evil strength.
I feel its fangs and teeth sprouting roots within my very skull.
It is not to long before these feeling override what made me, me at all.
Now it is time for this bird to take flight; to soar ever so high up on this mysterious night.
For it is on nights like this one that dangerous concepts will be born and we must keep sight.



Samya—Dawn Williams

Never Alone

By: Faith Okall

None of us walks alone
Each of us is embedded and entwined in the web
That spins through eternity

From conception to death,
Our paths intercrosses and entangles with the
Trails and tracks of persons and characters
That leave prints and marks in our hearts

The imprints of their influences
And the remains of the interactions
All correlates to define us
This transcends the span of time and individuality
That so defines us.
We don't walk alone

And Yet Again, I Have a Few More Lessons...

Kim Hively

- Without humor and sarcasm, I might have been a serial killer.
- When I tell stories about my family, people assume I am embellishing because, frankly it all sounds a little farfetched. Then, they meet them and wonder why I have left out so many details.
- We need a different moral compass in the event of a zombie apocalypse.
- I never shop on Black Friday because there is nothing I need so desperately as to take a beating from an old woman with a cane or fight my desire to beat an old woman with a cane.
- Common sense can never be too overrated.
- Towards the end, I want to look back and know that life was not something I survived, but something I lived.
- Being rude and mean are not endearing qualities and do not promote cooperation. Here's hoping you are good at complete independence.
- Irony is nothing more than a bitch slap from karma.

My Life in a Poem

By Tabitha Carter-Ward

I haven't gotten that much sleep,
Sometimes I think I'm in
too deep.

My life changes every day,
sometimes my mind just
seems to drift away.

Dreams of travel, dreams of the sun
Sometimes you would seem
to think that my life isn't fun.
But my life is making new
beginnings you see.
A life of happiness and
what it means to be free.

College, family, friends galore.
With times like these, people
tell me I couldn't ask
for more.

But I always go for more
because of what life has
in store.

I do what I do because
life is too short.
Even if I just pick a topic
and write a report.

But I enjoy life just so people know.
Because in life there are always
new things to do and places to go.

Curiosity Killed George, Adventure maimed Dora.

By Farai Gotorá

It is crystal clear that I have no business watching kid's educational shows. This isn't because I am a young adult woman, no. Those shows turn me into the HULK. They elevate my blood pressure to unhealthy levels and make me use coarse language.

Observe.

My niece has howled and stomped and thrown an almighty fit. It's Dora or nothing. Ticked off, I concede victory to a two year old and immediately regret my lack of resolve. Her howls and cries would have been more bearable than that mid-riff bearing Dora and her abnormal monkey sidekick Boots. For the fifth time she demands to know where the bridge is. I get angrier now. The fact that this show is geared towards cuddly babies and toddlers with growing minds is neglected. This salty, peeved woman who perhaps needs to get out more finds fault with Dora and dishes out low blows.

"With those eyes as wide as bloody saucers and you still can't see the fucking bridge, nor the apple tree or anything else! You're an 'explorer' in the same way Larry King is youthful! Idiot!"

Curious George is another that drives me to rage. Why doesn't he have a tail? Where is it? Hopefully it was lopped off in an endeavor to curtail his shenanigans. He gets into so much trouble further steps should be taken. Sever a digit for each offence and if that doesn't work, the man in the yellow hat must believe he has done the best he can for George and kill him. It would be for the greater good.

Dear Matthew Shepard

Dear Matthew Shepard, I am now learning of your brutal murder. I too am a gay college student. Was it hard for you growing up? Did your family still love and accept you? Dear Matthew, were you teased and picked on during school? I read that you were part of many extracurricular activities. Were you too, in some theatre productions? Same here! I too have seen Phantom of the Opera. Your mom Judy is a lot like mine. My mom Sharon, is not an activist. But just so you know, you mess with her son and you will meet a double-barreled shotgun between your eyes! I'm sure our moms would get along just fine! Dear Matthew, what did you want to be after college? Did you want to be a psychologist like Judy said in the book? I'm right now in chapter five. And from what I've read of you so far, you would have been great at it. I am studying the science of libraries at my college. I want to become a historical reference librarian. Dear Matthew, did you ever love another guy? Did you have this feeling of joy waking up with someone next to you? Did you ever kiss the guy you loved the most? Did you have a boyfriend that unconditionally loved you? I haven't, but I have wanted that for a long, long time. Did you find a guy when you finished getting settled in Heaven? I'm sure you have, you looked like you were quite the catch here on Earth. Dear Matthew, I hope that you get this letter. You seem to be a kind, loving young man. I would have loved to meet you. But hey, maybe I will.

With love and sincerity,

A. Beidinger



Music in Chicago—Erik Archie

Another View

By: Anthony R. Gray

I am a man of many talents that often go unseen.

Like an abused little girl in public with her parents, who wants to run away, and scream, for help, but she knows that I would only bring her more beatings, with the broken broom stick and belt.

Like the drunk at your local corner store asking for some change, when all he really wants in his life is a little change.

Like the teenage hustler on the corner slanging dope just to eat because his mother just spent her cash assistance and food stamps, and left him to fend for himself in the streets.

Like the promising student that graduated with honors who got a scholarship to a top college, but couldn't make it through the summer.

Like a new born baby born three months early, who has to live life in an incubator, while her parents pray and wonder will she still be around later.

So I ask you to keep your eyes open and view the world with patience. Remember I was just one of the fortunate to make it out of my situation.

MMO Haiku

By Ron Wood

Stay out of the fire
Kill all of the snowballs, Newb
There is no plan B

Gone Fishing

By: Charles Phillips

It's been almost two weeks
And they won't fall
They come but they still won't fall

I listen to the music we did
From Pac to Bone
And everything in the middle
I guess death row was how we thought

If I was a better a writer
I'd say something like
Stay golden
And you'd tell me to
Shut the fuck up
Like you did every time
I said something that
You either didn't get
Or
You thought was dumb
You kept me in check
Let me know when I was gunna get my ass kicked
And if it come down to it
Took my beating for me
You never let me get hit

From Black to Blaze
And Blaze to Black
Doesn't matter how you spell it
It was pronounced family

You were always a brother in arms,
In mischief,
And in times
Good or Bad

I keep trying to force 'em
But they won't fall
They come
But they don't fall

You always watched my back
Especially when no one else had it
Made sure I stayed on the straight and narrow

Took the blame for me in school
Even though you knew it'd piss ever
one off
You were never afraid of trouble
Always lead us out of it

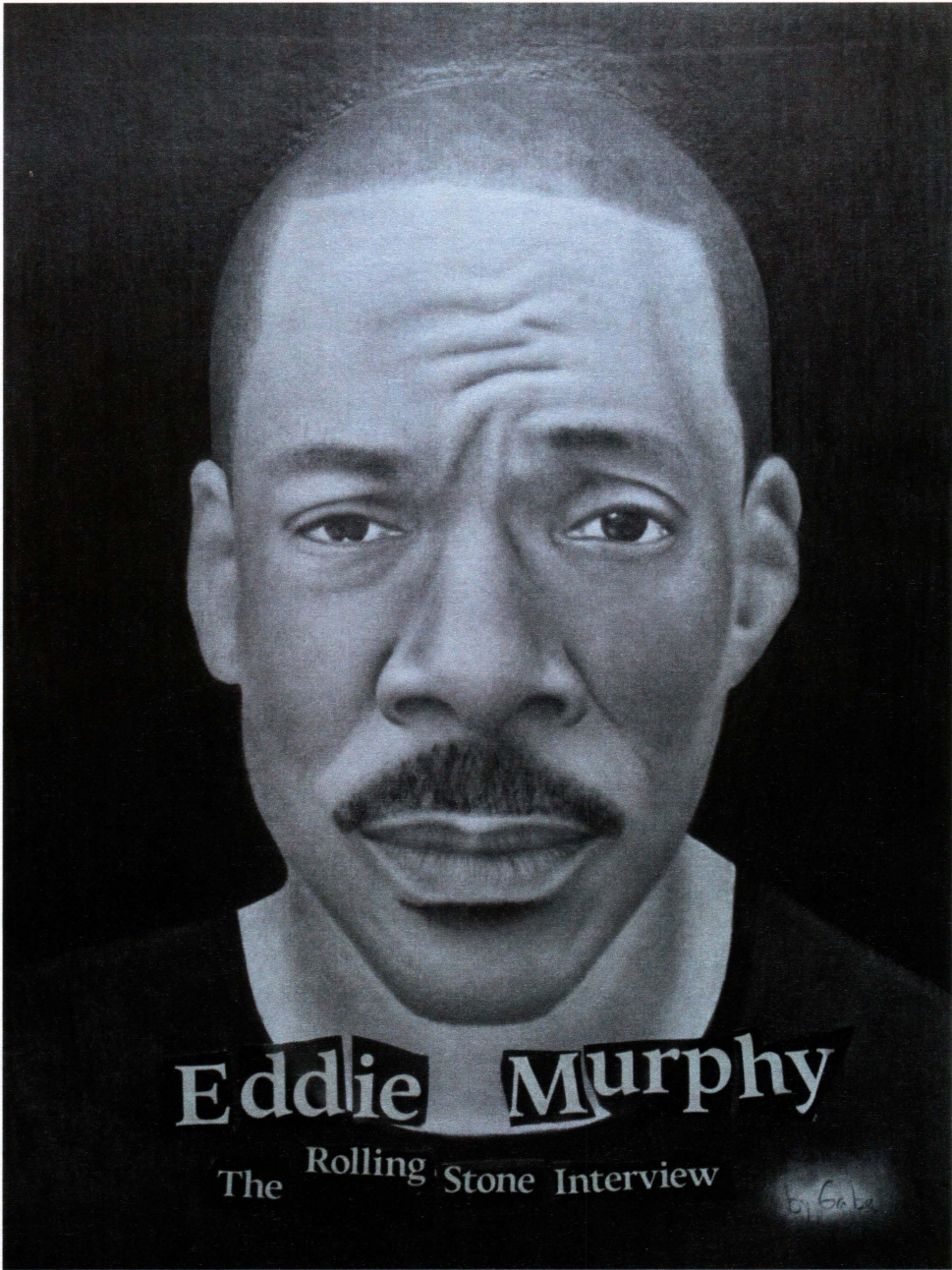
The memories keep coming
From football games,
To getting high,
Roaming the park at night,
To avoiding the cops,
Even bare knuckle fights.
You never let anyone call us Rema
Rats. You made sure we got back at
them for that.

You were more than a friend
You're a brother to the end
Sometimes better than my own
flesh and blood
Protected me no matter what
Watched out for your family,
Your friends,
Your brother,
And sisters.
Always watched out in the end

They stopped coming
My eyes stained red
They wouldn't fall no matter how
hard I tried
I guess these words are my tears
So I'll let them fall onto the paper
Like its a shoulder

From Blaze to Black
And Black to Blaze
Doesn't matter how you spelled it
It was always pronounced family

Dedicated to Johnny a fallen brother



Eddie Murphy Mixed Media—Gabe Thompson

Drink Like A Fish

By Mike K

A boat sitting in the middle of a whiskey lake
This could take a minute, swimming at a fishy pace
The vivid taste of living takes a second til' it sits the same
As all the other liver stains, how is it that it remains?

Shit for brains...stomach isn't fit for strain
Is it strange? Came across a school, instantly I just swim away
Live encased, rivers may, plot escapes, but this docile face isn't budging
Come a knocking on a different day

Swim in waste, give or take, an hour since I've been awake
Filling up my gills with something stronger than a minnow's taste
Face covered in whiskers, mind open to a bitter fate
How did it get this way, hope that this is just a phase

A fisherman strings a shot glass using it for bait
Dodged the fatal blow, but wasn't lucky with the ricochet
Feeling dazed, floating to the bottom where the sinners stay
Drift away only concourse when the liquor sprays

Orange Pennies

By Tashaun Massey

It was a hot mid-July day, where the heat was so thick you could see it dancing in the distance if one were to look hard enough. The sun was on its way down, casting a sort of light that seemed to engulf whatever it touched in a haze of yellow, red, and orange hues. She sat nestled in the winding roots of an old oak tree. Its trunk was almost as wide as their small three bedroom home, with branches proportioned to match that twist up and out in varying directions. It bore healthy green leaves the same size as her head that mingled with draping Spanish moss. She sat in the shade because any amount of sunlight would cause her skin to turn beet-red. Her father told her it was because she was a redhead. He said it was also why she had light brown freckles all over and her two older sisters didn't. She wasn't fond of them or her freckles. They didn't want to come out to play with her, whining that it was too hot outside. Frustrated, she went out the back door on her own, grabbing two of her favorite dolls.

Pausing to wipe the sweat from her forehead, she looked up at the tops of the trees. They swayed slightly in a wind that never seemed to reach the ground, where she desperately needed it to be. Suddenly, through the relentless noise of hissing cicadas, she heard something rustle out in the field. It was dried out and overgrown with plants she didn't quite know the names of. Her father didn't allow them to play in the field because there was an old well hidden somewhere in its center. They did it anyway, but so far they hadn't found anything but the remnants of unfortunate animals and a large rock. Thinking to herself she heard the rustling again, only closer. Quickly she grabbed her dolls and started towards the house. Stifling the urge to scream, her sisters would make fun of her if she screamed over nothing.

"Emma! Lia! I heard somethin out in the field." She exclaimed between gasping breathes.

"So what Sue, its most likely just one of the cats." Emma said as she lounged with her legs draped over the arm of the couch. Lia just laughed to herself and flipped through a magazine.

"I don't think it is, it sounded too big to be one of the cats. Just come and check with me." She looked from one of them to the other. Sighing. "Please."

Lia closed the magazine and finally looked at her. "If we go out there with you, will you leave us alone?" Sue nodded rapidly. "Alright. Come on Em, the sooner we get this over with the sooner we get out of that heat." Emma groaned, lazily flopping her feet to the floor and shuffled out the door. She made sure to make it apparent her objection to this adventure they were about to embark upon.

“Pa aint gonna like this. Ya’ll know that right?”

“Shut up Em.” Lia said, getting irritated. Sue grinned, Emma shut up.

They marched in a line, Lia leading and Emma bringing up the rear while Sue took up post between them. She was too short to see over the dried overgrowth, Lia was the tallest. She pushed through the plants as if she was swimming. Making careful steps not only so they made enough of a path to follow it back but because there was no telling what creature was hiding in the dead country jungle. Emma had been swatting at bugs from the moment they entered the field, occasionally hitting herself. Sue shook her head then found herself with her face in Lia’s back.

“What’d you stop for?” Sue asked, looking around.

“Hush!” She whispered harshly. “Listen.”

They went silent, doing as Lia said. Sue could see the top of the barn that was at the back of the field. She didn’t know that they had gone out that far. Their father was the only one that ever went out to the barn. Sue inhaled sharply and an uneasy feeling washed over her. She tugged on Lia’s shirt only to have her wave her away. They were still listening. Something rustled right next to Sue. She jumped and screamed, taking off running into the field. Off the path they had created, she was running blind. She could hear her sisters calling after her, urging her to come back. She closed her eyes tight, afraid of what she might see, afraid of the unease that she felt. A wash of intense cold went through her, causing her to stop dead in her tracks. She shivered, goose-bumps on her arms from the sudden cold she ran through and the fear that followed. She kept her eyes closed. She bit back a yelp as she heard someone whisper her name that was too deep to be either of her sisters. It was then that she noticed that the seemingly never ending hiss of the cicadas had stopped. Tears streamed from her tightly clenched eyes as she curled herself into a ball, covering her ears and burying her head between her knees.

After what seemed like a half hour, she felt her sisters come up behind her. They touched her back and called her name, nudging her slightly. She was still too afraid to open her eyes. Lia kept saying it was ok and to look. Look at what? She thought. Slowly she uncurled herself and stood up, opening her eyes completely when she was up fully. Her eyes widened when she realized what she had stopped in front of.

“You found it, Sue.” Emma said in a low shocked voice. Sue just nodded, trying to keep herself from shaking again.

The three of them stood in a semi-circle around the hidden well their father had warned them about. They peered into the depths of it. Its darkness so ominous it seemed to consume the light that touched the sides. They couldn’t tell if there was water in it and none of them wanted to throw a rock in to find out. Sue hid in the side of Lia, shocked that she stopped before she fell in. That fear sinking deeper into her gut. She heard Lia say something about going back to the house and then

pull her away from the well carefully. They reached the edge of the field in less time than they had reached the back of it.

“What’s that?” Emma pointed to the step of the back door.

“I think it’s an orange.” Lia said, frowning.

“Huh?” Sue glanced at the dirt path leading from the field to the door. She pointed.

“Look! Pennies.”

Lia and Emma glanced at each other before they ushered forward on the path of pennies. They didn’t pick them up like they normally would have. Something about them being in such a straight line up the path and stopping right before orange that sat on the step didn’t feel right. The three of them stared at the strange fruit before Emma picked it up. Her eyes bulged slightly and turned to Lia.

“It’s heavy.” Emma frowned and handed it to Lia, whose face mirrored hers.

Sue stayed still between them while Lia began peeling the rind. Suddenly she dropped it, stepping back and gasping. Emma threw her hands over her mouth and stepped back as well. Sue stared down at the orange, now ripped open, overflowing with shiny copper pennies.

“Daddy!!!!” Sue screamed.

Their father burst through the back door, frown and panic written on his face. He looked at Sue, knowing she was the one that had screamed. Her eyes were red from crying as she pointed to the mess on the step below his feet. Quickly he went to her and picked her up, waving the other two into the house. He looked around towards the barn before going back inside. Sue glanced up at the field and saw in the waving heat a figure of what looked like a girl shimmering in the distance. The figure seemed to be floating above the dead plants. As she stared, its face distorted into something gruesome and snarling before it flickered out like a candle. Sue squeezed her arms as tight as she could around her father and buried her face in his neck as he carried her inside.

THE QUEEN

By Jonathan Smith

Victim to her own calling she keeps her secret well for fear of how others will treat her. This knowledge she poses of the forbidden is of infinite vastness. Holding back her thoughts she walks alone in her day's journey, masking this information. The fear of being discovered has forever haunted her thoughts; which keep her senses keen and evolving. Some can see she is different, that she knows something, and seek her out. Yet, swift and devious she blends into the crowd with a dark smile for she knows if she wants to be lost, she cannot be found.

To tease and torment is her game that she plays, for it drives her one and only necessity; the need to feed. Unbearable sometimes to her frame of mind she struggles with this feeling trying to controlling her urges. This daily interaction with the flock is a simple practice as her skill keeps growing time over time. For she chose the cold life of living alone amongst the many in this chaotic lost world. Her individualistic view of her own ego drives her heartless soul.

This night walker of the past living today within the feeding grounds of the night life in our cities. She is breeding like a virus, feeding like a parasite, this creature named Lilith which is known only by the few. She is the mother of all night creatures throughout time. The legion of the vampire is her most famous and long lasting impression throughout this time. Others know her as the mother of the sirens, the succubus and even the Medusa, the heir to her throne.

Dear Cancer

By: Gina R. Lambert

Dear Cancer

You cannot beat me.

You may take my hair,

You may take my breast,

I will not mourn the unevenness of my chest.

Dear Cancer

You cannot beat me,

My family and friends..

They are my army.

Because of you,

I have shed a tear or two,

but, because I fought you,

My outlook on life is all brand new.

I have forgiven,

I have loved, and I have laughed.

I now live for the future,

instead of dwell on the past.

Dear Cancer

You have failed.

You cannot beat me.

I am stronger than you will ever be.

*In memory of all who have and are
battling the "C" word and, a special
thanks to Professor Twaddle!*

Evolution Confusion: A Poem

By: Eman Alkotob

Human Evolution? My friend asks, didn't that happen really fast?
No, I reply, it happened gradually in the past.
They say we came from Apelike ancestors which evolved to become what
We are today, somewhat.
It started with Lucy, they say, the earliest well known hominid skeleton found
Coined Australopithecus, the first human like hominid, they say she drowned.
Lucy could stand up straight,
Unlike an ape—
This is a very human trait.
Many Australopithecus were discovered, such as Robust and Gracile
They lasted for a while.
And then there was Homo-habilis found in E. and S. Africa who had a larger brain
and limbs,
They'd probably be good on the monkey bars in gym.
Homo-ergaster/erectus came next and were the first to leave
They were found all over Europe and Asia, too, can you believe!
They had even larger brains
And bodies more like us with their long legs.
A complete skeleton of a 12 year old boy was found who was nearly 6 feet tall,
This showing us that their growth was faster than us all!
Now the Neanderthals were before us, I'm sure you've heard about them.
People think that they were us, but their ignorance we won't condemn.
Of course they were ancestors, from our family tree,
But they had some differences to a degree.
Such as an occipital bun and larger teeth
That they could use as tools to hold things underneath.
They grew faster than us and built fires and tools,
Which is actually pretty cool.
They hunted mammoths and ate meat,
Evidence shows this from the skeletons of prey, which is also pretty neat.
As for us, we appeared 160,000 years ago,
Anatomically Modern Human Species are found all over the world, though.
We are less robust, we have no occipital bun, and the back of our skull is round,
This is from the evidence that anthropologists and archeologists have found.
They have studied caves, tools, and art,
Concluding that language, hunting, and shelter existed, this makes us pretty smart.
But how do they know how old
The fossils and skeletons they find are, my friend told?
There are many different ways, I reply, such as relative dating.

This does not determine the exact date, yet there is some equating.
By looking at the layers the fossil is buried,
The location of the fossils can be varied.
There is another, more accurate measure called chronometric dating,
Which provides an exact time and a more definite stating.
Carbon dating is used to see the radioactive decay,
But there is even another way.
Human teeth have growth rings similar to trees,
Which a person can count with some ease.
But wait, my friend interrupts, Didn't Charles Darwin have a part of human evolution?
Yes, I reply, he made a contribution.
Human evolution simply means a change over generations, either cultural or biological,
And Charles Darwin came up with ideas about this that are logical.
He developed natural selection, which basically states
That those who have the most offspring survive since they spread their genes and
traits.
This makes the favored traits more common and stay
Which means that the disfavored traits will go away.
But there is more to human evolution than that,
And we'd have to look at DNA to reinforce that fact.
Evolution happens when DNA has a change
Once the genetic code has to arrange.
A genetic code is a combination of genes
That decide the color of your skin or whether your eyes are the color of green beans.
The genetic code can arrange a mutation,
Which is a new form of a gene depending on the location.
This can be passed on from a parent,
Or simply caused by the environment.
Evolution depends on mutations because
It changes people from what was.
Mutations are the ways offspring survive,
But also determine how some offspring don't stay alive.
Mutations can harm,
But can also do nothing or help so don't alarm.
Culture also has to do with human evolution such as new
Developments and discoveries, who knew?
This is called bio-cultural evolution
And has made so many different solutions.
For example, to prevent malaria to spread,
Mosquito nets are used so less will become dead.
The net has the danger of malaria removed,

So then those with the malaria gene can be improved.
This is all very cool, my friend exclaims,
I never knew this is what human evolution claims!
It seems that evolution is good to know,
So that humans can learn their history from long ago.
Well, I reply one last time, that may be slightly true,
But there is more to know than when we first learned to wear a shoe.
Looking back on human evolution we can learn how
Our diets changed and language came to how it is now.
It is interesting and all, but
I hope you learned more than what
You had previously known about Human Evolution.

A Day In Her Dream

By: Claire Roof

A day in her dream rises in winter as the ice makes the trees
glisten
She sees the fog forming about the gardens where she has
wrenched forth fruit
And Russian pink tomatoes, Early Girls, hot red peppers, yellow
squash all listen
All picked and cut and canned and frozen into time of summer,
she listens
Her zinnias have fallen from their heights of hilarious flower
beds,
Striking colors of mirth and youth and have laughter of shapes
Her sunflowers are giants that stoop now in yellows unsaid,
The dreamtime of harvest, oh quick and sudden turn of the land-
scape
Peaches in clear syrup float filling the quart jars like jesters
All looking for joy in the deep coming hibernating time
But, in winter, what does sleep? Birds, bears, human nesters?
Or does winter bring out the deep dark hope of the spring finds?
Does nothing end, does nothing come in ordinary winter that
Cracks into extraordinary spring as crocus and snow drops sing
The seeds are kept in deep dear envelopes, labeled as the cat
Scouts the grounds for sudden bits of milk and what the birds
bring
Summer comes like a brooding bear, thick is the air and sky
Is cloudless, and rain did not come, made the garden gasp
And yet, the garden groaned with attention and was not allowed
to die
The work of two who dreamed the dream of the seasons' task.

Mirror of My Life (Awakening)

By: Anthony R. Gray

The sun was shining bright as a mid-summer's day. The kids from the neighborhood were enjoying the daily game of curve ball, sponsored by the Lanky well-dressed figure on a nearby porch. Each game that was being played (seven in all) the winners of those games took home five dollars. To a kid from a broken home that was the highlight of their day. An unknown to them it was also the highlight of the well-dressed figures day too. Except for today, his mind was darker than a house with no electricity on a dead end street at two in the morning. His heart broken into a million pieces like a plate glass window drop from the heavens to the streets with roaring sadness, roaring through him. Like the feelings a mother has when CPS comes to take her children. She knows she gave them all that she could give them. He doesn't hear the balls bouncing he just hears the sound of the bars closing and the judge handing out years like he's counting;

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6...

I am what I am! But I am not what I used to be.

I was sent into this world with a hole in my heart. That was bigger than my heart itself, fighting for existence. My mama left me on a door step at four months, and my daddy left whenever I was mentioned. The two people in this world that were supposed to love me unconditionally, left me without a pot to piss in.

So, I was bound for the streets, (hem-up), you are looking at a real life step child. From the beginning, me and this world had a beef. Fast forward, to age sixteen in the basement of an apartment building laundry mat is where I slept. I keep my gun in the roof, my clothes, dope, and hygiene products too. I saved every penny I had. I didn't spend it on something new. I just waited for people to come wash their clothes, and while they were drying I'll pick through. Somehow I ended up in Chicago, doing what gangsters do.

(throwing up gang signs)

I AM WHAT I AM! But I am not what I used to be

From 18 to my 20's, having kids and getting this money, I build a nice crew. Most of the people I grew up with are still here. We run Kalamazoo. Shoot them up, bang, bang! Oh yeah, we held it down in that dope game. (hem-up) but nobody paid attention. I was robbing cats to pay my college tuition. I didn't know about financial aid back then. And if someone told me I was too ignorant to listen. That didn't last long, sitting in class, as soon as the phone rang I was gone. Back to the streets, my nights became longer which made my relationship with my woman weaker, not stronger. Of course she left, took my babies with her too. When it rains, it pours. I then lost four in my crew. Too-Bit, Boo-Man, Ben Noce, and

Duece. Now I'm filled with anger walking around with my mouth piece in, ready to give it to a stranger. My little brother fucked my money up! (Now you know the rules I got to bring you danger) WOE this life then went too far, and my heart and soul is already too scarred.

I AM WHAT I AM!!!

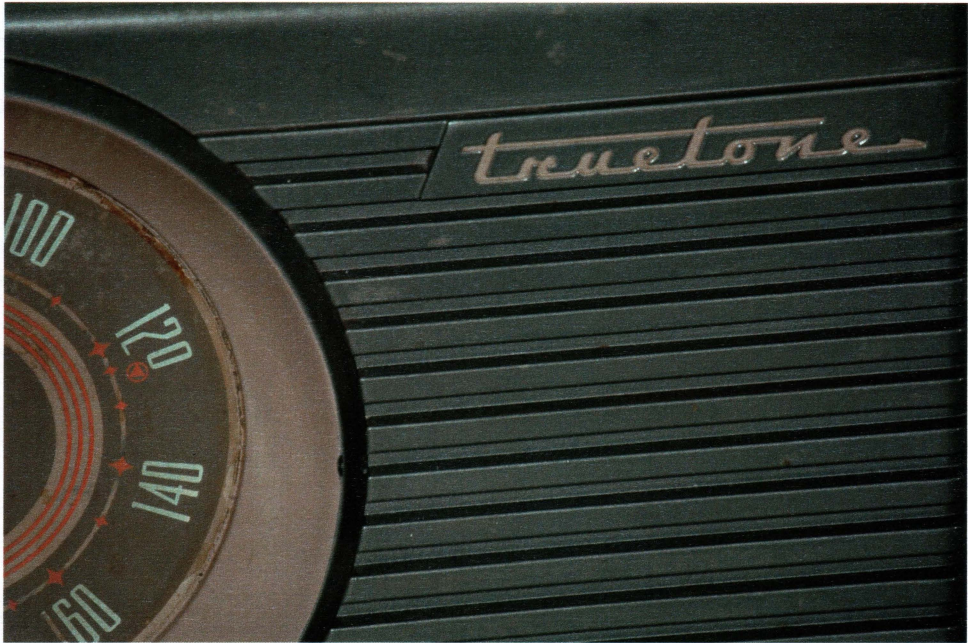
But not what I used to be

I got tired of walking those same streets. My family's gone, and some of my homies have passed on. Yeah, my hustle is still strong. The game don't stop. I know I'm better than this I wanted off the block. I started to feel like I was walking around in my casket. I knew I was smarter than what I was doing. I just couldn't get passed it. Until one day God tricked me, I thought I was going to South Haven; but I ended up in South Bend, and I realized, this is it! This is my out! With the clothes on my back, and another out-fit in my backpack. I vowed I will never go back. I vowed I will never do anything illegal again in my life.

In order to do this, I must start out by being homeless; but I'm FREE! I'm at peace. No more worrying about police or somebody killing me. I'm with God, and from now on I walk on his path into the light. To be the person I'm supposed to be.



Greenhouse—Allen Stenberg



Tru-tone—Bruce Tassell



Tigger—Tashaun Massey

Christina's World

by Sarah Zentz

I trace the scars on my face. They feel softer than the waving amber grain in the field around me, but they are really harder and more jagged than the crags of a cliff. It is hard being almost grown now. One must live in spite of one's troubles, but that does not make them easy to bear. I like to get away to the fields now, as autumn is getting on. The stems are so tall that I can completely disappear—like a prairie hen. If only problems would disappear so easily. Or chores.

“Chris—tee—na! Where are you, child?”

My aunt is never one to sympathize over lost futures or mourn over fate's cruel turns. But she sometimes frets and worries over me like our best biddy, Henrietta, who, deprived once of half her brood by one fell swoop of a weasel, now guards each new batch with a constant fretting and worrying that will drive her into the stew pot faster than most hens.

My uncle doesn't talk much: in fact, the last time he said anything more than a dozen words in one conversation was when I came home from school one day. I was trying not to cry: some kids had been teasing me...well, not teasing me, but definitely looking me up and over—like I was a flank of beef that was not good enough somehow. It was right after the accident. You would have thought everyone would be sorrier for me over the loss of --- well, I won't think of that--- than the damage the fi-- had done to me. They didn't seem to see it that way. My teacher was the only one who really cared—at least the first few weeks—that I was an orph--, No, I won't remember. After that, she only seemed to care about my posture.

“Sit up, Christiana. Haven't you been listening to the lesson?”

When called on in class, we have to stand and reply. I hate that. We must stand perfectly straight to recite. This means head up, shoulders back, and hair definitely out of one's face...and eyes. Miss Dandridge thinks that regular movement is good “for the pulmonary vessels and the lymphatic systems of the corpus.” Sometimes, she digresses on the wonders of medical discoveries when she is teaching history or on the rapid multiplication of germs in a wound when she should be helping the younger kids with their tables. She has never recovered from the loss of having to drop medical school in order to support her widowed mother and younger siblings. They are all grown up now, and she an old maid of forty-five. I suppose I should pity her, or at least empathize with her, but I don't.

I wish I could stay home from school—permanently—but my aunt thinks it better that I should have education.

“How will you be supported when we are gone? You need to be educated to

earn a living, child.” (Meaning, no man will ever want to support me.) Her knotted gray hair waggles back and forth with each emphatic shake of her head.

I don’t know why she calls me “child” all the time. I have lived with them for five years, now, and I am not the skinny, sniveling girl I was then, brought to their door, covered with bandages and ointment. The doctor despaired on me then, unthinkingly wondering aloud if I would survive my “experience.” Sometimes, adults put such significant meaning behind the ordinary words they use.

Anyway, my uncle simply looked into my tear-filled eyes, bypassing the ugly, red marks around them, and told me to follow him out to the barn. Belle, our collie-shepherd-mutt had just whelped that week. He reached into the old hay box she was using as a nest and patted her head.

“Pick out which one you want, Tina,” he had said.

I knew that these pups would all be either sold or traded to nearby farmers when they were old enough to walk. Belle might not have been the prettiest dog (her name was a joke, sort of), but she was the best herder, watchdog, and friend around (although my aunt would not have thought “friend” an admirable trait for a dog). Her pups always went, all of them. I had given up hoping for one.

“Really?” I couldn’t hide the hope in my voice.

“Pick the prettiest one,” he had said.

I wasn’t interested in looks—goodness knows I didn’t have any—but I saw one pup with a leg that was smaller than the rest. Stunted. I knew it would never be able to run fast, never cut out a steer, or anything “necessary” on a farm. That didn’t matter to me. “This one,” I said, my voice barely above a whisper.

My uncle acted surprised, which was unusual for him. Emotion of any kind seemed to elude him, like our dozen sheep at shearing time. “Ahh, but that one will not...” he began.

I knew where he was going. Weak pups didn’t survive, or else were “culled” before their eyes opened. I didn’t care: this one was going to—had to—survive.

“Yes, it will,” I said, looking straight into his eyes, almost daring him to argue, almost shouting with my face: “What about me? Haven’t I survived?” He understood. And the pup survived.

It is funny about animals: they never seem to notice what you look like. But they do remember how you treat them. Our cows will let me press my face up against their sides as the warm, steamy milk streams into the buckets. They don’t complain at my touch, even when it’s winter and I forget to warm my hands. But they aren’t always this patient. If Billy Bob, the stick-swinging neighbor boy down the road, comes to help Uncle with the chores when his rheumatiz” (that’s the way

he says it; but Miss Dandridge insists it is spelled with an i-s-m at the end) gets bad—or I'm sick with a chest cold—, the cows stamp something awful, or switch their tails in B.B.'s face. The cows can never forget—or forgive—him for driving them through a bramble clump once. B.B. didn't want to take the "long" route to the barn around our berry patch: he just swung his stick and lashed the cows through. I will never forget the dressing down my aunt gave him when she saw the state of her berry patch and the cows' legs and udders. Mentioning the cows' grudge against B.B. to my aunt would be pointless. She would acknowledge that cows might distrust a person, but that they do not do so for a specific reason. I don't believe she thinks animals have personalities. They do. Maybe they are not easy to spot, but animals act with minds of their own, and they treat you in response to your actions.

Roland is different, though. He senses my moods sometimes better than I can. He never complains about his leg. Even though he can't run like other dogs, or jump fences. He doesn't seem to mind either that he can't herd sheep or cattle with Belle. I think he likes it: he gets to laze around the farm when I'm at school and stick to me when I'm here—like Velcro. He is lucky. I guess I was drawn to him as a pup because I wanted someone to pity, someone to care for, someone to shower the compassion and concern denied to me. But he doesn't want it. Every morning, he leaps up from the floor by my bed and wakes me up with a crescendo of barks. He looks at me with laughing eyes and thrashing tail, seeming to say: "Hurry up, silly, the day is getting on and it will be great!"

I guess I think less about my face than I used to. If Roland can accept his fate and go on with his life, so can I. Easier said than done, however. With a sigh, I resignedly get up and head towards the farm. Chores await.

[Author's note]: This story was inspired by the painting *Christina's World* by Andrew Wyeth. I wondered "Why can't the girl's face be seen?" This story is the result.

Only While I Sleep

By: Gina R. Lambert

Drifting Asleep

I whisper your name

Wanting your love

Drives me insane.

Hearing your voice

My heart skips a beat

Reach out and touch you

Only While I Sleep



Chicago River—Erik Archie

Smile and Wave.

By: Farai Gatora

I laughed at all the appropriate times and nodded my head at intervals to show I was engrossed in the conversation. I wasn't. The wine glass I held was now clammy, its contents a bitter warm burden to finish. I didn't like wine yet there I was pretending to enjoy it, smacking my lips in faux delight and remarking along with the rest how the cool temperate breeze on the coast made for such delectable product.

I felt an arm around my shoulder and a light squeeze. Swallowing hard, I turned to face him with a plastered on smile and what I had been told on numerous occasions were "the most sparkling pair of eyes". Whatever. What-fucking-ever man! My fiancé kept his arm draped over my shoulders as he spoke and I behaved myself despite the internal turmoil going on. Guilt no longer consumed me; I felt how I felt that was it.

Such a soft man I thought. That developing pot belly, those slight shoulders and the cheeks of a chipmunk! The whiny little voice, like his vocal chords just weren't up to it.

He was speaking and laughing much too loudly thus showing the spaces in his teeth. These were not gaps, no. He had all his teeth; they were just not compact and side by side. I despised this man. My days were a miserable trek through boredom, naivety and unattractiveness. I'm sure he puffed out that flabby chest and boasted on and on about how he'd scooped the hot one. Whenever his favorite football team played, I wished disaster upon them. I prayed for a resounding loss just to get him down and depressed so he could, even if only for a moment, feel the way I felt every day.

I'm happy, so happy that my baby looks nothing like him. Besides inheriting his jet black hair, nothing else even remotely resembles him. When I cast discontent to the side and don the cap of reason, I know that I would probably get along well enough with him if we weren't together: engagement rings, house, baby, forever. But I resent him because I have his heart but he does not have mine. He failed and continues to fail to make me fall in love. Because of the expiration date stamped on my forehead by virtually all, I got convinced that it would happen, that I would begin to fall for him and I less than enthusiastically accepted his proposal.

I am erect when it comes to him. My feet and legs as firm as the buttress roots of a baobab tree; I have not fallen.

But I cannot risk excommunication, persecution and torment by obeying carnality. I was not raised "gay"! I am a mother now, Maxine's heart and mine will grow apart and she will eventually cease to occupy my heart and thoughts. I have to believe this.

The Gift of the Text Message

By: Kim Hively

We are in the age of technology, which makes this an entirely different world than the one I grew up in. When I was a kid, when you said you had a portable phone that meant that you had a phone with a cord long enough to stretch through the whole house. Words like cordless and wireless are very new to me and yet my niece has never lived in a world free of cell phones.

All of this technology is both wonderful and horrible at the same time. When I was in school, if you had to do research it was necessary to haul yourself down to the library and sift through index cards in the card catalog to find what you needed. These days when someone asks me a question my response is, "You have heard of Google, right?"

In the spirit of technology, I now give my students my cell phone number as a way to reach me and ask questions. My rules are very simple, text, don't call and tell me who you are. I have unlimited texting and pay for the minutes and I don't have any of your phone numbers in my phone book. It has become an interesting endeavor, to say the very least.

As a math professor, I hear every day how much everyone hates algebra. "Why do we have to mix numbers with letters. That's just wrong." Yet, I got a text the other day that used the phrase, "b4." So, what is this, has the student suddenly had a change of heart and now loves algebra so much that he or she are now writing in algebraic language or do he or she just not know how to spell the word "before," which does have an "e" on the end, unlike the word potato.

This is not the only shortened version of a word that I have received in a text. I have also gotten "cuz." My question is this, is this short for the word because or cousin? In either case, the first sounds like you are making an excuse for something that you have not done and the other sounds like you believe you are, somehow, related to me. Are either of these things what you are really trying to convey to me?

It is interesting to me that people send text messages without really reading what they have typed. I have gotten messages with atrocious spelling and incorrect words. There is a drastic difference between the words definitely and defiantly. The former means something absolute, while the other says, "oh hell no." So, when you send me a message that you will defiantly be in class, I am going to respectfully ask you to stay home. Frankly, I don't need the additional attitude. I have enough trouble with the algebra haters.

I got one that said, "I have done everything I cough." I read it three times. Yes, that is really what it said. So, you have done phlegm, spittle, fur ball? Really? Why would you send me this message? What response are you expecting from me? Kazoo tight? Please, don't cough on me, "cuz" that is just gross.

I understand that if you are text messaging your friends or even your family, that using this kind of language might be appropriate. I am neither of these things. The text messages that I should receive from students should be professional in nature. I should not get messages at midnight or before seven am. I do actually sleep. I should not get a drunk text or a pocket dial. This does not come across as you being very responsible. I should not get a second or third text message because you are in a panic that I have not gotten back to you from the first one. When I am in class, I don't have my phone and I am in class a lot. On weekends, I sometimes have other obligations where having my phone is inappropriate. I will get back to you as soon as I can.

All of this has caused me to alter my rules:

- Text, don't call. I have unlimited texting but pay for minutes.
- Tell me who you are and what class you are in. I teach many classes at more than one college and I don't have your number in my directory, nor will I add it.
- Use your words and proper spelling when sending me a text. You are in college and this is an appropriate request.
- Do not text at hours when I will most likely be sleeping. I am not a vampire. No one wants a cranky math professor. It will probably mean more homework for everyone or more "trick" questions on your next test.
- Do not text me algebra problems. If you have questions, it is appropriate to ask them in class when everyone will benefit from the answer.
- Do not send me a four page text that will blow up my phone as they come in. If you have that much to say, send an email.

And last but certainly not least...

- Do not send me multiple panic text messages. I will get back to you when I can. I am not on call 24-7 and you are not my only responsibility. I, too, have a family and the need for clean underwear and a hot meal.

Fly Away

By Claire Roof

Fly away yellow bird,
Your wings so sleek and fast,
Move from the waning warm Midwest
These are the days of color, dancing off the trees
Fly away yellow bird as the sun goes orange into the sunset
Fly away, my summer loves, lush and dancing, raucous singers
Take your wild colors and flowers to some protected retreat
Bother not to pack your bags, you have not the time now
Butterflies escape to trees in exotic lands, not here
Here is where the winter comes unbounded
Live in the dreamtime, your miracles today
Take my heart and find the place to survive

From Ghetto to Good to Great!

By Anthony Rayshon Gray

I come from a reality that doesn't operate or, play by the rules. That doesn't care about making anything out of their lives or, leading by example. A lost generation who can't find their first step or, second to remove them self's from poverty stricken areas from around the world

So for me to be living in this other side of reality is a very scary situation. To be detached from everything that I've ever known it's like being born again learning everything over going through the ups and downs, the good and bad parts of life's twisted track of hurdles.

I feel like an alien,

I have no family here or friends, no form of supportive hands,
But I have determination and courage, and the stamina to stand.

Alone in the world no matter the color of my skin

My cultural swag, how I move, how I laugh.

The slight accent in my voice, Ebonics of course

I ain't come from across no water (but I feel like it).

I came from my grandmother's daughter and my grandfather's son.

I grew up in an environment that was similar to a third world country.

Little food and lots of guns

Little money, dark days, no sun

Most people come here for the fame and the fortune

I came here for the education and degrees that says that I know this.....and that

To sit amongst intellectuals and debate politics and facts,

To gain the knowledge that some of our ancestors didn't have the opportunity to grasp.

No matter what nationality or background we come from,

We all deserve the right not to be stereotyped and look at differently.

Because we believe in something differently or, our belief's is more spiritually

When what we seek is the same," are you hearing me!

The freedom of choice and speech and, to understand who we are supposed to be independently.

I strive for a better life, I just don't want to do good I want to be greater than the sin I see.

Rise above and beyond the blood, the sweat and, the tears.

The loss of hope and dreams you see on my people face.

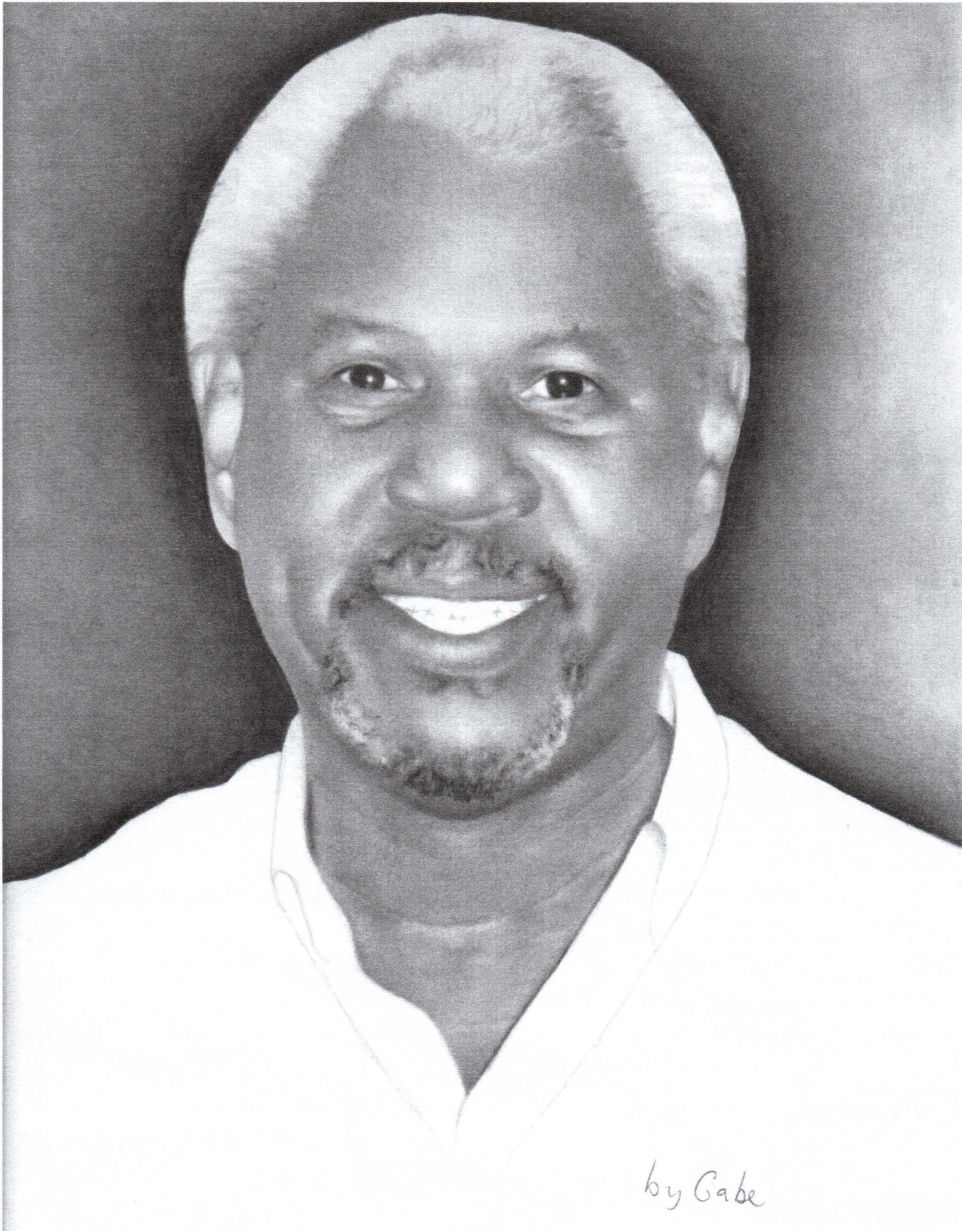
I'm gone pick my fellow brethren up and carry them with me to and, through the atmosphere today.

I represent my mother, my father, my sisters, my brothers, my aunties, my uncle's, my nephews, my nieces, my cozens, my kids and those that never made it out.

And those that got caught up or die in the struggle to get me here.

Now this first thing is for sure, and the second is for certain; but the third is ever so clear.

I will never forget who I am or where I came from.
I will never forget what it took for those to open the doors to the path that I now
walk on.
And last but far from least
I will succeed and be successful and earning multiple degrees.
It is not!
It is not!
Just for me.



Lynwood—Gabe Thompson

Index

- Uncaged Bird..... pg 1
By: Farai Gotora
- These Words Mean Nothing pg 2
By: Eman Alkotob
- An Accidental Family pg 3
By: Ron Wood
- AZ Saguaro—photo pg 4
By: Kathleen English
- The Craziiness of Family..... pg 5
By: Kim Hively
- Bicycle I—photo pg 8
By: Allen Stenberg
- Admiration(a text) pg 9
By: Anthony R. Gray
- Passion Prison..... pg 9
By: Tessaun Massey
- Walk the Limestone Line..... pg 10
By: Claire Roof
- Rust—photo pg 10
By: Darci Young
- More pg 11
By: Tracy Brooks
- The Spelling Bee..... pg 12
By: Sarah Zentz
- A Dangerous Concept..... pg 13
By: Jonathon Smith
- Samya—photo..... pg 14
By: Dawn Williams
- Never Alone pg 15
By: Faith Okall
- And Yet Again, a Few More Lessons..... pg 15
By: Kim Hively
- My Life in a Poem..... pg 16
By: Tabitha Carter-Ward
- Curiosity Killed George,
Adventure Maimed Dora pg 17
By: Farai Gatora
- Dear Mathew Shepard pg 18
By: A. Beidingar
- Music in Chicago—photo pg 19
By: Erik Archie
- Another View..... pg 20
By: Anthony R. Gray
- MMO Haiku..... pg 20
By: Ron Wood
- Gone Fishing..... pg 21
By: Charles Phillips
- Eddy Murphy Mixed Media..... pg 23
By: Gabe Thompson
- Drink Like a Fish pg 24
By: Mike K.
- Orange Pennies..... pg 25
By: Tessaun Massey
- The Queen pg 28
By: Jonathan Smith
- Dear Cancer pg 29
By: Gina R. Lambert
- Evolution Confusion: A Poem..... pg 30
By: Eman Alkotob
- A Day in Her Dream..... pg 32
By: Clair Roof
- Mirror of My Life..... pg 33
By: Anthony R. Gray
- Greenhouse pg 34
By: Allen Stenberg
- Truetone—photo pg 35
By: Bruce Tassell
- Tigger pg 35
By: Tessaun Massey
- Christina's World pg 36
By: Sarah Zentz
- Only While I Sleep pg 39
By: Gina R. Lambert
- Chicago River—photo pg 39
By: Erik Archie

Smile and Wave.....pg 40
By: Farai Gotora

The Gift of the Text Messagepg 41
By: Kim Hively

Fly Away.....pg 43
By: Clair Roof

From Ghetto to Good to Great!pg 44
By: AnthonyRayshon Gray

Lynwoodpg 45
By: Anthony Rayshan Gray

Notes:

