



Digital Proofer

illumination 2015-2016

Authored by mgccc

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

ISBN-13: 9781530434558
ISBN-10: 1530434556

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



Each year, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College students are encouraged to submit their best compositions for our annual writing contest. This journal includes winners of the 2014-2015 contest in the categories of Personal Essay, Critical Essay, Short Story, Structured Verse, Free Verse, and Original Stage Play. Artwork was contributed by the students of Jefferson Davis Campus.

Front Cover Art: Kim Iglesia, "The Most Beautiful Moment in Life"

Back Cover Art: Kim Iglesia, "Coastal Goddess"

Contest Coordinators: Colter Cruthirds, Denise Maguire, Tammy Townsend

Contest Committee: Language Arts of Jefferson Davis Campus

Journal Sponsors: the Jefferson Davis Campus, the Jackson County Campus, the Perkinston Campus, MGCCC

Journal Editors: Jason Stuart, Susan Bosarge, Barry Broussard, Angela Frazier, Denise Maguire

Journal Layout: Jason Stuart

© 2106 by MGCCC

"In compliance with the 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 in 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 conducted by the Equal Opportunity Officer at a Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Center, Campus, or the District Office. Compliance is coordinated by the Vice President for Administration and Finance, Dr. Michael Heindl, Perkinston Campus, P. O. Box 609, Perkinston, Mississippi 39573, telephone number 601-928-5211.





Kim Iglesia, "Violet," acrylic

Contest Winners

Personal Essay

- THE UNVEILING by *Keionna Harmon*.....10
 A HEALING PROCESS by *Lauren Sanders*.....17
 THE MAGIC OF BEING READ TO by *Abby Plowman*.....23

Critical Essay

- EUGENE AND CALEB AGAINST THE WORLD:
 AN ETHNOGRAPHY by *Sharita Amacker*.....26
 SOCIOLOGICAL CRITICISM OF KURT VONNEGUT'S
 "HARRISON BERGERON" by *Robert Silvernail*.....36
 CHRIS SEMANSKY'S "CRITICAL ESSAY ON
 "THEME FOR ENGLISH B" by *Jade Nguyen*.....43

Short Story

- SIDE ORDER AND BACON by *Megan Wilson*.....49
 THE DECISION by *Abby Plowman*.....57
 RED ON BROWN by *Parker Bond*.....64

Free Verse Poetry

- VISIONS OF THE SOMME by *Silvia Shannon*.....71
 THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING
 AT A WILDFLOWER By *Morgan Dugger*.....73
 BLUE by *Malarie Torres*.....76

Structured Verse Poetry

- MUSIC TO MY EARS by *Madison Sumrall*.....78
 MAKING ALLOWANCES by *Silvia Shannon*.....80
 MY PET RABBIT by *Katie Peterson*.....82

illumination

personal essay

THE UNVEILING

Keionna Harmon

“We don’t want people to think we’re out to kill people or shoot people. It would be ridiculous to protest Islam without defending ourselves,” said one masked man wearing a hat down low and a scarf covering half of his lower face, while holding an assault rifle outside of a mosque in Texas. Those were the first words I heard sitting down at the end of the day, doing something I never did. I turned on the news. This particular story that was playing was about a man with a M16 on his back and a M16 in his hands as he followed three women to their local mosque. The commentators did something that to this day I still find astonishing. They argued how he was justified and covered by the constitution and had every right to follow these women to the mosque, instead of what he was actually doing. Even though he was not physically hurting the women, he had every intention of being a domineering threatening force as he followed these women who were going to mid-day worship like a shadow. Not one of these news anchors mentioned how he may have been violating his or her constitutional rights of freedom of religion but argued how he was doing everything right in order to protect his community.

The rifle carrying man was a member was a member of the “Bureau of American Islamic Relations” and was asked why he was doing this. His answer was “self-perseveration and protection.” It was in that instant I thought, “Can wearing a hijab be that much of a threat that it warrants a man stalking women on their way to pray, even when he was the one following people, with loaded weapons?” The more I watched this, the more questions started to come to mind. The main question was “Is this what our nation is becoming?” I decided to find out on my own; with high hopes of my peers, I

decided to wear the hijab in the upcoming spring semester of 2016 at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Jefferson David Campus for three weeks.

My prediction was that even though my hair was covered, representing a certain religion, that my peers and many of my friends will still see me as I am, the Keionna before she wore the hijab. So when January 6, 2016 came, the first day of school, I parked my car next to the tennis court, which was a strategic move on my part, optimizing the area in which would be mostly populated by the bookstore and the cyber cafe. With blood rushing and palms sweaty, I was not welcomed with the usual southern hospitality of a warm smile and a friendly wave that I have now grown accustomed to while living these past few years in Mississippi. Instead, I was greeted with looks of hostility and curiosity. Those who would freely flirt with me, even knowing I was married, put their head down as I passed them in the hallway.

As I continued onward to my destination, I noticed that the crowds would part on either side of me, just like the parting of the Red Sea. Once I arrived to my first class of the day, I walked in five minutes early to a room full of conversation, but as the door closed announcing my arrival, all talking ceased. I offered a friendly smile, but none was returned. I sat in the very first seat in the last row of the classroom. It was at the moment that I encountered my very first hostile conflict with someone who also was a criminal justice major, a veteran, and someone who would also be applying for a position with the border patrol of this country. “I don’t like you wearing that here; you need to take that off” were the first words spoken to me in the classroom. The tension filled room became eerily quiet as I looked around the room and watched the reaction of my peers. The young man behind me further encouraged the removing of the hijab and also stated, “I don’t like it; you’re freaking me out.”

I offered my apologies and said that I would not remove my hijab, but even then my apology was not returned in kind or with understanding. The young man behind me proceeded to collect his materials for class and his book bag and moved three seats away from me. The tension I felt in that room can only be compared to one other moment in my life. The day my psychology class went to the Louisiana State Penitentiary, and I saw Derrick Todd Lee, the accused LSU rapist and killer. As a usually outgoing and confident woman, I did not anticipate feeling the reality of the burden that I actually placed on myself. As my social experiment progressed, so did some of the harshness of my peers. I had the door repeatedly slammed in my face, I was called raghead, and even had someone tug on my hijab.

Those whom I considered friends did not treat me as such when I donned the physical appearance of a Muslim woman. One “friend” made a video and made fun of the fact that I was not only African American but that I was also an African American Woman who was Muslim, which was unheard of to her. A young man who I followed on Facebook started to post questionable anti-Islamic pictures and comments on his social media, which he has never done before. Two days later, my heart was heavy with how I was being treated in the short amount of time that I wore the hijab to school. I had to constantly remind myself of what I was doing, and that it had a brighter side even though people would point and stare, giving me looks of disgust.

Soon that reminder would no longer be needed. On the 8th of January, as I sat in the cafeteria eating my lunch, a former classmate who is now in nursing school came to my table and asked how I was doing. We sat and made small talk for about two minutes before he went back to his table. As I grabbed my things to go, I overheard the group of females he was sitting with question him. They asked, “Why were you talking to her?” and told him that he

should not talk to me. They said it with such authority and conviction that my heart soon fell again, even though I finally had someone be nice to me after being shown so much hate, but my reprieve was for nothing. With just as much conviction, he told them that I was a nice person; in fact, he even stated that I was cool, and he knows me well enough to know I’m not a bad person. As soon as I got to the next class on my schedule, I quickly sat down and wrote everything in the journal that I was using for this experiment, not wanting to miss out on any positive feedback that I was desperately yearning for.

During the three weeks that I conducted this social experiment, I encountered many highs and lows, the worst being on January 11th, when I was pushed by a female. I tried to write it off and said that it was a mistake, or maybe that I was blocking her, but it was in my heart of hearts that I knew and felt that she pushed me with the conviction of hate in her heart and behind her actions, a hate for a religion that is now being persecuted by certain media as the “new evil” in the United States. In my social experiment, I learned the power of symbols.

The final day I wore the hijab. I was on a quest for more positive feedback, not seeing as much as I would have liked. So with the help of a friend, on the 12nd of January, I went out in search to find the light in the dark hole that was now becoming my experiment. With a Quran in my hand, and my friend with a recorder in her hand, we set out for the cafeteria. We waited to see if anyone would stand up in my defense. Eating a grilled cheese sandwich and pretending to read the Quran, I watched and listened to my friend approach a couple. She told them that she was starting a petition that since everyone was an American citizen and that everyone here should dress the same, and no one should be able to wear the hijab on campus. When asked what they thought of this, the couple stated that I should be able to wear the hijab, but also if she wanted

to start the petition, she should go for it. When she moved on to the next pair, who were two young men who were majoring in sociology, they also agreed that I should be able to wear the hijab as a constitutional right, but their justification for why was detestable. The more talkative of the two stated that "Muslims are crazy about their religion, and they were afraid of the retaliation that would happen to the campus and the people here at the school if the petition was enforced."

With conclusion of this experiment, came a certain relief. On the 19th of January, I did the unveiling of my social experiment in my public speaking class. I brought in a scale to which I compared myself. With the closing lines of my speech, I said to my class as I unveiled myself, " We should be honest, just and fair as if we were a scale to weigh people of all religions, races, and sexual orientations." Through the unveiling there came a sense of relief in taking off the hijab, not because I felt burden to wear it but because I sat and watched the astonishment of my peers.

With each passing day and class period, I was bombarded with questions from my peers. The main one was why I would ever want to conduct an experiment like that. I would always politely explain that over half of my family is Muslim. I grew up in a household with two religions. When I hear the word Muslim, the first thought that came to mind is family, specifically, my step father who is a gentle soul. When I would responded "what is the first thought when you hear Muslim?" the answer was always the opposite of mine, having a negative connotative meaning. Even now, two weeks after I have concluded this experiment, even though I no longer feel the glares and the pressure weighing me down, I still face the ignorant remarks mostly coming from my criminal justice peers. I do not plan to reveal myself nor my intent of the social experiment to these peers.

It was through this social experiment that I found that ignorance is the main driving force behind the hostility I found myself facing day after day coming to school, so much so, that I was actually looking forward to the relief of no longer having to wear the hijab because of the constant contact of being shunned and treated cruelly through ignorance, which is truly not knowing.



Talia Hunter, "Sassy Passenger," oil

A HEALING PROCESS

Lauren Sanders

Growing up without my father in my life, I feel that I have missed out on many special moments. I never had that superhero to always fight off the monsters under the bed, that perfect tea party date, or that protector to scare boys before they take his little girl on a date. Sadly, for part of my life, I thought of my father as nothing more than a sperm donor. In the past couple of years, his letters from prison have been our only correspondence. I always knew my father did not live life in the most desirable way, but I never knew why. Our communication has opened many doors to justification, understanding, and reasoning for our situation. "I'm ultimately wanting to explore the broken pieces as I put the puzzle back together," my father stated in one letter. According to mentalhealth.vermont.gov, severe trauma in early childhood affects all domains of development, including cognitive, social, emotional, physical, psychological, and moral development (Kathleen 7). At seven years old, my father lost his superhero, his best friend, and, most importantly, his father. His death has played a substantial role in why my father took the wrong road in life and why he had trouble making connections with people; on the other hand, it also why he is helping others now.

"The wicked world closed in on me," my father said as he described October 16, 1980, the day of his father's death. His father accidentally overdosed on sleeping pills. Heartbroken, lost, scared, and not knowing how to emotionally handle the situation, my father decided to handle it physically. He had heard that drugs could kill a person, so that grieving seven-year-old boy that wanted nothing more than to be with his father again started using drugs the same year. When he was around ten years old, he found out

what he had been told was a lie. He overheard his mother talking on the phone about how his father's death was not, in fact, an overdose but instead a suicide. This news dropped another boulder on top of his already broken spirit. At this point, the drugs were not enough, so at eleven years old, he began drinking heavily. With every effort to suppress negative thoughts and emotions, his mental state had completely shut down. He tried to pursue a normal life by playing sports. Although he received many awards for his performance, his mother decided that him continuing to play sports was no longer an option. The sports were "too dangerous," or he was "too old." Naturally, the only option he had left was drugs and alcohol, and he was good at that too. "By the time I was fifteen, I was a self-made screw up, and I screwed up everything in my own way," he said.

At fifteen years old, my father fell in love with a woman that was one year older than him. Young, reckless, and in love, my father ended up impregnating her. Neither my father nor his girlfriend had a life that was fit for a child, and their parents were not pleased. With all of the obvious problems, an abortion date was set. The night before the abortion, my father's girlfriend was crying and asked, "Jack, what do you want me to do?" He replied, "I don't care." Between the ages of seven and fifteen, he had no positive influences and did not have a chance to mature correctly. At that moment, when it was time to make a mature decision, he was not mentally stable enough to do it. She shook her head, disappointed, with tears rolling down her face, "That's not what I want to hear. Jack, tell me what you want me to do!" "Whatever you want to do," he replied. He knew he had dropped the ball. They had the abortion and continued their life together for three more years until he was arrested and taken to prison for the first time. His girlfriend ended up with a man he introduced her to. That was failed relationship number one. When my father married my mother, he had high

hopes of maintaining the marriage. He admits to not fulfilling the roles that a husband should uphold in a marriage, and he also admits to not being able to live his own life free of drugs and alcohol. He was thinking that one day, they would look back and "shake off the dust and keep moving," but that was not the case. That was failed relationship number two. When I was born, he explained how he experienced a love that he did not know existed. He only wanted happiness for me. "I honestly imagined that we would grow together regardless of whatever life threw our way," he stated. When the family split up, he lost not only his wife, but also me, his daughter. He never had any success of rekindling our relationship. That was failed relationship number three. His mind was reset and put back into "auto pilot."

Retreating back to his old ways, he found himself in the usual routine. "The record shows, if a person doesn't make wise decisions on his or her own, someone else will do it for the person." During past prison sentences, my father tried to find God with hopes of being guided down the right path. Time and time again, he was let down. When my father received his most recent prison sentence, he was ready to give up and end his life. "I mean I had failed at just about everything (aside from screwing up), so I figured, 'What's the use?'" Throughout his crazy life filled with drugs, alcohol, careless decisions, and many more life threatening situations, he somehow made it through alive. On the day he decided he was going to end his life, the urge to pick up a book came upon him. At the end of the first chapter, there was a Bible verse, Deuteronomy 30:19, that read, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have sent before you, life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live." My father explained how he heard that God may not be there when desired, but He will always be there when needed. The long, broken path that my father took was building up to that very moment. Years of

loss, love, anger, and sadness finally had a glimmer of meaning. “I find that I grow spiritually, mentally, and emotionally along the way.” Still serving that same prison sentence, my father can achieve one goal he has always had: to be a counselor and work with people, but the irony is that for years, with his emotional and mental instability, he has always been the one in need of a counselor. Recently, my father went through a program called Addictive Treatment Unit (ATU). He graduated from the program, gave a speech at graduation, and was chosen by the staff to help with future clients. Many inmates that are in situations like his come to him seeking help and advice. He is now able to use his life lessons to guide others towards the right path.

“My entire life (I believe and trust) has been the way that it has been so that the goodness and graciousness that is to come will be well worth the struggle and fight to a better life.” Receiving a letter about my father’s past not only helps me get to know who he is as a person but also allows me to connect some dots. At a very young age, my father lost his father to suicide. At a very young age, I lost my father to negative situations and unavoidable circumstances. My father’s life was stolen from him very early, and eventually, it was too far gone. Stuck in a slump of not caring and not giving any thought to situations, he fell vulnerable to “the easy way out.” Facing the challenge of acceptance his entire life, but not knowing how to achieve it, he has been hurting in need of healing and using drugs to comfort the pain. Thirty-five years later, my father is still mourning the death of his father, but after all my father has been through, it has been a learning experience. “I do know that it all starts with me, so if I plan to succeed in any area of life, I’ve got to stay real with myself.” Having knowledge of my father’s past helps me to fill the gaps in our relationship. I forgive him for every mistake he has made no matter the gravity of it, and I now see him through the eyes of a daughter even better than I did before.

“Lauren, if you have learned anything from this and can possibly teach someone else from this, I’d like you to say this, ‘Everybody that uses drugs and alcohol are not bad people. Some of them are sincerely the best people you’ll ever meet; they just happen to be suffering and may need help understanding themselves.’”



Dana Davenport, "Portrait of Jesse," acrylic

THE MAGIC OF BEING READ TO

Abby Plowman

My brother and I awaited my mother's arrival eagerly. We fidgeted on his bed; we stared at the clock and grew increasingly impatient as the seconds ticked by slowly. It was probably only a few minutes before our mother came through the door, but it seemed like an eternity. She picked up the thick, worn library book – *Harry Potter and The Goblet of Fire* – and crawled between the two of us. She flipped gingerly through the discolored pages until she arrived at the spot where we had last stopped. Taking the page gently between her thumb and forefinger, she began to read aloud.

My brother and I were grade school age; I was seven, and he was ten. We'd each been reading on our own for years now. We could have easily read *Harry Potter* to ourselves. But it was an unspoken rule that some books were sacred. They were read aloud; they were read there on my brother's forest green duvet. They were read underneath the plastic stars assembled in constellations on his ceiling. But it was more than that. Those books weren't simply read; they were brought to life on my mother's tongue. She shifted seamlessly between the character's individual voices, imitating the accents and inflections of each. The big and little dippers smiled down on us as the scenes of the story unfolded before us like a movie – no, more vivid than that. It was like we were living the book ourselves. The places were familiar, and the characters were our friends. We inhabited this whimsical alternate reality where magic wasn't just possible; it was a given.

We read for hours; every time a chapter ended, we begged for just one more. Even though Mom claimed that every chapter was the last, she sighed and agreed to another. But our epic exploits

had to come to an end sometime. It was getting late; we had to go to school in the morning. We never wanted to stop, but eventually we had to concede. Yet even though the book was closed, our minds remained filled with the remnants of an enchanted world.

The books that we read in those nighttime sessions were excellent books. But would it have really mattered what we read? The magic wasn't evoked by the stories themselves; the magic came from the way the stories were presented. Our mother took the words from the page and transformed them into vivid, colorful images. She turned fantasy into reality; she created another world from nothing but the words on the page.

What my mother did for my brother and me may seem like a simple thing. But those nights are something I'll always be grateful for because they are responsible for a large part of my identity. The way my mother presented those stories made me love reading and books. She introduced me to an escape from reality; she showed me a portal to other worlds. Discovering those worlds made me want to create worlds of my own. That is why I am a writer. In many ways, I am who I am because of her.

I believe that all children should be read stories when they are young. There really is no other experience that is as magical as the experience of being read to. Albert Einstein said, "If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales." I wholeheartedly agree with this sentiment. My mother instilled a sense of wonder and curiosity in my brother and me. Being read to when I was young has made me a more voracious reader, a more eager student, and a more curious person.

critical essay

EUGENE AND CALEB AGAINST THE WORLD: AN ETHNOGRAPHY

Sharita Amacker

Dancing Queens

The show was held on a Saturday at midnight. After getting there early, I waited in the loud, smoke-filled club with my friends until a pool table was open. I saw about 20 people in the small club, mostly white males aged 20 to 50, seated at the bar. I also saw some queens chatting (or “ki-ki-ing”) with people at the bar. A man I recognized from Sephora (he’d sold me eyeliner earlier that same day) just so happened to be there.

The show started about thirty minutes late because the queens weren’t ready. Estelle Suarez, India Ra’el Starr, and Gi Gi Glamoure performed, dancing around and *on* people, taking tips in their bras. By the end of each of their performances, they were sweaty and tired. In between performances, India and Estelle told jokes to the crowd, stalling so the next performer would have more time to get ready.

India was a Missy Eliot impersonator, and a hands-on performer; she would dance on people, hug them, hold their hands, sing directly to them, and grind on them. At the end of her first performance, she walked over and started singing to me. She caressed my face, and to my surprise, she turned around and started “twerking” on me. I was so shocked--all I could do was lean back and squeal until she finished. When she finished, she hugged me and went backstage.

Before I went to the club, I’d imagined my first drag show experience would be loud and crowded, punctuated by people having sex in the bathrooms and doing drugs at the bar, but the atmosphere of the bar was actually pretty calm. The music was, indeed, loud, but the bar wasn’t crowded, and as far as I knew,

there weren’t any people having sex in the bathrooms. People weren’t doing or getting drugged. Other than the dense cigarette smoke, the bar was a pretty chill place to be, and everybody talked, danced, and respected each other’s boundaries.

The queens were nice enough to let me backstage, which was a frenetic mix of dollars, makeup, and wigs. Mainly what the queens do there is have a ki-ki, spill tea, and take off makeup and clothes. (Tea means the truth or the gossip, so spilling tea means talking or gossiping about someone.) A tall, thin blond man came in and started trying on wigs and boots, and the other queens talked with him about their days. India motioned to me and told everyone I was her dance partner during the show. I asked Estelle if there were any drag words she could think of, and the first word that came to her mind was *busted*. Then Gi Gi, looking appalled, shouted, “Who you calling busted?” To look “busted” is to look bad or unpolished.

To “read” someone means to verbally attack the physical appearance of another queen (*Paris is Burning*). “Reading” is very fundamental for drag queens because they can have some big personalities, and they most always speak their minds. Some queens get “bitchier” in drag because they think they’re stars. You have “read someone to filth” properly if you have caused that person to become physically upset by your comments (Pinyon). “Shade” comes from reading and is like a hit below the belt (*Paris is Burning*). “No tea, no shade” means you are going to say something negative about someone, but you don’t mean for it to come off rude. “All tea, all shade” means you’re going to say what you want to say about someone, not caring about how they feel about it.

Express Yourself

Drag queens are usually gay males who face discrimination, not only from heterosexuals, but within the gay community as well. I was able to meet with Eugene and Caleb, a couple who

have been together for about three years, but they've only been married for about six months. They are white, in their late 20s to 30s, and Eugene is the older. Eugene is a life coach for a professional company, and he is also a drag queen in the process of retiring. His husband, Caleb, works as a professional psychic reader and has expressed an interest in trying drag.

Drag is a performance; it's about transformation and self-expression. Call a queen by her drag name and use feminine pronouns because she's trying to sell the illusion of being a woman (Miller). "Drag queens use nonverbal aesthetics to communicate a coherent drag identity as queens blur gender lines and use performance as a space in which to bend the dominant American gender narrative binary" (Simmons). Likewise, a queen's makeup is going to be more exaggerated because the spotlight used at the show washes her makeup out, so if it's exaggerated, the audience can see it better (Miller). There are many different drag styles, ranging from looking "fishy" (more easily passing for a woman) to looking "campy" (more overly exaggerated). Queens pad their bodies in certain areas to get the desired body shape, and they tuck to get rid of their bulge. In order to tuck, after shaving well, a queen will pull his penis between his testicles, cover it up, and tape it down to be flat "down there" (Miller).

It's Raining (Reigning) Men!

Eugene's drag name is Sherri Lavouge. He has been doing drag for about 8 years now and started while he was in college. He explained, "In college, I was trying to figure out 'ok how can I make money and survive?' I had a friend who was doing drag, and I went with her to a show. They announced an amateur night, so I went to the amateur night. It kind of just started off from there."

Drag queens sometimes have what they call a drag mother, who will train them to be a drag queen. Usually you become good

friends with that person, and when you decide you want to do drag, she teaches you the dynamics of drag, gets you shows, and gives advice (Miller). Drag often take on their mother's last name. The drag mother and her daughters or a group of drag friends are all a part of a drag family, house, or "drag conglomerate," and they all help each other out (Suarez). Some believe that the drag queen family is embraces each other with stronger bonds. Even within the larger queer community, it is different, and those who practice drag face further resistance and persecution than members who don't perform as drag queens (Simmons). Whether a queen's real family isn't accepting of her, or if queens just need a sense of belonging, they often will find a family or a group of drag friends or 'sisters' to belong bond with.

Sherri's (Eugene's) drag mother is Big Momma Lavouge, an older queen who some would say is just a boy who likes to get in dresses and twirl around; she's often unprofessional, an attention whore, just crazy. However, according to Caleb, she is the nicest lady you could ever meet (Pinyon). She's performed without knowing the lyrics to the song, with her wig falling off, even untucked. Caleb says Eugene is very shy when untucking and wants to untuck in privacy, but Big Momma will rip her tape off and exclaim, "He was screaming daddy let me out! Daddy let me out!" while running around the dressing room naked. Caleb says, "Big momma has been performing there for so long no one really gives a \$#*% anymore, and they will know that's just Big Momma, and that's what you get."

Caleb told me he and his husband met at a drag show Eugene was performing in. He was there for his cousin and her fiancé's first drag show. While there, he saw a younger queen and decided to go up and talk to her. He told her that he had always wanted to try drag. He wanted tips about getting started, and then they started talking about personal things. She told him her real name was Eugene, but he could call her Sherri, and Sheri gave Caleb her

phone number. Then she asked if he wanted to go home with her and try on some dresses she thought might fit him. Caleb thought Eugene was a very attractive woman and an equally attractive man. Afterward, they started texting a lot and going out. Then, a month later Caleb moved in with Eugene.

I asked who the top was and who was the bottom, not fully was knowing their definitions. I thought top meant the husband in the relationship and bottom meant the wife. However, that's not exactly what the term means. The terms are designations for more passive or aggressive roles, and they aren't strictly defined. Sometimes guys that switch between roles are called top versatile or bottom versatile (Pinyon). The domestic roles are not traditional, to say the least.

Eugene is more masculine and reserved, but he is the drag queen. Caleb is more flamboyant, very talkative, and outgoing but is physically larger than Eugene. Caleb likes to say whatever is on his mind. He told me, "I've always been like this. This is who I am. Like it or #*%@ you. I guess it's because I don't take \$#*% off of anybody." Perhaps his provocativeness language and action is a way to push his way of life on to so he can challenge your own. Eugene is more outgoing and less serious when he is in drag. Caleb says, "He talks a lot dirtier. You kind of have to be more provocative and outgoing in drag, though Big Momma is the same in person as she is in drag. It's easier to be more provocative in drag because you have the opportunity to be whoever you want and let your true colors shine in an atmosphere where you're being accepted."

When they are out in public, Eugene is a little more awkward about stuff like holding Caleb's hand (Pinyon). They have been in Mississippi their entire lives. Surprisingly, they haven't faced much direct discrimination. "On the Coast, you can be different as long as you're not overt with it" (Miller). Eugene also said, "I don't hide that I'm gay, but I don't advertise it either. I don't see

the point in that." He always refers to Caleb as his husband. Everyone at Eugene's job knows that he's gay and married. He doesn't go out of his way to tell his clients because that's not really important to his job (Miller).

Eugene will try not to mix his day job with drag. Drag is not as accepted as being gay. When you're a coach, they do require you to be held to a certain standard. It's never interfered with his job because he says there's no question about it. His job would take precedence over drag because his job pays the bills and drag doesn't (Miller). He is now trying to retire. What was once a fun way to make a little money has now become a nuisance (Miller). Eugene said, "I never meant for it to be a side job or a lifelong thing. So I was always looking for a way to end it." Eugene told me, "Sometimes I'll do it as a favor for Big Momma. Sometimes when I'm actually doing it, I will enjoy it to some degree."

Along with helping out with Eugene's drag shows, Caleb is a master-elite ranked psychic. He was going to nursing school, and wants to go back, but he's taking a break because the work load was a bit too much. He had been doing witchcraft and psychic readings for a while, and felt he might as well make some money off of it (Pinyon). He works by phone, and most days he can lounge around the house playing video games, cleaning, or playing with their pets until he gets a call, and then he'll walk around, smoke, and talk to the client. Caleb thinks his job is kind of like Eugene's: most people call to vent how they are feeling, or they need advice about relationships and life.

I'm Coming Out!

Caleb knew he was gay at twelve and came out when he was eighteen, but he wasn't as outgoing as he is now. He was very religious. Although his family wasn't conservative, he chose to be. In high school, he was very shy and would be bullied because he wasn't out, but he says everybody knew he was gay. When he

finally came out, he *really* came out. He would wear shimmery powders, carry a purse, and wear lip gloss. It took him a while to adjust because there was a big difference between the straight and gay worlds for him. He said, "The gay world is very sexual and very out there--and that's not to say that every gay guy is just a slut and horrible, but it was a huge culture shock."

On the other hand, Caleb's family was very gay friendly and supportive of and his father would go to Eugene's shows before he passed away (Pinyon). Eugene's family on the other hand is not as supportive. He had trouble with them when he came out and when he started dating Caleb having to leave him when he visited them until he decided his family had to accept Caleb or he wouldn't go anymore. When they got married Eugene's family didn't come to the wedding. They haven't contacted each other much since (Miller).

Eugene's family is part Pentecostal and part Lutheran, but they weren't really that devout. Caleb, on the other hand, described himself as "ultra-super religious." He started practicing Catholicism at 13 and converted at 15. He was asked to leave the monastery because of an inappropriate relationship with another member; then, he completely left the church because of bigotry towards his sexuality (Pinyon). Eugene and Caleb currently practice Hinduism because they feel as though its teachings are closer to their beliefs, and they feel less discriminated against.

We are Family

Eugene and Caleb seem to have a very close marriage. They have their differences, but those same differences balance each other. Their bond is, in part, based on the adversity that they've faced as individuals. Perhaps Eugene's interest in drag is a flagrant response to his family's rejection, as if to say, *this is me, world, so take it or leave it*. But he also may counterbalance his more provocative drag nature with his professional behavior. Caleb is

charming and well-mannered, though his personality is provocative and his vulgarity seems intentional. He also feels nobody is going to get in the way of the way of his being who he wants to be and doing what he wants to do. They stand together against the world as courageous provocateurs bound by their shared experiences. Eugene and Caleb, at different points in their lives, have not been accepted by society. How they live their lives is a way of fighting back and staking their own little place in the world.

Works Cited

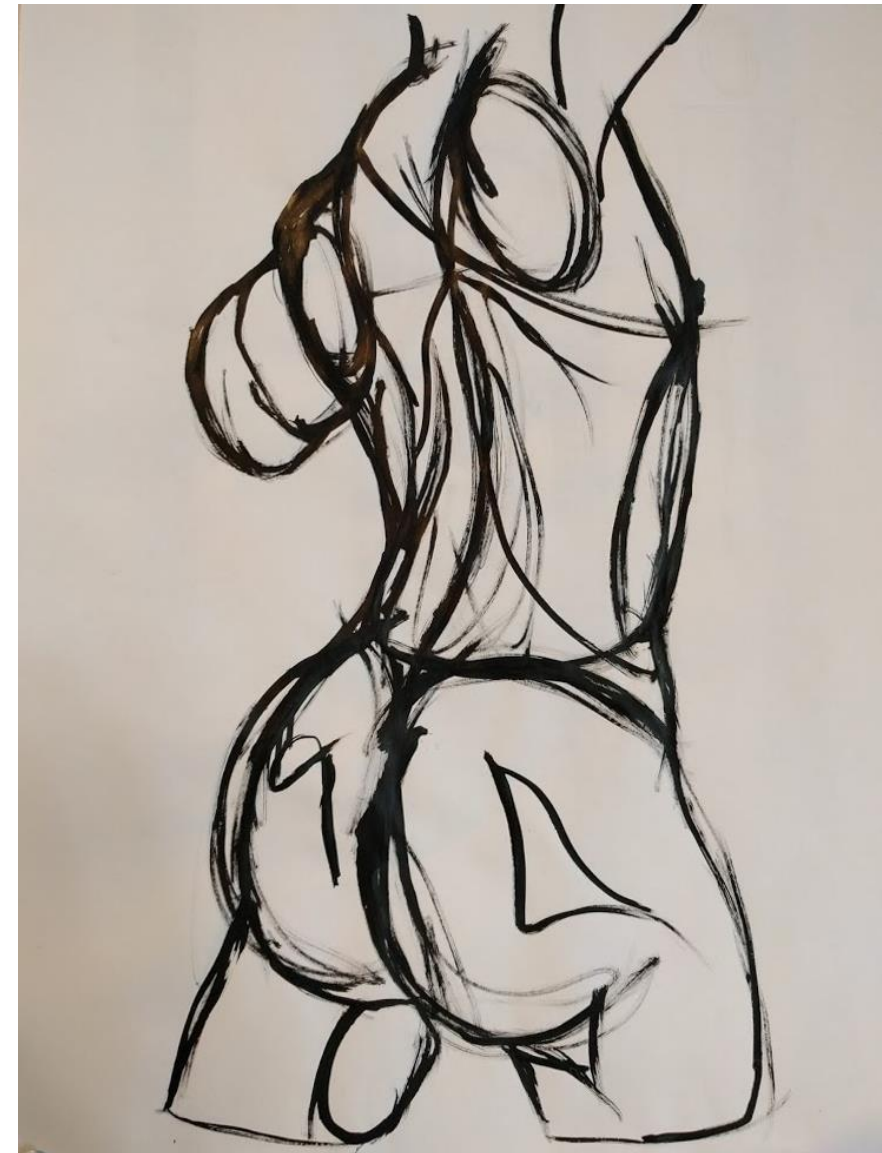
Pinyon, Caleb. Email interview. 30 Nov 2015.

Miller, Eugene. Personal interview. 3 Dec 2015.

Paris Is Burning. Dir. Jennie Livingston. Perf. Dorian Corey, Pepper LaBeija, Willi Ninja, Octavia St. Laurent, Angie Xtravaganza, Venus Xtravaganza, Sol Pendavis, Freddie Pendavis, Kim Pendavis. Miramax Films, 1991. Film.

Simmons, Nathaniel. "Speaking Like a Queen in RuPaul's Drag Race: Towards a Speech Code of American Drag Queens." *Sexuality & Culture* 17.4 (2013): 630- 648. Wwww.academia.edu. Springer Science Business Media. Web. 26 Dec. 2015.

Suarez, Estelle. Personal interview. 21 Nov 2015.



Alexandra White, "Modern Human Perspective," ink

SOCIOLOGICAL CRITICISM OF KURT VONNEGUT'S
"HARRISON BERGERON"

Robert Silvernail

The narrator begins the story of "Harrison Bergeron" by telling the reader, "The year was 2081 and everyone was finally equal." He also goes on to say, "All this equality was due to the 211, 212 and 213 Amendments to the Constitution and to the unceasing vigilance of agents of the United States Handicapper General." Immediately, the reader is given the impression that these laws are legitimate and therefore for the greater good of society and that they will be enforced! After all, they were enacted by our government in the democratic process; therefore, they must be just. Mr. Vonnegut establishes right away he is going to tell a story about our government, its laws and the concept of equality. However, this story is more than a cautionary tale about threats to our liberties; it is a polemic on the insidious and seductive nature of propaganda and the abuse of power.

A dictionary defines propaganda as "Information, especially of a biased nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view." In his book *A Chronology and Glossary of Propaganda in the United States* Richard Allen Nelson states:

Propaganda is neutrally defined as a systematic form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, attitudes, opinions, and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages (which may or may not be factual) via mass and direct media channels. A propaganda organization employs propagandists who engage in

propagandism—the applied creation and distribution of such forms of persuasion. (Nelson 232-233).

In his book, "*Hegemony or Survival*," Noam Chomsky states the views of some in the U.S. government who advocate the use of propaganda to control public opinion when he writes: If the public escapes its marginalization and passivity, we face a "crisis of democracy" that must be overcome, liberal intellectuals explain, in part through measures to discipline the institutions responsible for the "indoctrination of the young" — schools, universities, churches, and the like — and perhaps even through government control of the media, if self-censorship does not suffice. Recognition that control of public opinion is the foundation of government, from the most despotic to the most free, goes back to at least David Hume, but a qualification must be added. It is far more important in the more free societies, where obedience cannot be maintained by the lash. It is only natural that the modern institutions of thought control — frankly called propaganda before the word became unfashionable because of totalitarian associations — should have originated in the most free societies. (Chomsky 5-6).

No government has been more effective in its use of propaganda and its abuse of power

than 1930s Nazi Germany. As Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Minister of Propaganda, once said, "Repeat a lie a thousand times and it becomes the truth."

The definition of power is "The ability to cause something to happen that otherwise would not happen without that ability." These definitions of propaganda and power do not say anything about morality, ethics, justice, equality or the truth; they simply define a process and an ability.

Kurt Vonnegut uses satire in "Harrison Bergeron" to analyze the absurdness that can occur within a society, as well as the abuse by those in power to use such techniques as propaganda, coercion and force to subjugate a population. "Harrison Bergeron" is

purposely written to extremes to show how the bizarre can be inculcated into a population and accepted as normal. It's done to make a very important point; propaganda is a very effective means of population control. For a population to accept these ridiculous and absurd beliefs, they must either be persuaded, coerced or forced to. It can't happen any other way. People become subjugated out of fear or some sort of self-imposed passivity based on what they've been told, saw or taught to believe through the application of propaganda. In essence, there is an almost complete acquiesce and submission on their part, without protest, to things that go against reason and rationality. That's power!

In his PBS documentary "The Constitution in Crisis" Mr. Bill Moyers ends his look at the abuse of power in our own government with a cautionary note on our historical roots when he states:

"Our nation was born in rebellion against tyranny. We are the fortunate heirs of those who fought for America's freedom and then drew up a remarkable charter to protect it against arbitrary power. The Constitution begins with the words, "We the people." The government gathers its authority from the people, and the governors are as obligated to uphold the law as the governed. That was revolutionary. The people who wrote this Constitution lived in a world more dangerous than ours. They were surrounded by territory controlled by hostile powers, on the edge of a vast wilderness. Yet they understood that even in perilous times, the strength of self-government was public debate and public consensus. They knew too that men are fallible, themselves included, and prone to abuse great office. They left us safeguards against men whose appetites for power might exceed their moral wisdom. To forget this-to ignore the safeguards, to put aside our basic values out of fear, to imitate the foe in order to defeat him- is to shred the distinction that makes us different. For, in the end, not only our values but our methods separate us from the enemies of freedom. The decisions we make are inherent in the methods that

produce them. An open society cannot survive a secret government. Constitutional democracy is no romantic notion. It's our defense against ourselves, the one foe who might defeat us." (Afterword).

In "Harrison Bergeron" Mr. Vonnegut uses the example of equality to examine the use of propaganda and the abuse of power by governments. As defined by Edwin Coulter in his book *Principles of Politics and Government* the concept of equality is different in an egalitarian democracy than it is in a political democracy:

In an Egalitarian Democracy the government defines the standard of equality and whatever standards the government sets are enforced to create uniformity within the society. Conversely, in a Political Democracy there is an opportunity to achieve any standard the individual chooses for themselves. Individuals are allowed to seek and achieve their own goals absent any interference from the government within reasonable constraints such as violent criminal and fraudulent behaviors. Furthermore, in an egalitarian democracy participation and conformity are enforced. Whereas, in a political democracy participation is encouraged, but is optional. (Coulter 11-15)

The true meaning that lies just beneath the veneer of "Harrison Bergeron" is that propaganda and power can be devoid of morals and ethics and that these techniques are used by governments, and others, to manufacture consent. Propaganda has also been shown in the past to be effective in convincing a population to believe things that usually have no basis in fact, to give up their freedom of choice, to exchange their civil liberties for victimhood and to live in fear for their safety. It's a clarion call to take action to make the most of your freedom and rights, and to do, to say, and to achieve whatever he or she wants, because we live in a political democracy with freedom and equal opportunity, not an egalitarian democracy where conformity and mediocracy are enforced. But more

importantly, it's a polemic to avoid being duped by anyone or any government and to take responsibility for one's own life. Because if you don't, someone else will!

Works Cited

- Chomsky, Noam. *Hegemony or Survival*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003. Print.
- Coulter, Edwin M. *Principles of Politics and Government*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1981. Print.
- Moyers, Bill. *The Secret Government: The Constitution in Crisis*. PBS Documentary. 4 November 1987. Web. 8 Dec. 2015. <<http://billmoyers.com/content/secret-government-constitution-crisis/>>.
- Nelson, Richard Alan. *A Chronology and Glossary of Propaganda in the United States*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996. Print.
- Vonnegut, Kurt. "Harrison Bergeron" *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing*. Ed. X.J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia. 12th ed. New York: Pearson, 2013. 231-236, Print.



Hannah Livingston, "Libations Spilled with Hammer," oil

CHRIS SEMANSKY'S "CRITICAL ESSAY ON "THEME FOR ENGLISH B""

Jade Nguyen

An author by the name of Chris Semansky wrote a critical analysis of one of Langston Hughes's most famous poems, "Theme for English B." Semansky is an English professor and author in Oregon with many poems, essays, and short stories that have appeared all across the United States. In his critical essay on "Theme for English B," he writes about the meaning behind Hughes's words and what Hughes may have meant when he wrote this poem in 1949. First, Semansky notes that Hughes uses a different approach when writing "Theme for English B" as a lyric poem. To Semansky, Hughes writes this poem using the relationships in his life to identify himself. Semansky then goes on to explain Hughes's choice in words. If Hughes's descriptions weren't about race or location, then the image of Hughes, therefore, would have been completely transformed.

Semansky also mentions that Hughes finds the differences and similarities between himself and the outside world to announce that America's equality is a hoax, and that these differences define everyone. After justifying his argument, Semansky then begins to say that Hughes challenges his professor by questioning his professor's authority when he takes it upon himself to write a poem instead of the directed demands of his instructor, and because his professor is white, the professor is likely to be prejudiced, arrogant, and narcissistic toward Hughes's efforts.

As a college student who has had to formulate a fair share of botched papers due to advanced levels of procrastination, I believe that Semansky did just that. His critical analysis of "Theme for English B" is a series of bold, formal words used to mask his incomprehension. I do not believe that Semansky is grasping the reason why the poem is as powerful and as exceptional as it is. Langston Hughes writes this poem from the

viewpoint of a young black student during the time period where segregation of blacks and other minor races were very prominent. That being said, I believe that Hughes was trying to connect with every individual during the Harlem Renaissance to point out that no one really knows who they are, that everyone is alike in one way or another regardless of race or gender, and that we are all apart of the same world whether we respect that or not. Semansky, however, believes that Hughes was trying to emphasize alienation, power struggles, and false truths based on similarities and differences between the outside world and the young black student.

Langston Hughes writes "Theme for English B" as a reflection of himself and as said before, he writes this poem from the viewpoint of a young black student when the United States was in a time of disarray. Semansky says in his critical analysis, "These differences alone complicate the assignment, as they highlight Hughes's feeling of alienation and the difficulty of 'going home'." (Semansky 1) Semansky is trying to say that Hughes felt very alienated being the only black student in his class. I disagree. Hughes writes, "I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem. I went to school there, then Durham, then here to this college on the hill above Harlem." Langston Hughes grew up well before the Civil Rights began in 1955. That being said, he knew what was to come in a world where segregation and discrimination of blacks was prominent so why attend a predominantly white school if the feeling of alienation would stay steady on the mind? I do not believe that Hughes felt this way. Towards the end of "Theme for English B," Hughes is sure to point out that he is not so different from his fellow classmates at all when he says:

Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love.
I like to work, read, learn, and understand life.
I like a pipe for a Christmas present,
or records---Bessie, bop, or Bach.

I guess being colored doesn't make me NOT like
the same things other folks like who are other races.
So will my page be colored that I write?
Being me, it will not be white.
But it will be
a part of you, instructor.
You are white---
yet a part of me, as I am a part of you. (21-33)

If Hughes were to feel as alienated as Semansky makes him out to feel, then why spend time writing a poem about how everyone is a part of each other? The fact of the matter is, Hughes did not feel alienated. He wanted people to know that he is a part of them too regardless of the outstanding differences.

Semansky is quick to assume that the young black boy's professor is going to dislike the poem, because it does not follow the the guidelines that were instructed. Semansky says, "Rather than seeing this poem as an example of creative independent thinking, the instructor might very well punish the student both for challenging him and for writing a poem instead of an essay." (Semansky 2) I disagree with Semansky's argument. I believe Semansky is including his personal thoughts into his critical analysis. Being a professor himself, I can only assume he is bringing his own feelings in towards Hughes's poem. During the Harlem Renaissance, many whites were moved by the powerful words of blacks. I find it hard to believe that a professor who is invested in his or her students, would find the poem challenging. Hughes writes:

Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of
me.
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.
But we are, that's true!

As I learn from you,
I guess you learn from me---
although you're older---and white---
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B. (34-41)

I cannot imagine any English professor would be challenged by this poem. In my opinion, the professor would be deeply moved by Hughes's choice of words. The power struggle that Semansky is so adamant in finding is but a figment of his imagination.

Semansky focuses on the middle of the second stanza when Hughes begins to list the "relatively common human desires" and says, "Hughes then moves from answering his instructor to answering himself, as he ruminates on what makes him different from others" (Semansky 1). Semansky is trying to say that Hughes aims to find what is true by looking at the differences and similarities between himself and others around him. I disagree with this. I believe that Semansky has the wrong idea of what Hughes's endeavors are. Semansky says that Hughes is trying to find what makes him different from others but fails to see that Hughes is doing just the opposite. As I have said before, Hughes is striving to reach out to individuals and get them to realize that the color of skin does not matter. He is human just as the rest of everyone in the United States is. The reason this poem is as respected as it is because people are moved by Hughes's words and everyone connects to it in varying but similar ways. Semansky fails to recognize this.

Although Semansky's arguments about Hughes's efforts were very well said and justified, I cannot help but believe that Semansky did not understand the underlying message of the poem. Being one of the leading benefactors of the Harlem Renaissance, Hughes was striving to connect with any and every individual who has ever questioned their identity, who has ever thought themselves different, and who has ever thought that they did not belong in this world.

Works Cited

- Hughes, Langston. "Theme for English B." *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing*. Twelfth Edition. Eds. X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia. Boston: Pearson, 2013. 1022-1023. Print.
- Semansky, Chris. *Poetry for Students*. Mary Ruby. Vol. 6. Detroit: Gale Group, 1999. Print.

short story

SIDE ORDER AND BACON

Megan Wilson

The judge, looking quite tired, shuffled into his chamber. He shrugged off his blue pinstripe jacket and pulled on the judge's robe. The zipper on the robe stuck in the same place that it usually does, and, as usual, he took hold of it and gave it a jerk. He heard a ripping sound—now that was unusual. The sound caught Brittany's attention, too. Brittany, the court clerk, turned around just in time to see the judge examining how much damage he had done to the robe.

"I wonder if it can be repaired," mused Judge Sims.

"I don't know," Brittany commented.

"Nobody'll probably notice it," he said. "Well, I'm the judge, anyway."

"See you in the courtroom, Judge," replied Brittany with an arched eyebrow.

He should really look over the files on his desk.

Sitting down in the roly chair always presented a challenge. He firmly gripped the chair and eased himself into it. He hadn't forgotten how the chair had flown out from underneath him a few days ago. It had made him land on his backside; he had hit the floor as the chair barreled across the room, heading for the filing cabinets. With one cabinet drawer open, it managed to strike down the offending roly chair and prevent it from doing any further damage.

Judge Sims recognized the roly chair needed replacing, and the robe needed replacing, too. Maybe the judge needed replacing, as well. Looking at the stack of files before him, he wondered what the rest of his day was going to be like. If the beginning of the day

was any indication, he shouldn't hesitate to take two aspirin for the headache that he knew was coming.

The bailiff stepped inside the judge's chamber. He looked around and saw no sign of Brittany. That girl scared him, with her flaming-red hair and a temper that could make a pit bull back up and cower in a corner.

"Judge, we're ready anytime you are," said the bailiff. The bailiff hesitated a moment before leaving and added, "Judge, I should mention that there's a lunatic on the front row."

"What's court without a lunatic or two?" replied the judge.

A chuckle came from the bailiff as he left the chambers. The judge heard the bailiff open the door of the courtroom to begin the proceedings.

He heard the bailiff barking out, "All rise! The City Court is now in session with the Honorable Judge Sims presiding."

"I guess I'm ready," the judge mumbled to himself.

Now, to get out of the roly chair without ending up on the floor required putting both feet squarely on the floor and placing one hand on the desk because that was the one thing in his office that would stay put. Once again, he escaped the roly chair without his backside hitting the floor.

The judge entered the courtroom. He took his place on the bench and gave a sigh.

Before Judge Sims could call the docket, a man came running through the magnetometer without stopping, which promptly started the thing beeping and the lights flashing. The bailiff moved swiftly toward the man to stop him from doing whatever he intended to do.

"Young'un, don't get in my way," the man pushed past the bailiff. "It's only my buckle makin' that dadburned thing start with that mess. I'm not taking it off 'cause it's the only thing holdin' up my britches. I'm not walkin' around with my Fruit of the Looms

showing like those young'uns do. I was summoned to this kangaroo court. I want to say my piece to the head kangaroo."

"Does that mean you want to speak to the mayor or to the judge?" asked an irritated bailiff.

The courtroom erupted in laughter. The bailiff looked a little embarrassed, which only added to his irritation.

"I'm a-willin' to talk to either one of 'em or both of 'em if necessary."

"Hold it. Let's just stop right there," the judge ordered. "I'm the one running this court and the cases come up in an orderly fashion. You, with the belt buckle, go back to the magnetometer to be properly screened. Then, take a seat and wait your turn!"

"You the head kangaroo?" the courtroom erupted in laughter, again.

"First, I don't go by the title of 'head kangaroo.' I am to be addressed as 'Your Honor.' And I have already told you to go back and be properly screened."

The man started to issue his protest again to the judge. Then, changing his mind, he turned to speak to the lunatic on the front row, "He thinks a lot of himself, don't he now?"

The judge banged the gavel to quiet him and pointed, with the gavel, toward the magnetometer. The judge began calling the docket and the first one up was the man who had come into the courtroom referring to it as a kangaroo court.

"I'm here, Judge. Oh, just take my belt," he said, as he shoved his belt and buckle into the hands of the officer standing by the machine. "I put on fresh Fruit of the Looms today; although, I wasn't aimin' to show 'em to everyone." He ambled down the aisle to take his place.

The prosecutor stood before the judge to present the city's side of the case. "Your

Honor . . ."

"I reckon I should've worn the suspenders that the missus gave me for Christmas," he said, "that way I wouldn't be here holding onto my britches."

"Are you Mr. Whitaker?" the judge asked.

"Yeah," he answered.

"Mr. Whitaker, there are rules in this courtroom that must be observed. Do you have counsel to assist you?" the judge inquired.

"Sure 'nough." He turned around and motioned to the lunatic sitting on the front row to come forward.

"Right here I am, Judge. As you can see, he gets a little riled when someone criticizes the way he cares for his pets," he began.

"Are you his attorney?" the judge questioned.

"Well, no, I'm not exactly his attorney," Mr. Whitaker's cousin answered.

"Are you an attorney?" sighed the judge.

"No. I was just going to help you settle this case without any cussin'," he explained.

"There will be no cussin' in this courtroom. The point is that since you're not his attorney, take a seat or leave the courtroom."

"But I—," he started.

"TAKE A SEAT AND SHUT UP, OR LEAVE!" The judge was clenching his jaw. "Anymore from either one of you and there will be a contempt of court charge for you to answer. Do both of you understand?"

"Yes, sir!" they answered in unison.

The man took a seat. He decided the best course of action was to keep quiet.

"Mr. Smythe, what are the charges against Mr. Whitaker?"

"Well, Your Honor, it seems that there has been a complaint issued against him for cruelty to animals in regard to his pets," said Mr. Smythe, the prosecutor. "The city calls Ms. Mary Delane to the witness stand."

"Ms. Delane, come forward to be sworn in," shouted the bailiff.

She was sworn in by the bailiff. After she was sworn in, she took the witness stand. She reached into her purse and retrieved a handkerchief. The judge rolled his eyes and gave a long, suffering sigh.

"Ms. Delane, why did you bring forth this complaint against Mr. Whitaker?" asked the prosecutor.

She looked at the judge, already beginning to tear up. "Because that man," pointing to Mr. Whitaker, "let's his so-called pets tear up the backyard."

"Whose backyard?" asked the judge.

"Well, Mr. Whitaker's of course. Your Honor, it's nothing but mud over there."

"Ms. Delane, address the cruelty charges only, please," interrupted the judge.

"The man has the most perverse sense of humor I have ever heard," Ms. Delane proclaimed. "It breaks my heart when I think of what those two sweet little darlings must suffer through."

"I thought you believed the pets to be an annoyance," stated Mr. Smythe.

The judge rolled his eyes at his esteemed colleague's remark. Not only was the defendant annoying, but now the prosecutor proved to be exasperating, also. After completing this case, he would need the two aspirin.

"They are, sir," she answered. "But nobody – but nobody – should have to suffer the humiliation that those two animals have had to endure at the hands of Mr. Whitaker."

"Would you kindly enlighten the court as to the offense committed by Mr. Whitaker?" asked the prosecutor.

"It really is quite vile. I should be quite embarrassed if I had ever conducted myself in such a manner," Ms. Delane answered, her eyes welling up with tears.

"I understand," Mr. Smythe consoled, "but we need your testimony to prosecute this case. What does Mr. Whitaker do?"

The judge leaned forward to listen intently to the witness's testimony. She drew in a couple deep breaths as if to give her courage. All the witness seemed to be capable of was uncontrollable sobbing, garbled words, and pointing to the defendant.

"I object, Your Honor, I object!" Mr. Whitaker roared out. "I did no such thing!"

"And what is your reason for objecting?" the judge sighed.

"I did no such dadblamed thing!" Mr. Whitaker exclaimed.

"Mr. Whitaker, that is not a proper objection." Then, the judge turned toward the witness. "Ms. Delane, you will need to repeat your testimony so that the court can understand what you are saying. I understand that this is difficult for you to tell, but we must know what you observed Mr. Whitaker doing." The judge leaned over toward the court reporter, "Brittany, will you pour a glass of water for the witness."

The judge realized he might have overstepped his authority as far as Brittany was concerned. He hoped that she would comply with his request and breathed a sigh of relief when she did. Brittany's blue eyes flashed at him, letting him know he shouldn't do that too often.

After a few sips of water, Ms. Delane began her testimony again, "Well, you see, Your Honor," sniffled Ms. Delane, "It's so hard to-to say it. To say it out loud seems to make it worse."

Mr. Whitaker jumped up and shouted, "I object!"

"Sit down! I want to hear this," the judge said as he pointed the gavel at Mr. Whitaker.

Mr. Whitaker took his seat again.

"I understand how difficult and how unpleasant this must be to repeat, Ms. Delane, but please continue," Mr. Smythe consoled.

"Those two sweet darlings, he calls them Bacon and Side Order," cried Ms. Delane. She broke down in tears. The tears were streaming down her face, and she was dabbing away at them. Then, she blew her nose. "Mean and cruel, that's the only way to describe what he's done," she sobbed.

"That's odd names for dogs, but it doesn't rise to the level of cruelty," explained the judge.

"Your Honor, why . . . they're not dogs!" she looked at him as if he hadn't been listening to a word she'd said.

"Excuse me, I thought they were his pets?" asked the judge.

"Mr. Whitaker claims they are his pets, but they're not dogs. They're --," Mr. Smythe began to explain the specific nature of the "pets."

"They're pigs!" blurted out Ms. Delane. Her sobbing continued.

"Oh, I see," said the judge.

"The names he gave them are in such poor taste," Ms. Delane added.

"Poor taste in naming one's pets is not considered cruelty."

"Your Honor, any day he could haul off his pets to the slaughter house."

"I ain't aimin' to haul 'em to the slaughter house," said Mr. Whitaker, giving his pants a yank.

"Ms. DeLane, while the names may be offensive to you --"

"Your Honor, don't you find the names offensive?"

"That does not constitute cruelty to the animals. Case dismissed."

The judge leaned over to Brittany and said, "Bring me the aspirin."



Kim Iglesia, "Simple Mind," ink and acrylic

THE DECISION

Abby Plowman

I stared down at the envelopes. How was I going to make this decision? I wouldn't even turn eighteen until Tuesday; how could I decide my future when I couldn't even vote yet? I'd received acceptance letters from both the University of Virginia and Columbia. Columbia had been my top pick, and I wanted to go there more than anything. But the drive to Virginia was thirty minutes -- to Columbia, it was five hours. Going to Columbia would mean moving to New York City; the idea both terrified and excited me. I'd wanted to move far away for one reason only: to completely remake myself, to get rid of the old Angie, the nerdy, studious girl who laughed too hard and never knew the right clothes to wear. I would leave and go somewhere no one knew me. I would become Angelica: a sophisticated, professional woman to be feared and respected. But I realized, now that I was faced with the decision, that leaving the bad would also mean leaving the good: my parents, my best friend, every memory connected to this place. I didn't want to leave; I couldn't bear to stay. Strangely, this decision would affect the rest of my life, and what I wanted most in the world was for someone else to make it for me. I flopped back on my daisy bedspread. My gaze flicked over to the sun catcher hanging in my window. The act of holding my eyelids open became more laborious as I watched the jewels spin back and forth. Soon, I forgot what it meant to be awake.

I awoke with a start, but I didn't feel as if I was really in my body. I could see it - but I felt weightless, like I had no body at all. I glanced around and saw that I was lying in the grass at a public playground. As I stood up, I realized that it was the playground I went to as a kid. Now it was empty. Except . . . I looked toward the

swings. There was a little girl, swinging almost listlessly. The swings had always been my favorite – something about being suspended in the air for one perfect moment right before coming back down. But this girl didn't look like she was having fun. I looked around but didn't see anyone else. I approached cautiously, but she didn't seem to notice me. Suddenly she said, "It was fun, huh?" I jumped, but she still didn't look at me. For a moment I thought she was blind, but she turned to me with huge blue eyes. Something about her seemed familiar. "E-Excuse me?" I finally answered. She turned away again. "The swings, of course," she replied matter-of-factly, as if it were silly to think she could be talking of anything else. "Um, y-yes," I stammered. "Who are you?"

I was surprised when she laughed, an alarming, yet endearing, sound that I felt I knew. "Why, you've known me your whole life."

I frowned. "I have? What's your name?"

The girl bit her lip, as though she was thinking carefully about how to answer that. "You can call me Talitha."

"Talitha? That's your name?"

She smiled in the way that only young children with secrets can. "I said that's what you can call me." She stood up and grabbed my hand. "Where are we going?" I asked, as she tugged me across the playground. "It's my job to convince you," she called back.

"Convince me of what?" Suddenly I realized that we weren't outside anymore. We were in an old house. How was that even possible? "Recognize it?" Talitha asked hopefully. I turned around slowly, taking in the oak floors and low ceilings. The wood crackling in the fireplace. I grew excited. "Are we -?" I stopped when I saw it, hanging on the wall: a child's painting of a butterfly, signed **ANGIE PIERCE AGE 7**. "Our old house," I breathed reverently, as if the house itself could hear me. This couldn't be real: my childhood home was nearly four hours away in Richmond.

"Yes," Talitha confirmed. She sighed happily. "You loved this house." She gestured toward the back door. "Well, go on."

I giggled, as if I were a young child myself. I rushed out into the backyard and grinned. Everything was there: the fairy ring I'd made of smooth rocks and wild flowers, the iron fence, and most importantly, the little treehouse situated in the sturdiest oak. I heard Talitha behind me. "This is where you learned to be a child," she said. "To find joy in simple things." It struck me as an odd thing for a little girl to say but, then again, what about this wasn't odd? Using the rope ladder along the side of the oak, I pulled myself inside the treehouse. I thought that after all these years the house might seem small inside. But it was just as large and grand as the day I'd left it. Something else was strange: we'd cleared out all my old stuff when we moved, but it was there now. A faded pink table sat in the corner surrounded by a group of prim little dolls enjoying their afternoon tea. Colorfully bound books and copies of children's magazines were stacked on almost every surface. My paintings adorned the walls, and cheerful flower boxes invited the sunshine in through the windows. There was something else: a silhouette in the darkest corner. I jumped. "Hey! What are you doing in here?" I cried. The figure turned around slowly and gazed at me with the saddest expression possible. He was an unusually small boy with blue hair and eyes the size of half dollars, and he wore a plastic rain coat.

"Hey, I know you," I said softly.

"I'm Owen," he squeaked.

"You." I pointed at him. "You were my imaginary friend."

He put his hands on his hips. "I am *not* imaginary," he huffed.

I held my hands up. "Okay, okay. Not imaginary." I hesitated. "What are you doing here?"

He looked confused. "Waiting for you."

I smiled sadly. "Oh Owen, I . . . I don't think I can stay with you."

"Why not?" he asked indignantly.

"Well, because," I fumbled. "Because I'm all grown up now. I can't have . . . all this anymore." I gestured at the treehouse. Owen's lower lip quivered. Before he could make me feel guilty, Talitha climbed in behind me. "What have you done to him?" she shrieked. I looked back at Owen. He was fading, his colors growing softer. "Why is that happening?" I asked Talitha.

She sighed exasperatedly. "If you tell an imaginary friend that you don't need him, he disappears."

"Oh." I glanced back at Owen, but he was already gone. I was actually sad to see him go. Talitha looked angry, but gestured for me to follow her.

After we dropped down from the rope ladder, I gave Talitha an apologetic look. "I didn't mean for -"

"I know," she interrupted. "Just . . . be careful with this place, okay? Things here can be very fragile."

I nodded and decided it was best not to ask what that meant.

Her face grew grim. Her eyes flicked to somewhere behind me. I whirled around and saw a woman standing with her back to us. Her tall, slender frame was elegantly clothed in a sharp black suit; the afternoon light caught the auburn tones in her silky waves. "Hello?" I called. Talitha nudged me. "Don't," she warned. The woman turned around and I inhaled sharply. For some reason, her familiarity was more frightening than Talitha's. The woman flipped her hair over her shoulder. "Yes?" she answered smoothly.

"Who are you?" I demanded. She laughed and I cringed. Her laugh was not endearing like Talitha's. It was tinkling and girlish, yet somehow fearsome. "Well, you should know," she said.

"Get out of here, Donna!" cried Talitha.

Donna smiled smugly. "You have to let her know, Tal."

I glanced between the two of them. "Let me know what?" I asked.

Talitha glared at Donna with childish resentment.

"That there's another way," Donna said vaguely.

I shook my head. "What way?"

Suddenly, she was right in front of me, grabbing my hand. "Let me show you."

There was a flash and I blinked. When I opened my eyes, I was standing in a busy office building. People bustled about, not seeming to notice me. I looked around frantically and saw Donna, but not Talitha. "What is this?" I demanded.

She waved her hand theatrically. "It's what you could have. Watch."

A beautiful woman in a suit strode in confidently. The rest of the employees straightened up at her arrival. She delegated out tasks, handing files to some, pointing things out to others. I knew instantly that she was The Boss. I sensed that everyone was afraid of her, but respected her. And when she turned around I saw that she was . . . me. I gasped. She was older, prettier, thinner, and had shinier hair, but she was me. But she was also . . . I looked at Donna. "You're me."

She rolled her eyes. "Of course. Well, you about ten years from now, but you."

Something else clicked. "And Talitha, she's -"

"She's you too. Ten years ago."

"So why are you two here?" I asked.

"Well, it's a competition dear."

I narrowed my eyes. "For what?"

Donna clasped her hands earnestly and actually looked sincere. "For your heart. For your future. Talitha is who you've always been. And I'm who you could be."

Suddenly everything fit together. "If I go to Columbia."

"There you go. Give the girl a prize!" Donna laughed again and I didn't think it sounded so terrible anymore. "Look, I'm not as monstrous as Talitha thinks. I'm looking out for you. For us. I know what you want." She gestured around. "Important job. Respect. Friends. A man who loves you." She nodded back to the scene, as

a man approached the boss woman – me – and kissed her softly. My heart ached with how perfect it all was.

“But are you willing to give up yourself?”

I turned around and saw Talitha.

“Sure, people will respect you. They’ll like you. But you’ll be erasing everything you’ve ever been. And for what?”

“Well, how do you know I’ll change? I could go to Columbia and still –”

“We both know you will. It’s the only reason you picked it.”

As Talitha was talking, our surroundings had changed again. We were on the balcony of our current house. “Don’t change.” Talitha’s eyes swelled, begging me.

“You don’t have to make her feel bad. People grow up,” Donna insisted.

“It doesn’t mean she has to lose herself.” Talitha marched up to her. Even though Talitha only came up to Donna’s waist, she pushed her away forcefully.

Donna scowled. “Ever think that that’s what she wants?” She pushed back and Talitha fell down.

When she got back up, she cried, “I won’t let you ruin yourself, Angie!” She shoved Donna – me – roughly.

Donna’s eyes flamed. “It’s Angelica, you brat.” She gave one last forceful push and Talitha fell against the railing. It gave a tortured creak and fractured, sending Talitha tumbling to the ground.

I stood frozen and horrified. Donna turned around slowly. Her expression was placid. “I guess the decision has been made.”

I woke with my heart in my throat. I was terrified, but I didn’t know why. What had I dreamt that was so scary? Regardless, I somehow knew that I had made my decision. I picked up the Columbia envelope. I saw a flicker in the mirror on my vanity and turned in time to see it disappear. I thought it had been . . . a little girl: A little girl calling out, only to be silenced by a pair of delicate hands and pulled back into a dream.



Jasmine Lindsley, “Climbing Tree,” ink

RED ON BROWN

Parker Bond

A sleek and elegant animal perfectly molded for the domain he roams. He can spot a ladybug on a fencepost a hundred yards away. He can hear the beat of your anxious heart as you try to avoid his all-seeing gaze. His feathers are as dark as the nights of his wooded kingdom, yet they sparkle as if they are hundreds of tiny gems. His breast stands out as sapphire and ruby fused together and drowning in the blackest tar. He raises his elongated neck as he patrols his sector, claws raking the ground into a newly tilled field as he makes his rounds. An owl hoots in the distance and he freezes as still as the pine trees flanking his every side. All is still for a few seconds, and then, as graceful as a swaying pine tree, he unfurls his wings, and his grand call tears from his gullet, asserting his rule over all that can hear. This is the glorious turkey. This is my prey.

Lights dance before my eyes. Faces from forgotten memories and colors merge into one beautiful environment of which I am the sole inhabitant. I stroll through this marvelous land, carefree and oblivious to the passage of time. I laugh with old friends, reunite with passed loved ones, and become reacquainted with forgotten relatives. This is a world of happiness and warmth, and I never want to leave. Suddenly an alarm cuts through the utopia, faces scatter and chaos unfurls. Unseen forces lift me away, and my fingers desperately cling to the very fabric of the world, my world. The force flings me up into space. Darkness surrounds me, and there is nothing.

Slowly, my eyes peel open and I find myself staring at my alarm

flashing 4:30, the dull light pounding my mind like a rubber mallet. I begrudgingly throw off my covers and shuffle to my bathroom with the lights still off, both to avoid waking the rest of my family and to preserve the illusion of sleep. I linger in the shower, in my mind pretending the warm water is just an extension of my slumber, but I am soon pulled back into reality, and I make my way to my room. I carefully get dressed, avoiding any sound as I do, and then grab my gun and a box of shells from their place by my window. The gun is a 20 gauge shotgun that my grandfather gave me. The smell of oil and cleaning lubricant invade my nostrils as I check the poly choke for the correct setting. Satisfied, I look down the length of the weapon. It is a beautiful piece. The stock and foregrip are made of stained oak and glisten in the dull light. The metal is a dull grey, cool to my touch and shiny from decades of use, save for where the empty shells eject, which is bright silver. Starting from the chamber, the barrel narrows a bit, until it passes the foregrip; then it is a straight shot to the poly choke on the end. The choke allows the gun to be customized for almost any game, and it was installed by my grandfather when his dad gave the gun to him. His dad, my great-grandfather, bought the gun in the early 1950's, and it is on the verge of becoming an antique, yet it has never jammed or missed in my hands. Cradling my gun, I exit my room and go to the living room, my dream already forgotten.

In the living room I settle into my dad's recliner, the ancient chair squeaking with protest. I quietly turn on the television with the volume barely audible and wait upon the arrival of my grandfather. My family has always been avid hunters, but between my father, uncle and grandfather, my father is the tamer of the three. Because of this, I do a lot of hunting with my uncle or grandfather. Outside, the moon still has not released her hold on the world and allowed the sun to spread his warmth and light. I

find myself more interested in the dull grey world through this window than the bright animated one through the other. I study some of its features, the way the trees appear as a black void against the starless sky, the moon secure in her hazy fortress in her kingdom, before anxiously checking my watch. It is ten minutes past the time my grandfather said he would be here, but I do not worry. The men in my family are famous for showing up when they please and not a second sooner. Sure enough, I soon see headlights floating up my driveway as if they are two spectacles, traveling on their own time with no place to be. With my gun in hand, I walk to the door, grabbing a honeybun on the way, hurrying to join my grandfather in his truck.

The ride there is silent and uneventful, both of us focusing on the task ahead of us. I nibble at the honeybun, the sweet bites poison to my stomach this early. Seeing this, my grandfather hands me an orange, which I accept with a nod of thanks. I tear into the tangy flesh of the fruit, and there soon is nothing left but its tattered skin. Before I even realize where we are, the truck pulls into the hunting club.

We park the truck by an old, gnarled oak tree that serves as a message board. The board is old and weathered, with flecks of paint shedding off like the skin of the rattlesnakes that sometimes rest by its roots. Crowning it is the antler of an eight point deer, once as majestic as the English crown, now faded and chewed by rats. Pausing for a quick equipment check, we set off down the dirt road. I notice nothing but the crunching of pebbles beneath my booted feet, the damp sand clinging to the bottom of my grandfather's boots as he leads the way, the chirping of birds as they begin the morning gossip. The chill of the still nips at my skin, bluntly rebelling against the few rays of sunlight that demand its exile. We walk for a little while longer before stopping to sit on an

old fallen pine that lost in a duel against the wind. As we wait on the sun to finish his battle with the last holds of the night, we eat another orange and talk about the plan for the hunt. After the sun has declared his victory with a grand show of fireworks over the horizon, we prepare to move again. Before we take the first step, my grandfather sucks air into his lungs and projects out into the dawn the song of an owl. He is challenged back with the distant gobble of a turkey. Looking at me, he smiles and nods in the direction of the summons. Smiling back, I follow him towards our prey.

We continue to challenge the turkey with the owl's hoot until we have a general idea of his location. Once we know that, we deduce what path he will most likely patrol. Scouting ahead, my grandfather locates a small grove to set up our blind. While I construct the blind, using sticks and a sapling to prop up the thin fabric, my grandfather sets up the decoy. The decoy is an inflatable likeness of a female turkey, designed to attract the attention of a male turkey the same way a girl in a bikini can turn a few teenage guys' heads at the beach. Once my grandfather joins me at the blind, we settle down and begin to wait.

In a turkey blind, time is not measured in minutes or seconds; sights and sensations measure time. Soon, regular time is lost to me, and I move into nature's time. I see the passage of time by the sun advancing from his fortress as he continues on his eternal war to capture the entirety of the sky. I judge intervals of time by counting when my legs get numb and I have to shift my weight. Between shifts, my grandfather coaxes the turkey to us using a call that he plays as if he is part of nature's symphony. We occasionally get a flirtatious answer, but other than that, we can only hear the calls of the birds as they conclude the morning gossip. Time creeps by as we await our prey.

Several numbing intervals later, my grandfather hisses through his teeth softly, signaling for me to look in his direction. Tearing my eyes from the sector I am monitoring, which is the direction the calls have been coming from, I look in his direction. Peering through the underbrush, I can see the outline of a turkey strutting towards the decoy. Catching my grandfather's gaze, I ask a silent question and he nods, indicating that this is a different turkey than the one that we have been calling. Glancing back at the area I had been watching earlier, I notice a shape that does not fit into the scenery, like a puzzle piece turned sideways. Focusing in on this shape, I begin to notice details. A long neck, sitting above a blue and red breast, is the first figure I make out. Next, I notice the sparkling black feathers and the scaly legs. Nudging my grandfather, I point out our original prey as the turkey silently stalks our decoy, much as we are stalking him.

I feel a nudge on my shoulder, signaling that I should prepare to take the shot. As I slowly begin to move my gun up to its position, the turkey suddenly freezes, and me along with him. Using his neck to scan the area, the turkey acts as though the decoy is not his type, and his time would be better suited elsewhere. With a pompous step, he turns around and disappears into the foliage. A sense of dread begins to creep over me, but it is stopped and turned to joy when my grandfather reminds me of the other turkey. Moving as fast as a growing pine tree, I turn around, twisting my legs like cypress roots underneath me. Making small movements so as not to lose my precarious balance, I search for the turkey. I find him making his way around us and he will in a few moments be hidden from our view. I know that now is the only time for a shot. Pulling the gun up to my shoulder, I prop it against my grandfather's arm and look down the barrel at my target. Seeing that I am ready, my grandfather prepares to make the peck call. The peck call is like the police sirens for turkeys, and

it will cause them to stick their necks up and freeze for a few seconds, making them perfect targets. My blood freezes in my veins, and even the sun pauses in its Sherman's March of the sky as I prepare for my shot. The ringing of absolute silence is in my ears as I wait for the call that will be my signal. It comes like a drop of water falling into a lake on a windless day, and the shot that rings afterwards comes like a boulder crashing into that same lake. I blink for a second and when I open my eyes, I am staring at the clouds with the taste of pennies in my mouth. Standing up, I realize that the shot has thrown my barely balanced body back like a leaf in the creek, and the throbbing on my tongue suggests that I bit it when I fell. I spit on the ground and study the contrast of red and brown before looking at my grandfather. He is smiling, with a hint of chuckle in his voice telling me that he will get the decoy while I claim the turkey.

Even though fatally wounded, the turkey fights for his life still. He flaps his wings in a desperate attempt to reclaim the sky that was his right but a few moments ago. When his strength lessens too much to even allow him the attempts of flight, he lies still. Not dead yet, but lying still, staring up at the sun as if pleading for his life. The sun, though, is seemingly involved in some unseen battle and does not answer the turkey, and his life flows out, red against the brown. As I lean down to examine my kill, my eyes fall upon this contrast, noting the similarities to my blood earlier. As I stand up with my prize, I think of the main difference between me and this grand bird. I am the hunter, coming into the woods to master its secrets and treasures. He was my prey.

free verse poetry

VISIONS OF THE SOMME

Silvia Shannon

I saw my friend with anguished
face. Standing in the corn. Golden
in sunlight. Pride and peace.

I saw my friend with thumb up-
turned. The sun a moment stayed
to shine
warm on his face. His face
poetry and ash.

I saw my friend in blinding
light. Flashing light. And that
was the last
time
I saw my friend.



Madisyn Lanoue, "Death's Garden," pencil and ink

THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A WILDFLOWER

Morgan Dugger

one Plucked by your thin fingers
And placed behind my ear
In the courtyard
Cold hands for your warm heart
Brushing my cheek

two Underfoot as we dance
Through the woods
Show tunes on our lips
Our hearts screaming
We'll never grow up

three In hushed whispers
Of what you would have wanted
In a crowded room of
Strangers made family by
Grief

four Braided into my hair
As I don the
Superman tee
That is my funeral garb

five On your casket
Bringing out the colors
That this time won't fade
From your easy bruising skin

six Blurred on the road
Your name on their petals
I drive faster so
I don't have to think of you
Too much

seven Ripped from the root
Because some things
Are too beautiful
To live

eight Crushed
In a white knuckle grip
Clinging to the
Memories

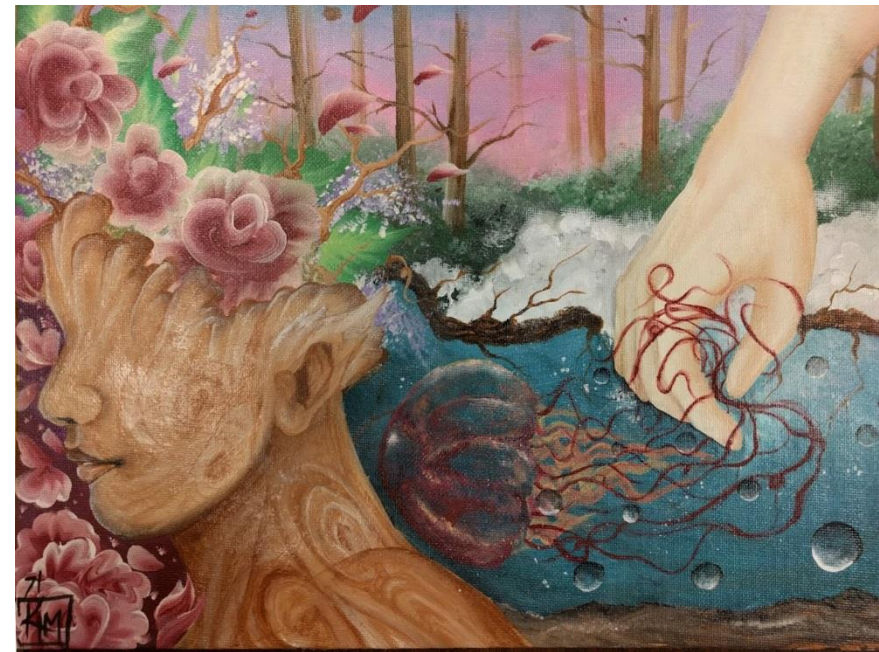
nine Brightening a dark corner
Trying to bring
Life
To a too-still room

ten Quiet and wilting
In a reminder that
All good things
Come to an end

eleven Once more
Painful
At the end of a sharp needle
Beside your writing
On my skin

twelve Sprouting through the cracks
Of my bedroom floor
A fighter
Against the odds

thirteen Plucked from the earth and
Placed behind my ear
So that I may wear
Some of your beauty



Kim Iglesia, "Disturbance," acrylic

BLUE

Malarie Torres

Blue is the color
Of wistful melancholy
And cold Decembers.
Of wilted blooms
And long spent hours
Beneath the tower.
Of blankets we shared;
Of memories we have made
And eyes that stared so.
Blue is the color
Of everything I lost.
And then you were gone.

structured verse poetry

illumination

MUSIC TO MY EARS

Madison Sumrall

Bass floods the speakers.
Words crashing over me like waves
Bringing me to sea.

illumination



Kim Iglesias, "Memory," acrylic

MAKING ALLOWANCES

Silvia Shannon

Together, yet not.
A pause, a sigh; the day lost.
The world turns on this.



Kim Iglesia, "Shifting Time," acrylic

MY PET RABBIT

Katie Peterson

I once had a rabbit
that had a good habit;
when he saw a gun
away he would run.
His favorite place
to get away from the gun
was under the house
and out of the sun.

Featured Artist

Kim Iglesia: An 18-year-old born in San Diego, California, and raised... well... all over the place. Kim has been creating art for years now. She first began once she found her love for anime towards the end of middle school, and like many fans, dreamt of becoming a manga artist. She realized that she wasn't very good at it though, so she moved on to sketching portraits a year later where she found her love for graphite. Then sophomore year came along where she was given a painting assignment and instantly knew she was done for (in a good way).

Nowadays, when she isn't spending her day stressing about homework, catching up on sleep, stuffing her face with food, or spending hours on end drowning in the Hallyu wave, Kim is usually -- almost -- always painting. Whether it be portraits of her favorite music artists, or -- scratch that, she's always painting them whenever she has a chance and secretly incorporates them into her art assignments. Oops.

"What inspires you?" people ask her, and believe it or not, Hallyu is her inspiration since a majority of her pieces are indeed fan art. Based off of music / Korean Pop artists and actors from dramas and all that epicness. Putting all that aside, she also really likes the idea of special FX makeup and dreams of attending cinema makeup school in Los Angeles. But for now, she'll just be sticking to getting her art degree at a university close by.

Acknowledgements

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College extends special thanks to:

Dr. Jason Pugh

Dr. Jonathan Woodward

Dr. Vernon Lacour

MGCCC-JC Language Arts Department

MGCCC-JD Language Arts Department

MGCCC-Perkinston Language Arts Department

Special Thanks to

Dr. Luis Iglesias and the University of Southern Mississippi English
Department

The 2014-2015 Writing Competition Judges:

Dr. Nicolle Jordan

Louis Di Leo, J.D.

Kelli Sellers

Andrew Milward

Alan Purdie

Proof

Printed By Createspace



Digital Proofer