1927 undoubtedly an important station in the artist’s professional career. Not only show one of the first exhibitions emphasizing the art of photo-

In general, but it also constituted the first large summary of his progress, with which he hoped to establish connections to better photographers, in particular Man Ray. A group photograph also from 1927 reveals just how much a part of the international art Paris Kertész had already become. On the picture titled

see Piet Mondrian, Michel Seuphor, Adolf Loos, and the German artist Willi Baumeister met with “recognition and very great artists” and even toyed for a time with least on one other occasion Kertész did in Mondrian’s studio together with Gert Piet Mondrian, Michel Seuphor, and Marg
hoped to establish connections to
lar Man Ray. A group photograph
turned into the first large summary of
become. On the international art
lar Seuphor, Adolf Luft,
and very great
for a time with
Kertész, d'Amours,
for the first time with
Cléo ephor, and
Dane for Art and

Lights & Shadows

Vinh-le-Combes

Avinomei

Alvino

National Art

Alvino
Editors’ Note

From Candace

So here we are again. Your esteemed editors (and indispensable typists) have returned for another year of Lights and Shadows. Once more we have endured aching fingers, numerous paper cuts, and computer-weary eyes to help produce the literary magazine before you. Of course, we can’t take all the credit (but I’m sure Kris will take care of all the necessary acknowledgments). As for the rest, readers, I would like to introduce you to a work without fillers, imitations, or substitutions. Just raw literary workmanship. Enjoy!

From Kris

Wow, another year flooded with eclectic submissions. Whether expounding on the intricacies of the face of a mangled Barbie, or examining exactly what would happen if you misplaced a foot on the treadmill, the writers at UNA provide glimpses of talent that we’re lucky to see. So here’s the new magazine, with some returning writers and some fresh new talent. We’ve read and reread these stories, and now we’re handing you our faves and craves. Curl up with a frozen Coke, pet your dog and dig into the newest Lights and Shadows.
Contents

Literary works

Tyler Mason
“To Patricia, a Poetry Lover” ............................... 1
“A New Word” ........................................... 18

Kevin Graham
“Dog Days of Christmas” ................................... 2
“In Seurat’s Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte”
1. The Smoker ........................................... 42
2. The Trumpet Player ................................... 43
3. The Trumpet Player’s Ex .......................... 44
4. The Monkey ......................................... 44
5. Musing on the Fishing Lady .................... 45
6. To Georges Seurat .................................. 46

Linda Foust
“In the Chicken Coop” ..................................... 6

Candace Herron
“Canning” .................................................. 7
“Atalanta” .................................................. 16
“Serving” .................................................... 17

Holly Dotson
“The Shearling Coat” .................................... 14
“The Sand and the Sandcastles” .................. 20
“Never” ..................................................... 52

D. L. Waddell
“America the Gullible” ................................... 34

M. Brett Trapp
“Edgar” ..................................................... 36

Kris Szebenyi
“Cutting” ................................................... 59

Josh Stephenson
“Running” .................................................. 64

Emily Godwin
“Fractually” ................................................ 71
“Georgia Pilot” .......................................... 76
“Still Daylight Outside” .............................. 77

Artwork

Eve Styles
Beneath the Surface ....................................... 11

Gary Hart
Lingering Voices .......................................... 12

Jenny Higginbotham
Pollen ....................................................... 13

Andrew Sutherland
658 N. Wood Ave ....................................... 31
Untitled ..................................................... 73

Emily Durden
What She Sees ........................................... 32

Jaclyn Whitt
Self Portrait, Artist’s Inner Self .................. 33
Puffed Taffy .............................................. 74
Untitled ..................................................... 75

Jessica Clos
Untitled ..................................................... 49

Dustin McNeal
Galleria D’arte di Dio .................................... 50

Jason Behel
Old Growth Pitcher ..................................... 51
This year's recipients of the Patricia Robinson Prize are Holly Dotson and Kevin Graham.

Holly Dotson was born and raised in Corinth, Mississippi, and moved to Florence in June of 2004. She has earned a B.S. in English from the University of North Alabama, where she still attends and is currently pursuing a M.A. in English. She has a wonderful husband of five years, Gent, as well as two beautiful children, Gracie and Noah. Other inspirations include Margaret Walker the mother, teacher, writer and poet who refused to sacrifice anything to reach her goals.

Kevin Graham is a native of Cullman, Alabama. He is a graduate of the University of North Alabama with a Bachelor's degree in English Language Arts. He is currently teaching eighth grade language arts at Maddox Middle School in Jasper, Alabama. His favorite writer is John Steinbeck, whose works—such as East of Eden—are a vibrant source of inspiration. He also enjoys creating sketches and portraits with both pencil and charcoal.
To Patricia, a Poetry Lover
by Tyler Mason

You were never satisfied with anything you showed me and once, you asked me if I liked anything you had written. Perhaps that is why a poem about your death has taken longer than a year to write and still the author cannot be satisfied. And though I know you respected and maybe even loved creative nonfiction, I hope poetry consumed you. I hope couplets and quatrains ate at your brain, slowly, like zombies in a horror movie, starting at the spinal cord and joining with troops of sextets and octets at the medulla oblongata. I hope you could never complete a poem, even while similes tortured your thalamus and allusions in collusion with assonance tormented your hippocampus. In those final few days, I hope somonkas and pantoums locked hands and began a march through your pons. I hope the words to describe the cadence of the marching eluded you. That you never found the words to describe it, though you searched and were still searching for them, scavenging dictionaries, phone books, and road signs. And in your last thoughts, I hope you saw your childhood, on a cool summer day, drinking lemonade and watching your mother put out the laundry. In that moment, when you first felt inspired and saw in the distance a fragment of a poem, I hope metaphors took arms against you and with personified villanelles close at hand, attacked your cerebellum.
Dog Days of Christmas
by Kevin Graham

Around the middle of December is not a good time to be caught anywhere in the city limits of Cullman, Alabama. Down the five-mile main stretch of town, cars, people, and those frilly little Christmas ornament things that light up and hang on lampposts are about the only things to be seen. The occasional Salvation Army Santa, with his black stubble showing above his loosely fitting white beard, pops up on street corners here and there. That is, of course, not to mention Cullman’s everyday attraction of having more red lights per capita than any other city in the world.

I had been home from college for Christmas break for three days, and I was trying to weave my way through the automobile madness after finishing my holiday shopping for Karen. I had agreed to meet her at her house that afternoon and join her while she picked up a few last-minute gifts for her family. Normally, I would have passed on such a deadly quest, but, being the significant other, I figured I had to live up to my heroic duties. Not only that, but the trip would also give us a chance to escape temporarily from our nagging parents.

When I got to Karen’s little brick house, set off a winding back road, I had to let her mom pull out of the driveway before I could get in. Karen later told me that her mom had gone to the grocery store, and she wanted to leave before her mom got back. When her mom had started down the road, Gus, their stumpy, brown dachshund, dashed after the car.

“We need to take those?” I said to Karen, pointing to a stack of about fifty stamped Christmas cards on the dining room table. “Yeah, I reckon,” she said, and she heaved up the stack of puffy envelopes. “I need to put Gus up right quick.”

“You mom’ll be back in a minute, won’t she?”

Karen rolled her emerald eyes. “Good point. Let’s just go.” She locked up the house, and we hopped in my red Ford Ranger and started down the gravel driveway.

Almost all car-chasing dogs have a designated cutoff point, a spot where they helplessly give up and go back home, and Gus’s was a small spot of tall, dead weeds we had almost reached. I had built up too much speed to stop before the spot, so I floored it and tried to beat him past it.

Thump.

My heart sank. I slammed on my brakes and looked in the mirror. He was flopping like a bluegill on a dusty pond dam.

“You hit him!” Karen said. She glared through the back glass. Denial is the first step people go through when they’re hit with tragic news, but she completely skipped that stage. She kept sitting there screaming those three heart-wrenching words over and over, as though I didn’t hear or understand her the first eighteen times.

Karen slammed the stack of Christmas cards down on what most people call the transmission hump, jumped out of the truck, and ran toward the dog. I put on my flashers and tried to stop her before she got bitten. Animals that have just been run over, no matter how gentle they are, would snap at Mother Theresa. “Go try to find a tub and a towel,” I said.

Karen came running through her yard with a blue plastic tub and a white towel. She set the tub next to Gus, and I thickly wrapped my hands and wrists in the towel, holding my head down so she couldn’t see my wet eyes. I put my left hand under his hip and my right hand under the back of his neck. Surprisingly, he didn’t snap at me, and I gently put him in the tub.

Karen got back in my truck, and I tucked Gus in the tub fairly tightly with the towel. I carefully set the tub in Karen’s lap and told her to keep his head as far away as possible. We took off for Lee’s, a vet about five miles away.

When I took the very first curve, half of the Christmas cards flew off the transmission hump and landed under my feet.
in the clutch and tried to pick some of them up, but I swerved, and the other half flew under Karen’s feet. In the process, my Sun Drop in the cup holder decided to spit on Mr. and Mrs. Danny Thompson’s card. Karen leaned over to pick up some of them, and Gus started grunting. Naturally, Karen started crying over him, forgetting about the cards. The dog then lifted his head and began banging it on my dash, getting blood all over the place.

“Try to hold him by the back of his neck a little bit,” I said. “He’s gonna be okay. Look at him swingin’ his head like that. I bet I couldn’t even do that on a good day.” I was trying to console Karen, make sure Gus didn’t bite her, shift gears, kick Christmas cards out of the way, keep from puking from the smell of Gus, and drive ninety miles per hour through red-light-riddled Cullman.

We came to a screeching halt in the parking lot of Lee’s Veterinary Hospital, and I turned off the engine and looked at Karen. She had calmed down somewhat and stopped crying, but her moist, tear-stained cheeks were killing me. Until that moment, when I saw her gently stroking the top of Gus’s head with her index finger, I thought I had run over her dog. It wasn’t until then that I really looked at the situation as though I had run over a member of her family.

I went around the truck, took the tub from her, and we quickly walked into the hospital.

Dr. Lee was talking and laughing with his secretary when we walked in. When he heard the electronic bell on the door, he looked our way. His smile faded, and his laugh lines disappeared. “Bring him back here,” he said, grabbing his white coat and vanishing through a red swinging door. I swear, it was almost as if we had phoned ahead. My expression must have tipped him off.

We took Gus into the small room and put the tub down on a large metal table. Dr. Lee put on a pair of rubber gloves and gently lifted Gus and laid him on the table. The dog was still breathing wildly.

“I ran over him about fifteen minutes ago,” I said. Then I gave Dr. Lee my ‘back tire of a small truck’ routine, like I was some sort of professional or something.

Dr. Lee talked very softly to Gus, as he calmly ran his hands over the dog’s body to check for badly broken bones. None were found. He then lifted the eyelids and showed us how Gus’s irises were moving around very rapidly. He explained to us that almost all animals do that when they are in a state of shock, and he hinted around at the fact that he had never seen a case that bad.

For a few seconds, the only sound in the room was the panting, which had slowed to about the pace of a heartbeat. Dr. Lee looked up from Gus and solemnly told us that Gus probably wouldn’t live thirty more minutes, no matter what medical procedures were followed.

My heart jumped to my throat, and I put my quivering arm around Karen’s shoulders. She felt very stiff and looked as though she were in another world, like she hadn’t heard a single word since we had gone in.

I gently massaged her right shoulder. “Let’s go get your mom and come back, okay?” She nodded slowly, looking straight ahead.

I opened the truck door for her when we got outside, and a Christmas card fell out of the cab. I picked it up, and Karen halfway laughed. Before we got in, we picked them up and dusted them all off. The post office was on our way back to her house, and she suggested dropping them off at the drive-thru mailboxes.

I pulled in the circular drive and dropped the cards in the blue mailbox. I looked in my rearview mirror to make sure nobody was behind us, and I took the opportunity to cry like a five-year-old girl who has just been spanked with a hickory switch.

Karen took off her seatbelt, leaned over the console, and wrapped her arms around me. I bawled, wiped my nose, and apologized over and over, as though she didn’t hear or understand me the first eighteen times. She kept running her hand through my hair and telling me it wasn’t my fault. She eventually found a napkin in her purse and gave it to me.

As we were driving away from the post office, I said between sniffles, “I bet Danny Thompson’s gonna think somebody pissed all over his Christmas card.”

I’ve never seen her laugh so hard.
In the Chicken Coop
by Linda Foust

When one has lived with chickens and longs for peacocks in the barn, one has gathered eggs yet looked for gold among the drab feathers. More, more and more, one longs for more money in the purse, horses in the stable, silver in the china cabinet and pie safe, dreaming of finer things. They look behind to see fox, weasel, or chicken snake ready to raid. One wishes to exchange foxes for accountants, lawyers and terrorists. One does not see the obvious, the miracle of the egg, the grandeur of the egg, the simple beauty of fried chicken on a cool Sunday noon. One overlooks the good in life, always longing for more energy lost in dreams, looking out, when one has lived with chickens and longs for peacocks in the barn.

Canning
by Candace Herron

Each summer my mother and I are sealed together with the steam of pressure cookers and the sweat we share. It comes like clockwork, the hoarding away. Like chipmunks we pack and store the fruits of labor to savor during the winter months. Scurrying to save the spoils of another season, the women of my family are prepared for disasters of nuclear-holocaust proportions.

The pickle recipe came from Mr. Arthur Hewitt. My mother met him at an indoor flea market—she, looking for cheap jars, he, looking for a little conversation. Small talk was given in exchange for a simple recipe that Mr. Hewitt had memorized from a childhood spent in a Southern Great Depression.

3 parts white vinegar
1 part pickling salt
1 stalk of fresh dill (preferably in flower)
1 clove of garlic
2 tsps. alum

-enough cucumbers to fill a jar

Every June, Mr. Hewitt receives a basket of pickles. I am the designated deliverer. There is a certain pleasure involved in placing the sour morsels into his ancient hands. Included in the basket is a small hand-written note, a warning to wait at least a month to allow the pickles to cure. My mother never forgets a thank you.

July is the season of assembly lines. The kitchen of my parents’ home is arranged into a factory when necessary. Rows of steam-sterilized jars and metal dishpans line all counters, tables, and chairs. The tomatoes are first. They are fragile; the line between perfect ripeness and utterly useless is thin. We rush to save them all. The beautiful ones are preserved whole, their red globes of flesh suspended in animation within glass containers. The misshapen are mercifully pureed and made into sauces and salsa.

Two summers ago I added to my mother’s repertoire. Her salsa is mine. She planted the cilantro reluctantly, but was encouraged by the way it thrived. Survival is a thing to be admired.
Trial and error and weeks of eaten mistakes ended with mother’s close-eyed smile of approval.

- 1 lb. fresh plum tomatoes (seeded and skinned)
- 2 cups fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 cup fresh lime juice
- 4 jalapenos (deseeded for mild, seeds in for hot)
- 2 pablano peppers
- 1 small yellow onion

My father has been caught with his chip-laden hand in the pre-canned salsa more times than a three-year-old tempted by the cookie jar. It is always taken with good humor and the occasional roll of the eyes from the salsa makers.

Coming to college is a test in survival. Thankfully, I was well prepared. Amongst the luggage I took to freshman year lay a box of Ball, Kerr, and Mason jars. Combined hands filled each one, and each lid was labeled in my mother’s sprawling script. Her daughter would not starve. Her daughter would not have a reason for an empty stomach. Money was not a substitution for a taste of home encased in glass. Of course, conditions were attached before I reached the front porch. My mother guarded her jars with the ferocity of a suburban, Tupperware-hoarding housewife. The jars must be returned, empty and awaiting the summer.

Soup is the last product of summer. Its heterogeneous composition demands it. All the labors of the growing season are brought together in a fusion of vegetarian tribute. It is a lengthy process. The work to be done, as well as gossip and conversation, brings grandmothers, aunts, and sisters together on my parents’ front porch. There are two days of shelling, shucking, snapping, and sorting before the raw ingredients are ready. Then the company spills over into the kitchen to follow the soup into the jars and to end the last conversations over coffee-cups.

- 1 part sweet corn
- 1 part okra
- 1 part purple-hull peas
- 1 part green beans
- 2 parts beefsteak tomatoes
- thyme, oregano, marjoram, and salt to taste

My house is home to many, and its small kitchen has nourished more than I can count. When we talk, my mother asks who I have fed lately. She is proud that her work is enjoyed by so many. To her, the empty jars I bring home each spring have more value than any gift I could purchase.
Gary Hart
*Lingering Voices*
First Place Monochromatic

Jenny Higginbotham
*Pollen*
Second Place Monochromatic
The Shearling Coat
by Holly Dotson

Unto Adam also and to his wife, Eve, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

Genesis 3:21

A gift. Eve's appeared within a lacerated cloud. Still warm from the sacrifice.

Sewn with light. A perfect fit. Mine came wrapped in blue paper and silver bows. A birthday present. Two sizes too big. Stiff and cold. I'm no animal rights activist. Still, I didn't know the proper reaction to a dead animal in a box. But I slid into the sleeves—once the proud buttocks and strong back of a she-lamb, wandering hills and eating soft blades of grass,

now awkward and clumsy, draped over my shoulders. I was certain it was a better fit for the sheep. How many nights did Eve lie awake amid her guilt, watching the stars from her tent, or counting the stalagmites on the cave ceiling,

wearing her fleece pajamas—her previously beloved pet? But perhaps the fruit—still bitter on her lips—had hardened her. Maybe she wore it like a second skin without a second thought. Out of necessity. Cold from the cracks in the tent seams and the stone in her chest. As I wore mine, because it was January. Because it was a gift.
Atalanta
by Candace Herron

Foolish girl
Relinquishing maidenhood
for pretty fruit

The golden trinkets
would have waited
until the race was won.
A dead man wouldn’t protest
your belated gathering.

Boar huntress
Abandoning wildness
for domestic duty

Did your trophy apples
keep you warm
when Hippomenes
had a few too many with the boys
and forgot to come home.

Bear daughter
Surrendering independence
for handsome ownership

Pity.
Not everyone can be Nike.
Someone must be the material girl
and fall for shiny things.

Serving
by Candace Herron

For $2.13 an hour
I serve you
pirouette and dive into subjugation
finding out the little things
that make you feel
at home

For $2.13 an hour
I fall in love with the dishwasher
and busboy, the fry-cook and expeditor,
adrenaline forming bonds
like those of some Vietnam battalion

For $2.13 an hour
I burn hands and punish feet
and push the corners of lips
to limits of beauty queens
all for 10, 15, 20 percent

For $2.13 an hour
I huddle with compatriots
in brick back alleys
finding short valor
in shallow-inhaled menthols

For $2.13 an hour
I try to give the man in the gray suit
a telekinetic blowjob
for two extra bills
left on my table

For $2.13 an hour
I try to push the thoughts of the end
to the beginning
then give in with a cash out,
tip out to the highest bidder
A New Word
by Tyler Mason

When I was seven and the house still smelled like dead fish, my mother would bring a new word to my door every night.

One night, when my father was in the hospital with his slipped disc, my mother knocked on my door. She was late coming home from the hospital. She knocked on my door loudly, and I knew she had been drinking. I was awake. Her stumbling up the stairs had woke me up and relieved me.

"Cuntilingus," she said through the door. I was only half-awake, or I was confused. "Cuntilingus," she said and knocked again on the door.

"What is cuntilingus?" I said, opening the door of my bedroom. She was drunk, but her clothes were neat and secure around her body. She was still in her dress suit.

"Cuntilingus. It's a word," she said. "You know. Like asphodel and halfling. Or...Oh, what's another good word, Sam? What's the most beautiful word you can think of?" She looked down at me in my pajamas, sweaty and red-eyed. "What's your favorite word?"

"Northing," I said, glowing at my drunken mother. "I think it is so great."

My mother snapped suddenly. I don't mean she lost it, she just snapped back, quickly and excitedly. "And what does it mean? What does northing mean? Hurry, three seconds."

"Going north or latitude." My mother smiled. She reached down and scooped me like ice cream, or like she scooped the dead fish at work.

"You are the smartest little boy in the world." She rubbed my head. I loved the smell of my mother's drunk breath—whiskey mixing with beer—in my nose.

"What does it mean? Cuntilingus?" I asked in her arms. She had heard the word from my father. She had sat in the hospital room all night and sipped the whiskey she sneaked into the room with him. He had told it to her during a joke.

"Let's look it up." She kissed me on the forehead. Quickly, she carried me down the stairs and opened her small college dictionary. We flipped through the c's until she came to cunt. "It's not here," she said. "How do you think you spell it, Sam?"

"Cunt-a-ling-us. C-u-n-t-a-l-i-n-g-u-s."

"Yes, exactly," she said, slamming the dictionary shut. "It must be a brand new word. It must not be in this dictionary or maybe even any dictionary. Maybe your father created it. Wow. Your father is such a genius. Let's make up something for it to mean, Sam. What do you want it to mean?"

"Let it mean," I said, "Hmm."

My mother interrupted me. "Let it mean a new pair of shoes," she said. "Who doesn't love a new pair of shoes?"

I stomped furiously. "No. Let it mean: when people talk to horses."

"Yes. Brilliant. Yes. Like Mr. Ed." I did not answer. "Or like Dr. Doolittle." She set down and pulled me into her lap. Lightly and gently, she kissed me on the forehead.

Of course, my mother had it all wrong. I did not mean talking horses; I only meant when people talk to horses. Not when they talk back.
The Sand and the Sandcastles
by Holly Dotson

Life sometimes throws us those rare moments when all seems to fit—when every aspect of our existence is clicking and turning with its fellow details to form this magical clock. *Tick—tock—tick—tock,* and all is at peace and harmony with everything that surrounds it. The whole experience can be quite overwhelming, and for this reason, is encountered only a few times. But from these scarce flashes come the most intense, plummeting-to-the-depth-of-your-soul insights—rare jewels of knowledge. These days are brought on in many ways, but they are always life-changing.

_Lysergic Acid Diethylamide-25._ also know as _Acid, 'Cid, Bart Simpson, Barrels, Blotter, Heavenly blue, Hits, "L," LSD, Liquid, Liquid A, Lucy in the sky with diamonds, Microdots, Mind detergent, Orange cubes, Orange micro, Owsley, Paper acid, Sacrament, Sandoz, Sid, Sugar, Sugar lumps, Sunshine, Tabs, Ticket, Twenty-five, Wedding bells, or Windowpanes, was first made in 1938, by Dr. Albert Hofmann, and discovered to be psychoactive in 1943. But a naturally occurring form was used in a religious ritual by a secret society of Greeks over 2,000 years ago in Eleusius._

I wanted to be spiritual—that's one reason why I started using drugs. I had been to church. Three times a week whether I needed it or not since I was two-and-a-half. Maranatha Fundamental Baptist Church had a children's church. There were rules: No pants on girls, No shorts or long hair on boys, No standing when not asked, No talking unless talked to. But I could get tokens—one for just coming every week, one for bringing my Bible, one for saying my memory verse (word for word from the King James Version), and two if I sang when I was supposed to and sat quietly in the front row next to the preacher's kid Leah Beth. The Twenty-third Psalm, the Lord's Prayer, and the Beatitudes, brought 25 tokens a pop. I could get tokens, and tokens meant that I could get candy from the treasure chest, or if I saved them up from week to week, patiently, hoarding them away, I could get toys from Wal-Mart bought just for me. But when I turned 12, I had to sit straight-backed on the pew, smiled and nodded during the service, and cursed on the phone about Miss Marie and Bro. Travis when we got home.

My dad didn't go to church. Not even on Easter. He was in Vietnam, and I learned in 10th grade history that everyone who was in Vietnam did drugs. He didn't go to church and he didn't scream at me when I was learning to drive my brother's five-speed. Not even when I turned off of Harper's Drive going 60 miles an hour, forgetting to push the clutch in with the brake and causing the car to shake like an alcoholic before the first morning drink. He didn't go to church, and he didn't tell me I was stupid when I dropped the good china on the kitchen floor. I never saw him drink a beer. I never saw him smoke a joint, but he went to school in the '60s. And everyone knows that everyone who went to school in the '60s did drugs. (Except my mother. While everyone else was getting high, she was smoking Swisher Sweet cigars behind Judy McCall's barn. But everyone else did drugs.) My dad was in Vietnam. Everyone who went to Vietnam did drugs. So—I came to the conclusion that spirituality must be this purple cloud floating above my head, and if I did enough dope, if I got high enough, I would float right up into it. So I did LSD.

The DEA's list of Schedule I drugs includes heroin, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamines, and LSD. LSD is also listed as Schedule I in the International Convention on Psychotropic Substances, an international drug-control treaty.

With any drug, part of the high came from the satisfaction of actually getting the drug into my possession—knowing I had it in my pocket made me somehow feel better about myself, like I had a secret potion that made me Superman. But the process of getting it usually included hours of calling people whom I only knew by nicknames like "Fat Boy" and "Spudy," driving to empty parking lots or graveyards, and waiting. There was always waiting, which built up tension, and the only thing that relieved the tension was the freshly received drug, wrapped like a Christmas present in the cellophane of a cigarette pack or folded up into a square of tin foil.
Sold by the single hit of blotter, LSD sells for $3 to $10 per hit, though it sometimes ranges as high as $25, depending on where you purchase it. Captive markets such as raves generally produce high prices while friend-to-friend it's often sold at cheaper prices, if not free.

James was my best friend's boyfriend, and the father of her new baby. They never married, and it was a good thing. James was a casualty of Nancy Reagan’s War on Drugs. He was nice enough—he always gave me free drugs, but he lacked something. One time he took my friend, Gent, and me to his dope dealer’s double-wide at the end of a long dirt driveway somewhere between Corinth and Pickwick—no phone, no cable, no one there with more than three teeth in their heads. The porch was a couple of 2x4s nailed to the tops of beer kegs. Everyone was talking when James said, “Yeah, I remember the time my dad and I...” and he jumped up, ran out of the house, slammed the door, got in his truck and left. Just left us there. He came back about thirty minutes later. My friend and I were standing on the porch, wondering if the 2x4s and kegs would hold up long enough for us to jump from it, trying to remember which way the highway was from there, hoping the guys inside had forgotten we went out to “get some fresh air.” But James did come back. He was nice enough, and whatever he lacked he made up for with acid. He always had acid, so I stopped by to get a few hits before Gent and I went back to Florence.

LSD is one of the most commonly used ‘psychedelic’ or 'hallucinogenic' substances. It comes in a variety of forms. LSD is most commonly found in the form of small squares of paper called blotter (full sheets of paper are decorated with artwork or designs, perforated, then soaked in liquid LSD solution and dried). Blotter is most common because it is easily produced, easily concealable, and the format allows for few adulterant chemicals.

James lived in the back of a Jr. Food Mart gas station in a huge square room that used to act as storage for beer and cigarettes. To get to James, I had to go through the front of the store and talk to Tracy, the storeowner, a thirty-something junior college drop-out with a medium build, puff of brown hair, and permanently blood-shot eyes. And to get to Tracy, I had to pass by the store’s usuals, high school kids taking advantage of the weekend freedom, and the worn old men checking in with Tracy to talk about the latest Ole Miss game as they munched on jo-jo potatoes and burritos. I didn’t enjoy either one.

There is a gulf that divides high school and college. It’s a strange ravine that is wedged between the young and the younger, some cross it earlier than others, and some never reach the other side. It’s sad to see people fall in the middle—twenty-four years old and still driving crooked back roads, getting drunk and stoned with seventeen-year-olds, trying to hold on to the time they had long lost—a time when they were younger, a time when the world was a table of endless possibilities spread before them. Not that I felt superior, I just wasn’t interested. I didn’t care about the gossip or the small town nonsense that hung over them like a menacing cloud. All that I wanted was to get high.

The production of LSD requires an experienced organic chemist. All useful synthesis methods begin with Lysergic Acid (Schedule III), a synthetic chemical derived from ergot alkaloids, which are produced by the ergot fungus that grows on rye. LSD is produced in crystal form, primarily by a small number of knowledgeable chemists in fully equipped laboratories. The DEA speculates that it is produced mainly in the United States and Canada. A single hit of most blotter paper contains somewhere in the range of 50 - 150 ug (micrograms) of LSD. There is no way for the average user to determine the strength of a piece of blotter other than by word of mouth.

“This is the best acid I’ve had since that last shipment I got from that chemist dude in Nashville,” James said. His eyes shot back and forth as we walked to a refrigerator that sat in one corner of the room. His head turned side to side like he was looking for someone to break through the paper-covered glass front. I didn’t ask if he was okay or if he was expecting someone. I took the rectangle of tinfoil he handed me from his freezer, stuck it in the of my underwear, thanked him, and left before someone did bust through the glass front.
Even in low doses, LSD is a powerful psychoactive drug that can be significantly affected by an individual’s previous life experiences, his mindset going into the trip, and the setting where the trip takes place. Physically or psychologically unsettling events in the days before an LSD trip can blossom into more serious distress and trauma while tripping.

There are many ways of minimizing possible dangers and trauma: making sure to have others around for first time of high-dose experiences, choosing carefully when and where to use a substance, taking a little time to prepare mentally for an experience with LSD by relaxing, having an intent for the experience, or incorporating a comforting and calming ritual into the preparation (clean the house, adjust the lighting, choose music that will go with the sort of experience you’re looking for, etcetera).


“Do you think we should go ahead and eat this or wait until we’ve got the drinks?” I asked.

“It’ll get dark in about three hours,” Gent said, “We want to be peaking by sunset.”

The onset of an LSD experience takes 20-60 minutes, depending on the quality and quantity, and coming up can take 15-30 minutes. There is often a slight feeling of energy in the body, and extra twinkle to lights, or the feeling that things are somehow different than usual. During the “coming up” stage of a LSD experience, an individual feels a variety of physical, mental and emotional changes.
I stood in the candy isle. Lines and lines of shiny wrappers, reflecting light, but I knew better. I knew what they held behind the reflection. The candy and beef jerky. I knew. They wanted me to buy them, but I knew.

The Starburst pack was blue, and blue was a good color. Made with real fruit juices? How exciting! I opened the pack and put a square in my mouth. Fruit juice wax, I went to get Gent.

He stood in front of the Frozen Coke machine—a swirling mass of cola-colored frost. Soon, we were both standing.

“Man.”

“Yeah. I know.”

The curling layers of tiny frost particles stacked one on another, forming an intricate quilt of spinning, caramel-colored ice. And we stood. And we watched. And we stood. And the line formed behind us. And we stood. The machine was humming warm. We were smiling. And we stood. And the ice made quilts. And the fruit juice wax was dripping from the corner of the smile locked on my face. And we stood. Until the gas station attendant came to us and said something. I don’t know what. Her lips moved. The people behind us acted like they knew what she said. I stared into her eyes. I thought if I stared long enough, I could resurrect the already-spoken words from her thoughts, play them backwards to decode any hidden messages, and replay them forwards. Replay the fully decoded, better-than-the-first-time sentence from her mind.

“Hek-bock soon daow? Thismuth do-yah binkle-dom.”

Her lips moved again, and we stood. And fear—the kind of fear that I have in dreams when all of a sudden I realize I’m naked. I’m naked in the middle of Wal-Mart during the middle of my wedding to some famous guy—fear that doesn’t seem to have an origin or a rationale draped over me like a black veil. I was smiling fruit juice wax.

On our way to the door, I looked back at the cashier. “Can I help ya’ll kids with something?” she asked. Her lips didn’t move.

It takes 2-6 hours for an LSD experience to plateau. The effects of the onset and coming up stages continue during the plateau stage, but an individual may experience new sensations.

Gent had to pee. I sat on the concrete sidewalk that led to the stream at Buzzard Roost. The sun melted into the hills behind us, melting the sky as it went down, charring the trees into black silhouettes against the melting sky. I grabbed a handful of rocks at my feet. Gent had to pee; he was brave. I had to pee, but the bathrooms were on the charred hill, and I saw swirling—black on black swirling and spinning. The spirits of old Indian warriors cursed with boredom in the afterlife, swirling in the charred silhouettes. Black against black. A vortex sucking life into death.

One. Two. Three. Four. Five, six, seven. Seven cold stones in my hand. Rocks in my hand? That meant something. The Indian spirits put them there. They hold a secret. Gent sat next to me.

“Dude, look at this one,” I said, holding up a piece of cement that had broken off the sidewalk.

“It’s like a microcosm of Corinth. You know, like if Corinth was a planet. And this big brown rock over here, it’s—it’s like Wal-Mart. Because that’s like the center of our society. You know? Like all small towns—you know, they center around Wal-Mart and stuff. Consumerism. It’s like taking over. And all these—these small pebbles, you know. They’re like the churches. And these little black dot-rocks are the houses. You know? And then the bottom part that’s flat and smooth. It’s like saying that all the consumerism and stuff is making—our—society—think. You know, think like the people did when they thought the earth was flat and stuff. Wow. Thank you, Indian spirits.”

Gent took the rock from me and rolled it around in his hand. “If that’s Wal-Mart,” he said, pointing to the brown rock, “then downtown would be over here.” He pointed to the other side, covered with quartz pebbles. “And that’s where my parent’s house would be.”

“Gent, are you shedding?” There was hair all over the sidewalk. Thin, silver hair, like down on a newborn’s back. Hair growing out of the concrete like the hair on Gent’s legs—straight up and down like grass in dirt.

“Maybe this is where the deer come and lay at night,” he said. “Then downtown would be over here.” He pointed to the other side, covered with quartz pebbles. “And that’s where my parent’s house would be.”

“Gent, are you shedding?” There was hair all over the sidewalk. Thin, silver hair, like down on a newborn’s back. Hair growing out of the concrete like the hair on Gent’s legs—straight up and down like grass in dirt.

“Maybe this is where the deer come and lay at night,” he said. “Then downtown would be over here.”

That sounded good. It sounded right. The deer came out of the woods to get a drink at the spring. They rolled on the sidewalk and left their hair behind. But Gent’s butt was sitting on the hair. His butt was floating above the sidewalk on the silver hair.

“But it’s growing,” I said.

“Yeah. It’s growing,” he said. He waved his hand over
the silver tips. A whirl appeared where his hand had been. “It’s growing, and we’re sitting on it.”

The sun had charred everything and left. The moon was black. The stars were silver like the hair on the sidewalk. A line of light hit us in the face. A car—turning into Buzzard Roost. A cop car with lights mounted on the roof and headlights that made lines and hit us in the face. We got back in the car. The silver hair was crawling on me. I could hear them. I could see goosebumps where they had been.

**During the 1930s, the United States government began a top-secret research project dealing with the production of chemicals to use in warfare: tear gas, mustard gas, LSD. If convicted of possession of a large amount of any Schedule I drug, a person gets a life sentence in prison (thanks to Nancy Reagan), but if convicted of possession of a large amount of LSD, a person is charged with “conspiracy to take over the government.” The sentence could be death (thanks to the large vats of LSD stored in the US chemical armory).**

NPR was on the radio. An acoustic show. The sound waves from the guitar and the sound waves from the woman’s voice wrapped together as they came from the speakers—ivy blowing as I drove down the road. Vines of red and blue ivy attached to the speakers, blowing faster when I sped up, slapping me in the face when I slowed to turn into the parking lot next to Rice Hall. Vines spreading out when I parked, forming a landscape in the car—red and blue hills, purple valleys, orange peaks. The song ended. And purple valleys and orange peaks still hovered about the seats of my Miata. A ghost of sound. A hologram. Purple and orange dust.

“That was Bob Dylan,” I said without speaking words. **That was Bob Dylan,** I told Gent with my eyes.

**Of course it was Bob Dylan,** he said back to me without saying it. **It was Bob Dylan,** he said when he looked at me from behind the ghost of red and blue hills. That’s a given. A universal law. If you turn on the radio and hear a random song—a perfectly random song—perfectly written, that perfectly fits your mood at that very moment. Perfectly fits not because you felt that way to begin with, but because the song made you feel that way. Made you feel the way you didn’t feel when the song first came on. If that’s the case.

Then there’s a 90 percent chance that the song was written by Bob Dylan. That’s a given, he said with his eyes. Yeah, it was Bob Dylan.

LSD is quite unlikely to lead to addiction in most people. There is no physical addiction after heavy use, although people can and do become as mentally habituated to LSD as with any substance. There is a short period of tolerance after LSD use. Using LSD two days in a row is likely to lead to a diminished experience the second day, though spaced three or more days apart, this effect is nearly non-existent.

I was alone in the car, and I couldn’t remember if it was today or last week. Had I dosed by myself today, and with Gent last week, or had I dosed with Gent? And. And I was parked at Rice Hall—in the back where I could see Rice Hall and Rivers Hall standing like sea castles in a fish bowl. The water was air. And I was parked in a fish bowl—a fish bowl empty of air-water, filled to the brim with falling leaves. It was today. It wasn’t last week. It was today and I was here. So I got out of the car. Purple dust flew out of my window when I slammed the door.

I walked. I walked and leaves fell around me. And it was today in a fish bowl of falling leaves, and I was alone. So I walked.

“I knew you’d come,” Gent said. He said with real words that came out when his mouth moved. I had found him, so today was last week and not today. And Gent was standing in the middle of the volleyball court between Rice Hall and Rivers Hall and my car was parked in a fish bowl and I had been walking but now today was last week, and I was not alone.

Four-by-fours held the sand in place—trillions and trillions of earth particles held together by four square inches of wood. Strange stuff. Sand. Sand in the volleyball court, held by four square inches of wood. Sand on the ground, held by roots of grass blades—millions of grass blades, dancing like natives, swaying like drunks, bending like ballerinas, holding the sand in place from the wind and falling leaves. Sand in the sea castles—molded sand. Solid bricks. Solid sand stacked one on one seven stories high in a fishbowl. Melted sand in carved rectangles on the side of sea castles. Melted sand holding the wind in place. Keeping the water and the leaves out.
Andrew Sutherland
658 N. Wood Ave
First Place Polychromatic
Emily Durden
*What She Sees*
Second Place Polychromatic

Jaclyn Whitt
*Self Portrait, Artist's Inner Self*
First Place Three-Dimensional
America the Gullible
by D.L. Waddell

1. Finger licking good
The best part of waking up
Is the breakfast of champions
Going snap, crackle, pop in the bowl,
But only if I've got milk.
Lunch where they love to see me smile
And they serve two all-beef patties,
Special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles,
And onions, all on a sesame seed bun.
Then beef is what's for dinner,
Or maybe pork or the other white meat.
And for dessert, something that melts
In my mouth, but not in my hand.

2. Solutions for a small planet
Where do I want to go today?
I want to go where they have
Answers to my questions,
Where the repair guys are
The loneliest guys in town,
But they keep going and going.
I'll go down to the worldwide Wow,
Where they bring good things to life,
And where quality is job one.
Their ad said "drivers wanted," so
I'll go in my ultimate driving machine
Where I'll press the button
And let it do the rest.

3. A few good men
It's not just a job,
It's an adventure
Where I can be part of the action.
It's time to aim high
And get an edge on life,
To go where the flavor is.
I'll head for the mountains

And look for the great taste
That won't fill me up
And will never let me down
And hopefully find something that
Tastes great, and is less filling.
Edgar
by M. Brett Trapp

Edgar squinted hard to see the fine print in the Sunday morning newspaper. He held the classifieds section close to his thick glasses to read the tiny type:

“1990 Special Edition Christmas Barbie. $4000. 555-2759.” With a frustrated sigh, he leaned back into his creaky recliner, faded and stained with time and coffee. He laid the newspaper across one arm of the chair and reached for a cigarette.

“Do you think you might be able to fix the dishwasher today?” the woman quietly asked.

“No,” Edgar barked. “I’ll fix it when I get around to it. I’ve told you a million times.”

He took a long drag off his Marlboro as he tore off a piece of newspaper and reached for his ink pen. He scribbled down several numbers and mumbled something about January rent, paying the light bill, and a bank. He reached over to turn on the lamp sitting on the dinged-up desk beside his chair. It popped and flashed as the bulb flickered out.

“Woman! Bring me a light bulb!”

The woman scurried into the washroom, tripping over cardboard boxes brimming over with old music records. Edgar had left them there. She stepped on a green milk crate so she could reach into the oak cabinets. Her fingers fumbled through the dark cabinets until she finally felt the cold rounded glass of a bulb. The woman pushed aside the boxes of records and quickly slipped out of the washroom and into the den.

“Here,” she said and handed the light bulb to Edgar. With a grunt, he snatched the bulb from her hand and screwed it into the lamp socket. He looked again at the newspaper ad and compared the $4000 price tag with the numbers he had written. He grabbed his pen and began to calculate the numbers. $3,100 was the final amount. Not enough. Even after taking what little he had in savings, he still didn’t have enough.

Edgar knew the girl would like it though. Twenty-six years ago, when she was only five, she asked for that exact doll one day when they were shopping at a toy store. Her father laughed at the little redhead as he told her she should “keep dreaming.” This was his chance to make up for it and hopefully end the years of bitter silence. He had to get it.

He put down the newspaper and picked up the receiver on his old rotary phone. Edgar must have been the last one in the neighborhood with a rotary phone. He dialed the digits to the phone number in the ad.

“Hello.”

“Uh yeah, my name is Edgar Humphreys, and I was callin’ about your ad in the paper for the doll. You still got it for sale?” Edgar asked.

“Yes sir, I do,” the cheerful voice said.

“Well, I’ll give you $3,100 for it—in cash.”

The lady on the phone chuckled.

“Sir, I’m sorry, but the price is non-negotiable. I will have to have $4000. I’m sorry.”

“Forget it!” Edgar shouted as he slammed the receiver back onto the phone. The loud clash echoed through the hollow house. He collapsed back into the recliner and crossed his arms as a scowl swept his face. Edgar rocked tensely as the woman washed dishes in the kitchen. The quiet crept through the house, punctured only by the rhythmic ticking of the antique clock hanging on the den wall and the squeak-squeak of Edgar’s off-beat rocking.

The rocking stopped.

The woman heard Edgar get out of his chair and walk across the room towards the wall clock. She glanced out of the corner of her eye to see what he was doing. Edgar was inspecting the antique Regulator clock closely—feeling it over and rubbing his thick hands across the smooth walnut wood. He eyed it closely. The woman’s heart skipped a beat as she realized what he was doing.

“He wants to sell my clock, she thought. The classic piece was a cherished family heirloom that her grandfather willed to her. It was the only thing of real value in their cramped, one-bedroom house.

Edgar looked up. The woman quickly dropped her gaze and began scrubbing a large pot. Her body was stiff as she clenched the black handles of the pot.

“What are you lookin’ at?” Edgar accusingly asked. The woman said nothing and continued scrubbing in rigid silence. She heard Edgar grab the phone and dial another number. He turned
his back to the kitchen so she couldn’t hear him. He lowered his voice and mumbled into the phone. After a minute or two, the woman heard him say “Thanks,” as he dropped the receiver back into place.

She’d continued washing dishes for about half an hour when she heard three loud knocks on the front door. Edgar shuffled to the door and let in a short man wearing a black coat and red checkered tie. The woman glanced into the den. She recognized him. He was a banker who had been to the house several months earlier, when he had come to talk to Edgar about a loan the old man had quit paying, though he had the money. The woman remembered how he commented on the clock during his earlier visit:

“Let me know if you ever want to part with the dear thing. I’d love to have it for myself,” he had said with a toothy grin.

The woman dropped her dishes and raced into the den. “No!” she shouted in a frenzy. “You can’t have it! It’s not for sale!” She yanked the clock out of the hands of the stunned banker.

“Woman!” Edgar yelled as he grabbed the upper half of her arm and pulled her away from the banker. The woman yelped in pain as Edgar’s hands clamped down on her thin arm. “Get back in there and shut up!” He shoved the woman towards the kitchen and pulled the clock away from her. She crashed to the floor and skinned her knees on the rough den carpet. The banker looked away as if he hadn’t seen the exchange. The woman began sobbing as she saw the tender pink skin flaking off her knees. She ran into the kitchen and grabbed a wet rag to cool her burns. She wiped away little beads of blood that began gathering on her knees. As she bent to tend to her wound she heard the banker counting in the den.

“1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9. $900, Mr. Humphreys,” said the cheerful banker as he placed nine crisp hundred-dollar bills into Edgar’s hand. Through her heavy sobbing, the woman listened as his heavy footsteps clomped down the hall and out the front door. The door slammed shut, and she listened as his car sped down the street.

Edgar arrived at the home of the lady selling the Barbie a little after 4:00 p.m. He paid her and left, eager to take the doll to the girl’s house. When he got in the car, he inspected the ornate doll with its dark green satin dress and flowing blonde hair. Tiny red and white sequins adorned the upper half of the soft dress. A small silver necklace with a red plastic ruby hung around the doll’s neck. The doll wore dark green eye shadow and a deep red lipstick that matched her glitzy earrings. Her hair had an oversized green bow with individually stitched sequins. Edgar tossed the doll into the passenger-side of his old Dodge truck as he pulled out of the lady’s driveway. He began his four-hour journey to the girl’s home in Sikeston.

Edgar’s anxiety grew as he sped down Interstate 70 towards the girl’s house. The sun began to set on the horizon as it cast heavy dusk on the empty cornfields along the interstate. He hadn’t seen the girl in many years. The last contact he had with her was when she called him on the phone to inform him that she now had a small son and that he was a grandfather. He responded with a comment about how she should have told him sooner that she was having a child. The conversation ended with a loud argument and a string of bitter accusations. Edgar knew the wounds were deep, but he was sure this would be the peace offering. It was a risk, but he hoped the doll would salvage their relationship, and they could reconcile.

By now, the sun had completely set and Edgar raced through the black Missouri night. He wanted to be at the girl’s house before the child went to bed.

He pulled into the driveway of her Victorian-style home a little after nine o’clock. The house was mostly dark except for a large, lit bay window on the side of the house. The girl’s house was beautiful. Several years ago, she spent her life-savings renovating and decorating the home. She now managed it as a bed and breakfast for honeymooners and wealthy retired couples. She lived in one end of the house and the guests lived at the other. Edgar flicked off his headlights and stepped into the chill Missouri newspaper. I got $4000,” the woman heard him say. “Good. You live on Cunningham Avenue? I’ll be right over.” Edgar slipped on a pair of shoes, grabbed his overcoat, and hurried out the door. The woman took a tissue and sat down at the kitchen table.

Edgar arrived at the home of the lady selling the Barbie a little after 4:00 p.m. He paid her and left, eager to take the doll to the girl’s house. When he got in the car, he inspected the ornate doll with its dark green satin dress and flowing blonde hair. Tiny red and white sequins adorned the upper half of the soft dress. A small silver necklace with a red plastic ruby hung around the doll’s neck. The doll wore dark green eye shadow and a deep red lipstick that matched her glitzy earrings. Her hair had an oversized green bow with individually stitched sequins. Edgar tossed the doll into the passenger-side of his old Dodge truck as he pulled out of the lady’s driveway. He began his four-hour journey to the girl’s home in Sikeston.

Edgar’s anxiety grew as he sped down Interstate 70 towards the girl’s house. The sun began to set on the horizon as it cast heavy dusk on the empty cornfields along the interstate. He hadn’t seen the girl in many years. The last contact he had with her was when she called him on the phone to inform him that she now had a small son and that he was a grandfather. He responded with a comment about how she should have told him sooner that she was having a child. The conversation ended with a loud argument and a string of bitter accusations. Edgar knew the wounds were deep, but he was sure this would be the peace offering. It was a risk, but he hoped the doll would salvage their relationship, and they could reconcile.

By now, the sun had completely set and Edgar raced through the black Missouri night. He wanted to be at the girl’s house before the child went to bed.

He pulled into the driveway of her Victorian-style home a little after nine o’clock. The house was mostly dark except for a large, lit bay window on the side of the house. The girl’s house was beautiful. Several years ago, she spent her life-savings renovating and decorating the home. She now managed it as a bed and breakfast for honeymooners and wealthy retired couples. She lived in one end of the house and the guests lived at the other. Edgar flicked off his headlights and stepped into the chill Missouri
night. He grabbed the doll and walked down the cobblestone path to the front porch. The old man was rough. The shadowy stubble clung to his face like an oil slick. His abused work pants were streaked with a deep red paint. His heartbeat quickened as his breath made a frosty cloud with each step. He walked up the steep stone steps of the dark front porch. The ancient wooden planks of the porch groaned with each step as he approached the front door. Edgar took a deep breath as he reached his gloved hand to press the doorbell. He heard a muffled ding. A few seconds later he listened as soft footsteps came towards him. Two shiny copper light fixtures flicked on as he heard a key unlock the heavy wooden door from inside. The door cracked open and the girl peeked out. She was startled when she saw her father standing on her porch. She froze in shock as she stared at the wrinkled man. After several moments of awkward silence, the girl quietly opened the door wide and stepped out onto the wooden porch. Edgar slowly pulled the doll out of the store bag and, without a word, handed it to the girl. He managed a nervous smile. The girl took it and stared at it. Her eyes filled with tears as she pulled the doll out of the plastic packaging. She felt it over—the green satin dress, the silky hair, the rosy cheeks. She took a step towards a softening Edgar. As she stepped, she grabbed the doll by its long blonde hair and slapped the old man in the face with the doll’s body. In a wild rage, the girl hit him over and over with the doll and began screaming into the black Missouri night. Stunned, the old man shivered in pain as a cut opened up on his forehead and began to bleed. He put his hands over his face to shield himself, but the woman’s fury backed him down the stairs of the high porch until their feet hit the cobblestone sidewalk. She gritted her teeth, and, with a grunt, gave him a hard shove; the old man fell backwards into the yard. The woman, clenching the expensive doll, squatted down low to the ground and began to drive the face of the doll into the concrete. She grated its face over the rough stones of the sidewalk until the doll’s head was an unrecognizable chunk of mashed, peach-colored plastic. Finally, the woman leapt to her feet, cocked her arm back, and slung the mangled doll high into the air where it disappeared into the night sky. It landed in the road with a dull thud. The butchered green body lay eerily motionless in the road. She stood over the crumpled man and her deep gasps for air were now the only sound piercing the night. She wiped the back of her hand across her mouth as she glared at him bitterly. The woman turned around, stomped up the stairs, and slammed the thick wooden door behind her as she disappeared back into the house.

The old man crawled back into his pickup truck and began his journey home.
In Seurat’s *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*
by Kevin Graham

1. The Smoker

I am at peace.

Nobody is around me
But those of my own creation.
I make them enter
And evaporate at will.
They’re my smoky figments.

I gave the proper ladies
All those umbrellas
So the sun wouldn’t scorch
Their powdery faces.
My total expense
Was one thought.

The black top hats
On the gentlemen
Are my classy creation.
I’ve never worn one,
So I’ll at least
Be with those who do,
For a little while.

If the monkey behind me
Gives the dogs any more trouble,
It’s gone, with a cat in its place.

The scrawny trumpet player
Blows in vain.
If only he knew
What dream analysts say about sound,
He’d stop and sit in the shade.

The young lady knitting next to me
Is my greatest figment of all.

It’s peaceful to watch thread cross thread,
But, like all the others,
She will cease to exist.
There will be no funeral or ceremony.
She will just fade,
Like the opiate odor
Of my slender pipe.

When she vanishes,
I’ll dump my ashes and leave,
Making a mental note
To bring her back next Sunday.

2. The Trumpet Player

That woman walking in the middle,
The one with the red umbrella and young girl,
Was my college sweetheart.
We met our freshman year
During a marching band practice.
We talked on the telephone
For four hours that night
And stayed together
For three years after that,
Sharing our youthful lives,
Making love night after night.
I saved enough to buy her a rock,
But it’s not on her finger.
Some other guy’s is,
And I never found out why.
She dropped the ring I bought her
Into my poor shaking hand,
And chaos broke loose.
I had a two-year bout with drugs,
Was arrested and booted from school,
And now I play here for pocket change.
She walked by and didn’t see me,
Even though I was playing
The very same song I played
The night I proposed to her.
I think I'll go over to her
And play it loudly in her face.
When she cowers from my brass,
I'll kneel and tell little Julie
Who her real father is.

3. The Trumpet Player's Ex

I used to date that guy
With the trumpet in college.
His name is Jacques,
And I think we first met
At dinner in the cafeteria.
He was sitting alone,
And I was merely being polite
When I asked if I could sit.
He must have thought
I had a thing for him.
For three years, he served
As lips to kiss,
A body to hold,
And sex to have.
He eventually proposed,
But I didn't want that with him.
I married James a month later.
Jacques disappeared after that.
I guess his music degree
Got him a fine position
Playing here in the park.
He wore those same brown pants
The night we met.
They can be pulled down
Without being unzipped.

4. The Monkey

I can't stand this moronic park.
Every Sunday, the missus puts me
On this uncomfortable leash
And drags me along.
She only does it for attention.
She could easily bring her mutt,
But there's no novelty in that.
When people see she has a monkey,
They ask questions.
My worst one is
*Does he do any tricks?*
They immediately assume I'm male,
And she tells me to do something.
Usually jump for a treat in her hand.
Sometimes I do, sometimes I don't,
Solely depending on my mood.
Generally, I just sit there
Scratching my butt or armpits,
Until the nosy idiot leaves.
I have noticed, though,
The lady's grasp on the leash
Slightly loosens when I jump,
And those trees aren't so far away.

5. Musing on the Fishing Lady

The tense way she's holding her rod
Is the same way Nikki held hers
When we went fishing the first time.
We packed a small picnic lunch
Of ham sandwiches and potato chips
And drove to Sportsman's Lake
In the middle of a blistering July.
She nervously watched my hands and arms
As I showed her how to cast.
Her first went farther than mine.
Her red-and-white cork bobbing in the ripples,
Slowly carrying itself even farther away.
Her knees locked, she stared
At that dancing cork so hard
I thought it would burst.
Her small hands clenched the rod next to her waist.
Making her forearm muscles bulge.
The warm breeze blew her auburn hair
In front of her focused eyes,
But she couldn’t let go to move it.
We fished that lake for three summers
And nothing came of it.
She walked near to me and hung her head
Before we left the lake the last time.
1 can’t do this any more
Was overshadowed by an unfamiliar necklace
Resting against her maroon shirt,
The same color the fishing lady is wearing.

6. To Georges Seurat

Look what you’ve done
To the third rower from the right, Georges.
You, young man, have shown
His entire life with three dots
Of grayish white and red.

He’s making A’s in college
And about to graduate
With a degree in philosophy.
He rescued a young girl
From drowning here last week,
And he organizes
Park clean-up campaigns.
He’s a perfect role model
For his two younger brothers
And the best damned rower
On that narrow brown boat,
But he’s almost hidden
By your crooked poplar.

We look at your work
And have to point and ask,
“What about that guy?”

Just because he doesn’t have
A fancy umbrella
And expensive clothes,
He didn’t make your foreground.
Jessica Clos  
*Untitled*  
Second Place Three-Dimensional
Dustin McNeal
Galleria D'arte di Dio
Campus Bookstore Award

Jason Behel
Old Growth Pitcher
Merit Award
Never
by Holly Dotson

It’s like the crickets in the summertime when you walk at dusk. So tiny yet so loud—huge—like their sound blankets the entire forest, and they’re bigger than the trees, larger than the night itself. Even when you go inside and shut yourself up in safety, you can still hear them. Yes—bigger than night, stronger than the glass panes. They won’t let you forget they’re out there.

Step One:
We admitted we were powerless over people, places, and things; that our lives had become unmanageable.

My mother worked during the day, and my brother wasn’t old enough to look after an eight-year-old. I stayed at a babysitter’s from 8:00 to 5:30. Ms. Brenda’s house had gigantic rooms with ceilings ten-kids high. She had hundred-year-old oak and willow trees in her yard, dirt trails that led into the woods, and a carport for when it rained. But I liked the sunroom best.

There’s a quote in a twelve-step program: “Our secrets make us sick.” I heard a lady misquote it once. “Our secrets kill us, Honey,” she said nonchalantly to her daughter in the Wal-Mart checkout line like she was saying, “A penny saved is a penny earned.” I didn’t hear her conversation before or after, so I have no idea why she said it. But it stuck. “Our secrets kill us.”

I had as many G.I. Joes as Barbies. I climbed trees and played football with my brother and his friends. And they were big kids—teenagers. I wasn’t a sissy. I didn’t need to be rescued from tall castles. I could fight really good with sword-sticks. I had a Heman/Skelator castle swing set in my backyard.

The boys at Ms. Brenda’s were just jealous. I was taller than them. I always broke the arm-links when we played Red Rover. And when we played cops and robbers, if I was a bad guy, I always got away, and if I was a good guy, I always caught the thieves. But they said I was girl even though they knew I could pop them in the jaw so hard their mouths would taste like pennies.

Childhood—if it’s good, we have no problem remembering it. If it’s bad, the memories somehow fade into the vapor of time—swept into the dusty storage rooms in the back of our brains, filed neatly away in the manila envelopes labeled “Things That Didn’t Happen.” Psychology terms this disassociation: a way for children to escape harmful situations when they have no other options, a way for them to disconnect from their environments by disconnecting from their feelings, a way to protect themselves when no one else is there to keep them from danger. When these symptoms occur in adulthood, psychologists call it post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Either way, whether it’s children or adults, a part of their brain shuts down, and they go somewhere else where the bad things can’t touch them. They run from themselves.

I went somewhere else. I went somewhere else, and I stayed there for seven years. I lied to myself. I said it never happened. I said it over and over again like a magic spell to get rid of warts when a frog peed on my hand, chanting the words my Maw Maw taught me, “Go away, go away. No warts here. When I say this no warts will appear.” Rubbing my hands together until the pee is gone—like it was never there.


Three walls were made of ceiling-to-floor windows, but the willow tree stood guard outside to block the sun. The sunroom was where Ms. Brenda did her laundry and stored her canned food and potatoes. I sat on stacks of canned peas, vegetable beef soup and hominy or on crates of potatoes and onions. The smell of fresh linens so thick my mouth tasted like fabric softener. The hum of the washer and dryer vibrated through my eardrums into the pit of my stomach. And I watched the dangling shadows and sunrays fight on the walls. I liked the sunroom best. Not because I could still see the flicker of the sun when I closed my eyes. Not because the air made me warm all over and inside too. But because it was my room. No one came there—I was safe.

No matter how hard I pushed, they came back. Sharp thoughts. Returning, jutting to the front lines of my memory like glass shards working their way through the scar tissue of a...
forgotten wound. Memories jarred open by a sound or a scent.

I was sixteen. I was peeling potatoes for dinner, cutting away the brown skins thin as paper, the way my mother had taught me. The bowl fell. The sound of potatoes thudding against the floor. Then a flash of something familiar but forgotten. Terrifying. Sharp as the knife I held.

Then, Thanksgiving—Maw Maw was making candied yams. Brown sugar and butter...a memory of dull pain.

The smell of baked sweet potatoes and grilled banana and peanut butter sandwiches drifted from Ms. Brenda's stove and out of the kitchen window. I got to the kitchen before Ms. Brenda had a chance to call us in for lunch. I was always first, sitting in my corner seat, watching her place the food in the middle of the red-and-white checked table cloth, waiting for the others to file in—dusty and sweaty from a game of chase, waiting for the "Amen" of the blessing, waiting for the taste of crisp butter-fried sandwiches and brown sugar on the stringy insides of yams.

"God is great. God is good. Let us thank Him for this food. By His hands, we all are fed. Thank You, Lord, for daily bread. Amen."

Most people link post traumatic stress disorder to Vietnam veterans. The man gone mad from Agent Orange. The man is olive green rags, sleeping in alleys. The man waking in the hallway of his own house, fighting his wife because he thinks she's the one who caused the shrapnel cutting through his neck. But a majority of people with PTSD are women. The largest group is rape victims.

We had to wash up before and after lunch. That was a rule at Ms. Brenda's. We couldn't eat before we washed our hands. We couldn't go play until we did the same after we ate. Billy Handall was behind me in the line that snaked its way out of the bathroom door. He was eleven. He was a big kid. And he was the cutest boy I ever saw. But I wasn't sure if it was okay to like boys, or not so I acted like my heart wasn't pounding because he was standing so close behind me. He put his hands around my waist and tickled me, but I wasn't sure if it was okay to like boys or not. So, I gave him a good elbow in the stomach and a slap across the face before I ran into the kitchen to wash my hands at the silver double sink where

Ms. Brenda stacked the dirty dishes.

I sat on the bushel basket filled halfway with potatoes when he walked into the sunroom. I almost peed my pants. Billy Handall. He leaned against the wall. The sun and dangling shadows from the willow fought across his face and made light and dark patches in his blonde hair. He walked towards me, and I stood up. He hugged me. I didn’t think I was supposed to like boys, but I liked it.

"Let me go!" I said.

"Oh, come on; I was just loving on you. Are you not used to people loving on you? Your parents love on you, right?"

"Yeah, but..."

"But what?"

"Nothing," I looked at the shadows fighting with the sunlight on the walls.

PTSD was like running a race I didn’t know I was in. All at once I was running. I couldn’t remember why, but I was running, and I didn’t know from who or what, but I was running, and there was no one in front of me, but I was running—running fast so I thought I must be winning. There was no time to see who was behind me because I was running, and that’s all that mattered. When I ran, the pain of reality blurred past me. If I felt uncomfortable, I could run. No particular destination. Nowhere to go, but I was safe. I was in control. I was running.

The memories came silently. Patient. Stacking up one brick at a time until all at once there was a wall looming—too tall to jump, too strong to knock down, too wide to run around. I stopped and saw there was no one but me. No one to run from. No one else to build the wall. It was me. I was running from myself.

Step Two:

We came to believe a Power greater than us could restore us to sanity.

Billy grabbed me. My feet left the ground. He swung me around in circles—the shadows and light on the walls blurred into horizontal lines, encircling us. My head felt lop-sided like when we spun in Ms. Brenda's backyard—the trees and grass and sky making smudged cylinders around us until we fell to the
ground drunk with dizziness. The sunroom lost its shape. There were no walls. No corners. No ceiling or floor. Just a hazy tube of shadow and light. We landed on a pile of dirty towels. My head hit the concrete block wall, and a sharp pain shot down my neck. The sunroom was still not the sunroom. It was a tube of shadow and light that fell on its side spinning around us. Everything still spinning around us. He pulled my arms above my head. I screamed, thinking he was about to tickle me.

“If you scream like that again, I’ll hit you so hard on the head, it’ll make you retarded and everybody will laugh and you. And your parents—well, they won’t love you any more. And I bet they’ll put you in some home, because everyone knows that parents don’t love kids who’re retarded.” His face was close. Everything was still spinning, but I could feel his lips against my ear and his breath on my neck.

Step Three:
We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

He held my face out from him for a few seconds, squeezing my cheeks with his hand, and pushed my head back into the wadded towels. I was still drunk. The air tasted damp. He stuffed something in my mouth. The taste of ammonia. We weren’t in the sunroom. We were in that hazy tube of spinning light and shadow that turned on its side when we fell. He pulled at my pants, and tied my arms and legs. I felt the dirty towels under me. Dirty towels were in the sunroom. But now the sunroom was not the sunroom. I was in the sunroom when Billy came in. And now we were in the spinning tube. We were in the tin canister that held cookies on Granny’s kitchen counter, spinning around like it as falling sideways to the floor. But I was in the sunroom that tasted the way fabric softener smells. I was in the sunroom that smelled like Ms. Brenda’s blue housedress and dirt. I was sitting on the potatoes. I wasn’t hurting. I wasn’t crying. I wasn’t a sissy.

We were in Granny’s cookie tin. But people don’t go in cookie tins—chocolate chip cookies go in Granny’s cookie tin, and sometimes snickerdoodles, and sometimes gingersnaps. And we couldn’t fit in the tin. Not even me, and I’m not a big kid so we weren’t anywhere. We were nowhere. And if we were nowhere then nothing was happening. And I was in the sunroom that smelled like Ms. Brenda’s blue housedress and dirt. I was sitting on the potatoes. I wasn’t hurting. I wasn’t crying. I wasn’t a sissy.

Emotions warn us of danger—anxiety and fear alert us when we leave our area of protection, sadness allows us to heal by grieving, and anger informs us that we have possibly been hurt. I took my feelings off like an old sweater, and one by one I unraveled the threads and placed them in different boxes: “Good feelings”—all A’s on my report card, ice cream cones that drip milk-syrup on my bare toes, lights that dance with shadows—that box was left open; “Bad feelings”—hate, anger, guilt, shame—was closed and taped, stapled one hundred times, edges glued.

When individuals disassociate from their feelings, those feelings build up and become toxic. We are emotional creatures. We can’t deny ourselves the ability to feel. Our emotions erupt. Our behavior becomes unmanageable. Many rape victims feel with forgiveness—forgiving ourselves, forgiving other people. Forgiveness leads to freedom. Recovery is freedom. Freedom to embrace the ugliness of our lives as tightly as we do the beauty. Freedom to stop blackmailing ourselves with the secrets we are afraid to let go of.

Step Four:
We made a fearless and moral inventory of ourselves.

We were in the spinning tube, and Billy was on top of me. The air tasted damp in the tube. Billy’s belly was rubbing on my belly. I knew I wasn’t supposed to like boys, and I felt a pain between my legs—sharp and dull, burning and ripping—so intense it made my head spin more. It made me dizzy and sick at the same time. I tried to move. The ammonia was in my mouth—was choking me. Snot and salt water in my throat. I gagged, but I wasn’t crying. I didn’t cry when I was in the sunroom. I was in the sunroom. I wasn’t a sissy.
they are to blame for what happened to them. I made the guilt and shame mine. I closed it inside of me, and the longer it stayed there, becoming stale—bitter, the deeper it became a part of my distorted self image. But it was mine. I was in control. I fit perfectly in those size zero Gap jeans because I didn’t eat. I caught the boys’ eyes because I danced on the tables when I got drunk and stoned. I could stop when I wanted. I was all right. I was in control.

**Step Five:**
*We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*

“Stand up!”
Billy leaned over me. We were in the sunroom.
“You know if you tell anybody, they won’t believe you. They’ll call you a liar.” He pulled up his pants. “And if you tell your parents, they’ll think you are as disgusting as I do. And, they’ll think you’re lying too. They won’t love you any more, because good parents don’t like kids that lie.”

I didn’t answer him. I had been in the sunroom. I was never in the tube. I was watching the lights and shadows fight on the wall. He wiped the red and yellow stain up from where he had been in the spinning tube. He pulled a hand towel tight between my legs. Red and yellow like the spot where he’s been in the tube.

“Go tell Ms. Brenda that you fell on the carport and hit your head.” He pushed my shoulders against the wall and zipped my pants. “Go tell her that, and don’t say nothing about this. You’ll go to hell, too, if you tell.”

Ms. Brenda gave me some Tylenol. I got a real Coke from the can and I got a special snack. Ms. Brenda told my mother I had slipped in the carport just like Billy said.

**Cutting**

*for LBB*
by Kris Szepenyi

She says every other stanza could probably be omitted. She tells us We talk too much, with too-much exposition and too little meaning. The flow, is interrupted by all that expository description, and those pesky conjunctions.

And she tells us not to rhyme:
Poets don’t realize how much impact is lost when they attempt this popular technique of the past.

We learned to ‘cut things’ out,
Too decorative leads one to absence of emotion and lack of clarity.
Before this class, I knew only - how to interrupt the flow, make bumpy the roads to the final stanza.
I’m not used to pushing myself away from the direction my grain naturally goes. But evolution, is a process of change, tells me that And to write well, I need to learn to cut. cut, cut.

It was the main lesson this year:
Take out your old habits, make new ones:
We pull away with less than before, but more than we were:
Carl Brackin, Jr.
Blue Cola
Merit Award
Kathy Roush
*Untitled*
Merit Award

Melissa Sirasky
*Breakfast*
Merit Award
Running
by Josh Stephenson

I love to sweat. I love it when I sweat so much that it drips off the end of my nose and lands on the ground, marking my territory like an animal. My favorite thing to do is run outdoors in the middle of the day in late July, starting such a good sweat that I don’t want it to end, so I crank up the heater in my car while driving home and create my own personal mobile sauna.

I told my roommate, Anthony, about my masochistic habit and all he had to say was, “Man, that’s insane! You’re gonna pass out from heat stroke one day and kill yourself in a car wreck.”

Eh, what does he know; he’s never tried it for himself. It’s only a five-minute drive, so I’m not worried about it. It feels so good it’s definitely worth the risk. He thinks I should try swimming. “That would be the best thing for you if you want a good workout; nothing wears you out more than swimming,” he says. “You’re missing the whole point, man,” I said. “You can’t sweat if you’re already wet. That’s why swimming is definitely not for me, plus I don’t even really know how. I’ll never quit running.”

The only bad thing is now it’s late November and too cold to run outside. I hate running in the cold because it makes my lungs bum, so I am forced to log my miles on a stupid treadmill and run in place like a hamster in a wheel.

I have a membership to a really nice gym with some brand-new equipment, but there are just too many people around, and there are a bunch of televisions on the wall to distract me. Running is my chance to zone out and not think about anything. That’s kind of hard to do when there’s music blasting and beautiful women doing things like hamstring curls and leg presses all around me. Running should be something done alone, with no distractions. I love to feel my legs push me forward, my feet slap the ground, and my lungs strain for air. Ever since I was in high school, I used running as a way to escape from my thoughts and problems; I enjoy the way it feels like I’m really running from them even though I always end up in the same place I started. I love to run when life pisses me off and just let my stress seep out of me.

Now that Laura is out of the picture I don’t have too many problems; I let her take most of them with her when she left. We went out for almost two years. It was great too, at first. We really made the perfect couple, everyone was sure we were going to get married, even me. We had plenty in common; we both liked the same kind of music and movies, and she even tolerated my inability to talk to her on the phone. It’s not that I can’t physically talk on a phone; I just can’t talk on one for more than five minutes at a time. I mean, please, anything that needs to be said on a phone can be said in five minutes or less. I just feel stupid talking to a piece of complicated plastic and would much rather say what I have to say in person. Anthony talks to his girlfriend for almost two hours every night. I think he’s crazy.

I thought Laura and I were doing just fine until one day when our relationship came to a screeching halt that a derailed train would’ve struggled to imitate. It wasn’t one of those normal fade-away kind of mutual break-ups. It became something to go down in the record books as quite possibly the weirdest break-up ever.

We both attended the same church at the time, so we decided to go to a crusade our church put on each January. Hundreds of people were gathered in the freezing cold to hear about how they would go to hell if they died that night, unless, of course, they repented their sins right then and there. This was the message: standard Southern Baptist doctrine, and I chose to ignore it as usual, but for some reason, Laura was paying close attention. To this day, I can remember what she looked like; her mouth was open just a little bit and her eyes were bright and wide as if the sky had ripped above us and the finger of God was pointing right at her. After the revival ended she went down to the front and got saved for the third time in her life. I myself had been saved twice and figured that should be plenty, but I guess the third time was the charm for Laura. On the drive home she could do nothing but smile and sing praise and worship choruses while raising her hands like she was trying to pick up better reception from the heavens. I was utterly baffled by the transformation that took place right before my eyes. I tried and tried to talk to her on the way home; I wanted to know what had happened to her and what that evangelist said to her when she went down front, but I guess he told her the only thing she could do was sing because that’s all I got as far as an answer.

We finally pulled into her driveway and I begged her to talk to me. “Come on, Laura, answer me. What the hell is wrong with you? Quit singing for a second, please.”
She did quit singing but refused to say a word. She just looked at me as if she had never seen me before and wondered what I was, all the time smiling a grossly exaggerated, crooked smile. By this time it had gotten really late and cold. Snow had begun to fall, creating an unusual atmosphere to add to my unusual situation; it hardly ever snows in southern Tennessee. The snow must have been some sort of unforeseen omen for the events to come, because no weatherman had mentioned anything about snow that day and, believe me, if there was a chance for snow, everyone at the revival would have been talking about it. I guess Laura was still conscious under her religious stupor because she began to run and jump through the yard, laughing and playing in the snow. Her four-year-old little brother came outside and started to copy his sister by making some sad, tiny snow angels in the quarter-inch of snow that had fallen. Laura just kept laughing and singing. She was rolling around on the ground, singing *Jesus Loves the Little Children* over and over again. I stepped back to my car slowly, not totally sure this was really happening; I thought it must be a dream.

Laura was a good girl. She never did anything horribly wrong. She never really got into trouble with her parents. She always went to church, just like me, but she never took it as seriously as some of our church’s “holy rollers.” Now apparently she had joined their ranks; God Himself had touched her that night. I yelled at her one last time, “Laura, I’m about to leave. Can you hear me?! Do you even care? If I leave, I’m not coming back.”

I still to this day am not sure if she heard my pleas for attention that night. I was so mad that I refused to call her. I figured if she remembered that I existed she could call me first. The real surprise came when I found out a week later that she had left the country.

She had made a last-minute decision to join a mission trip to Zaire in hopes of converting the natives to Christianity. Her best friend, Jennifer, who was as exasperated as I was, gave me a note that Laura wrote to me just before leaving town. I looked down at the letter with hope and uncertainty. Could she really explain her sudden psychotic behavior on one scribbled piece of paper?

Dear Brother in Christ,

I hope this letter finds you in good spiritual health. Please forgive my sudden departure, but I feel the Lord is calling me to serve His will by helping to spread His good word to those who are less fortunate. Please pray for me as I will be praying for you. Always remember that I love you with the love of the Lord.

Laura

I went out with this girl for almost two years, and I know for a fact she never used the words *spiritual* and *health* in the same sentence, let alone asked me about mine. I folded up the letter neatly and still have it to this day; it serves as a reminder of why I will never be seriously involved with a woman ever again. My mother liked Laura just fine, but she always thought she was strange. If my mother has been right about one thing in her life, that was it.

That all happened about three years ago; I’ve dated several girls since then, but never for more than just a few weeks at a time. I still feel like I just can’t trust anybody enough to get into another serious relationship. Who’s to say I won’t get cheated on, lied to, or left behind? Mom keeps telling me not to worry about things like that, “Someday you’ll find the right person and you’ll just know it,” she says. My mom is like that though, hopelessly romantic. Definitely in a hurry to get me married so she can have some grandchildren she can spoil. It’s a good thing our culture doesn’t arrange marriages, because if we did I know my mom would’ve had me married at twelve. My parents have been married for almost twenty-nine years; they represent the ideal married couple. They rarely fight. They still go on dates, and, after all these years, they can still stand to live with each other. My mom is a self-proclaimed matchmaker, too. If my mom knows somebody who is single, then she’s got the perfect match for that person, and she will continue to pester and push until these unlucky victims humor her and go out at least once.

The way I see it, I’ve already got all I need in life; I’ve got my faithful dog, a new car, and a trustworthy roommate. I don’t even have the desire to date anyone right now. Well...maybe someone. Maybe Julie Streamer.

I’ve known about Julie for almost a year now. We’ve never met but my mother knows her mother and you know how that goes. My mom talks about me, her mom talks about her, and suddenly they both think that we’re the most wonderful people in the world and we’re meant to be together.
My mom tries to convince me daily that Julie is the girl for me. "You know, dear, she’s really very pretty and her mother is a lovely woman. I just think you two should give it a try, maybe go out to dinner or something. Her mother thinks it’s a good idea, too."

"Come on, Mom, I’ve told you a billion times that I’m not going on a blind date with some girl that you’re trying to hook me up with. When the time comes I’ll be able to meet a girl on my own. Thanks, but no thanks." My mother can be extremely stubborn about these things, so that just makes me want to do it even less.

Little did she know that I started to notice Julie way before our mothers had started plotting together, and I probably would have asked her out if my mom hadn’t said anything about her. She just recently joined the gym where I go to run; only she doesn’t run, she swims. Go figure. I have a favorite treadmill that allows me a perfect view of the pool. At least twice a week I get the joy of watching her enter and exit the pool; she always wears the same bathing suit, a bright-red backless one piece with a strap that ties around her neck. This woman is beautiful. She’s not really supermodel beautiful or anything, but she has an amazing body and a face that can easily distract me, even at far distances. I often wonder how many laps she swims because she definitely has the textbook swimmer’s body: lean, toned, and very sexy. Even if my mother didn’t know Julie existed, I probably still wouldn’t have the guts to talk to her. This girl makes me feel like I’m in high school again. Every time I see her, my heart starts to beat really fast and I just stare at her until I have to force myself to snap out of it. It kind of scares me and I don’t like it.

One Tuesday night I went to the gym, prepared for a long, hard run. I had a really crappy day at work so I was ready to shed some stress. I got on my favorite treadmill and began my first mile. I sped the treadmill up to about 7.5 mph and soon I was in the zone. I was so tuned out to the world that I forgot to look for Julie’s entrance; she usually came in around six o’clock for her evening swim. I don’t really know where my mind was but I barely felt the light tap on my shoulder. I turned my head slightly to see who was interrupting my run. I couldn’t believe it, but Julie was standing right next to me. She was wearing some flip-flops, a pair of very short blue shorts, and a white tank top. I could see the strap of her bathing suit on the back of her neck. She looked really good.

Unfortunately, I only got to look at here for a second. Her sudden appearance ruined my concentration and made me stutter in my stride. My left foot landed half on the belt of the treadmill and half on the stationary side panel. I felt my feet fly out from under me and then there was darkness.

I woke up in a hospital bed with my ankle in a sling and a large white bandage on my forehead. As I slowly regained consciousness I realized that Julie was in the room with me. I think she was surprised I was alive. "Oh my God! You’re finally awake! You’ve been out for almost an hour. I was so worried that I’d killed you," she said with a hint of laughter in her voice.

My vision was kind of blurry due to the I.V. pumping painkillers into my arm, so at first I saw two Julies. Then I realized there was someone else in the room. My mother was sitting next to Julie and holding her hand. I tried to focus on them, but I was still seeing double. I started to feel faint and they began to spin around; I felt like I was looking through a spinning kaleidoscope. I blinked hard, took a deep breath, and finally my vision went back to normal. Whatever painkiller they were giving me was definitely doing its job. I felt like my whole body was numb. Everything around me looked miles away, but I could still tell my mother’s face was damp from crying. As soon as I made eye contact with her she erupted into tears again.

"Oh, honey! I was so worried. Are you okay? I called your father; he’s on his way. Oh, God, I was so worried when I got the phone call from the gym telling me you were taken to the hospital. What on earth did you do to yourself? Why aren’t you answering me? Oh, God! Are you deaf too? Answer me! Are you paralyzed? Oh, no! Oh, God, I think he’s in a coma! You were running too fast. Your leg looks awful. What am I going-"

"Mom! Chill the hell out. I haven’t said anything because I can’t get a damn word in edgewise. Just calm down and let me talk to Julie," I said. My vision had returned to normal, but the high-powered medication stopped me from editing my foul language in front of my mom. She reluctantly composed herself and smiled at my ability to communicate while she pouted at the same time at being reprimanded with such vulgar profanity.

I apologized to Julie on behalf of my mother, and asked her what the hell happened to me. I couldn’t remember anything.

"Oh, man, your foot slipped off the treadmill and you..."
whacked your head pretty hard on the control panel before the belt threw you off into the wall behind you. You pretty much destroyed that treadmill. I saw an employee put an out-of-order sign on it while we were waiting for the ambulance, but believe me, it wasn’t necessary. Nobody’s going to use that treadmill for a long time.

I’m so sorry; this is all my fault. I should never have startled you like that. I just wanted to introduce myself; I’ve heard a lot of good things about you from your mother. Just tell me what I can do to make it up to you.”

I sat there looking at her, a little angry, but mostly embarrassed. Julie looked great, even under the bright hospital lights, and I could still see that collar piece of her bathing suit. I was surprised she cared enough to accompany me to the hospital. My mom was smiling like crazy; I’m sure she was thrilled about the sudden interest Julie was showing. I tried to imagine what I must have looked like flying off the treadmill, lying limp on the floor of the gym, being gawked at by my fellow exercise addicts. My leg looked pretty rough too. My toes were purple and even though the bandage covered my ankle, I could still tell it was swollen. I figured I wouldn’t be able to run again for a long time.

I tried to imagine how long Anthony would laugh at me when he found out. I tried to imagine what kind of horrible things my mother had been telling this girl, and how I could get back at her for telling them. What could Julie do to make it up to me? What a wonderful question. My drug-induced brain failed to come up with any good answers, so I said the first thing that came to mind.

“Just teach me how to swim,” I said. “I’m tired of running.”

Fractually
by Emily Godwin

Who knows what it is that has existed, is existing, will exist—among quarks and chaos—

A thought, lucid, a thought that is carefully suspended in little vellum envelopes,

hung on satin ribbons, on velvet hooks in one’s mind,

whirling around the rack to see all the beautiful thoughts sway and trace ovals in the air—becoming tangled and resting against each other

suspended invisibly.
Jaclyn Whitt
*Puffed Taffy*
Merit Award

Jaclyn Whitt
*Untitled*
Merit Award
Georgia Pilot
by Emily Godwin

Our shoulders touching, I remember standing near the runway for half an hour listening to the slapping of sheet metal against the side of the hangars, half-expecting to see a tumbleweed bounce across the runway.

I sit silently, my eyes widening as if this will somehow help me see out of the small windows of his red and white single-engine Piper. “Are you ready?” he asks, and I nod. I, who will say hardly anything on this flight as he reaches overhead to adjust the trim, lightly turning the yoke to bank the plane, his deceptive Georgia drawl making him seem as easygoing as a swamp covered in Spanish moss. Landing in strong crosswinds, he smiles and says, “Now, that’s real flying.”

Still Daylight Outside
by Emily Godwin

Her calendar is covered with barely legible numbers, supposedly her blood pressure readings, ones that MeMe is convinced are being sent to her cardiologist. However, she is the only one who looks at the calendar daily, pushing up her glasses and deliberately writing the top number then a slash then the bottom number in the right box. The numbers stop for the week of Christmas when her health worsened, and we spent Christmas morning sitting on her hospital bed, helping her open her Christmas presents.

It is December 31, 2003, and I am sitting at her kitchen table. Two weeks ago, at the end of the semester, when Katie, my best friend in Western Literature, asked me what I’d be doing New Year’s Eve, I thought I would be spending it with friends. It was too early then to know how weak MeMe was going to be, how much help she was going to need. We are the only ones in her house, and all I can hear is the refrigerator running not so smoothly, certainly building up more ice in the freezer that will need defrosting. The kitchen is closest to her bedroom, the chair at the front of the table where I am reading closest to her door, where I can listen to her breathe. MeMe is 94, my only surviving great-grandparent.

When she breathes, it sounds as if it is a wheeze, gurgle, and gasp, punctuated sometimes by a cough. MeMe is suddenly much quieter, I strain to hear, then tiptoe to her door. If she’s still asleep, I do not want to wake her up. Often, she is disoriented, confused, restless, finds it hard to go back to sleep. My eyes adjust to the darkness, and I can see the sheet that is covering her is still moving up and down, barely perceptible. I stand in the doorway, relieved, and watching her when I hear fireworks going off outside and realize that it is 2004.

“Maybe you’d like a corndog? With onion rings? Or a grilled cheese? They have BLTs or a cheeseburger. Oh, I know, you love the chicken tenders with gravy!” She shakes her head slowly, her silver hair wisps erratically from sleeping all afternoon. “Is it supper time already?” MeMe asks again although we have already explained that today is Sunday, the day we eat supper with her, that it is afternoon, she’s been asleep, but it’s not Monday...
yet, and not time for breakfast. It’s suppertime. We tell her again, open the blinds, “See, it’s still daylight outside.”

“I’ll buy you supper,” she says. “What do you want?”

“We’ve already decided what we’re going to order,” we tell her for the fourth time and ask for the fifth, “What would you like to have? A corndog with onion rings?”

She shakes her head, frowning, then touches her hair that is frizzed because she has lain in her chair all afternoon, instead of going to church. “Nothing sounds good. It all tastes like sawdust.”

I lean down, “A cheeseburger? Oh, I know, how about those chicken tenders with gravy you love? Or how about a country fried steak sandwich? With onion rings?” She shakes her head, looks at the window.

“Is it suppertime already?” Her voice is high and shaky, because she has just awakened from sleeping all afternoon.

“See it’s still daylight outside, and we just came from church. Today is Sunday, the day we eat supper with you.”

“I’m not hungry. It all tastes like sawdust.”

I lean down and ask, “How about some sawdust?” and she laughs, covering her mouth with her hand and then holding her head in her hands.

MeMe’s health is like summer weather, when in June a fierce thunderstorm will unexpectedly appear only for it to be peaceful and green and beautiful an hour later. From one day to the next, my parents and sisters and I do not know how we’ll find her. Her son will call sometimes, telling us that she is weaker today or asking if one of us can stay with her. Sometimes, she will be lucid, regaling us with family stories about how Jesse James slept in her father’s barn one night.

It is another night that I am staying with her when she is not feeling well again. She goes to bed early, and I sit in the living room reading. I hear her calling, but when I go back to her room, she is confused when I turn on the light. She wants it off, so I go by the light from the hallway.

“Something’s wrong with my bed. The blankets are bunched around my legs.” I know something is wrong because the blankets are smooth. Even if they had been bunched, MeMe never complains about anything. But she frets about the blankets even when I tell her they are not messed up, she keeps trying to sit up and brush at them with her hands.

I take them all off, straighten her flannel pajama legs, and begin reassembling the covers carefully. I begin with the sheet, pulling it tight where it is not wrinkled. Then her blue flannel blanket, equally layered across the bed, each one where it is smooth and straight.

“Is that better?” I ask. “Try to get some sleep. I’ll be in here if you need me.”

She is sitting up halfway and stares at her covers, then at me. Her voice is high and wavering.

“Something’s wrong with my covers. They’re too much” — her voice trails off where I cannot hear her, her hands moving restlessly, this time bunching them into a tangled mess.

I begin again, lifting them off. Straightening her flannel pajama legs, pulling the sheet taut, the seams straight. I go through the whole process seven or more times before I can convince her that her sheets are all right. She lies down, troubled, something in her mind convincing her that her blankets and sheets are bunched around her legs.

I alternate between anger and acceptance on our visits. Eating supper with her when she is particularly weak one night, watching her trying to stab some English peas on her fork, chasing them around the rim of her plate while I am able to effortlessly spear fried okra without even looking. I find that I am angry at myself for being able to walk lithely around, while she is trying to decide how to negotiate a foot that does not even want to lift off the floor.

On Spring Break, we sit outside with her in the swing we bought her for Mother’s Day. She has had a small stroke and is able to talk but the words come out at random.

“The sky is sherbet,” she says, nodding her head.

“Really?” We say, trying to think how to keep the conversation going. I look at my sisters, thinking maybe they know what she is really trying to say.

A few minutes later, she points at the yard, “The yard is full of fever.”

“Isn’t it pretty?” I reply and push the swing back and forth. Then I realize that she meant to say clover instead of fever.

“It does have lots of clover, doesn’t it?”
She smiles and nods, “Lots of fever,” she agrees.

When I was ten, my first dog, Liza, had to be put to sleep. I insisted on holding her while Dr. Welton gave her the shot. The moment after she drew the needle out, I wanted it all out of my dog, but the feeling of helplessness, of being unable to undo my decision panicked me as I watched her on the table.

Liza died in less than ten seconds, ten helpless seconds that seemed like one because I knew they were my last seconds with her. And that is how death is to me: quick, sudden, unexpected, spontaneous. Hearing of deaths only confirmed that sense: “He died last night.” “She passed suddenly.”

I began to realize I was feeling the same sense of helplessness with MeMe, when she was weak, disoriented, and even when she was better. Sitting in the swing with her, when she could not form a sentence, I held her hand as if it would somehow help me to connect with her when we could not communicate. It was as if my anger at my own physical health was compensation for the helplessness of her condition.

MeMe surprises us each time her health worsens, always pulling through. I know she cannot live forever, yet when I think of the future, MeMe is always there.

---

Writers’ Festival 2004 High School Winners

Short Story Category
First Place - Kristi Delaney
“Amazon Elite”
Bradshaw High School
Ms. Montgomery

Second Place - Rusty Russell
“Seattle’s Cry”
Bradshaw High School
Ms. Montgomery

Essay Category
First Place - Matthew Mallard
“Enduring Memories”
East Lawrence High School
Ms. LeMay

Second Place - Rusty Russell
“A Life Worth Living”
Bradshaw High School
Ms. Montgomery

Poetry Category
First Place - Andres Ochoa
“Courier”
Bradshaw High School
Ms. Montgomery

Second Place - Will Brannon
“A Ghost Went Down to Castle”
East Lawrence High School
Ms. Bowling
approach as a strolling photographer considerably easier. In addition, the 36-exposure rolls allowed pictures to be taken in sequence, thus allowing a visually more experimental approach to a valid pictorial formula – an advantage which, as we shall see, played an important role also in the conception of Meudon.

Portraits of his artist friends; including Mondrian, Foujita, and Chagall; interiors, as well as everyday objects and street scenes, were among Kertész's more common themes in those early years in Paris. Nonetheless from the beginning, Kertész's visual exploration of the metropolis on the Seine occupied the center of his artistic interest. In these years, according to Sandra S. Phillips, he often strolled through areas like Montmartre and Meudon. Gaining familiarity with the traditional artist-quarter