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# #adventureBound: A Collection of Student Work From SWOSU-Sayre 2014

Southwestern Oklahoma State University

## Description

This anthology contains the works of students attending the Sayre campus of Southwestern Oklahoma State University in the spring, summer and fall semesters of 2014.
Sponsors: Language Arts Instructors Judy Haught and Terry Ford. The book was designed and compiled by DeShawna Smyth. The front cover photo was taken by Ryan Kelly. The back cover photo was taken by DeShawna Smyth.

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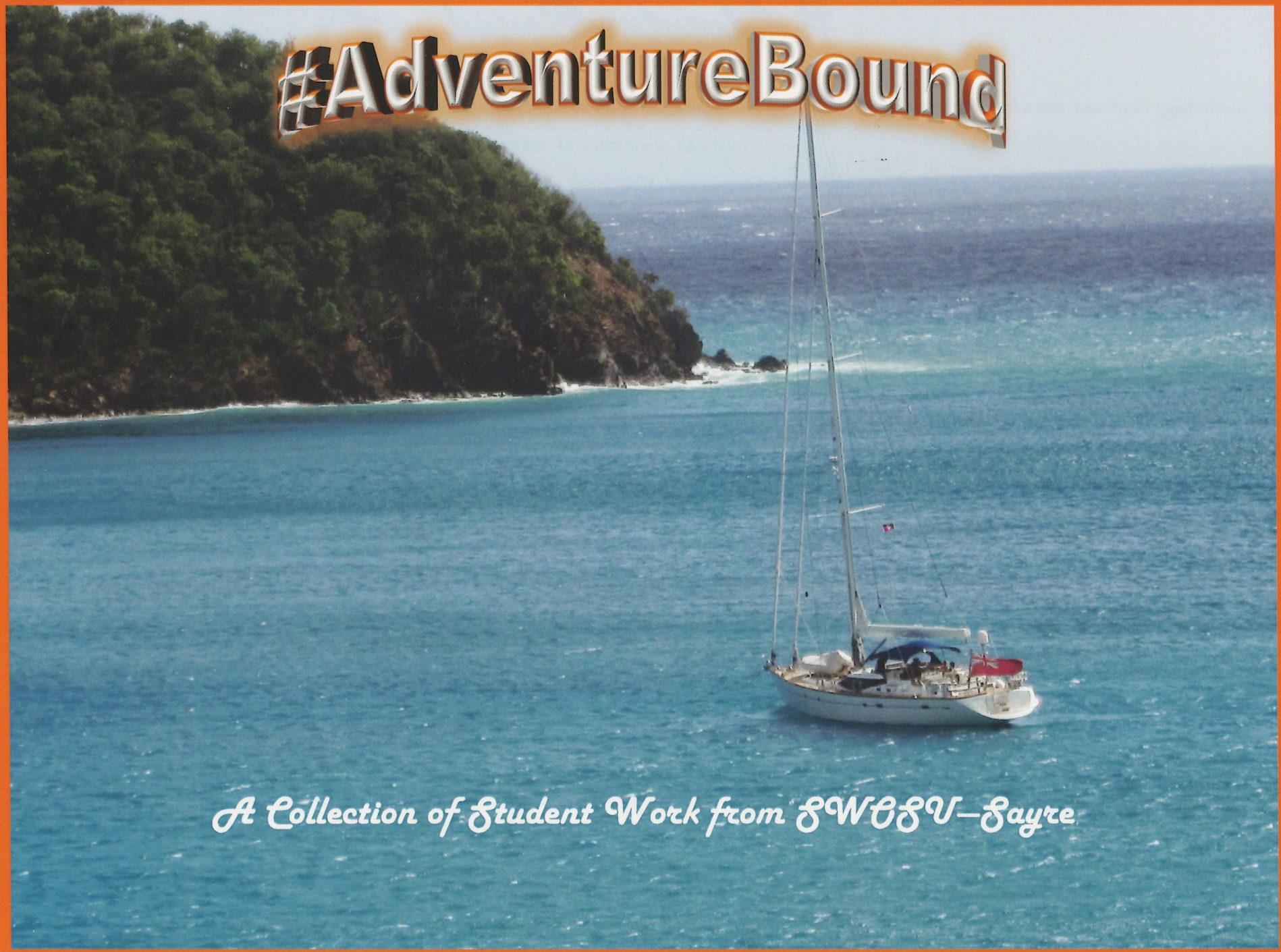
#AdventureBound
A Collection of Student Work from SWOSU–Sayre

# #AdventureBound

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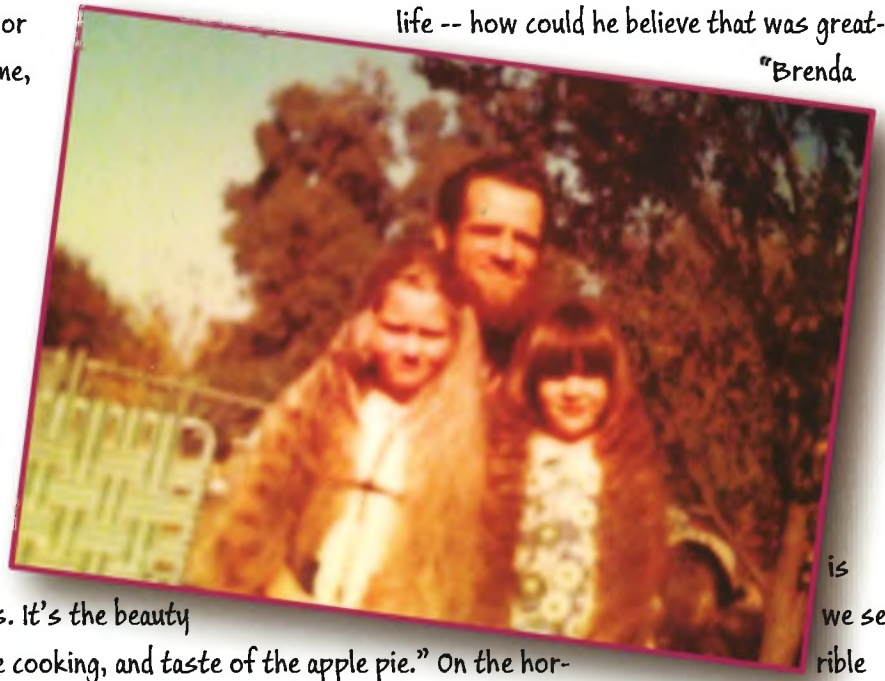
# Words of Wisdom from a Great Man

By Brenda Harris

Many people are overcome by depression, and this could have been my story. On February 14, 1999 at 8:04 a.m., I watched my father die, but somehow I saw a great peace come over his face, as if his job here was complete, and the pain he suffered for years was gone. Yes it hurt to the deepest parts of my heart and soul, to watch him go, leave me, his baby. At that moment I realized this was not the end. In his last moments he told me to continue living his legacy. To live a god fearing life not to take people, and the earth for granted. This a few short days before he was admitted to the hospital, he said to me, "It's time for you to live the greatness as I have." I was an adult with three young children. I did not understand that his statement had such wisdom behind it. This man my father who had suffered 20-plus years in pain, and lived a very poor life -- how could he believe that was greatness? He stated to me that day, I will try to explain now. He proceeded to tell me, "Brenda Lee, look out that window, what do you see?"



I said, "A mountain."

Then he said "And?"

I said "Clouds, trees, bushes, cactus, and animals."

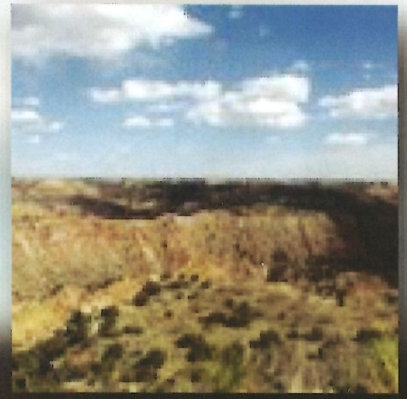
He said, "Now look in the mirror and what do you see?" I said "me."

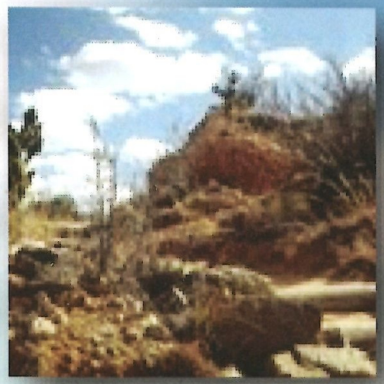
Then he told me to look at pictures. I said, "Family."

He said, "Baby girl, which is greatness.

Everything you just looked at is God's greatness. Our greatest gift from him is everything that surrounds us. Not money, not a pain free life, not even success. It's the beauty we see the trees, the things we hear our children's laugh, the things we smell apple pie cooking, and taste of the apple pie." On the horrible day that I lost my daddy, I heard his words once again as the peace that came over his face. Every time I start to feel depression near, I'm reminded of those glorious things, God gave us that I had never really saw before, until my dad had pointed these things out that day on his hill. This was the greatest man I have ever known, a man of wisdom, foresight, and intelligence. My only hope is, that I will have all of his greatness, and wisdom, when it comes time for me to explain these things to my adult children.

# Photos by Sandra Peña





# Who Really Knew - Brit Burnam

*We always want more. We can never be happy with what we have. Sometimes we think we will never be good enough. I believe all of these aspects have to do with a personality that is sociable or non sociable. "On the Social Nature of Nonsocial Perceptions" written by James k. Beggan, University of Louisville says, research in social psychology has focused predominantly on how individuals think and feel about other people."*

*For instant someone with a sociable personality seems to have more confidence in themselves, so therefor they also think positive of others. Being social shows that one believes enough in his or her thoughts and feelings that he or she is not afraid to talk or tell all about them. Whereas non social people seem to be afraid because they have never had the assurance that they are truly good enough to express themselves. Non social humans have issues with asking questions even when an answer is needed. They are afraid that others will think they are not intelligent or maybe they are not good enough.*

*Not only does sociability play a huge role in the way we feel about ourselves, but it also plays a huge role in being outgoing. Humans that have a hard time talking to others have the tendancy to lock themselves up in their room, and not be involved. Social people like to be leaders and go out in the world to make a difference, but that is because they grew up with a family that always believed in them and supported them in all they did. When a non social person even thinks of trying to be a leader they immediately think of all the flaws they have. They constantly say bad things about themselves and never see any good. I truly believe that could be due to a family that always expected more. They never made their children feel good enough, or from a family or group of peers that have always spoken negative words of others that are out going. When a child feels as if he or she is not good enough and has no confidents in themselves, then that is where we start getting issues with students not working to their fullest potential.*

*Students really start realizing how unsociable they truly are when they are in college and do not have mom or dad there anymore doing everything for them. When students are going through college it is up to them to get involved and to take action in things that will better their future. Freshmen in college get this misleading idea in their mind as if they are alone and that they are the only ones going through whatever it is that they are going through. Of course they are not alone; there are thousands of first year college students that are just as lost. The difference between some is that the more social students find answers to their millions of questions whereas a student that is not as sociable feels inadequate of doing so. They think they are going to be thought of as dumb! (which they have probably heard that said about others before.) That is where success starts or ends! If a student feels as if they are not good enough to ask for help in college then what makes them think that they could be successful one day! Non sociable humans have so much ability and potential that they do not even realize it. They just play the poor poor pitiful me game, which is a key to failure.*

*Humans with all kinds of personalities need to realize that they are not alone. There are others in the world that are just as afraid and do not really know what the next step in the life is and they are just as lost as their neighbor is. A non social person is like a fish out of water, a person that is uncomfortable out of his or her comfort zone. Social persons are like wild flowers that have bloomed and are ready to explore the world! I guess, sometimes we just have to stop and realize that non social humans need to hear that they are good enough, because it never hurts to give others a bust of confidents!*

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# I Hate that I Love You

- Brittney Jones

Lollie, an online source said, "Love can exist without hate. But hate can't exist without love because it is love, just not at its best side." Love is a warm summer's day, down by the meadow, ready to play. Hate is a bitter winter night, frost bite creeping through windows biting one's toes. Couples that deceive, get hitched too quickly, or simply dwindle out of love, leave one to wonder if there is really a thin line between love and hate. According to an online article written in The Independent, Professor Semir Zeki stated, "Like love, hate is often seemingly irrational and can lead an individual to heroic and evil deeds.

Nothing in a relationship can consume ones thoughts greater than inquiring if one's spouse is cheating or not. In historic time, when a married couple assumed deception was taking place, the wife typically waved it off for the sake of her family. While the male, on the other hand, usually struck his wife in secrecy. Finding out from the early 1900s to the late 1900s, however, was not as easy as it is in the modern society with the advanced technology. Going through a phone, hidden cameras, and even Maury are just a portion of the devices used to expose a partner in the act.

Another reason that thin line is drawn is the fact that some couples get hitched too quickly. As teenagers, the first boy or girl that becomes interested in him or her most likely believe they have fallen in love and marry after only a few months, sometimes even weeks of courting. Not knowing who the other person really is, but later discerning that he is no prince charming and Cinderella does not quite fit her personality either.

Perhaps simply dwindling out of love is what brings about that line. Couples that have been en masse quite a while tend to grow disinterested in each other. At the threshold of the relationship the man may have sent sweet morning texts, sent flowers for no reason, taken his precious Amor on dates, or said I love you every day. If after time went on, and these sweet antics stopped, the once "love of one's life" can become one's worst enemy overnight.

The war between love and hate will never cease to exist as long as deception, getting hitched too quickly, and dwindling out of love have a say so. "Hate is often considered to be an evil passion that should, in a better world, be tamed, controlled and eradicated. Yet to the biologist hate is a passion of equal interest to love," says Zeki.

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# Burning Daylight

By Kari Sodowski

# Go Big or Go Home ~ By

DeShawna Smyth

I have never been fond of heights. I love a good thrill, don't get me wrong, but ladders, roof tops, mountains, and bridges (just to name a few) all give me cold chills up my back. I have travels all across this country but never outside of its borders. That is until February 13, 2011.

My husband is from England. He moved here in 2001 and had not seen is mother since then. It is our dream to move over to England one day, but we have yet to be able to do that. We had some money saved up, and tickets already bought, to go on a visit to England. I have never been on a plane, not even in a helicopter, so this would be my first adventure in flying.

Rollercoasters, and any other thrill ride, have always been something my grandfather and I have loved. Flying was something far different to me though. I have seen far too many plane crashes on the news. I never particularly wanted to be in an in closed cabin 30,000 feet or more in the air.

We left for Oklahoma City on Saturday, February 13 for our flight to Atlanta. We arrived the recommended two hours early, checked in, checked our baggage, then went to our gate and waited. I was calm and collected until they finally called our flight for boarding. I all of a sudden developed a cold sweat and became pale. My husband assured me that all would be well and managed to calm me down, not only for my comfort, but for the sake of our two small children flying with us!

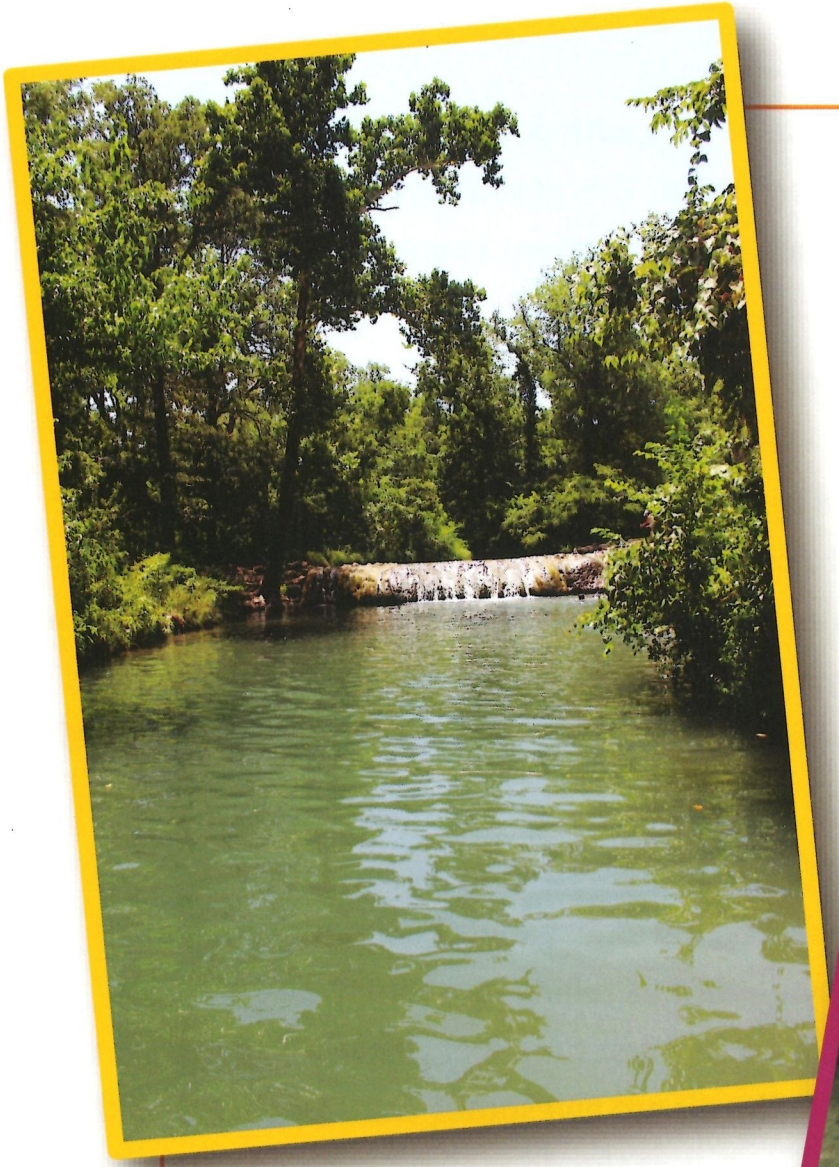
The flight to Atlanta was not one that I was looking forward to. I call it a jumper jet, but it was actually a Delta Airlines CRJ 700. This jet can accommodate anywhere from 70 to 96 passengers. This, to me seems so tiny. This first ride turned out to be smooth and comfortable though. There was no passenger in the seat next to me, so I was able to sit

comfortably and enjoy the ride. My true challenge would come later.

We had a two hour layover in Atlanta. This airport is a large international airport with departures at one end and arrivals at the next. We landed after 8p.m. at was set to take off a little after 10p.m. This gave ample time for my two boys to stretch their legs and for my husband and me to grab some much needed coffee! Thank God there was an actual Starbucks!

It was dark outside and the windows of the airport were heavily tinted, so we were not able to fully see the plane as it arrived at our terminal. We were able to see the outline but that really isn't a true indicator of the sheer size of this beautiful aircraft. I was however shocked when boarding our Boeing 767. It had more room than I had originally expected. We realized we were placed in the front row of Coach, and this was a mistake for a family with two small children. No one under the age of 16 is allowed to sit in these seats since they carry responsibilities with them in case of an emergency. The two rows behind us were empty, allowing us much more comfort as well! To our surprise, this flight was only half booked! What luck! I highly recommend a half booked plan and night flying, especially with small children! We stretched out and slept most of the way there!

We woke to the sun rising over the Atlantic Ocean and a wonderful breakfast served to us by our lovely flight attendants on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2011. This just so happens to be my eldest son's birthday. He turned 4 that day. The flight attendant overheard us telling him Happy Birthday and alerted the captain that there was a few first time fliers on board, and one of them was turning 4! Birthdays in the air are awesome! The captain asked that we be the last to disembark and met us at the door singing our son "Happy Birthday" then presented him with a set of wings from his own jacket, and a business card with a personal note and signature all for my 4 year old! It is by far the most memorial birthday, even though the landing had not been so smooth for me.



Photos by Mandy Fleming

# College

By DeShawna Smyth

My heart is racing.

My palms are sweating.

My pupils are dilated.

My hands are shaking.

Do you know the feeling?

Do you see my terror?

Do I remember the info?

Can I recall?

I did not sleep.

I cannot eat.

My nerves are shot.

It's finals week.

# Life Lessons ~ Georgia VanNote

When I was little, every Sunday my sister and I would be sent over to Grandma and Grandpa's house to keep them company. I never really wanted to go because I could not stand the way Grandpa always told stories about his childhood. He loved my sister very much, but he always seemed to keep me around longer than he did her. Maybe there was something special that he saw in me, but I became a little jealous of my sister. She was always right next to Grandma's side, helping her cook and testing everything to make sure it tasted just right. My grandma is one of the luckier ones and actually knows how to cook, and even to this day when my sister and I stop by, she has a buffet waiting for us as soon as we walk through the door.

Grandpa and I became very close as the years went on. As I got older and older, I came to a realization that Grandpa's stories were not that boring. It turned out they were actually quite interesting. He would tell me stories about his mother and father, his brothers and sisters, and all the pets that he had when he was a small child. The very first pet he ever had was a baby calf. He bottle fed it, washed it, and even tried to ride it. He told me that it took him nearly two years to even get on its back. Every time he tried, it would buck him off, and it would run away into the pasture next to their house. He also told about his school years and when he got in a brawl with his best friend, Todd, in high school. Grandpa told me that Todd tried dating his little sister, and after they started dating Todd tried to hit her a few times. After Grandpa told me this, I could tell he became uneasy thinking back to that time.

He suddenly switched his thoughts to his college life and when he first met Grandma. He told me that he would hang out at the coffee shop on Main Street. He became obsessed with this girl that always wore a little white dress. He would sit there and wait for her, and she would always come at the same time every day. Eventually she began to notice that he was only there when she was, and she confronted him. He would lie and say that he was only there for the coffee, but she knew otherwise. One day, he finally asked her out. Of course she said no, but that never stopped him. He was so amazed by this beautiful woman that he bribed her until she finally agreed to go on one date. They went to the county fair, and he won her a teddy bear just like all the other love stories you hear. It was love, and they both knew it. After a few years they finally got married and had a few kids of their own. Soon after Grandpa got drafted into the army.

His army days were full of chaos and many tears. He missed his five children and his beautiful wife, but the seven years of torture passed by quickly. He would never tell me much about what happened in the other countries, but I knew they could not be good. All he would say is, "What happened, happened and that is all you need to know." I knew it was probably traumatizing, so I just left it alone. After he was released, there was trouble with the home life. Some of the kids were on drugs, and Grandma was wanting a divorce, but once Grandpa glued everything back together, he felt like he was finally home again.

When grandpa passed away, Grandma's attitude never changed. She is still the same woman she was when Grandpa was still here. She still cooks, cleans, and does laundry. She tells my sister and me that when she goes she will see Grandpa again and that is why she is not sad. She also jokes around and says that just because he passed away does not mean he gets a break from her. Grandma and Grandpa have taught me so many life lessons that I will cherish forever. I have learned to never take anything for granted because it might not be there forever, to always protect your family, and to never give up on something or someone you love. I know now that even if you think something is boring or annoying, eventually you will find it to be just a little bit interesting.

# I Did

By: Sarah Sutherland

I stood in the parlor and witnessed my first miracle. There were so many people in one tiny home that I swore the walls were expanding just to keep the party inside. This was no reception; this was a festival. The aroma of scratch recipes, the hum of drunken voices, and the scratching draw of a fiddle made the air romantic. Everyone was in love. Guitars shouted.

The rafters were lighted with what looked like decorations from last year's Christmas. This was a modest attempt to transfigure an ordinary room into a hall fit to dance in. Yet the beauty of this whimsy spoke the truth: this wedding was planned in a week's time. However, the family didn't even notice.

Children ran, women laughed, men played in their own band, and the old sat and watched with eyes charmed with crow's footprints. There was laughing, there was kissing, there was drinking, there was playing, there was eating. Wood floors creaked under the weight of our joy.

Autumn makes people need to find their own reason to celebrate. This night in October was about the young couple the neighborhood watched grow from toddlers to one soul tied into matrimony and bound by the blessing of God.

The groom held his bride and spun in slow circles in the middle of what, under normal circumstances, was the living room. The bride floated above a family carpet. Her countenance told the guest, "Everything is okay." There were no tables or chairs besides the stairs that lead to the upper level of the home. I liked it, a wedding with no seating arrangements.

We were all arranged by grace, under one roof, for one night, and for one purpose: To love one another.

# Grandparents

By: Wyatt Hill

I wasn't too excited about spending the summer taking care of my grandparents. It's not what every 17-year-old boy has in mind. But my grandfather came down with a serious illness about a year ago from today. The doctors said it was a death sentence and he would be dead within the year if we removed him from the hospital. What the doctors didn't anticipate is that he would receive excellent care at his own home. My mother has been a nurse for nearly 20 years; she has had plenty of experience taking care of elderly people. But she could not be there for him every day, so she asked me if I could fill in for her. I thought it was going to be awful taking care of my old grandparents from eight to eight. I wasn't expecting my view of them to be changed forever and my view on all elderly people to be changed.

On my first day there I had my mother showing me what to do, and the first thing I realized was how much they needed help. They could barely do anything on their own! When they to do something, they would nearly fall or hurt themselves in the process. My grandfather had no idea what medicines to take or when to take them. Also he would never take his breathing treatments unless someone made him. My sweet grandmother would try to take care of him as best as she could, but she is 83 and has had troubles taking care of her own self. It never came to my attention how much they needed the help until I was there. I also believed it would be a boring job, which changed quickly.

At first I thought there was a smell, like how old people have that distinct old person smell. It turned out to be just vinegar my grandmother was drinking. I still have no idea why she would drink that dreadful stuff. It was also very loud with loud music playing, both grandparents yelling at each other (not intentionally), and the TV blaring. Both my grandparents are a little deaf. My grandfather wears hearing aids that don't ever seem to work, and my grandmother is too proud to admit that she has hearing damage. So there is a lot of noise all the time. They also need to be fed. My grandparents can't get up and drive to the grocery store. My granddad tried and wound up running through homeland with his car! I try to fix them food that tastes okay but I am not the best chef. When taking care of people for 12 hours a day, for weeks at a

*(Continued on page 15)*

time, you tend to really talk to someone and learn about their past. I wasn't expecting my grandfather to have that interesting of a past until I got to know him.

After taking care of them for a couple weeks my grandfather told me stories about whenever he was in WW2. About how he fought for our country and was placed all over the world at different locations. He was in the air force and his job was someone who mapped out where bombs would be dropped in Japan. He also remembered when they stormed the beach on Normandy. How the enemy was hiding in the trees picking us off like flies. There is never a dull moment with my granddad. He has so many interesting stories about his childhood that is different from ours today. These are the people that are wise and have lived long fulfilled lives and should be treated with the utmost respect. Sure they can be grumpy sometimes, for example about halfway through the summer I told my granddad to breathe through his oxygen tube, which he has heard a thousand times. His response made me laugh.

"Boy I oughta slap you", he said in his grumpy raspy voice. What he didn't realize was my grandmother walking around the corner! He was in some serious trouble. She scolded him for hours and still will not let him live it down.

Just because they become grumpy and impatient doesn't give us the right to neglect our interesting important people and we wouldn't be alive without them. I went over to take care of them this past summer thinking with would be a drag. I ended up learning a lot about how the past was and the hardships that our elders went through to give us this brighter future. I learned a newfound respect for our elders. We should spend time with them for what precious little time we have left. They may look old and wrinkly and maybe even smell of vinegar, but they are the sweetest people and all they want is to talk to their family a bit. They deserve at least that much respect. I am eternally grateful that I spent time with them this summer and really got to know them. For they are truly wonderful interesting people, and I'm proud to say that my grandfather is alive today because of the good care he receives from his family.

# Torrential Beauty

By DeShawna Smyth

# Longing

By DeShawna Smyth

Just around the corner,
On the other side of the door,
There you stand,
I am heated to the core.

Your lips are so soft,
At least I can dream,
To kiss them I need,
My heart wants to scream.

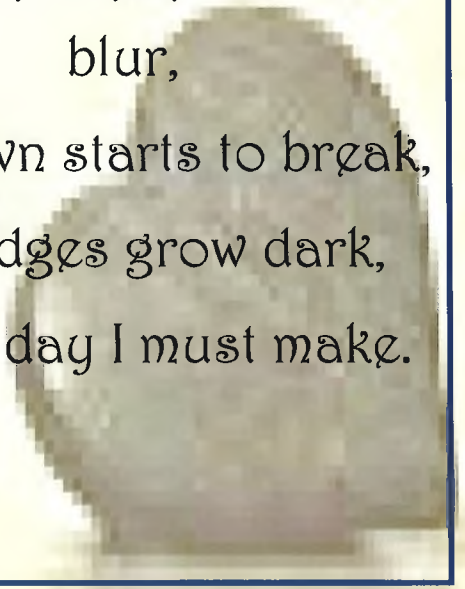
Passion so strong,
Lust so deep,
Shaking with want,
My heart you may keep.

But you don't see me,
You don't know,
The desire I feel,
The feelings I cannot show.

I wish I was sexy,
I wish I was yours,
I wish I was skinny,
My dream soars.

But in this moment I am perfect,
In this moment I have you,
Our desire is the same,
You feel the same way too.

Then the scene starts to blur,
The dawn starts to break,
The edges grow dark,
A new day I must make.



# Photos by Mandy

# I STUDY THE CLOCK

By: Tyler W. Burch

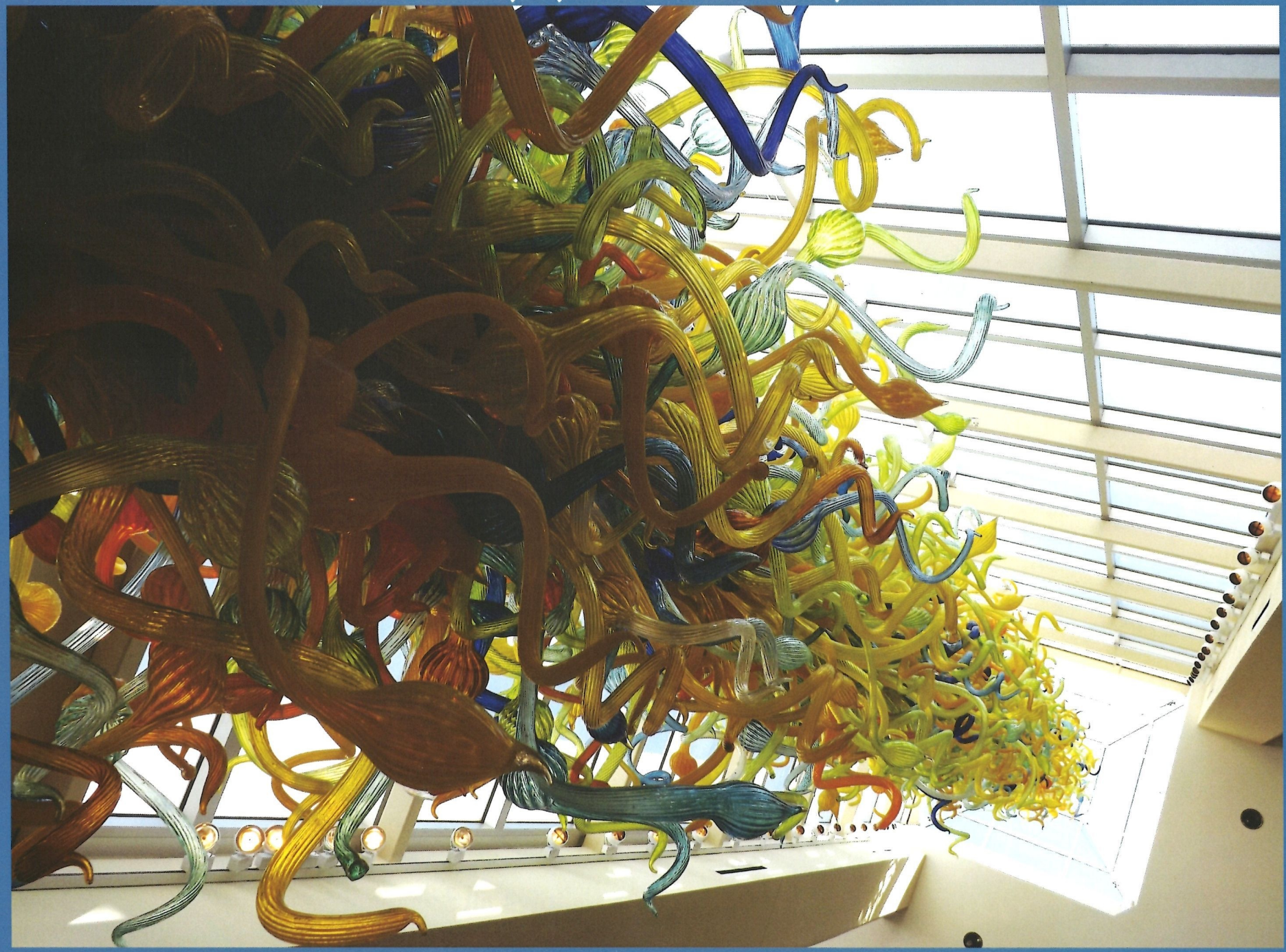
I study the clock,
As it goes tick, tock.
I follow its rhyme,
With the passage of time.
It moves along,
No care for the season.
It causes no wrong,
It knows only reason.

I study the clock,
As it goes tick, tock.
I watch minutes go by,
But I know not why.
It seems to tower,
But also to sway.
It counts every hour,
In its usual way.

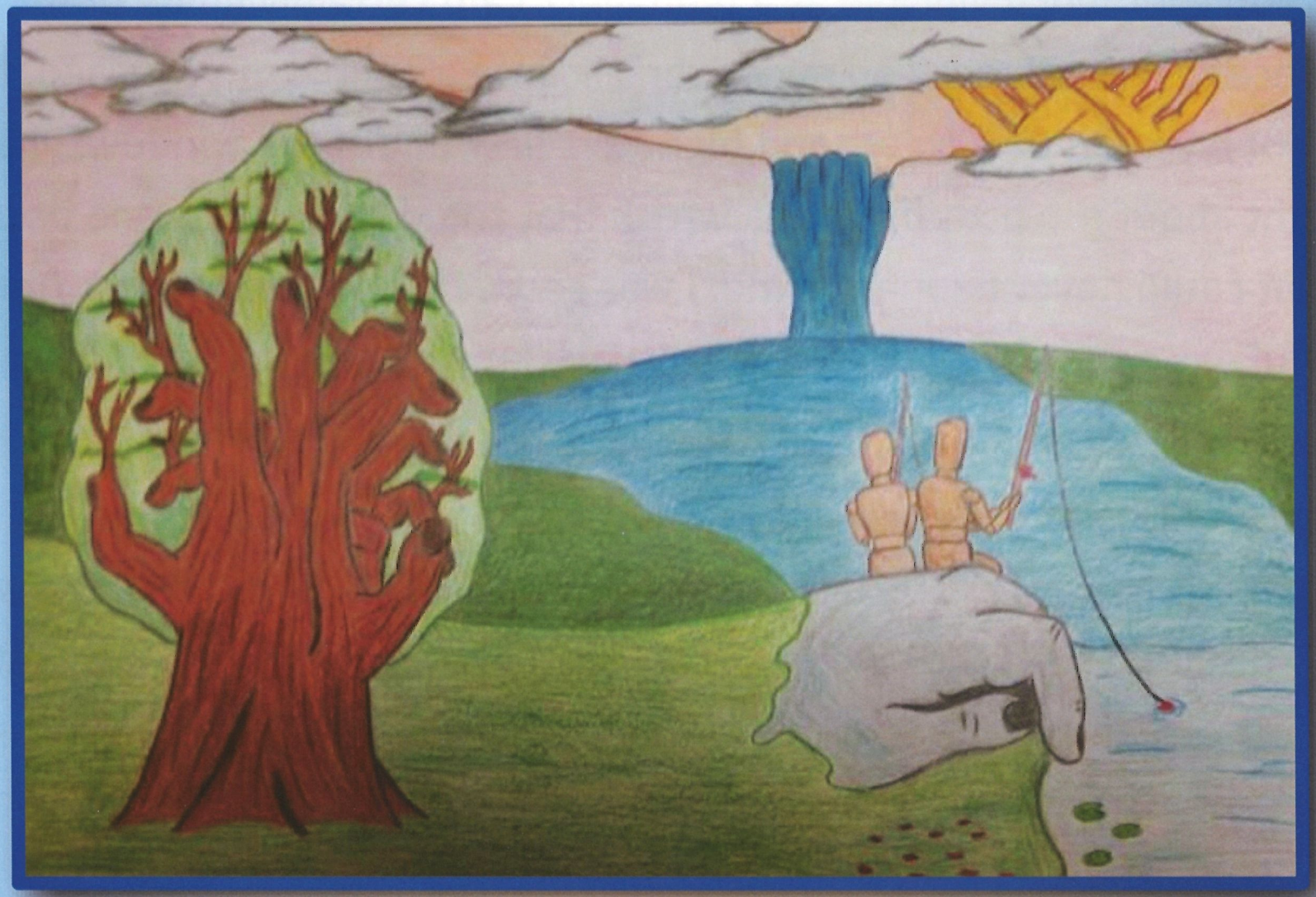
I study the clock,
As it goes tick, tock.
I ponder its place,
As it keeps its pace.
It seems to run,
But then it walks.
It has its fun,
For it always talks.

I study the clock,
As it continues to mock.
It reminds me of the strife,
That we go through in life.
I hope it will find,
A way for an end.
I hope it is kind,
And allows all to mend.

# Chihuly by DeShawna Smyth



# ARTWORK BY WILLIAM BARR



# Wrecked Day

~ Sydnee Sealey

Did you ever feel invincible as a teenager? I am certainly guilty of this sense. Seconds after I received my driver's license a couple of years ago, the thought of harm on the streets and highways flew out of the window. I had never thought about the possibility of a wreck that could harm someone because I knew that could never happen to me. I was soon, though, proved incorrect. A wonderful day as a legal driver was eventually labeled as a failure.

Approximately a month after I passed my driver's test, I had a desire to take a trip with some of my very close friends. It was a warm day, and the sun shined its rays harshly on me, as I recall. The clouds in the sky seemed to fade away and disappear like they were hiding from society. Gladly, there was still a slight breeze that made for a comfortable evening. Unfortunately, the evening was about to turn into something far from comfortable.

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Three of my friends scrambled into my brand new Mustang, and we took off on the road to an unknown destination. I think we all enjoyed the thrill of a trip excluding any organization. All four of us noticed the emptiness in the sky when there were no clouds to spot. The light blue sky made us pause and gaze at it while the bright sun beamed down on the world. It was effortful to soak in the scene, and it was more than just a peaceful site.

I had been driving with my friends for roughly half an hour when we came upon an intersection. With no hesitation, I failed to slow down and stop. My actions would quickly prove to be a simple, foolish mistake. I noticed from the corner of my left eye that a huge truck was headed right for us. The truck was bright yellow and drove on tires taller than I was. It felt like for that slight moment my tiny vehicle held an imaginary target for the truck's enjoyment. The truck instantly smashed into the front of the car, causing it to roll one and a half times. The driver attempted to hit the brake before our collision, but he was just going way too fast to stop.

# The Greatest Treasure ~ by Nicole Galindo

The dictionary's definition of "family" is "a group consisting of parents and children living together in a household" ("Family"). Now even though this is true, family is much more than parents and children living together. It is a relationship between people who love and care for one another no matter the circumstances. Family is supportive, caring, and most of all loving. Family is truly one of the greatest treasures a person can have.

"When everything goes to hell, the people who stand by you without flinching—they are your family" said, Jim Butcher. A New York Times bestselling author best known for his contemporary fantasy book series "The Dresden Files." We may encounter many obstacles in life and not know what to do or how to handle the situation. For instance, when I decided to move to Oklahoma, my parents were there to support and give me guidance. As for me, before my son's big game, I'm always there in the stands, supporting him to his next touch down. Our family will be there by our side to support and guide us through the difficult obstacles and also to share the greatest moments of life.

Not only is family supportive, they are caring. They care for us when we are sick in bed with a cold by making homemade chicken soup, or when we come home from football practice with a sprained ankle. They are there to take care of us until we recover. Just as they care for us, we need to care for them as well. Family is a great blessing.

On the other hand as much as your family is caring, the most treasured part is the unconditional

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love between each other. That special bond between one another will help us get through the biggest challenges in life. We will never forget how our family comforted us after a terrible tragedy-how you felt like everything was falling apart, but the love among one another helped us get through it and made everything a little easier. "No matter what you've done for yourself or for humanity, if you can't look back on having given love and attention to your own family, what have you really accomplished," stated Elbert Hubbard, an American writer, publisher, artist, and philosopher from the early 1900's.

After all, family is the foundation of all support, care, and love. A great quote from the 26th Governor of Oklahoma Brad Henry once said, "Families are the compass that guides us. They are the inspiration to reach great heights and our comfort when we occasionally falter." Always treasure your family, for they are our foundation and greatest gift we can have.

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# Cherish Every Minute ~ by Leslie Macias

Being a single parent makes my mornings hectic. I have multiple things to do with little time. My mornings usually start at 6 am, which it's still dark outside, making it just a bit harder to get up. Who wants to get out of bed that early? First, my alarm goes off at six-thirty am and I drag myself out of bed. Next, I make my way to the bathroom to wash my face, brush my teeth and put my contacts in so I can see. Next, I head to the kitchen and start breakfast for my daughter. Then about seven-thirty I go and wake her up so she can eat and get ready for school. She usually tells me " Momma , the house smells so good I could eat it up." Meanwhile, I am getting my daughter's lunch going on the stove on low heat. While lunch is on stove, I start ironing her school clothes and my clothes. Once we are dressed and ready for school, I take her food off the stove and put in her thermos and finish packing up her lunch. Finally, we get in the car and head to school. Even though our mornings are hectic, I wouldn't have it any other way. I cherish every little moment I have with my daughter!

Myriad Gardens by DeShawna Smyth

# The Trials of Dealing with Sorrow! ~ by Kimbra Thomas

All people at some point in their lives go through a time that brings them sorrow. Some go through more than others. Going through sorrow is something that no one ever wants to go through, but sometimes we have no choice. I pray every day for the people who are constantly going through sorrow every day of their lives.

I have recently had to deal with something that changed my life forever. Early November I had gone to Childress, TX, to check on my uncle. He was in his late 70's and wasn't doing very well health wise. Of course when I would talk to my uncle on the phone, he didn't act as badly as what his health actually was. The day I got to Childress I noticed my uncle had lost a lot of his color, and he had lost a lot of weight. My uncle is a big man, so for him to lose weight was a very uncommon thing. That day I forced my uncle to go to the doctor because we were going to get to the bottom of his health issues.

After going to see the doctor, my uncle was told that he needed to go see a specialist because they had found a mass on his lung, and they who? had a feeling it could be lung cancer. A week later I took him to a specialist in Lubbock, TX. After all the results from the

*(Continued on page 29)*

many tests that he had to take came back, we found out that he had stage 3 lung cancer. There were only 4 stages to the cancer that he had, so they caught his cancer really late. The doctors told him that at the rate he was going he would only live up to 6 more months.

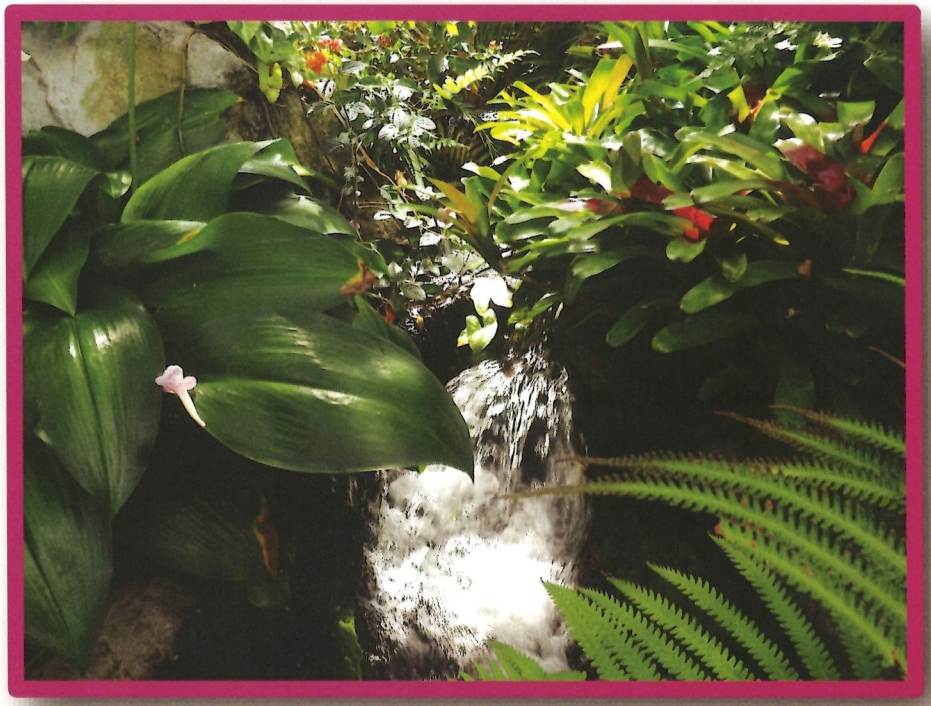
"You will only live up to 6 more months" were the worst words I could have ever heard. I was terrified. My uncle was one of the closest people in my life. We did everything together, and the thought of all of that ending was awful. I'm a senior this year, and all I could think was that my graduation would be the last accomplishment he would ever get to see me have. My uncle was at everything and made sure saw all of my accomplishments. My uncle was the type of person to say, "If it is my time to go then I'm going." That was probably the best attitude to have, but that was not the attitude I wanted him to have. I wanted to hear him say, " I'm going to fight through this, and I will not lose this battle," but that is not what I ever heard. My uncle chose to take chemo and radiation, and that was the only thing I had agreed with that he had said.

A few weeks later he took his first round of chemo. I was taking him to every appointment because I refused to let him be alone. After his first treatment my Nana decided that she was going to go live with him so she could take care of him. There for a while he

*(Continued on page 30)*

was doing really well. I would talk to him on the phone every day because I wanted to hear his voice for myself. On January 30th my mom woke me up at 4 in the morning. When she sat down on my bed, I could tell she had been crying, and I knew exactly what she was going to say. She told me that my uncle had passed away. That was it. I didn't know if I was going to be able to handle anything after that. That day was the worst day of my entire life, and every day I think of him. Going through my senior year without him has been the hardest thing I have ever had to deal with. Knowing that he will not be there for my last prom, or my graduation breaks my heart.

Everyone has been telling me that there are some things that are better off happening sooner than later. Now that I think about, it my uncle did not have to suffer through that chemo, and radiation. He passed away in his sleep, and that was probably the best way for him to pass. I have had many dreams about my uncle, and I know that he is still with me in Spirit. I was shown a Bible verse that had helped me a lot through this process. It is Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be dis- couraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." You will go through trials and deal with sorrow, but there will be good things that come out of it even though you can not see it now.



# Myriad Gardens

by DeShawna Smyth

*Origional Artwork by Darbi Kelton*

# The Bible is the Perfect Mirror

By Lacy Pryor

You stare into the mirror
Do you like what you see?
Wading through flaws in search of perfection
The meaning of insanity

What if I told you
That through love, mercy, and grace
Perfection is attainable
By simply seeking his face

It can't be found in retail stores
Nor the cover of a magazine
But only through revelation of The Word
Which reflects your true identity

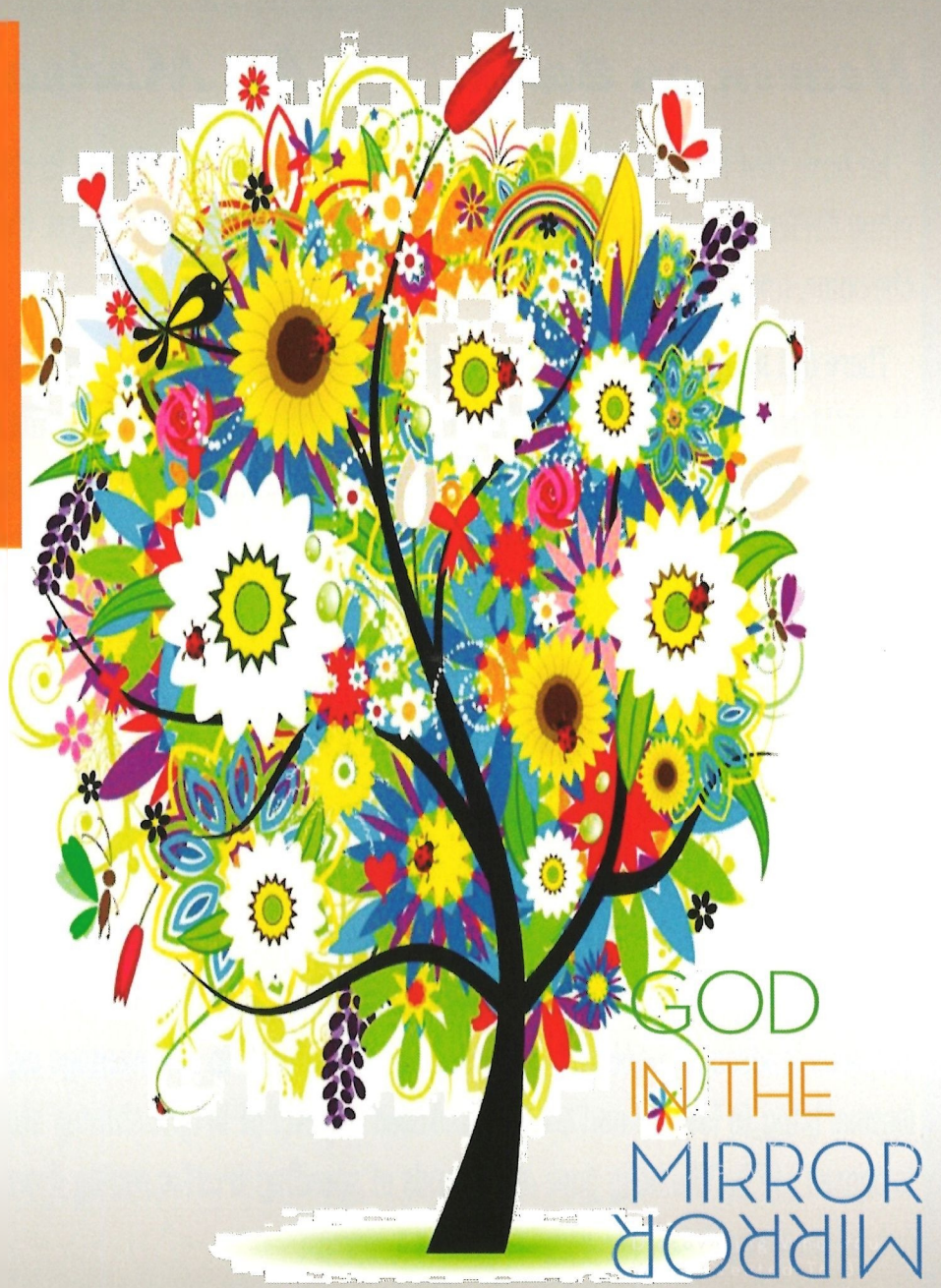
With this comes understanding
The true meaning of grace
It's the unmerited favor he showed
By removing our faults and taking their place

So lay down your earthly mirror
And let him show you what is true
In his eyes you are perfect
Because true perfection was sacrificed for you

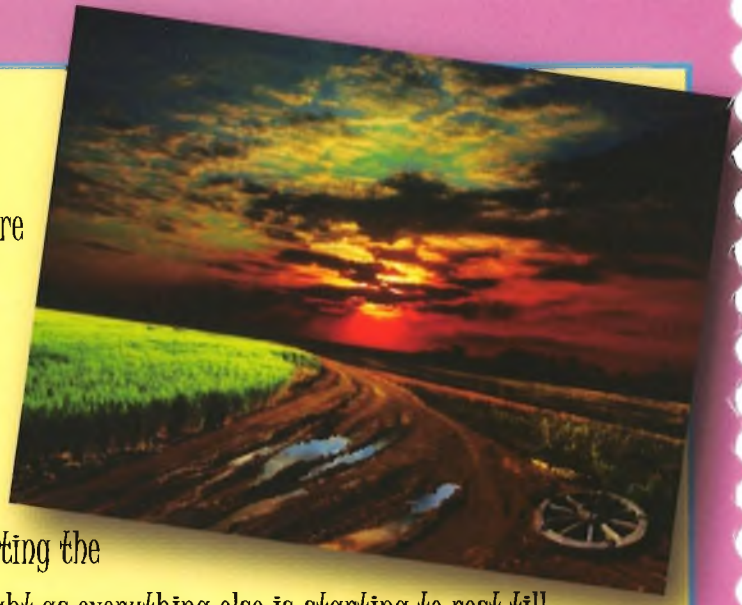
Don't be sad or shed a tear
Do not conform to earthly ways of thought
For what society defines as perfect
Is based only on what they were taught

Instead rejoice in your new found knowledge
Be now joyful in what you know
Spread the truth of God's love
For you reap what you sew

Cast down all insults and judgement
For you are not what you hear
The Word says that you are made in Jesus' perfect image
And the Bible is the perfect mirror



# Heaven on Earth ~ by Marisa Garcia



We have now lived in the country for almost five years after living in the city for sixteen. There are many differences between country and city life. The noises are unique, the road conditions are not the same, and the views change.

There are many noise comparisons between the country and the city. It is quiet and peaceful in the wilderness. On hot summer days the grasshoppers hiss as they hurdle after every step dropped on the dead crunchy grass. On warm evenings the silence is interrupted by the sound of bobbers hitting the water and the noisy croaking frogs that surround the pond. The howls of coyotes seize the quiet night as everything else is starting to rest till the morning comes. The sun rising over the city is like a bomb intruding the peace. Car doors start to slam and busy traffic begins to fill the streets. Horns honk and people shout as they are running late for work. Sirens shriek through the air day and night as they rush to bring help.

Road conditions are not the same in the country as they are in the city. It gets extremely muddy after it rains. I love putting my pickup in 4-wheel drive and sliding down the sticky roads. It's exciting to see mud fly around the headlights and hearing it smack against the windows. People in the city don't get the joy of mudding. It's nothing but pretty painted pavement there!

Let's not forget about the beautiful views of the countryside. My mornings start off with the most breathtaking sunrises, the kind found on post-cards. Some mornings I'll wake up to find the wildlife, such as turkey and deer, right outside my window. I can stand on the back patio and see miles of gorgeous landscape scattered with trees and livestock. In the evenings my view is lit by burst of vibrant colors as the sun is setting in the west. It's mesmerizing to look up and see the darkened sky full of bright shining stars. Being in the city, the view is blocked by houses and buildings. The wildlife is chased off by the busy pace and sounds of speeding traffic racing down the streets. Some people have never seen the water-color painted skies that we get to see every day.

Growing up in the city I didn't know what life was like in the country. After living out here I would never give up my dirt roads for a busy street. Go-ing from city to country life is like dying and going to heaven.

Photos by Paul Yoder

# Parent Involvement: Children are Paying to Play ~ by Gunner Garrison

I wake up two hours before school to do the morning workout my father forces me to do every day. I do it to the best of my eleven-year-old abilities, but it is never good enough for my dad. He wakes my little sister with his screams of tough encouragement. When I finally finish I am forced to drink a protein shake that is absolutely disgusting. It taste like cat food and there is not a day that goes by that I do not have trouble getting it down. I just want to enjoy sports, but if I am not playing perfect then I get punished. All of my friends love playing soccer and baseball, but my dad makes me hate it. This is not just a illustration of how awful a dad or a mom can be in a young athlete's life, but these type of situations are happening throughout America every single day. I try and put myself in a situation like that and to be honest I would not be able to handle the pressure mentally or physically. The fact of the matter is that parents are being to hard on their young athletes and are ruining some of the greatest time in these children's lives by treating their own child like a slave of whatever sport they choose. Parental guidance is appropriate in all children's lives, but some parents are crossing the line when it comes to athletics or other extra curricular activities.

I currently just finished watching the "Friday Night Lights" television series on Netflix. In this television series there is a new quarterback in town to take over the Panthers starting job. This new athlete is J.D. McCoy and with his role he shows how overbearing parents can really be. His father wants only success for his son and will not allow J.D. or anyone else to stand in the way of that. J.D. is not allowed to go out after a win and is up to workout every morning with his private quarterback coach. The producers of this show correctly portray the effects on athletes with parents like J.D.'s in showing us how detrimental it can be to a child's mentality towards everything they do. J.D. ends up running away for a weekend and getting a girl pregnant and maybe if his dad would have allowed him to enjoy his high school experience with his parents support a mistake like this would not have been made. J.D. is a very good quarterback in the show, but is shown to not enjoy the game he loved anymore further into the series. This growing dislike for football is made known to be his father's fault and the forceful nature of success being shoved in his face whenever presented. When a major television series points out a problem like this. It is obvious that the topic is not just a fictional one. A non-fictional example of parents going overboard was written about in Sports Illustrated in 1975. "Within what has been described as this "rat's nest of psychological horrors," it is not unusual for a child to

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have his parent and/or coach falsify his birth certificate to get him into a favored division, one in which he might excel. Or submit to starvation diets to make a weight. One coach in Florida says that he sees these kids, "flying around so high on diet pills they can barely tell you their names."" (Underwood 92) This was forty years ago and parents were going to the extreme to make sure their child succeed. Imagine parents now as athletics has just grown more and more into the way to be apart of the upper class of children or what it takes to make their child cool. Parent involvement does not have to be directed at the child in some circumstances. In the same Sports Illustrated article it says, "With so much riding on the outcome-bowl bids, adult egos, bragging rights at the local pub—it was predictable that violence would creep into kids' football, and last month in Kissimmee, Fla. a mob of adults attacked four coaches of a winning team of 12-year-olds with clubs and pipes, sending one coach to the hospital. A cry from the crowd, "He's dead!" apparently satisfied the mob and it withdrew just before the police arrived."(Underwood 95) These events truly capture the extent parents will go for their children's success and in most cases in youth sports it is not positive.

The amount of negativity around a child and an athletic event can have different effects on different children. A great example is Mickey Mantle and the experiences he overcame to become a Hall of Fame baseball player. Kelsey Crouse wrote, "Centerfielder and first basemen Mickey "The Mick" Mantle, who played for the New York Yankees from 1951 through 1968, experienced the repercussion of an overbearing sports parent. Mantle in a 1970 television interview shared how he wet the bed until he was 16. He later developed emotional problems that led him to become an alcoholic. He couldn't handle the inappropriate amount of pressure placed on his shoulders. Mantle succeeded and became a professional athlete, but the chance of this happening for most athletes is next to none."(mobridgetribune.com) It is known that Mick's father was the source of his pressure and once his father was out of his life Mickey went on to become one of the all time great hitters in the history of baseball. The facts show that overbearing parents have negative effects on children of all ages.

Why do parents act in such ways? "...in response to the important and legitimate question, "why do some parents behave so poorly at their child's sporting event," the often parroted answer has been, "because no one told them they couldn't." Such simplistic analysis fails to provide direction for reforming youth sports, in terms of preventing sports rage, because it doesn't address the underlying reasons for poor parental behavior."(youthsports.rutgers.edu) If parents realized what immature ac-

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tions they were partaking in affected their children parents would probably stop. The fact of the matter is that parents acting out are usually the ones in control of the situation and spectators are not brave enough to explain to a fellow parent how to raise their own child in such a way to not be rude or antagonizing. I think the child needs to step up and tell the parent that the way they are treating them is causing negative affects. If the child is willing to do this then the parent would realize what is happening and possibly give in and become a supportive "its just a game" parent, which through time will end up having the most positive effect.

There is not a right or wrong way to be involved as a parent, but there is a detrimental and non-detrimental way. A non-detrimental way of being involved is explained by Lisa Heffernan in her article about parent involvement. Lisa states, "… Wanting to win is human, it always feels better than losing. But our larger job as parents is not to teach our kids to do what feels best, but rather to equip them for life without us. We are charged with taking the longterm view and teaching our children what is important rather than what is expedient. It is our job to teach them that they can only control their own effort, preparation and focus and not the outcome…"(theatlantic.com) She also mentions how her son always wants to win, but just the fun of playing with his best friends is enough. The way her son feels about athletics is a young child's way of looking at everything. The young athletes will get better with time and work, but the pushing and the pressure could push them down a path of failure and parents need to realize what they are causing in their children's lives.

I love to use the way my parents treated me as a young athlete as a great example of parent involvement. My mom would baby me just like any other mother, but she also taught me to not give up on something just because I was not very good at it. My dad is a coach and now educator so he had an abundant amount of knowledge about athletics, but yet he was never a coach of mine or tried to tell me how to do every little thing whatever sport I was playing involved. His only words before every game I ever played were, "run fast, jump high", and good jobs waited from him after the games. The simple fact is that my parents were involved in everything I did, but they found a happy medium between not caring and pushing me to my limits. All parents need to take a deeper look into their relationships with their children and how well they are treating them. Then find that happy medium before it is too late and their children's athletic careers they wanted so badly are cut short because of them.

John Wooden is a famous coach and his players admire him as a father figure as well. Wooden would always tell his players,

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"Consider the rights of others before your own feelings, and the feelings of others before your own rights." (goodreads.com) If parents would take a look at this quote and quit trying to relive the past or make the future then young athletes would have time to grow and prosper before the pressure of parents and competing at a high level causes hate for such beautiful games. Young athletes need support and love not pressure and anger. Across the nation young athletes are being caused pain and suffering because of the pressure of their parents. The crisis will only grow and what could the rest of America do to stop it?

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# His Barbed Wire Halo ~ by Chelsea Coffey

Being in a room with somebody and automatically feeling warmth there is an amazing thing. Maybe it's because of a person that has a smile a mile-wide and a laugh that's graceful. Just being around a certain person makes everybody have the same feelings as him. He will always have a mile-wide smile and graceful laugh. This person could be worried about so many things, but never worried about himself.

I have a person like that, my best friend. I should actually say I had a person like that. My best friend just recently passed away on Halloween morning. Only being a few weeks ago, it still doesn't seem real. My best friend Seth Gardner Rutledge was sick his whole life. He had Cystic Fibrosis from the time he was six months old. I was having a hard time with him being gone, so my father sat me down and talked to me.

All I could think about was it wasn't fair. God had put this amazing person in my life, then took him away from me. It was then my father said, "Wasn't Seth put in your life to teach you something? Didn't you learn something from him?" He did teach me something. To never give up on myself, to never hold anything back, even if there is pain to live on through it because life can be short. He told me before he passed that I was an amazing gift from God. Knowing I had that kind of impact on his life will warm my heart forever.

Aaron Watson sings the lyrics "Showing off his band new spanking wings and his barbed wire halo" they mean so much because, that's how I picture him being in heaven. I miss him every day and think about him everywhere I go. He's here, always influencing me in my life still. I can't step into that room and feel the warmth of his smile anymore, although I can feel the warmth of his grace among me today. Now he never has to struggle to breathe again.

# Photos By Sandra Peña

# Equality in Writing ~ by Hunter Hines

For years the United States has fought and strived to bring down racial barriers to provide equal rights for people in this country. Although the barriers of race and equality have been broken down for the most part in everyday life, the writing community has not fully grasped the concept. By looking at works of authors both men and women, black, hispanic, any other racial minority, or white, one can see that the conflict still today has an undermining effect on how we decide to analyze or 'judge' their work. In this paper we will be looking at examples from Jacqueline Jones Royster's When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own, Cornel West's book Race Matters, and as well as other textural examples. It is my goal in this paper to confirm that the equality in the writing community has not fully been rooted in the discipline and that race does have an effect on how we perceive writing.

Hasn't racial equality been gained in the United States? Some people may argue that it essentially has. Well, they're right, by law the United States has given equal rights to all citizens no matter what color their skin is. In fact just recently, some states that have had encounters with racial discrimination in the past are wanting to get the "Voting Rights Act" appealed! According to the New York Times, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. when asked about the situation simply stated "Our country has changed." (Roberts Jr.). I think that by taking this step they are trying to proclaim that hey, racial discrimination is old news, we don't need those laws anymore. Haven't we proved ourselves worthy? I don't want this paper to turn into a political debate, but how can we, as nation say we are truly expressing equality when really racial tension still exists in areas like English composition? This side of the argument has a probable argument, on the surface, however the United States as a whole does a great job of putting on the mask of "Land of the FREE and home of the brave." I'm not saying the United States isn't a free country, but if we look beyond the 'cover', the sayings, and the laws, one can see that racial discrimination does indeed still exist, more specifically in the English community. But why is this? If all races are "equal" then why aren't their inputs and voices just as important as the rest?

Jacqueline Royster is today the Dean of Georgia Tech's Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts, as well as a Professor of English in the school of Literature, Communication, and Culture. Royster, in her paper describes particular events that stand out to me as a

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great example of how a voice that should be heard like any other, isn't. She describes the instance of her "authentic voice." Why authentic? Why isn't it like any other? Royster describes she feels like the reason why this is, is "home training." She says "the concept of 'home training' underscores the reality that point of view matters and that we must be trained to respect points of view other than our own." (32). The way we are 'brought up,' the things we are taught when we are growing up have a direct reflection on how we see other people. She describes that what some people grow up learning may not be how it is in the real world at all. (32). When I think of what she is saying the old saying "don't judge a book by its cover" comes to mind. Race should not be something that hinders us from hearing what someone has to say, it shouldn't be a speed bump in the credibility of their work. Royster states in her paper a saying that came to her is 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The 'Golden Rule' as it has come to be known. But why has the 'golden rule' became more of the 'bronze rule' in a sense?

The tarnishing of the "golden rule" and the downgrade to the "bronze rule" is a good example of the inequality we associate among the races in different social classes. Personally, I believe that that social class can be directly connected to the type of education someone receives. According to the American Psychological Association (www.apa.org) this is exactly right. They state the following educational facts: "1.) African Americans and Latinos are more likely attend high-poverty schools than Asian Americans and Caucasians. And 2.) [Recently] the high school dropout rate of Latinos was highest, followed by those of African Americans and American Indians/Alaska Natives." (APA). Typically, even without knowing someone, if they're a different race we have pre-formed emotions of how we will perceive and accept them. This is essentially just "judging a book by its cover." I believe that this is a reason in which races other than 'white' are not receiving equality. The way in which race is presented, "home trains" us from day one to view people by how they look and not what they possess. It is reasons like this that race still has an effect on how we perceive their voice, credibility, and overall equality. You see, I think that the "golden rule" is something that has yet to be achieved, as of now it is simply something that we strive for. When the golden rule is fully put into action only then will we see that race, wealth, social class, etc… do not matter when analyzing voice and opinion.

By looking at just about any work cited page, it is easy to see that 'credibility' is not easily given to races other than white. Here is what I mean by this, a small experiment if you wish. Take a modern English textbook, analyze the table of contents and the

(Continued on page 44)

authors it possesses· One will probably find that for the most part there is quite a racially diverse line-up of writers· Awesome! Equality right? Now turn to one of those authors and their work, preferably a white one, look at the work-cited page· How many foreign sounding names, women, and races other than 'white' do you find? See, credibility is not easily given; because of the racial boundaries that still exist it is hard for writers to have a credible paper with insight from people who may be African American or Latino· But why is it like this? Why is it so tough to give credit to someone who by law is just as equal as everyone else? According to H· Richard Milner IV the author of his article, Analyzing Poverty, Learning, and Teaching Through a Critical Race Theory Lens, he believes "the race problem" as "... when race is used but not understood and [can] cause people to stereotype populations of students and their families based on their membership in particular groups·" (Milner)· This problem can be tied back to the 'social class' issue and the fact that stereotypes happen every day and are a constant handicap in the educational world·

Cornel West is an American philosopher, academic, activist, author, intellectual, and member of the Democratic Socialists of America, and is recognized as the first African American man to ever receive a Ph·D· at Princeton in Philosophy· In his book, Race Matters, he has numerous claims about the racial tension in America and his feeling on the issue· West in my opinion states a claim that really makes me put my thinking cap on, he exclaims, "without the presence of black people in America, European-Americans would not be "white"—they would be Irish, Italians, Poles, Welsh, and other engaged in class, ethnic, and gender struggles over resources and identity· (107-108)· This doesn't apply to only blacks, however· I feel as if he is saying that overtime the stereotypes and constant degrading of races based on skin color has carried through the undertones over time and still haunts us today· Since the beginning of the United States we have seen people with skin complexities of 'not-white' as inferior· Take slaves for example, to this day there is still a haunting image of how poorly African Americans were treated and used as labor tools, the same goes for the Chinese· Throughout the 1860's The Chinese were paid dirt cheap to build our railroad for us, and that's about how we viewed their lives; dirt cheap· Circumstances like these are contributors as to why today we still have pre-formed opinions on people and where they come from· However it is not too late to change, West expresses his thoughts by saying "none of us alone can save the nation or world· But each of us can make a positive difference if we commit ourselves to do so·" (109)· By keeping this attitude each day can be a step in the right direction of having the true meaning of "equality" alive and well·

(Continued on page 45)

In conclusion, it is clear that racial boundaries have not been fully broken in the writing community. As a country we have fought for the equal opportunity for all races, and for the most part we have succeeded. Some may argue that the racial boundaries have been broken. And they have a point, on topics like voting rights and equality in everyday life. But by digging deeper and looking below the surface, one can begin to see just how "equal" we view other races. Take a look at a work cited page on just about any essay, see how many authors are women, see how many are 'not white,' then maybe you can see that although viewed as equal through law, their works, ideas, and voice are not typically heard as equal. But why is this? Could it be the "class" we associate races with, or could it be as simple as the "home-training" Royster describes in her essay? Summing up, equality in accordance to race is not completely throughout in the English discourse. Only then will we see all races have an "equal" voice, and stand in the writing community. I challenge you, next time you think you hear an "authentic" voice, to not think of it as authentic but rather a voice like any other; a voice that is equal.

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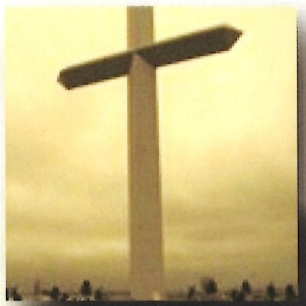
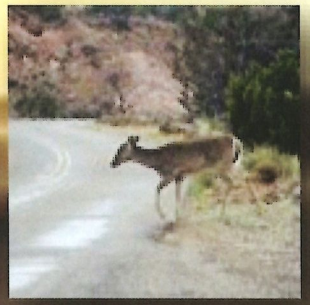
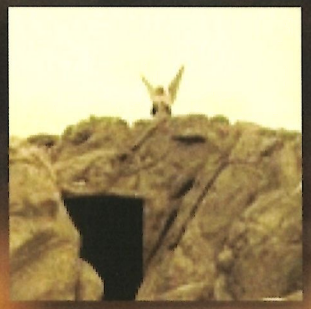






# Photos By Sandra Peña

# Quickly Stripped Away ~ Tyler Wilhelm

The first day of summer football was the best time of the year to me. The journey to a new season finally started, and it was glorious. The same sweaty smell of the locker room that would wrinkle up your nose, I assumed it always smelled like that. The worn out jerseys, and scuffed helmets used years before. We stepped out onto the practice field, the grass soft as a blanket. It was time for warm-ups. About half way through I felt a pop, and the pain like a sledge hammer slamming into my knee.

I cried, "My knee! My knee!"

The coach ran to me asking, "What's wrong, Wilhelm?"

"My knee popped!" I yelled,

"It looks like there is a big bulge on your thigh," he exclaimed.

So I was taken to the emergency room immediately. They laid me down on a bed I was still in excruciating pain. The doctor snatched my unhurt leg by grabbing it right below the knee, and started to mess with it. All along he talked to me trying to calm me down, explaining I need to take deep breathes.

He then grabbed the leg I had hurt, it was the worst pain I had ever experienced, I was screaming at the top of my lungs. He had to push my knee cap about seven inches back down into place. He then gave me a doctor's name out of Oklahoma City, so I could get checked to see if I needed surgery.

So after about a week of waiting I was taken to the doctor, he had me have and M.R.I. he then told me that this was the worst knee injury he had ever seen in his entire life.

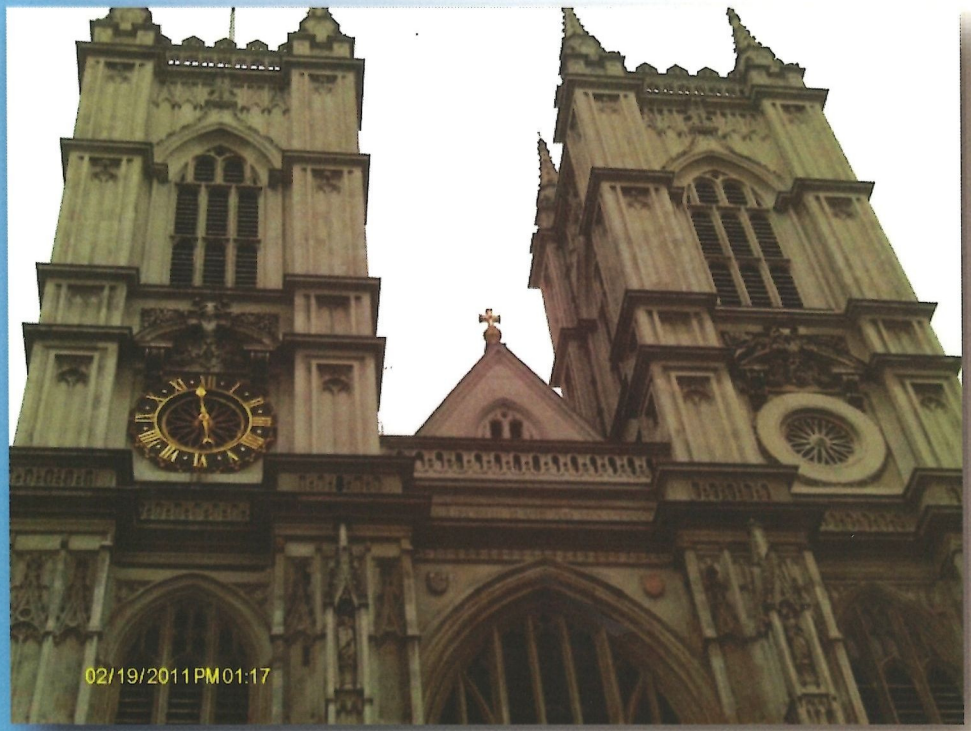
I then asked him, "Will I ever play football again?"

"You shouldn't be worried about football at this time, I'm worried about getting you to walk again."

My eyes filled with tears, I had never been more devastated. The thing I loved the most in this world was stripped away from me just like that.

# How to Make Your Baby Shine ~ by John Lewis

Washing your car at home saves you money, and saving money makes everybody happy. Here are a few tips and steps on how to wash your car at home. First, you need to get all of your supplies that you will need: bucket, sponge, towel, and of course the main part soap. Secondly, you fill the bucket with water put the soap in and swish it around, and then you take the water hose and spray your cherry red Mustang with water to get it wet. Then, you take the sponge with the soapy water and start washing your mustang. Then, you clean the wheels and hood, for example, you may have to take a brush and a little elbow grease to get all the dried bugs off the front that you have hit while driving. And then, when you are all finished washing it, you take the water hose again and wash off all of the soap. Lastly, you take the towel and dry off the car and buff to a nice shine. These are just a few steps to save money and have a nice clean car.



# DeShawna Smyth
# In
# London, England

# Gold Buckle Dreams ~ by Lane Wilhelm

I'm pulling in, and it's 6:59. The performance starts at 7:00! To my surprise, my bull is loaded in the chute, and I'm first out, as I hustle around juggling my equipment like a circus clown. There are things flying out of my bag and going every which way. The chute boss begins yelling above the crowd, "Hurry your ass up!" I stand in dismay, looking around at my equipment scattered like a hive of bees in a forest. In a usual situation I would wear my helmet and chaps along with the rest of my equipment, but here I only have just a few seconds to be ready and 30 minutes of things to do. The next thing I know, the crowd roars so loud that it sounds like thunder. As the bull comes rolling in thunder in is hooves and lightening in his veins, my heart beat is rising so loud, but it must be ignored. His hide is as black as the midnight sky. I slide down upon him with no fear in my eyes. The bellar in his voice beats all is all that is sung. I looked up to hear the announcer say I had just received a 90 pt. score. As I walked back to the pay window to pick up my check, my mom wakes me up, and I am in a cold, cold sweat.

"Thanks a lot, Mom," I said.

"For what?" She replied.

# THE RAMP, THE WRECK, AND THE REDHEAD ~ RAVNEET CHHOKER

I remember my bike wreck like it was just 11 years ago. It was a warm, humid Houston day in the suburbs. I had just gotten done with homework, and like usual, I hopped in my crocks and bolted out the door. It was an everyday thing on our street to be playing outside after getting released by our parental guardians. As soon as I stepped out, my ginger-headed friend Dustin was already setting up his homemade wood bike ramp. One thing about Dustin was that he was a risk taker, always trying ridiculous things like lighting gasoline on his own driveway. Once I grabbed my bike, Dustin looked up from his ill-made ramp and asked," Hey, you got any extra nails?" While I answered no, the question definitely alarmed me "Is the ramp even ready?" I asked myself, but I ignored my instinct because the glory of flying through the air was irresistible, and instead I took a slow start and jumped the ramp. When my bike tire connected, I felt the weak wood and terrible craftsmanship bend underneath my puny weight. Even though it was flimsy, it worked, so for the next few hours we were propping the ramp against sidewalks, driveways and anywhere else we could attempt some "crazy stuff." Even though we had a few falls, we were still were pushing ourselves and the ramp to the limit.

It was around 8 o'clock and we were starting to wrap it up. I was about to head inside, exhausted from the riding, when Dustin yelled excitingly," Ravi, try this out!" Without care, he had moved the ramp seven yards away from the curb and challenged me to jump to the other side. My first thought was "This red head is trying to kill me," but while I was pretty hesitant, i've never been known as a pansy. While weighing my options, I inspected the distance. It was farther than anything I've ever attempted, but it was do-able So without wasting another minute, I decided to do it.

With sweaty palms, I backed up about thirty yards for space to build up speed, and without a moment to spare from daylight ending I headed out. I remember asking myself if I had checked the ramp's integrity, but I decided to ignore my doubts. With my legs pumping, the bike started to build up some real velocity. As I approached the ramp, I put my head down and got ready to fly off. I felt the myself lifting off the earth at a shallow angle, after that I don't really remember anything. The only thing I remember is lying on the pavement holding my head wondering what went wrong. I then reached for the top of my head and felt warm blood running across my fingertips. I had just started trying to get up when my mom ran outside yelling at Dustin, somehow thinking he had something to do with it. After I groggily explained to my mom it wasn't his fault, she carried my injured self into the house so she could assess the damage. Luckily I didn't need stitches, but I did end up scarring up my knees pretty badly, which I guess is my lesson for acting like a fugitive with nothing to lose. Needless to say, I never tried to jump another ramp after that experience.

# Got Gravity? ~ By Shane Raleigh

Some people believe that the world would be a better place if gravity didn't hold them down to the earth. However, gravity is an essential factor in most every aspect of life! Gravity is more than a force that pulls people into their shoes; gravity is a force that pulls two objects together. One may think that gravity can only really go so far as to keep our solar system together, but in all actuality, the entire Milkyway Galaxy is held together by a black hole, a huge sphere of super-condensed matter. Gravity is important for many things, such as holding in our atmosphere, keeping our moon in place, and holding us in our solar system.

Our atmosphere is composed of gases and vapors which we breathe to stay alive. This air is made up of molecules, and molecules have mass. Mass is attracted to more mass, which means that the earth, a very large mass, is holding in the air, a still large but less dense mass. If the earth didn't have gravity, then we would suffocate due to lack of oxygen because all of it would float away. Also important is the atmosphere's ability to hold in the heat of the sun. Without an atmosphere, the earth would be very hot during the day and extremely cold at night. Our atmosphere even protects us from meteors and harmful UV rays. The rocks falling from the sky burn up due to friction, and most of the sun's UV rays are absorbed by ozone molecules (Rodriguez 1).

Sure, it is fun to have oxygen for the birds, but gravity does much more than hold things together. In the instance of the moon, gravity prevents the axis of the earth from tilting. Without the moon, Earth's rotation pattern would be unpredictable (Foing 7-8). Mars, a planet with two very small moons, has a very unstable axis. It has been observed that the polar icecaps of Mars have actually been shifting around, sometimes being found on the planet's

(Continued on page 53)

equator. Another amazing factor about the moon's gravity is that it tugs on the ocean. Without the moon's push and pull, the ocean would no longer have tidal zones for intertidal animals to live in. Like children are attracted to candy, the seas will shift closer to the moon.

The moon may prove useful in many ways, but the sun's gravity, which is extremely important to our solar system, does much better by far. Just as a heat lamp warms eggs, the sun provides energy for the earth. But without the sun, how would this planet fair? Without the sun, the earth would literally be a chunk of ice, perpetually drifting through space, plunged into permanent darkness because the universe is expanding. The other galaxies and stars are skittering away, and we don't have the necessary speed to catch up to them. If there was still life on sub-zero earth, then it would have to shovel frozen gases into a fire just to have air to breathe!

The earth is an amazing place, but none of it would be as beautiful as it is without gravity. This planet would be a dull world without the vivid colors, but thankfully, there is such a thing as gravity. Rejoice in this! Be joyful in the fact that ground travel is even possible! Pause to smell the rosy scent in the crisp air, to splash in the high tide of the deep, blue ocean, to bask in the warmth of the blazing sunlight. The world is a grand place with grand people, and it is all held together by the force exerted by mass. There is one downside to gravity, however; falling and bashing a knee on the sidewalk.

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# Par for the Course ~ Micah Waters

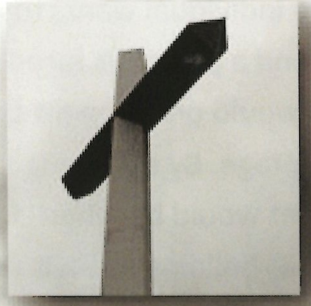
Since the dawn of time, man has been throwing rocks at things for fun. That all changed some time in the 15th century when the Scottish had a world-changing idea. They discovered that by hitting a ball with a bent stick, fun could be had. This fun came to be known as golf. Golf is like a box of chocolates, a person never knows what he or she is going to receive. Although the game of golf has changed over time, the reasons for playing have remained: to relax, to compete, and to avoid expiration.

Now, do not get me wrong, golf can be a frustrating sport, perhaps more aggravating than any. There are infamous professional golfers who have broken clubs after a bad shot, such as Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy (2 Examples). At the same time, however, one falls into a state of tranquility and solitude. Alone, beholding nature's wonders, surrounded by greenery no photo shop can imitate blue skies that make a person gaze involuntarily, it's an uplifting feeling. One's appreciation for life, and everything we're fortunate to have, will be clearly visible in his or her face. After a few holes, nothing is better than relaxing under a tree, drinking a cold pop, and taking in the view.

Unlike America's three main sports, golf is not a team sport. It's one person scrabbling against every other person. That's why golf is so competitive. Not only do players compete against other people but with themselves. A person always has to hit a better shot than before. It becomes addicting. It sure gets the juices flowing. Playing for something, whether it's money, bragging rights, or a giant golden trophy, will cause someone's ability to go into either fight or flight (mode?). That means a person will either rise to the occasion and play like he or she has no weaknesses, or they will plunge into a hole and struggle. Golf reveals true character and competitive nature.

Everyone gets old and feeble. Golf is to middle-aged fat men as middle-aged fat men is to drinking beer. When there's one, there's the other. Playing golf can act as a medicine, though. I see seventy to eighty- year-olds playing golf every week. It helps them stay active while not hurting their bodies. I see old farts walking the course. I don't even do that! It may be an odd way of saying it, but it's true: Golf helps people avoid expiration. Golf is like a refrigerator, and a golfer is like milk. A person can't avoid "expiration," but golf can prolong it, much like milk will get old and chunky unless it's in the fridge.

This all means that golf is a big part of life. "Golf is the most fun you can have without taking your clothes off," says Tiger Woods in Men's Golf Magazine. Golf gives a person the fulfillment he or she needs in his or her life. It is the binding that bring us together. So, play golf. Play golf to relax, play golf to compete, and just play golf for fun, but most of all, play golf to not turn in to chunky milk.



**Photos by**
**Sandra Peña**

# Pave the Way ~ By Wiley Mason

Every human being comes to a point in his or her life, when he or she is faced with two choices. In this case the individual has the option to pave the way, or to take the simpler, more efficient route and build sandals. There are many opportunities when people are faced with two options and have to make a decision.

Many people, at first thought, would chose to build sandals, which in some instances would not be bad. They would be faster, easier, and more efficient to build. Some people can argue that taking the "easy way" is simply lazy. The biggest downside to building sandals is that only one person will benefit from them. By paving a path, not only is this helping oneself but also it is very beneficial to the rest of humanity. Not only can the individual who paved the road use it, but also everybody else in society can use it. A paved road will endure harsh conditions and will last longer; in the end it would save money and time as a whole. There are many situations in life when one can pave a road or build sandals.

Sometimes when an individual wants to exceed everybody else or simply needs a quick fix, sandals would be beneficial. When competing with someone and a person is faced with the option to pave a road, which would help your competitor along with the builder, or build sandals, which would only benefit the builder, the smart choice would be to build sandals. By building sandals it gives the builder an edge or an advantage. By obtaining the advantage, the builder will be more successful at the competition. Times that paving the road would be expedient would be when there is not a competition and it could help many people. Paving the way would be viewed as unselfish, whereas building sandals could be viewed as selfish or self-centered.

Many people have different things that motivate them. Some people are motivated by their own personal gain, which again can be viewed as selfish or smart. For many people, their motivation includes their friends, family, and other people they care about. There are a few people that go a little further and not only care about themselves, friends, families, and other people they care about, but also complete strangers. These are the people that keep faith in humanity alive.

There are many opportunities when people are faced with two options and have to make a decision. People today may overlook how one small decision can greatly affect not only him or her, but others around him or her. One can only hope that they make the right decision.

# The Renaissance ~ Wiley Mason

## Abstract

The Renaissance is not only a time period that roughly spanned from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century but also the idea of reform and political rebirth. The Renaissance began in Italy, and eventually spread to the rest of Europe. The time period between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries marked a large movement in humanistic art, political reform, and academic scholarly. The Renaissance was the start of a large cultural advance from the middle ages. The word Renaissance was first used and defined by a French historian known by the name of Jules Michelet. Many famous artists and scholars came from this time period such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. Some of the most inspiring works of art came from this time period, such as the Mona Lisa, The Last Supper, and Vitruvian Man. There are many different aspects to the Renaissance and its meaning, but one thing that is inevitable is the fact that the Renaissance had and still has a huge impact on life today.

## The Renaissance

Beginning around the fourteenth century, there was a large scale cultural movement that swept across Europe with the movement starting in Italy. The movement had completely spread across Europe by the sixteenth century and influenced art, philosophy, politics, and many other aspects of life. Without the Renaissance, life as we, the people, know it today would be completely different.

## History of the Renaissance

The Renaissance began in the fourteenth century and continued through the seventeenth century. The word Renaissance comes from the French language meaning "rebirth" (Gascoigne, 2003). The beginning of the Renaissance was marked by the fall of the Roman Empire in early eight hundred years before the fourteenth century. Europe had been mostly dependent on Rome as far as their advancements in science, math, and technology. When Rome fell, Europe entered the time known as the "middle ages," which was a motionless or stagnant time period between 542 CE and the fourteenth century. During this time period people became timid due to the Lords and Kings that ran society by force. By the fourteenth century, epidemics, such as the Black Plague, wreaked havoc on much of the European population. Because of the amount of deaths caused by the Black Plague, workers were in short supply. As a result of the lack of workers, wages that employers had to pay rose with the demand for workers. Higher wages allowed many peasants to move higher up in the social classes. This in turn contributed to the rise of wealthy merchants, which would provide the money, resources, and the motivation for the Renaissance to begin (Brown, 2006).

## Changes in Society during the Renaissance

*(Continued on page 58)*

The social change during the Renaissance was slow but steady. By the end of the Renaissance, almost every characteristic of European life had been altered in some way. One of the biggest changes came with the idea of humanism. Humanism was an intellectual movement that instilled an attitude of live for today as opposed to the Middle Age belief that life was something that was to be suffered through by most people. Art was another large area during the Renaissance that underwent extensive changes. This time period produced many great artists such as, Leonardo da Vinci, Donatello and Michelangelo. These artists looked back to the Greek civilization for inspiration and ideas. One of the most famous paintings, The Mona Lisa, was created by Leonardo da Vinci himself. Science, another large aspect of the Renaissance, was largely modified and studied during the Renaissance time period. Famous scientists emerged such as Nicholas Cusanua, Galileo Galilei, Tycho Brahe, and Johannes Kepler (Brown, 2006).

## Personal Analysis

At the beginning of my research, I knew very little about the Renaissance and what impacts it had on life today. After doing research and learning from my gathered research, I personally believe that there is much to be learned from this time period. All aspects of life as we know it today would be different without the Renaissance (Wikipedia, 2013).

## Conclusion

The time period from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth century marked many important improvements in science, art, literature, and politics. Many influential people also came from this time period, people such as Leonardo da Vinci, Donatello, and Michelangelo. One thing that cannot be argued is the fact that the Renaissance has a huge impact on life today.

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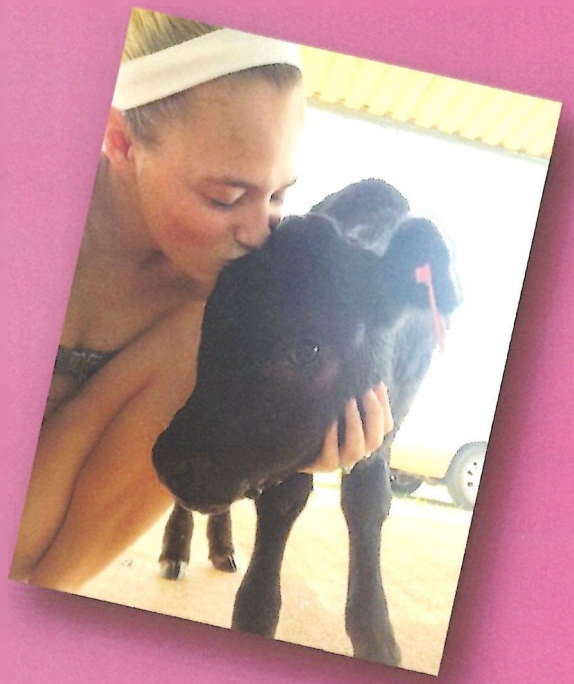
# Saving Sue ~ By: Alex Berry



*While it may be common in Western Oklahoma to haul an orphaned calf in the cab of your truck this was a first for me. My family and I had been at the river when we noticed a calf crying for its momma. It looked as if it hadn't eaten in weeks and was on the verge of dying. We soon found out that its mother gave birth to twins and only took to one of them. We didn't have it in our hearts to just leave the poor suffering calf there because we knew she would more than likely die. So when we got ready to leave for the day we loaded her up in the back seat of the pick-up, it was the only option we had. It was about an hour drive to get back home but it felt like it took a decade. The little calf was terrified because she wasn't familiar with riding inside a vehicle. By the time we made it home I ended up with a 150 pound calf sitting right on top of my lap. This little calf became known as Sue and she is the sweetest little calf you could ever meet.*

# My Father's Death ~ By Jordan Jenchs

I grew up south of Cheyanne, Ok, in the middle of the country. I lived with my mother, father, and older sister. We lived in a double-wide trailer house right next to my grandpa. The trailer house had 3 bedrooms, 2 ½ baths, a small office, a large living room and a massive kitchen. I would consider my childhood to be ordinary except for my father's absence. My dad labored in the oilfield and made pretty decent money, but he never gave my mom a dime of it. My dad was an alcoholic and a drug addict. He wasn't there the majority of my childhood. My mom worked three jobs to make ends meet. She worked at Great Plains Bank in Sayre, LaDonna's Liquor Store in Elk City, and she has a billing service for the oilfield on the side. My sister and I didn't lack the things we needed or wanted. My mom made sure we had everything we desired. My dad would be gone for weeks at a time, and we didn't ever know where he was or when he was going to be coming back. I remember when I was 6 years old, it was my birthday and my dad wasn't there. I asked my mom

"Why isn't dad here, he is going to miss my birthday cake that I made all by myself?"

"Your dad is at work and will be here tomorrow for your actual birthday, and we can celebrate again with him."

The next day he didn't show up. My sister and I got used to not even caring if he was there. On Christmas on year my dad was actually there, but he sat in his recliner passed out from drinking, it was almost like he wasn't even there. This was my childhood knowing my father but never really caring if he was there or not. My mom and dad divorced in 2006 when I moved to Sayre with my sister and my mom. We rented a small 2 bedroom house where I shared a room with my mom. My dad never came to visit, he would always call me and ask:

"When are you going to come out and see me?"

"Why should I take the time to come see you when you are always high?"

"I', your father and you should do what I say."

I would just get mad and hang up on him. It went on like this for years. On my 14th birthday he promised me that he would take my best friend and me out to the movies and dinner. When that day arrived I waited for

*(Continued on page 61)*

him to call me or show up, but he never did. I tried calling him but of course he didn't answer me. A few days after, I called him to see what his excuse was for blowing me off.

He picked up "Why are you calling me, I'm trying to sleep?" He said.

"You never came and got me on my birthday or even called to cancel, you're my dad and you promised me some- thing and I didn't even get a call from you!"

He started to yell something at me and I just got mad and hung up. Three months went by and on December 15, 2008 my mother woke me up telling me that my dad was in a car crash and was dead. We drove to Cheyenne Hospital, just my mom and I. My sister despised my dad and didn't want to go. She told my mom "I'm happy that he's dead." When I arrived the nurse took me back to see my dad, it was the worst thing I had ever seen. There was my dad lying on a table frozen, when he crashed he couldn't get out of the vehicle and died of hypothermia. I walked over to him, kissed his cheek, and said "I love you daddy and I'm sorry." I walked away, I couldn't take it anymore.

At his funeral, I wrote a poem for him telling him that he wasn't perfect and neither was I, but I loved him anyways. The funeral was a hard thing to go through with everyone hugging me and telling me he was a good man and that he loved me very much. I couldn't help thinking to myself what kind of decent man spends all his children's childhood too drunk and high to even spend Christmas with them. I was mad that he never apologized to me for not being there for me when I was young. I was only 14 when he died, that was the time when I needed him the most and he wasn't there for me.

For the next couple of years, I experimented with drugs and alcohol to try to understand why he would pick that over me. I never understood. I have learned through my father's death that life is too short and even when someone can ignore you your whole life, they still need to be forgiven. I forgave my dad in 2010 when my boyfriend's father passed away and they actually had memories to remember him by. My father might not have been the ultimate dad, but he was still my father. I love and miss appallingly. I will never hold a grudge on anyone again because I never know when he might decide to get into a car crash and leave me too.

# Artwork By William Barr

# Mrs. Martin ~ by Megan Stachnik

My son Alex had trouble with school until the most effective teacher I have ever had the pleasure of meeting took him under her wing. I will be forever grateful to Mrs. Martin for everything she did for him.

Mrs. Martin was a retired army officer. She was teaching elementary school kids because she genuinely loved what she did. She saw traits in Alex that reminded her of her own kids and hand picked him to be in her class that year because she knew she could help him. Alex's biggest problem was staying on task, and she created and kept to a strict schedule with the kids so that they knew what they were supposed to be doing every minute of the day. Alex is really meticulous about things and generally falls into a type-A personality. For him, that strict routine was a huge game changer and just what he needed to keep him on task.

My son also has a talking problem, as in talks non-stop including while he's asleep. Every teacher thus far has constantly tried to get him to be quiet and has punished him for his running mouth. Mrs. Martin's daughter had the same problem, so she had seen how most teachers considered it a distraction and would come down on talkative students. She was a huge advocate of channeling that glibness towards more productive things. Instead of giving Alex opportunities to speak out of turn in class, she would set him up as a "mentor" to students who needed extra attention so he could talk his head off explaining how to do an assignment without interrupting the class. It was brilliant!

Another huge reason I fell in love with her was her push on reading. Alex didn't like reading much because he never had anything to read that interested him. Once she noticed this, she brought him some books from her kids' collections that were their favorites at his age. The books were a little advanced for him at the time, but she helped him through the tough, and he found some that he genuinely enjoyed. He quickly became addicted to "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" books and a few others and started to devour every one he could get ahold of. With Mrs. Martin's help, we created a reward system to keep him reading as much as possible, and it's still a major success!

Most importantly, her absolute love and passion was to help these kids become everything they potentially could be. No one in her class was deemed a troublemaker. No one in her class was held up above the others nor was anyone left behind. She cared so much for each and every one of her students and made it a point to find what worked for all of them and to get their families on board with how best to help them succeed with other teachers in the future. We had a very close relationship with her, and I imagine she was the same with all of the parents of her students.

Mrs. Martin was a one-in-a-million teacher who turned my child from a difficult child to the top reader of the school and the student of the month twice in the year after. It was all thanks to the solid foundation she laid for Alex and for the freedom to be himself that she cultivated. Never has a teacher been more effective.

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