



Digital Proofer

Illumination 2011-2012

Authored by Mgccc

6.0" x 9.0" (15.24 x 22.86 cm)
Black & White on Cream paper
74 pages

ISBN-13: 9781475156577
ISBN-10: 147515657X

Please carefully review your Digital Proof download for formatting, grammar, and design issues that may need to be corrected.

We recommend that you review your book three times, with each time focusing on a different aspect.

- 1 Check the format, including headers, footers, page numbers, spacing, table of contents, and index.
- 2 Review any images or graphics and captions if applicable.
- 3 Read the book for grammatical errors and typos.

Once you are satisfied with your review, you can approve your proof and move forward to the next step in the publishing process.

To print this proof we recommend that you scale the PDF to fit the size of your printer paper.



illumination

the literary journal of
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

2011 – 2012

Each year, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College students are encouraged to submit their best compositions for our annual writing contest. This journal includes the winners of the 2011-2012 contest in the categories of Structured Verse Poetry, Free Form Poetry, Short Story, Personal Essay, and Critical Essay. Artwork was contributed by the students of Jefferson Davis Campus.

Front Cover art: "Burning Monk" by Jonathon Christian
Contest Coordinator: Tracey Williams
Contest Committee: The Language Arts Department of Jefferson Davis Campus, MGCCC
Journal Sponsors: the Jefferson Davis Campus, the Jackson County Campus, the Perkinston Campus, MGCCC
Journal Editor: Tracey Williams
Journal Layout: Jason Stuart

©2012 by MGCCC

"In compliance with title IV of the civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972 of the Higher Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other applicable Federal and State Acts, the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Gulf coast Community College hereby adopts a policy assuring that no one shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age or qualified disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity of the college. The Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College is an Equal Opportunity Employer and welcomes students and employees without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age or qualified disability."

Compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II of the Age Discrimination Act and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is coordinated by Dr. Billy Stewart, Vice-President for Administration and Finance, Perkinston Campus, P.O. Box 609, Perkinston, Mississippi 39573, telephone number 601-928-5211, email address billy.stewart@mgccc.edu.



Dedication

Deborah Lee Emery – Debbie to her beloved family, Lee to colleagues and friends on the Coast – always had more than one side to her! She came to this area as a high school teacher instructing ESL students to read the language, then became a Writing Instructor in JD's Learning Lab for a short time. But Lee had really enjoyed working with international students and returned to reading and study skills in the Lab. She worked in that position for many years and was happiest when she could help students for whom English was not the primary language.

At the same time Lee deeply involved herself in the lives and cultures of her students at MGCCC, she was in love with biking, yoga, and occasional tree hugging! She was passionate about the environment, a member of numerous organizations from local to national dedicated to saving and preserving the earth and its creatures. Lee also cared a great deal about her longtime neighborhood in Biloxi and her few years living in Ocean Springs, following Katrina. In both areas she took active part in community programs and groups. Whatever interested her, whether for the moment or for years, Lee wrapped herself in that interest wholeheartedly and with great enthusiasm.

These qualities endeared her to many people, including her community here at MGCCC. When news of her death in November spread, the impact was shattering for us here as well as for former students. Over time, we treasure the good and often funny memories, and we remember Sigrid, her sweet and lovely daughter, who finished here, and pray for the best for her. One thing we know: true to the motto Lee repeated to us, she left us "doing what I want to do."

Deborah Lee Emery
MGCCC
1989 - 2010

Contest Winners

Structured Poetry:

First Place – “What My Father Taught Me” by Joe McKenzie 9

Second Place – “Innocence” by Brandi Piepgras 12

Third Place – “Welcome Home, Kid” by Mark Burr 14

Free Verse Poetry:

First Place – “Road King” by Gene Bernache 19

Second Place – “Against the Surface” by Laura Weitalla 20

Third Place – “The Time of Me” by Kimberly Landry 21

Short Story:

First Place – “The Connubial Game” by Alison Beeson 25

Second place – “Fog on the Bayou” by Vel Merrithey 31

Third Place – “Change of Heart” by Amelia Webb 35

Personal Essay:

First Place – “Start of Another Season” by Vel Merrithey 40

Second Place – “An Ordinary Pencil” by Cody Burk 46

Third Place – “Love & Betrayal” by Meaza Medlock 50

Critical Essay:

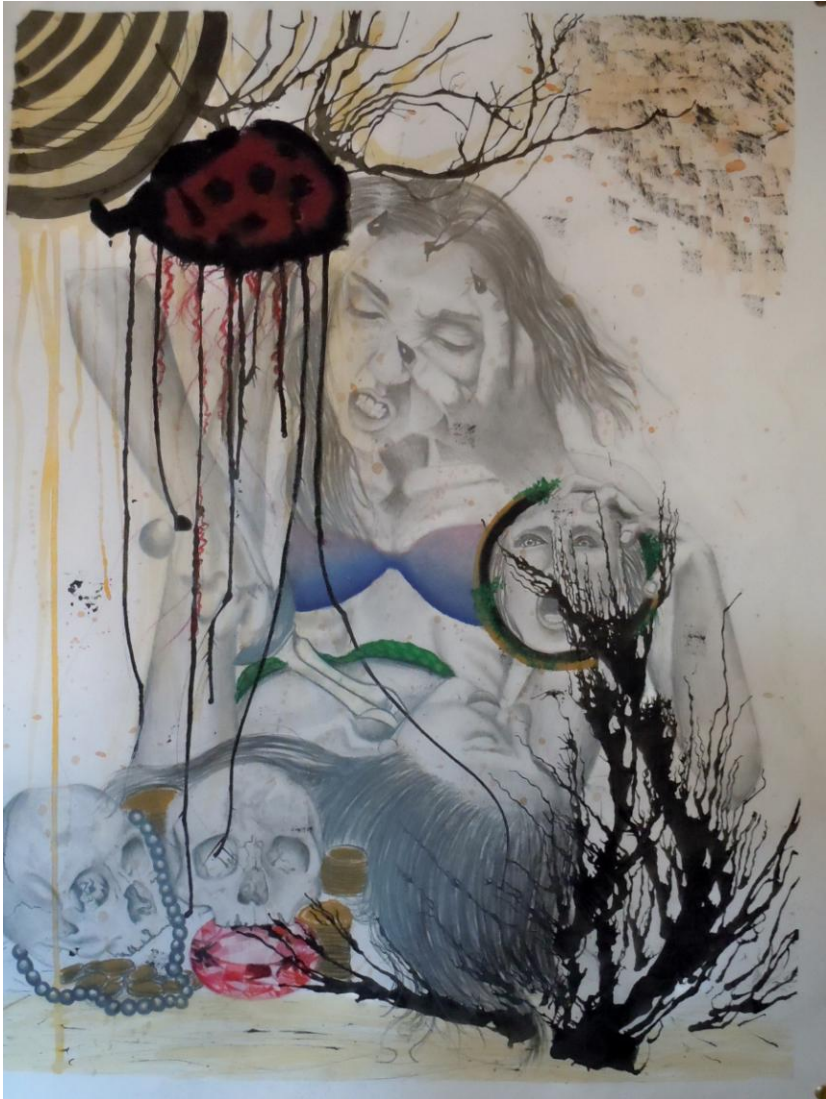
First Place – “Man of Steel” by Orrin Cummins 57

Second Place – “Cryptomnesia, Self-Plagiarism” by Mark Burr 62

Third Place – “The Buried Past Unearthed” by Orrin Cummins 67

illumination

structured poetry



"Mean Girls"

Hillary Henley

Joe McKenzie

What My Father Taught Me

My father taught me how to cheat on my wife.
He taught me how to get away with it.
He taught me how to lie.
He taught me how to lie even more.

My father taught me how to fear.
He taught me how to cringe when a car door slams.
How to handle the word "fuck" being screamed in my face
He taught me how two-by-fours sting for days.

My daddy taught me how to take sides.
How to pick and choose based on lies
He taught me that love doesn't last.
But petty name calling will sustain

My father taught me how to swing a bat.
He taught me how to shift gears in trucks and motorcycles.
He taught me the rules of football
And how much they don't make sense

My papa introduced me to John Wayne.
He taught me what to laugh at.
He taught me what to be ashamed of
And what not to be, most importantly

My dad taught me how to love.
He taught me how to miss someone after two days.
How slow dancing is not appropriate for father and son
But that it was still smile-worthy.

My father taught me how to throw up in hospital parking lots.

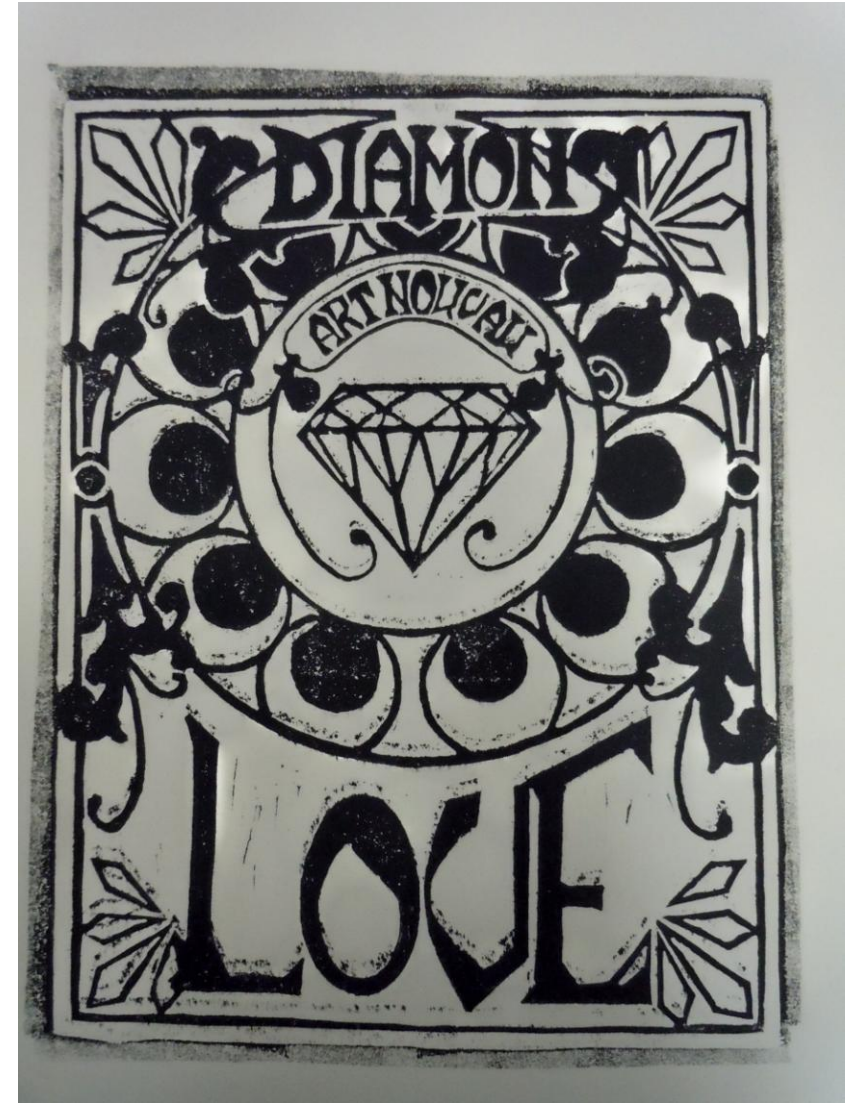
illumination

He taught me how to watch a man cry because stroke victims
are emotionally unstable.
He taught me how to keep up hope.
And how not to breakdown when you realize there is none.

Michael taught me that funerals aren't bad
That I don't ever want to hear "Amazing Grace" again
He taught me how to watch your best friend sink slowly into
the ground.
He taught me that all he is now is an indentation in the grass.

He taught me how to be a husband
He taught me how to be a father
He taught me how to be a man without being a "man."
He taught me a lot, but surely not enough.

illumination



"Love"

Dustin Templin

Brandi Piepgras

Innocence

Rain falls upon them
Standing in the open clearing
An innocent kiss.



"Mayan Sun"

Ksenia Uraleva

Laura Woitalla

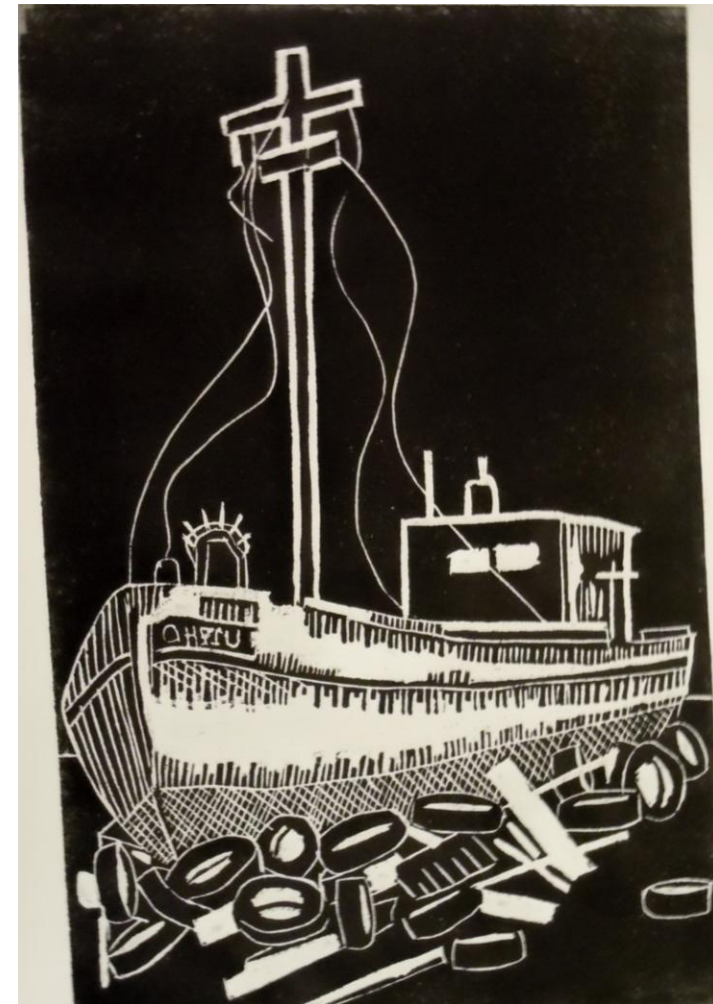
Welcome Home, Kid

Prodigal son – left in the dark to fend for himself,
I lost myself in the maze; the frenzy of pleasure.
When her voice pierces my ear, “Find yourself,--
I promise you, that’s the greatest treasure.”

Blood in my mouth and on this ground
“You ain’t nothing but a dead dog”
“I promise you, it will all turn around:
Just clear your head of all this fog.”

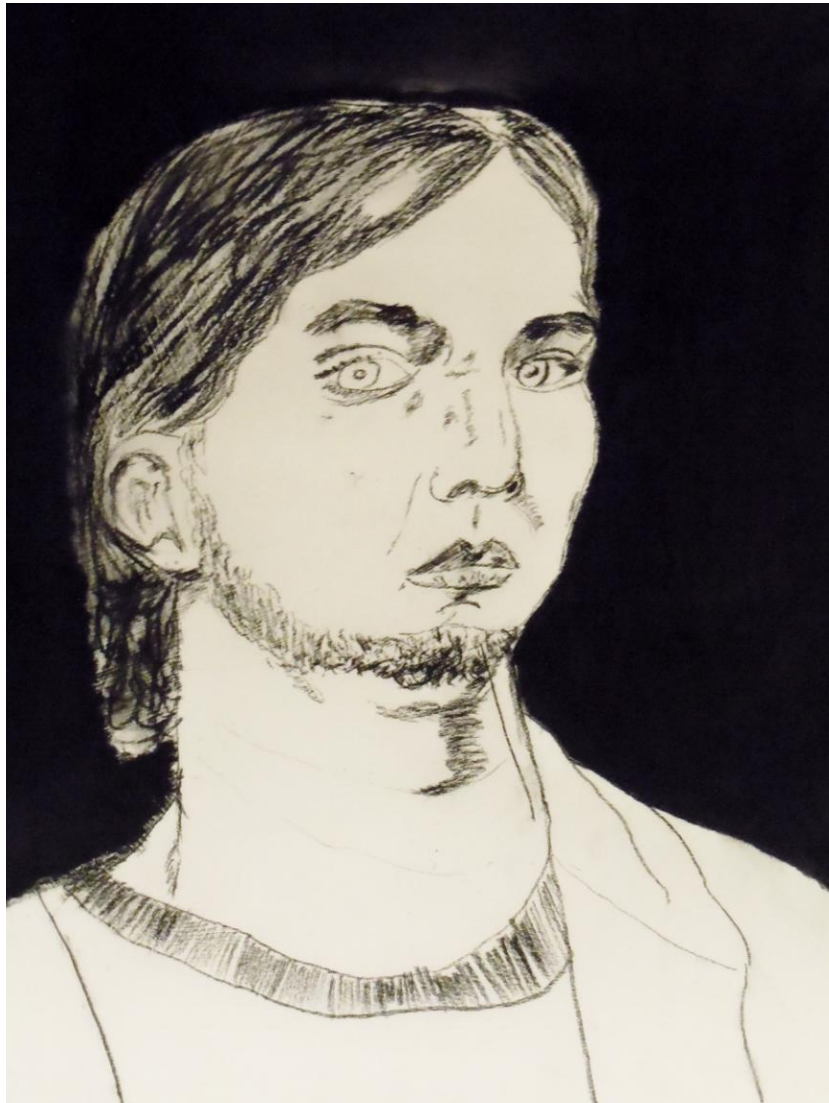
Burn it all! Burn it all to the ground;
Start fresh, begin anew.
See, the king’s been crowned.
Sorry it’s so overdue.

I know I bought the dream that was sold to me.



“Shrimp Boat”

Ro’man Martin



"Self-portrait"

Neil McKain

free verse poetry



"Ghost Dog"

Brianna Uren

Gene Bernache

Road King

Sunlight reflects from the chrome.
I wrap my hands around the grips.
The push of a button brings it to life.
It rumbles like some great beast, in anticipation...

I head into the rising sun.
The pavement smells of morning dew.
Not much traffic this early, the earthy smells are strong.
Wisteria, honeysuckle, damp earth, things unknown...

Wind roars in my ears drowning out all sounds.
Riding fast or slow, it's all the same.
The miles pass under my wheels.
I can think now, no distractions...

The pegs scrape the pavement when I corner, kicking my heels up.
A straight road puts me to sleep; I'm called the weaving wonder.
I don't need or want a destination; the trip is what I want.
When I get there I'll know it, until then I ride...

I pass cages along the way full of trapped people.
They look like frustrated mice on tread mills.
Running... running... they never get anywhere.
Thinking they are going somewhere they go nowhere...

illumination

Laura Woitalla

Against the Surface

Our steps move against the surface,
Rocking back and forth like a rhythmic dance.

The equator of my heart beats and blazes
In anticipation as we move forward.

Tall grass grows around the bayou
Like a wild maze.

Underneath the bridge
Lie endless, sunken hallways.

The boat moves on
Sweetly sliding against the water beneath.

illumination

Kimberly Landry

The Time of Me

I sit by the lake

The ripples across the surface distort my reflection

A leaf gracefully dances its way down, atop the mirror

This makes me ponder who I really am

The autumn wind picks up my hair playing with the fair
strands

With eyes closed I search within myself to find peace

I can not

I open my eyes

Before me everything is tinted in a lovely amber light

My very own fairy tale land

I feel a spark within me

Nature courses through me

It ignites through my veins

Nature is my playmate

I am nature



"Biloxi Boatyard"

Ra'mon Martin

short story



"Sea Turtle"

Brett Jenkins

Alison Beeson

The Connubial Game

She kept their wedding photo in a cookbook in the kitchen. For years it had hung over the fireplace in a large ornate gilded frame, above a vase of the same flowers that had made up her wedding bouquet, and surrounded by smaller pictures of their life together. Now a large Van Gogh print adorned the wall instead, and the photo was placed inside of her cookbook, carefully pressed between the well worn pages of the potato section. She said it was symbolic.

Thanksgiving break began as usual, my drive from university uneventful, the guest room as warm and inviting as ever. I was eating breakfast when she came downstairs the next morning, slowly leading my grandfather by the arm. I watched out of the corner of my eye as she carefully deposited him in the chair to my left, patted his shoulder gently, and bustled off to get his breakfast. Grandpa grinned after her, then turned to me, sticking out his hand in his usual flamboyant manner.

"Good morning!" he shouted, pumping my entire arm up and down. "What's your name, son?"

"Michael," I answered, offering a small smile as I regained use of my right arm.

"Arthur," he hollered back jovially. "Say..." he glanced back at Grandma, then leaned towards me, his face showing a hint of confusion. "Nice place, this," he announced, his eyes

flickering around the room. "You live here?" he asked, his hands twisting in his lap.

I put down my spoon and reached under the table to grasp his hands tightly in my own. He looked surprised but didn't pull away.

"You're in a safe place with friends who love you." I tried not to let my words sound scripted. He stared at me for a moment and I squeezed his hands, trying to offer what I could, what he would accept. He gave a quick nod and pulled away from my grip as Grandma plopped a stack of pancakes in front of him. He beamed up at her as she straightened his napkin, and his head pivoted to follow her as she returned to the kitchen for her own breakfast.

He turned back and gave me a wink. "That's some girl," he said in a stage whisper, before digging into his meal with gusto. Within seconds he started shouting praise about "the best damn pancakes I ever ate!" and commented that they "must have been cooked by an angel." My grandmother accepted the praise in her usual humble manner, occasionally leading the conversation towards another compliment, which prompted me to nudge her under the table. She kicked me back, and refused to explain to Grandpa why she was giggling as she helped me up off the floor.

The pantry was beginning to look woefully desolate, so Grandma bundled us up, piled us into the notorious Granny-Van, and off we went to the supermarket. Grandpa hummed along to the radio, tapping his fingers unrhythmically against the window. Once we arrived, he decided that pushing the cart was the single most important thing he could be doing at that moment, so he set himself to pursuing my grandmother and I

doggedly around the store, occasionally getting distracted and excited over an electric toothbrush or cinnamon bread or Batman pajama bottoms. I looked the other way as he snuck the pants into the cart, and pretended not to notice when my grandma quietly exchanged them with the correct size while Grandpa was causing a hullabaloo over a pair of neon orange slippers.

Grandma and I were arguing the benefits of skim versus whole milk when we realized Grandpa wasn't with us. I don't think I'd ever seen my grandmother's face so pale. We flew up and down aisles, Grandma wildly berating me, herself, and anyone who had the misfortune to be in her way for letting this happen again. Finally, the intercom system crackled into life and announced "Ida and Michael to customer service." Grandma was charging up the aisle before the speaker had sputtered into silence.

Grandpa was standing awkwardly by the customer service counter next to a small dark woman who was resting one hand on his shoulder, a child secured to her hip with the other. Grandpa's flitting eyes landed on us, and the relief was palpable. Grandma grabbed him around the neck and pulled him stumbling in to her arms, murmuring words of comfort and reproof in a broken voice. He smiled and closed his eyes, arms circling around her waist and face settling into her hair.

I swallowed and turned to thank the woman, who smiled and said "Of course, honey. He's the sweetest man." I chuckled politely. Without warning she pulled me into a hug, startling her child, who leaned as far away from me as possible. I avoided its horrified gaze and stared over the woman's

shoulder at my grandparents, who were still entwined, my grandfather looking as peaceful as could be.

"She's a gorgeous dame, isn't she?" Grandpa muttered to me after we got home. Grandma had shuffled off to the garden, leaving Grandpa and I to unpack the groceries.

"Grandma? Yeah, she's really pretty," I answered, trying to figure out how to squeeze a year's worth of cashews into the pre-designated snack cupboard.

"Grand...wait just a...," and suddenly I was hoisted upright by a pair of sinewy arms. Grandpa leant towards me, peering deep into my eyes.

"Are you meaning to tell me," he asked, one eyebrow threatening to disappear into his hairline, "that that woman out there...is your grandmother?"

"Uh. Yeah." I answered, trying to keep my face blank. My emotions didn't really know which direction to be going in, so they settled on watery eyes and barely contained grin.

Grandpa moved away from me and wandered over to the window. He stood watching Grandma watering her flowers for so long that I took a tentative step towards him, when suddenly he spun back towards me. "Well," he said, shooting me a broad grin, too infectious for me not to reciprocate, "doesn't matter. We all have our baggage, don't we?"

"I want to go for a walk," Grandpa announced later on after supper, shuffling over to the front door and wrestling his beloved cane out of the umbrella stand. Grandma went to the coat rack to grab their jackets. I watched from behind my book as she pulled a long chain from underneath her sweater, detached the ring swinging from the end, and tucked it into

Grandpa's coat pocket, before joining him at the door and pushing the coat up his arms.

"Coming, son?" Grandpa asked, shooting me a look heavy with connotation as he tried unsuccessfully to force his cane through a sleeve as Grandma watched, looking amused.

"Uh, no, I have some reading to...do..." I trailed off as he bounded out the door. Grandma checked that Grandpa was out of earshot, then winked at me and jerked her head towards the stairs. "What? I can't read in the living room?" I asked, confused. She sighed and fixed me with a 'look'. "You said you wanted to see, so get upstairs! You won't see anything from here," she whispered.

"He's gonna do it now?" I asked, setting my book down hurriedly. "Probably," she whispered, and a faint blush appeared on her cheeks as she headed outside, where Grandpa was tramping impatiently back and forth, looking slightly flushed himself. As soon as the door swung closed, I charged upstairs to my bedroom and peered out the window into the front garden. Grandpa had led Grandma down the front path a little ways, one arm shoved into his pocket, the other entwined in her own. Suddenly he halted, pulled something out of his pocket, and studied it intently, while Grandma scrutinized the lawn with a sudden intense interest. He shuffled nervously from foot to foot and glanced at Grandma, who was now gazing at the stars with extreme fascination. Finally he turned to her, his ears glowing a bright red. He mumbled something, then slowly lowered himself down onto one knee and awkwardly presented the ring, to which in answer Grandma threw her arms around his neck. His sigh of relief was so deep I thought I could almost hear it. As they walked off down the

path together, I saw Grandma slip the ring from her right hand to her left.

“Love is a wonderful thing, son,” Grandpa shouted at me as we were watching TV later that night, Grandma snuggled up at his side. “You gotta grab it when you find it. If you put it off, you’re gonna miss it, boy.”

Grandma rolled her eyes at me from her position pressed against his chest, her head bouncing slightly as he droned on. I chuckled softly and turned back to the TV, the light from the set glinting off the ring perched in its rightful place on my grandmother’s left hand.

Vel Merrithey

Fog on the Bayou

Duhé Francois disappeared on the night of a full moon while taking a short cut through Bayou Chovan. Since that time, most people shied away from going through the bayou after dark. Search parties had spent many days poling through the bayou and surrounding swamp; the neighboring Indian tribe joined the search to no avail. It was useless to hope that he would ever be found or return on his own. Late at night, some of the villagers said they heard strange sounds coming from the bayou on the night of the full moon. Most of the men laughed it off, attributing it to too much home brew and cherry bounce.

René and his fishing buddy, Maurice were two who laughed it off and had planned on picking up their jig lines on the night of the full moon. He had placed a lantern and jug of coffee laced with *white lightning* in the bottom of his pirogue. After supper, Ulla walked down to the edge of the bank with him.

“Good lord René, why do you wait so late to go out in the bayou to pull in those ol’ fish lines?” She stooped to pick up her cat that was slinking through the grass. “You know I don’t like it one bit especially after what happen to Duhé.”

“Aaah Chérie you worry too much. There’s nothing out there at night that ain’t there during the day, furthermore, Maurice and his brother-in-law are going with us.”

"Just hurry back. You know I'll worry until I see you pull up to the bank."

Laughing, he kissed her on her cheek and threw his croaker sacks in the pirogue waving as he poled away from the bank. The moon, as if on cue, rose large and yellow over the horizon. Poling, he slid between the banks of dense vegetation draped in vials of Spanish moss that reached out long grey-green arms toward the deeper green water. Occasional shacks at the water's edge broke the luxuriance of the scene. Rounding the bend, he saw Maurice standing at his landing.

"Hello, my friend. How are you and the family?"

"Everybody's doing well."

René glided to the landing, dipping his pole deep into the water to stop the pirogue.

"I say doing well, but not everybody. Sonny has to take Jacqueline and Nettie down the road to their mama's house because she's got the grip, or the croup or something, and I have to stay with the children."

"Aah man we have to pull the lines tonight, they must be full."

"I know, but what can I do?"

René looped the pirogue rope around the piling. "Well if you can't go, you can't go. Throw me your sacks and I'll get your lines for you."

"You don't have to do that René. I'll get them at another time."

"I'll be out there Mo, just as soon pull yours. You'll need all of the food you can get with the ol' lady being sick. Buddy and his gang will be coming and you know they eat everything

in sight. Go over to my place and tell Ulla to give you that fat back and a bag of beans. We have more than enough."

The bayou's banks receded; the smell of sulfur in the marshlands became more intense. René felt apprehensive in spite of what he had said to Ulla. The intermittent moonlight was tense with an unhealthy mix of frost and fog. His mind had begun to whirl and twirl; tightness gripped his throat when he heard a queer bleating cry. He was not alone on the bayou. He felt his body rise slowly and a wild sensation flooded him. A low moan went up from the bank and hands propelled him forward. He floated over the surface of the bayou, toward the shore. The cawing of the swamp birds was all around him. He tried to stop the ringing in his ears but could not raise his hands to cover them. No sound came out when he tried to shout to frighten them off. *What was happening to him? Could all of those stories he had heard be true?*

The fog lifted, and he saw a shack on the edge of the bank. He could just make out the form of a woman sitting silently in a chair on the porch. Leaning against the side of the shack was a man who looked familiar, a face from the past-Duhé. *Duhé, could that be Duhé?* He tried to pole closer, but there was no bottom. He could not move. Peering through the haze, he saw an agonizing look come over the placid face of the man, as he clutched his chest and let out a curious mewling sound. *Dear Lord, where am I?* The fog closed in as quickly as it had lifted.

His head was pounding; the sun burned his eye lids, and his tongue felt as though it filled his entire mouth. He lay in the bottom of his pirogue surrounded by half-filled croaker sacks and his empty coffee jug. Had he fallen asleep while pulling the jig lines? He vaguely remembered all he had seen or

dreamed or imagined. Confused, he struggled to sit up and looked around to get his bearings. *I'm not too far from home. Lord help me get there.* With heavy arms, he poled through the murky water passing sights that were familiar. On the surface, things went on as usual. Inside, he wondered if Ulla was right. Could all of the stories he had heard be true? Something had happened to him that he could not explain. He could hear someone calling his name. *Dear God let this be real.* Just ahead of him, he saw his friends and neighbors paddling their pirogues in his direction.

"Hey René, where have you been? We've been looking all over for you. Ulla is frantic she said you left days ago."

Looking all over, *I left days ago? Lord they will never believe me.*

"I just crossed over to Bayou Tach and decided to stay a while."

Any lie was better than the truth.

Amelia Webb

Change of Heart

I arrived in Wyoming just before day break. He picked me up in a beat-up old pickup truck. It's the same one from the stories my mom used to tell me. She said that once a month her and her dad would drive into town to pick up supplies. Each time he would let her pick out three pieces of hard candy. She always said that was her favorite part of the trip.

My parents died in a car crash a week ago. My grandparents are the only family that I have. Moving to a ranch in Wyoming is a far cry from what I am use to in Nashville, Tennessee.

Climbing into the truck, my grandpa shook my hand and looked forward again. He cranked up the old truck, and we started rolling along. After thirty minutes of driving, I asked him how much longer. He didn't respond, just shook his head. The red dirt road seemed endless. I thought tumbleweeds were just something in old westerns, but there they were rolling along. I have never seen such dry red dirt before either. My grandfather's face matched the surrounding. I guess from over the years of riding the range, his face had weathered along with the country side.

Finally, after an hour of driving, we arrived at the ranch. We rolled under the Double T ranch sign as dogs bounded to meet the truck. As we pulled up to the worn ranch house, a woman walked out. She had such a warm welcoming smile. It was such a relief to see. This must be my grandma. When I got

of the truck, she gave me a huge hug. I was amazed at how strong her wrinkled arms were. "You must be starving," she said, "I have cooked eggs, bacon, toast, and freshly squeezed orange juice."

"I am, thank you," I said.

As I walked into the house, it smelled so good. My stomach growled with hunger. She must have heard it because I heard her softly laugh. We sat down at the table, and my grandmother piled my plate high with food. As I took my last bite, my grandpa Joe started talking to me for the first time. "I need you to help me clean all of the horse's stalls also feed the horses and cattle. Tomorrow we will begin cutting the hay," he said. He got up, and walked out the door. As I sat there wondering why he was so reserved, my grandmother spoke up. "He has always been quiet, but since we got the phone call of your mother's death he has been worse. He has taken her death especially hard. You will just have to be patient with him. You are not doing anything wrong," she said. I hope my grandma's words are true. It still does not seem real to me, that my parents are gone. But living here with my mom's parents, I hope I can learn more about how she grew up.

The next day was hard work. I woke up at five a.m., and we did not stop till the sun went down at seven p.m. That night, at dinner, they told me that I would begin school the next day. "We only have one school in this area. It houses kindergarten all the way up to the senior class," Grandpa told me." Yes and the neighboring ranch family has a daughter that is your age. I am sure she will help you find your classes," Grandma said. The thought of a girl the same age as me made

me nervous. It was easy for me to make friends back in Tennessee, but it was so different here.

The next morning, I walked to the bus stop. There was a girl about sixteen and two other little boys probably the age of six. As I got closer, they noticed me. "Hi, my name is Leann, she smiles. "Hi my name is Jake," I said. "I just moved in with my grandparents on the Double T ranch." "Yes, I have heard that you moved here. I am so sorry for your loss. I didn't think you would start school so soon," she smiles again. "Yeah I think it will help me keep my mind off of things. Plus, I think my grandpa would work me to death." I laugh. The school bus pops into view just then with a swarm of dust engulfing it. It was a thirty minute bumpy ride before we arrived to the school. I could not believe how small the school was when we pulled up. Leann told me that even with all of the grades combined there was only forty three kids that attended school. My teacher's name was Ms. Honeysuckle, and she was extremely nice, almost too nice at times. There were only six juniors, counting me. In Tennessee, there were at least twenty-five in each classroom. There were two-hundred in my junior class. I liked having the smaller classes though. It seemed like a much calmer atmosphere. The kids in the class were all nice to me. I think they felt bad for me. Word must get around quickly. Finally, the bell dismissed us at two thirty. I was eager to get back to the ranch and help Grandpa finish cutting hay. Leann offered to walk home with me. That made me excited; I was eager to show Grandma that I had made at least one friend at school and not just because she felt bad for me.

When Leann and I stepped off of the school bus, we were surprised to see there was a horse trailer pulled up to the corral

outside of the barn. I walked to my grandpa and asked, "What is going on Grandpa? Are you getting a new horse?" "No, he said, "You are." I was astonished. "Me, I asked? But why would you have gotten me a horse?" "Your mom had a love for horses. I thought maybe you would to," he told me. He was right. I would beg my mom to tell me stories about the horses she grew up with. Each year for my birthday and Christmas, she would buy me a book all about horses. I practically memorized them I read them so many times. I was amazed at the horse that stepped off the trailer. She was jet black with a long gleaming mane and tail. I could hardly believe my eyes. "Grandpa," I smiled, "She is beautiful." "I'm glad you like her son, but you will have to help me train her. We can only have working horses on this ranch," he said. "I understand, Grandpa. Thank you so much."

Leann stood in the corral for hours with me brushing and combing her. She was extremely gentle but very spirited. For the next month, every morning and every day after school, I spent with her. Most days, Leann would come over and offer advice. The horse gained my trust, and, eventually, let me sit on top of her bare back. The first day she let me sit on her was the day I realized that even though I lost my parents, they had given me the greatest gift. On the back of this jet black horse was where I belonged. She saved me that day.

personal essay



"Protector of the Castle" Candace Rainey

Vel Merrithey

Start of Another Season

Cool winds unfurled flags on the four elaborate turrets jutting skyward above the grandstands. There was talk of the favorites and dark horses, which jockeys would ride and how many entries each stable would have. Buggies and wagons of every description drove into parking spaces off of Gentilly Boulevard. Pedestrians walked along the byways from home, and others road the trolley. A scenario that dated back over a hundred years was being played out.

It was Thanksgiving Day, and that meant gumbo, turkey, oyster dressing, and all of the trimmings that families gave thanks for. For New Orleanians, who were fans of horse racing or just fans of a good Bloody Mary during the day, big hats and dressing to the nines, Thanksgiving held an entirely different meaning: opening day at Fair Grounds. In the Guillemette home, it was no different, good food and racing. Family members had gathered for the day; women were setting tables and putting the last touches on desserts. Rémy, his three sons, and grandson, Jules, were leaving for Fair Grounds. It was a big day for his grandson; he had waited for long as he could remember to accompany his grand-père, daddy, and uncles to the race track. He had only seen the track from the outside fence and was excited by the thought that he would actually be in the grandstand. He ran down stairs and kissed his ma-mère.

"I'm so happy, Ma-Mère, can hardly wait to see the horses up close."

Laughing, she reached in her pocket and gave him a two dollar bill.

"Make a bet for me, any horse you think will win, *cher*," she said.

"I've never seen a two dollar bill before."

"That's race track money, my boy, the smallest bet you can make is two dollars. This is your first time to bet you will be lucky, parlay it."

"What is parlay?"

"Ha, ask your grand-père he is the big horse man and will love to answer all of your questions."

Jules put the bill in the new wallet his *Paran* had given him for his birthday and ran out to the car.

His père sat in the driver's seat, as usual.

"There you are my boy. Hop in and let's get going. Don't want to miss the first race."

Alex mumbles from the back seat.

"As though Pop would ever miss the first race on Thanksgiving."

Jules was wide-eyed and excited as they drove down the avenue.

"Has the track always been in Gentilly, Pa-Père?"

"Yep, for over a hundred years, but it wasn't the first track in the area. Way back about 1820, a private track was laid out by a guy named Francois Livaudais on his plantation uptown in the Garden District. The first public race track was the Eclipse Track built in 1837. That's where Audubon Park is now."

"But where were the animals?"

"No one had ever thought of that area as being a zoo back then; all they thought about was building better tracks. There was the Metairie Race Course in 1838; it was the grandest track of all. The Union was built in 1852. These were all on our side, the east bank of the river and the Bingaman was on the west bank. The Union outlasted all of the others and became Fair Grounds. After the Civil War, the original Louisiana Jockey Club disbanded in 1879 but was reorganized in 1880. The new club made large investments in the Fair Grounds, including electric lighting.

Seated in the back of the car with Alex was Rémy, Jr., and Jake, Jules' daddy, listened to their Pop tell the story to Jules they had heard through the years. They were as excited as Jules, hunching over one another. Alex leaned over Jake, trying not to talk too loudly.

"Pop should be the track historian. I'll bet he knows more than the board members."

Rémy, Jr. laughed.

"Just think, dudes. This is my fourth time hearing it, but Pops knows what he is talking about. Say Pop, tell him about the one in City Park."

"I was getting to that. Well, just like today, Fair Grounds was the go-to place for horse racing through the turn of the century, but a competitor came on the scene in 1905. The New Orleans Jockey Club purchased an old dairy farm on land that was once a part of the Allard Plantation that is now City Park. The track was situated on Tad Gormley Stadium and Rosevelt Mall."

"Say Pa-Père, you mean I've played football on a race track?"

“Guess you can say that, but it didn’t last too long. Anti-gambling opponents went to the legislature in 1908 and had horse racing outlawed, it was called the “Locke Law.” The horsemen got together and formed a group to lobby the legislature, and the law was repealed in 1916 both tracks were reorganized.”

“Tell him about the Jefferson Park Track Pop.”

“Well, the Jefferson Park was a late comer. With the repeal of Locke Law, the Jefferson Park was constructed in 1918. Both Jefferson and Fair Grounds prospered for a while but fell on hard times during the Great Depression. A syndicate controlled by the owners of Jefferson Park acquired the Fair Grounds in 1934. Jefferson Park was closed leaving Fair Grounds as the only horse track in the metro area.”

“What about the fire, Pop?”

“Ooh, that was a sad day. People came from all over to stare at the charred ruins of the grandstand. You would have thought someone had died. There was this massive fire in '93, and it took four years to rebuild because it was reconstructed exactly as the old one. All of the glass rollup windows were handmade, and those took time to make. Here we are in our favorite parking spot, Jules boy. Come on, let’s get our programs. See you boys in the box; I’m going to take my grandson to the paddock where he can see the horses up close.”

Jules looked up at the massive grandstand.

“Wow, Pa-Père, I had no idea it was so big.”

“Wait until we get inside and you see all of the different rooms and the Club House where we sit. When you hear the

bugler’s Call to the Post, think about all I’ve told you, over a hundred years of heritage, son.”

They walked to the paddock through the throws of people enjoying the start of another racing season at Fair Grounds.

Cody Burk

An Ordinary Pencil

Through years of wear and age, years of transfiguring a blank slate into a window to the artist's ambition, the humility possessed by the most underwhelming of entities can spark any emotion, expedite any action, and intensify any hope; while the world will change and play host on its stage to acts of tragedy, drama, comedy, and the like in unlimited spectrum, the most basic of tools will always write these scripts and conceptualize these characters for all time to come. An artist, a visionary, a narrator of humanity's tale can be of any mold, which only calls to question what has been chosen to fill it. Humans' dreams and the most beautiful scenes are born to physical form in the wake of disparity and despair, and hail from the most seemingly insignificant concepts; never could it be questioned that in essence, all that is a larger entity will always be fashioned of smaller ones, ones that exist in all shades of the world's canvas -- the stage's backdrop.

Prolific shadows were brought to view by the sole light source, an old rusty lamp poised downward to the finely grained article of paper which one could so plainly see everything one has ever seen in. The dusty and stale backroom which housed a seemingly eldritch oaken table also gave stay to a substantially newer redwood chair, which creaked and shuttered as the aged man sitting atop it struggled in silence to grasp control of his rampant thoughts. A pencil, splintered and worn, rested in his ancient fingers, which, scarred and

dilapidated above the skin of youth, impressed an unintelligible strength. The pencil slipped slightly downward as he loosened his grip in his mental tirade; the ambivalent clash of the artist's ideas permeating his preamble. This artist had once been a man of deceptively few years, as the heart that beat to the rhythm of his always stellar dreams has never diminished, nor augmented in the tides of passing age. Despite the master's immense imagination, the vast arsenal of tools he possesses is of upfront notice; when one sees the work this man has done, the dreams and soaring images he has brought to the physical world, it is shocking that the staggeringly adept technique imparted is not marred by the simplistic nature of the pencil, the invaluable tool that has never faded from his highest priority.

From this cluttered and cramped room's walls, hangs the overwhelming work of this seemingly miniscule instrument. This artist, in particular, chooses to deluge his work in the darkest tones possible, while still maintaining copious light in flawless simultaneous fashion. These intense stages of emotive, masterful, and vividly lighted scenes come to a head as he garnishes his piece with the finishing touches: the tiniest details which will undoubtedly be the largest factor in delivering his vision, one he has struggled in frenetic delight to extricate to paper. This vision, however, was never meant to be limited to the canvas. The immense volumes of his story, the immortal tale which expounds the artist can be put to a blank slate with only limited success, as he has seen in his dreams man, woman, and child transformed as a direct result of what he now holds tightly in his aged and wrinkled, yet powerful grasp. His eyes sparkle in raging candlelight; a slight grin creeps over his

bearded lips in bittersweet reminiscence, as reproachful eyes narrow and brace closed.

To this artist, and to mankind alike, this pencil was the soil in which the deathly and malnourished tree of gnarled branches of war and hatred grew stalwart; though saplings, incarnations of love and peace existed in considerable quantity, the endless storm that is the sky would weep forever and inhibit the saplings' growth, never letting the sun shine through again in full -- the stage immersed into darkness. This seemingly insignificant pencil would author complex scripts of morosely tempered articles that all the world, the actors and actresses, would play a part in; this pencil would make practitioners of all types of emotion and actions of those under its spell: actions born of disdain, love, and pain, yet always given form to ambiguity -- the world cannot burn any hotter. The raging inferno makes smoldering ash of the stage's background that is this world's color: red, green, and blue, now singed black and devoid of what made it stand. This riotous tempest rescinds the stage's novelty, as it becomes yet another casualty owed to the playwright's ignorance and avarice. The lesson that all who witnessed the tragedy must learn becomes clear: the power of the press and artistic expression can sway any heart in any direction in a swift and unanticipated gust; those who refuse to seek shelter, or those who do not flee quick enough are caught in its awful wake. In realizing this, the artist sets down his pencil with a faint thud, rips his masterpiece to quarters in a slight air of indignation, and -- with the same grin as before -- starts over.

A monotone color will always correspond to one of plethoric vibrancy, whether it is dense, devoid of shades, or

livid with all species of tones. Awe for the monolith and not the humble stones, which carry its weight, recalls the fear of a swarm of locusts juxtaposed to the lack of respect for a single one. An artist can recreate a piece in eternal recursion, re-exacting it to all critics' specifics, and still face stiff obstinacy in his or her peers. The piece that the artist has brought into being becomes synonymous with the script that is authored as a byproduct; because of those actors and actresses in the artist's play who misread the script -- or those who refuse to go by it -- the play becomes a viciously misguided improvisation that will always inevitably tear the stage to the ground. It should be hoped that those spectators who choose the doomed playwright's path learn from the disaster, and heed the sun's setting.

Just as silence edges over the scene of indifference, a scene of joyous, mellow, cacophonous birdsong ascends speciously; the sun begins to set over the distant titanic mountaintops. The elusive shadows dance as the beech trees, meadow grass, and the artist's ragged gray beard sway in obliged acknowledgement of the gentle wind as the artist shuts off his lamp again, granting full atmosphere to candlelight as he leaves the decrepit room to preserve his masterpiece in stale silence.

Meaza Medlock

Love and Betrayal

When I lived in Bahrain about ten years ago, I met Shawa. She was happy, outgoing, fun, and a Christian person. We became best friends. We talked about our families and our love lives almost all the time. Shawa told me about her high school sweetheart and about how much she loved, trusted, and believed him. She said, "When I go back to Ethiopia, I am going to marry Assefa. He is the love of my life." For the next five years that we were in Bahrain, I heard so much about him that I felt as if I knew Assefa already. However, Shawa's love for and trust of Assefa did not go the way she expected it to, and her world was changed forever.

I got married first and left Bahrain for good. My friend, Shawa also left the following year. The same year she and Assefa met at church, the same church they used to go to when they were dating. They talked about their past lives. She asked if he were seeing someone while she was away from him. He asked her the same. They both admitted they had been in relationships with someone else. Shawa said, "I have tested for HIV/AIDS, and I am negative." In this part of the world where diseases are widespread, this is considered a necessity. She insisted that he must get tested before they started their love life again. He said that he got tested every six months through his employer. She trusted him, and they moved to the next steps, which was a wedding. They got married and had a baby boy the following year.

However, when their son was two years old, Shawa noticed some pimple-like spots around her husband's eyes, but she never asked him about them. One day, she said to her husband, "When do we have another child? As we all know neither of us is getting younger. Besides, our little boy wants to have a little brother or sister to play with." Her husband said, with a rude tone, "Look at my face, what do you see? Go to the hospital and have blood work done."

She did not understand why he talked to her that way, but she went to the hospital and got her blood checked. Before the doctor at the hospital told her the result, he told her how to take care of herself if she was infected. Having HIV/AIDS was not the end of the world. She said softly to herself, "What is he talking about? I know I must not be infected. How could I be?" She grabbed the envelope from the doctor's hand and opened it. After that, she did not know what to think; she left the hospital crying. No one was there with her. She almost had a car accident before she got to her house, crying so hard she could not see. She did not want to stay one more night with her husband. Sobbing and crying, she took her son and left her husband.

Shawa felt sick, and she did not tell any of her family members that she was HIV/AIDS positive. However, she went to a hospital and told her doctor about the pain she began having and also that she was HIV positive. She thought the symptoms she had were complications from HIV/AIDS. Soon, she found out that she was pregnant with her second son. She was happy and worried at the same time. She then asked her doctor what could happen to her unborn child. The doctor said, "There is a chance the baby can be negative, but the delivery

must be done by C-section.” Shawa said, “I had my first child by C- section. I am familiar with the surgery.” She was happy with the news the doctor told her. At least her baby might not be infected.

During this same time period, her husband became very ill. He could not even get out of a bed without support. His AIDS became aggressive. When Shawa heard that, she went back to her house to take care of him. His sisters were there with him, and they said that they could take care of their brother. Shawa said, “No, he is my husband. I am the one who should take care of him, no one else.” And she did take care of him until his death.

After her husband died, she started searching the house. She had strong suspicious that he had HIV for years prior to their marriage because everything happened too quickly. She did not know what she was looking for, but she needed something to give her closure because she had not asked him how he became infected with HIV/AIDS. One day, she found a certificate with Assefa’s name on it, stating that he was HIV/AIDS positive. He had the certificate two years prior to Shawa going back home to Ethiopia. On top of the certificate, he wrote a note saying, “I am HIV/ AIDS positive, but I will marry Shawa.” She could not believe her eyes. He gave her the disease on purpose. She knew that she was not a bad person. She loved him. How could he have done something like this to her? Now, she hated him with all her heart. How was she going to raise their children? There were so many questions but no answers for them. He must not have cared about anyone. A few months later, she had her second healthy baby boy by C-section. A few months later, she took both children to the

hospital to get tested for HIV/AIDS; thanks to God, they were both healthy.

Last summer when I went home to Ethiopia, I saw my best friend and her two beautiful little boys. Shawa asked me if I could do her a big favor. I could not refuse my best friend. She had gone through a lot already. I said to her, “What is it Shawa?”

She started by saying, “As we all know, I do not know how long I have to live. Even though I am on HIV medicine, I am having bad headaches and pain in my right leg. I want you to find me someone who can adopt my two boys.” My heart dropped, and my eyes filled with tears because as a mother, I would not want to be separated from my children. She was afraid to leave them behind without a father or mother. She continued, “I want all the best for my children. Since I am not lucky enough to see them grow up, at least I will know before I die that they are with good people who will take good care of them. I know when they grow up they will understand.” I could not say a word. We both were sobbing and crying for a moment. After wiping my face and blowing my nose, I cleared my voice and promised her to do anything I could. I will keep my promises to find her someone who will love her children.

I spoke with my best friend, Shawa, last month. Her illness is progressing. The pain in her leg is worrying her the most. Her boys are doing fine. I am still looking for people who are willing to adopt her children. As a result of her love, trust, and believe in Assefa, she lost the most precious things in this world, her health and, potentially, her children. Assefa’s betrayal continues to ruin lives.



"Rose Bouquet"

Chad Cordray

Critical Essay



"Cicada"

Dustin Templin

Orrin Cummins

Man of Steel

In the short story "Barn Burning," Mississippi author William Faulkner paints a picture with words like only a true master of prose can. Through the careful selection of descriptive terms, he manages to conjure into the reader's mind lasting impressions of the various characters. For example, from the time he first introduces Sarty's "two hulking sisters" (157), Faulkner makes it a point to emphasize their largeness by comparing them to cattle: "[the sister's] head, face, alone merely turned...wearing only an expression of bovine interest" (165). But perhaps the most striking uses of descriptive imagery are exemplified by the author's treatment of the story's antagonist, Abner Snopes. The repetitive employment of particular words to describe Sarty's father cannot be underestimated, as Faulkner was certainly not a man with a limited vocabulary. By constantly likening Abner Snopes to the properties of metal, the author causes the reader to harbor very specific notions of exactly what kind of man the character is: stolid, cold, and unemotional.

One word in particular is used more than any other to describe Sarty's father: stiff. In the initial courtroom scene, Sarty follows "the stiff black coat, the wiry figure walking a little stiffly from where a Confederate provost's man's musket ball had taken him in the heel" (157). At the height of their foray into Major de Spain's mansion, Abner "just stood stiff in the center of the rug" (160). In fact, the adjective "stiff" is used

in no fewer than twelve separate instances to describe Abner Snopes. This stiffness is quite indicative of the character's personality; like a metal statue, Abner is unbending and unyielding.

Another property of metal that often comes to one's mind is its relative coldness to things around it. Here, too, Faulkner supplies some magnificent imagery. Describing Abner's first words in the story (again from the courtroom scene), the author writes: "His father spoke for the first time, his voice cold and harsh" (157). Later, when Abner pulls Sarty to the side to scold him, he "struck him with the flat of his hand on the side of his head, hard but without heat...his voice without heat or anger" (158). And finally, when Sarty can no longer endure his father's vindictive actions and decides to rebel against him, the latter looks at him "in breathless and frozen ferocity, the cold dead voice speaking over him" (165). This last example is especially telling; by using words such as "frozen," "cold," and "dead" Faulkner is clearly portraying Abner Snopes as an immutable, resolute force, again akin to a metal statue: cold, unfeeling, and frozen in time.

As if he believed that this wasn't enough imagery to drive the metaphor home, at times throughout the story Faulkner comes right out and directly compares Abner Snopes to types of metal. For instance, as Sarty struggles to make out his father's figure on the night road, he describes "a shape black, flat, and bloodless as though cut from tin in the iron folds of the frockcoat" (158). The following day, as the two are approaching de Spain's mansion, Sarty notes that his father "had more than ever that impervious quality of something cut ruthlessly from tin" (159). The use of the word "impervious"

here is important, as Abner Snopes does indeed appear to be "incapable of being influenced, persuaded, or affected," at least on the surface ("impervious"). At other times in the story, Sarty describes things like "the machinelike deliberation of the foot" (160) and "the shaggy brows beneath where the grey eyes glinted coldly" (162). All of these examples elicit powerful images of metal or machines.

For all his outward appearances, though, there is more to the character of Abner Snopes than his rigid and implacable exterior. Though Sarty is too young yet to notice or fully understand it, his father is secretly filled with a "ravens and jealous rage" at those persons occupying a higher station in life than he (159). Abner does an impressive job of hiding it, but lurking behind that glacial, dispassionate facade is a fiery maelstrom of hate and envy. This internal negative energy simmers just below the surface, until something triggers its master's ire and then it ignites all at once into a blaze that cannot be tamed, a blaze that can only be quenched by its physical manifestation in the real world. This explains why Abner Snopes is a "barn burner": "the element of fire spoke to some deep mainspring of [his] being, as the element of steel or of powder spoke to other men, as the one weapon for the preservation of integrity" (158).

Consider the last time that Abner Snopes is mentioned in the story: "Then his father was gone, the stiff foot heavy and measured upon the boards, ceasing at last" (165). This is presumably the last time that Sarty sees his father alive; although the author does not explicitly state so, it seems relatively safe to assume that the two gunshots that Sarty hears on the road shortly thereafter have found their mark.

illumination

Therefore, the words “ceasing at last” do not refer merely to the sound of his father plodding out the door, but much more importantly to the exiting of that seemingly inhuman force from Sarty's life. As Sarty runs down the road after hearing the shots, he finds himself “looking backward over his shoulder at the glare as he got up, running on among the invisible trees, panting, sobbing, 'Father! Father!'” (166). Of course, the “glare” he sees is de Spain's barn afire, but symbolically this glare also represents his father's inner inferno coming to the surface one last time, in a final stroke evaporating the impenetrable, gelid shell of Abner Snopes and with it, his life.

In the closing paragraph of the story, Sarty sits at the top of a hill. Dawn is coming, both for the new day and for the next chapter of his life. He is “a little stiff, but walking would cure that too, as it would the cold, and soon there would be the sun” (167). The deeper meaning here is beautifully crafted; Sarty's incredibly oppressive father has left his youngest son's character somewhat shackled, but these binds will ease up as he moves forward with his life. No longer detained in that chilly emotionless jail by that frigid jailer, the future suns will shine on him like never before. His indurate metallic father has metaphorically transmogrified into a harmless liquid state, prompting him in the final sentences to remark how the “liquid silver voices of the birds called unceasingly” from the dark woods ahead, sweetly beckoning him into a new and unexpected future in which his metal prison bars have now melted away.

illumination

Works Cited

Faulkner, William. “Barn Burning.” *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing*. Ed. Dana Gioia and X. J. Kennedy. New York: Longman, 2010. 155-167. Print.

“impervious.” *Dictionary.com*. Dictionary.com, 2012. Web. 10 February 2012.

Mark Burr

*Cryptomnesia, Self-Plagiarism, And How To
Steal A New American Classic*

Plagiarism is often thought of as a problem that only plagues the halls of universities and colleges as a fleeting crime committed by desperate students facing dire deadlines; however, there is not a fundamental limit to classify all who commit plagiarism. Plagiarism is frequently defined simply as the attempt to pass off the ideas of another as original thought, although the definition is much broader. Even famous written-works in our history have plagiarized origins. Countless articles and essays have been written that establish the gray nature of plagiarism and its standing within philosophy and morality, and only grow in number every year. Plagiarism is a growing trend among modern writers and students which encompasses more than just its written definition: it is a part of our written history and is a philosophically ambiguous crime.

“The word plagiarism derives from Latin roots: *plagiarius*, an abductor, and *plagiare*, to steal” (Moss 1). In essence, plagiarism is the theft of an idea and the attempt to claim it as his or her own original thought. Plagiarism consists of several different forms: incorrectly citing source material, not attributing a quote, copy and pasting a sentence from an online encyclopedia, and completely lifting an idea or concept from someone else. Plagiarism carries great shame in the academic, scientific, and creative field; but, as written in *Opposing Viewpoints*, “no law governs plagiarism, so no one can be sued

for plagiarism” (“Plagiarism Is Different from Copyright Infringement” 2). There remains a philosophical dispute over the nature of and existence of creativity and whether or not an idea must be committed to paper to be plagiarized.

The history of written word is littered with plagiarism accusations—even toward some much unexpected authors. Stephen Moss writes that Shakespeare stole most of the ideas for his historical plays directly from Holinshed (Moss 1). Writers such as David Shields, argue that there can be no control over written word because creativity is more of a fusion of old thoughts present in a new way (Shields 1). Anyone familiar with ancient history is aware of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*—the world’s first epic poem—and the stark similarities to the story of Noah and the ark. In this vein, many literary scholars question whether original thought can exist anymore when so many of our historical works are representations of older works that have been repackaged.

Shakespeare is not alone among the many famous plagiarizers: Oscar Wilde, Martin Luther King Jr., Picasso, T.S. Eliot, Thomas Jefferson, Tchaikovsky, James Joyce, William S. Burroughs, and George Harrison have all been accused of plagiarizing. Concerning the mysterious, unattributed authorship of *The Reign of Edward III*, Shakespearean scholars have attributed the authorship to Thomas Kyd with the advent of plagiarism detection software (Faure 1). Through this discovery with plagiarism detecting software, many scholars now want to run our entire anthology of written word to analyze the results. To read *The Wasteland* is to witness T.S. Eliot’s “verbal kleptomania” (Moss 1). With this rich history of

plagiarism, David Shields questions whether it matters who wrote anything (Greenberg 1).

The very nature of plagiarism has been described differently between scholars of academia and creative writers. Stanley Fish of *The New York Times* writes that “plagiarism is a hot button topic and essays about it tend to be philosophically and morally inflated. But there are really only two points to make. (1) Plagiarism is a learned sin. (2) Plagiarism is not a philosophical issue” (Fish 1-2). Fish further writes that plagiarism only matters in the fields of science, literature, and academics because those disciplines adhere to guild rules of writing that are not followed by the general public who do not understand the gravity of its offense (2-3). Plagiarism is thought by some to be a necessary evil—one that is committed by everyone and should be forgiven. Scholarly writers, such as Tshepo, write “Plagiarism is morally wrong” (Tshepo 2). The very nature of creativity comes into question when discussing plagiarism. Is creative, original thought possible?

Cryptomnesia is defined as when a forgotten memory returns without its being recognized as such by the subject, who believes it is something new and original (“Cryptomnesia” 1). The modern writer begins to wonder if anything creatively produced is actually the reproduction of something forgotten. One begins to wonder if every piece of written material created must actually be footnoted to death to avoid unintentional plagiarism. David Shields questions the limits of plagiarism and creativity in his *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto*. He borrows passages from countless authors, such as T.S. Eliot, movie scripts by Woody Allen, plagiarizes himself, and even his own six-year-old daughter (Greenberg 1). While

he footnotes every piece of borrowed verbatim, he morphs the borrowed passages into an entirely new genre of creating new work from pieces of old works like a mosaic. How does one quote an old adage with no author to attribute? Simply claim it as one’s own.

There is no doubt that the instances of plagiarism among students of universities and colleges are growing alarmingly despite the use of plagiarism software and application of honor codes; but, the attitude toward plagiarism is very gray and ambiguous and only taken seriously among those in the fields of creative thought and research. Stanley Fish writes that it is our desire to own intellectual property and the desire to be original that keeps those in the industry on the hunt for plagiarizers (Fish 3). The theft of creative thought may be the core of plagiarism; but, more often than not, someone simply forgets to cite a source without malice intent. Our entire library of literature contains countless pieces that are simply retellings or new imaginations of the limited number of plots and archetypes we have produced—even Shakespeare could only churn out so many plays alone. The horrible question underlying the issue of plagiarism is one concerning the existence of creativity and the ownership of intellectual property. But like any philosophical question, there is no true, correct answer to the question of original thought. Attorney General Ashcroft spoke, “stealing intellectual property puts at risk the very lives and well-beings of these people” (Reel 1). Stealing a thought could be equated to harming another author’s life.

Works Cited

- Batane, Tshepo. "Turning to Turnitin to Fight Plagiarism among University Students." *Journal of Educational Technology & Society* 13.2 (2010): 1-12. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Web. 2 Sept. 2010.
- "Cryptomnesia." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. 1 Sept. 2010. Web. 22 Sept. 2010.
- Faure, Gaëlle. "How Plagiarism Software Found a New Shakespeare Play." *TIME*. *TIME*, 20 Oct. 2009. Web. 02 Sept. 2010.
- Fish, Stanley. "Plagiarism Is Not a Big Moral Deal." *New York Times Opinionator Blog*. *New York Times*, 09 Aug. 2010. Web. 03 Sept. 2010.
- Greenberg, Susan H. "Second-hand prose." *Newsweek* 22 Mar. 2010: 63. *Gale Opposing Viewpoints In Context*. Web. 2 Sept. 2010.
- Moss, Stephen. "A History of Plagiarism (not My Own Work)." *The Guardian*. *The Guardian*, 23 Nov. 2005. Web. 2 Sept. 2010.
- "Plagiarism Is Different from Copyright Infringement." *Copyright Infringement*. Ed. Roman Espejo. Detroit: Greenhaven Press, 2009. *Opposing Viewpoints*. *Gale Opposing Viewpoints In Context*. Web. 2 Sept. 2010.
- Reel, Monte. "Getting the Word on Intellectual Theft From the Top." *Washington Post*. *Washington Post*, 21 Oct. 2004. Web. 02 Sept. 2010.
- Shields, David. "In Writing, Art, And Music, Everybody Steals." *Huffington Post*. *Huffington Post*, 28 May 2010. Web. 03 Sept. 2010.

Orrin Cummins

The Buried Past Unearthed

"The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" by Katherine Anne Porter is a remarkable, multi-faceted short story with several themes worthy of exploration. In it, the reader is taken on a poignant boat ride down the title character's stream of consciousness as she lives out her final moments. By telling the story from this perspective, the author manages to offer incredible insight into the true essence of Ellen Weatherall's nature. In addition, the reader becomes informed of key information about the character's past through her own internal reminiscing as her failing mind drifts effortlessly between past and present. The cumulative effects of these storytelling techniques are profound; Granny stands out not only as a proud, battle-hardened octogenarian*no comma here but also as a woman whose psyche has been deeply wounded for most of her adult life. For sixty years, she has done the best that she could to bury a painful memory, but she is ultimately unable to repress it any longer as it rises once more to consume her final thoughts. Still, Ellen Weatherall's long life of trials and tribulations has unquestionably earned her the name that Porter has so purposefully assigned.

To be sure, the name "Weatherall" was not selected by mere accident. It is hard to imagine a more fitting name for a woman who "fenced in a hundred acres once, digging the post holes herself" (Porter 81); a woman who sat up nights "with sick horses and sick negroes and sick children" (Porter 82); a

woman who lived “for forty years with kerosene lamps” before enjoying the luxury of electric lights (Porter 84). Even before the story begins, the placement of the name “Granny Weatherall” in the story's title evokes certain images of strength and stoicism. As the novelist William Gass remarked, “A character, first of all, is the noise of his name” (49). The noise produced by the name Weatherall smacks of eight decades of struggle and hardship, but also of times of pleasure and happiness. Through it all, Granny has weathered the storm, and now she lies on the other side recounting battles lost and won.

There was one emotional skirmish, however, that she never quite recovered from: “Wounded vanity, Ellen, said a sharp voice in the top of her mind. Don't let your wounded vanity get the upper hand of you. Plenty of girls get jilted. You were jilted, weren't you? Then stand up to it” (Porter 82). Though she tells herself these words of strength, being stood up at the altar by George is a bitter wound that won't heal, one that she has kept buried deep inside of herself since she was twenty years old. Getting married to John, raising children, running a household; these distractions commanded her attention well enough to enable her to lock this pain away in her heart, but like a tiny metal splinter, it remained there dormant, waiting for the right conditions so it could reemerge. Finally, when the vitality of her mind at last began to wane, the memory returns, like a lost but unwanted pet, back to throw it all in her face one last time: “the thought of him was a smoky cloud from hell that moved and crept into her head” (Porter 82).

Taking this critical event in Ellen Weatherall's past into consideration provides an additional angle from which to examine the character's name. Perhaps Porter was not simply implying that Granny had stood up to and survived everything that the world threw at her, but that she was able to do so while simultaneously repressing this overwhelming emotional anguish, not unlike a runner successfully completing a long race while shouldering a heavy weight. This makes Granny's hard-won victories seem all the more admirable, and gives her even more reason to be proud of her own accomplishments. In fact, it could be argued that while her jilting certainly gave her long-lasting scars, it also filled her with an unwavering determination to find “[her] husband just the same and [her] children and [her] house like any other woman” (Porter 83). Though it returned to haunt her in the end, that singular agonizing event might very well have been the most crucial component in the shaping of Ellen Weatherall's proud character, and thus directed the remaining course of her life not so much because of its negative impact, but because of the vigorous force with which she was determined to push against it.

illumination

Works Cited

Gass, William. *Fiction and the Figures of Life*. Jaffrey: New Hampshire: David R Godine, 1979. Print.

Porter, Katherine Anne. "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall." *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing*. Ed. Dana Gioia and X. J. Kennedy. New York: Longman, 2010. 79-85. Print.

illumination



"Funky Owl"

Toria Mason



"Spoonbill"

Nykes Hiasaw

Acknowledgements

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College extends special thanks to:

Dr. Jason Pugh

Dr. Susan Scaggs

Dr. Vernon LaCour

Sandra Halat

Jason Stuart

MGCCC-JC Language Arts Department

MGCCC-JD Language Arts Department

MGCCC-Perkinston Language Arts Department

And the 2011-2012 Writing Competition Judges:

Sue Bennett

Marilyn Moss

Betty O'Brian

Terry Pollard

Duke Sutherland

Proof

Printed By Createspace



Digital Proofer