

The
Vaguest
Notion



2009



THE **Vaguest**
NOTION

A Southern Wesleyan University Publication

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Why



The Vaguest Notion has become a longstanding tradition at Southern Wesleyan University. Over the years, hundreds of submissions have been sent in from students and faculty hopeful of seeing their hard work published in the university's own literary magazine. Though the magazine itself has seen many changes, the tradition remains the same. We believe that literature and art are called into the service of God as He gave us these gifts to enjoy.

“I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.

“I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.”

Psalm 9:1-2, KJV

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D Arizona Nights

Dry air and clear sky
meeting a flat desert floor.
Horizon silently interrupted by
upright saguaro.

--- Chandra Walls

D Ascent

The spiral to the bottom was more disconcerting than living here. Here, all I can see is up. Here, in the mire of uncertainty and defeat, I find solace in the fact that my climbing out of this pit will be an impressive and unthinkable feat, one that I can be proud of and one that may ultimately shape me into the person I long to become. It's so far up to the top, though. The walls are slick with the blood of those who have tried and failed before me. I will not die here, though. I will scale these walls though my fingers break into splinters. I will hold my breath to spare my nostrils from the foul smell of death, and only breathe again once I have reached the inviting arms of reawakened life. I will not die because life is not worth living – I will simply live and laugh in the face of the absurdity of existence. I will not run from the darkness, for it has no end. I will instead be light and a light of my own shade. I will spread love without vanity and find in the hearts of men some glimmer of hope. Truly, now, a glimmer would all but blind me in the darkness that fills this pit. I'd give up this tired vision, though, for just one fleeting moment of purpose.

(Continued on the next page)

(Ascent, continued)

Indeed, my purpose now is to find purpose where none exists. It should keep me occupied for a while, I imagine. Maybe, just maybe, though, I'll stumble upon it, hidden beneath the lies of men and their imaginations. Maybe, beneath all the vanity and conceit which chokes out the better part of our spirits, I could find some ancient relic, some long-lost clue as to where and when we lost our way. Maybe we just never had a way to begin with. Either way, my search continues as I climb, excruciating inch by excruciating inch.

I can feel the warmth of the sun fingering down through the darkness, now, teasing me – maybe I am getting close. Even if it's all my imagination, still I must climb. I must face the sun and make it pay for refusing to shine on me. It must pay for refusing to shine on the cold and the fields of the hungry. I will spit on the ground of this wretched earth which spawns life and loves it not. It will feel my wrath and I will feel it too, flowing out of the deepest places in my soul. The world cannot bear the darkness stored away in me. It will crumble under its own weight once I shrug it off my liberated shoulders. Then I, with a voice that lives in the throat of everyone who bleeds, will shout at the universe and shake the galaxies. Life and death, themselves, will hear the wail of generations – the tragic song of humanity for once in perfect harmony. The clashing of swords and the beat of the war drum will keep my rhythm, while the screams of the murdered will keep my pitch. I will cry in a chorus of explosion and cancer. I will sing a melody of famine and suppression. At the end of it all, there will be no resolution – just the same wretched refrain to repeat for eternity. I will make the universe listen to the story it has written; I will make it drink the blood it has spilled and choke on the pain of all of history.

Then I will have the last laugh, though the end will never come. At least I finally won't be waiting for it.

--- Brian Daniels



Breaking Melody

--- Moriah Sears

The Crane

Style moves to movement.

Grace in flight, its sharp utensil rising from chaste body,
blue and gray reflect in moonlit sky.

Words find troubling the thoughts of detailing it and its strength.

It is above; we crane our necks to heavens.

We lift our heads; see the movement, sweet melodies arise
from musically refined orchestration between gentle wings
and wind's power.

Strength and beauty, power and elegance, swiftly rising in
and out of lost translations.

It seeks the gently waving earth, it is now a missile.

A soft splash is heard across the lake of time, which so often
brings passersby to view this spectacle.

The echo reaches the ears of lovers, lost in each other,
seeing beauty in eyes, hearing nothing but the gentle splash
that touches souls.

--- *Nicholas Hindes*

Creative Lashing

I can hear the voices:
ringing woeful
calls that, through
long practice, have
learnt to draw
down
Silver wine and
White abandon
from the night
In ceaseless chori

Intoxicating in
their splintered
harmony notes
run shivering over my skin
Stinging whispers piping
golden children
down the walls
until they vanish in a world
of piercing melody
I follow limping, straining
to reach out and grasp
the rumor of their song--
I cannot keep from weeping

Long wails, feverish
heights and
somber depths, carefree
dashes up and down--
My heart breaks
I run into the bosom of
the far far sun,
the trees, the sky
burying myself beneath
their weight

I cry
Scream
Bleed
Drown

Because I cannot sing down
sunbeams
Along the halls

--- *J.M.*

D Dead Men

Dead men walking,
Roaming all around,
Breathless and lifeless,
Though not in the ground.

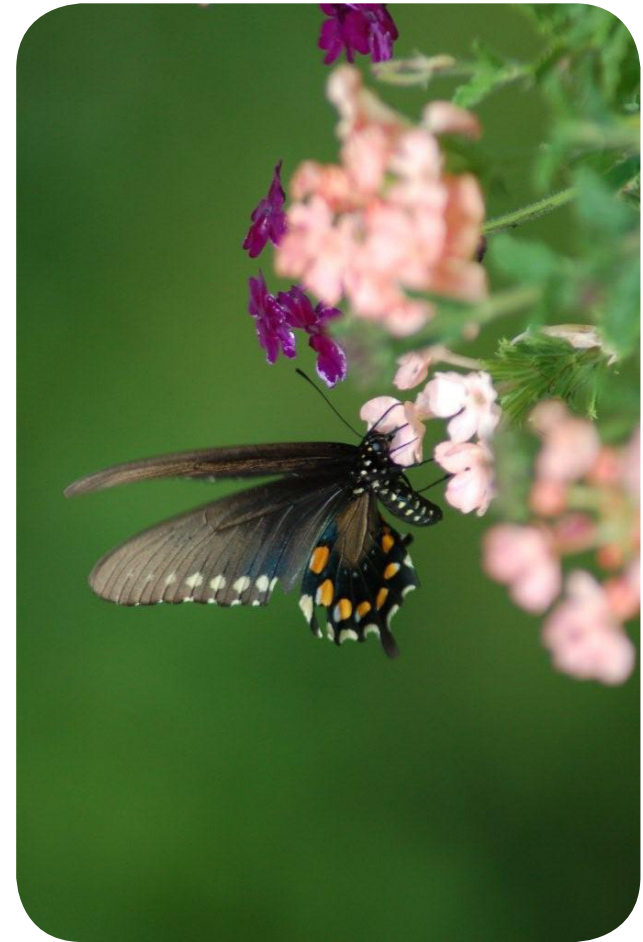
They don't listen to Him,
His words they do not believe.
I keep trying to tell them,
On that day I will grieve.

I am not hurt,
Because they ignore,
But very disappointed
Because their sin He bore.

I cannot comprehend,
From the Father above,
They have not felt,
The greatness of His love.

Dead men walking,
Roaming all around,
I can only hope,
Soon that love be found.

--- *Kevin Ellsworth*



D Delicate

--- *Christina Accornero*

An End To Life

An End To Life

We take a walk through the grave yard.
The smell of moldy grass fills the air.
We view the martyr with
tombstones broken and cracked.
The fog seems to rise as we proceed.
We can no longer see our feet.
Fallen limbs seem to grab our feet.
The old man statue guides our way.
A stillness fills the air.
Pain swells in my leg.
I tumble to the ground.
The stroke of pain causes me to scream.
As I rise up, I find myself alone.
My companion fled in horror of my scream.
I face the statue alone.

--- *Mary Robinson*

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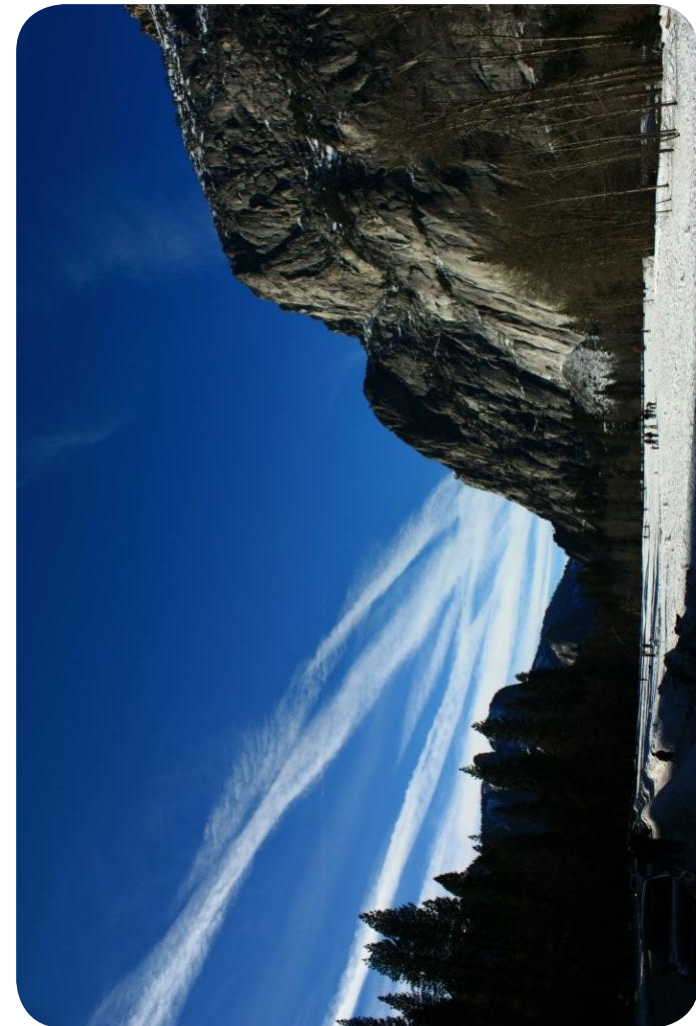
Excelsis

--- *Jessica Mussro*

A Far Off Day

I was walking down a road today,
And I caught a glimpse of a far off day.
That was not filled with war and rage,
But filled with peace and glory and praise.
There was no famine, sadness, or pain,
There was not hate, poverty, or shame.
Just glasses filled to the brim with wine,
And a man sitting upon a shrine.
There was food stacked to the clouds so high,
And a hint of fresh apple pie.
But it was what he said that caught my ear,
And I turned to find what I would hear.
I fell to my knees not knowing what to say,
I bowed my head and began to pray.
And when I looked up to see the dawn,
It was just me and the road, everything else was gone.

--- *Stephen Morrill*



Glorious

--- *Abram Rampey*

Here At The End Of All Things

Dedicated to my dad, Renaldo Sears, at the passing of his grandmother, Leola Easley, May 7, 2008.

Here at the end of all things
Stands a grand harp still strung.
The winds sadly brush at the strings
As though to reply the tune that's been strummed.
Do not weep, little one,
For there is still the memory
Of that tune ever played in your heart.
How different and empty this world might have been
Had that melody ne'er played on that harp!

Here at the end of all things past
Stands an empty field
Flowers faded and gray
Where once rang a sweet laugh
To the skies.
Do not fret, little one.
Though the laughter is gone
Remember the joy in the laugh.
How sad and how gray your world might have been
Had the laughter ne'er crossed your path.

Here you are now, at the very end,
A gaping hole in your heart,
Sweet memories you see
Where once, in that place,
Stood a friend.
Remember, remember, little one,
Remember, though this be the hardest of thoughts,
Remember the good times and laughter
And how truly empty your world would have been
If you had ne'er loved and lost.

--- Moriah Sears

Illusion

Lost words touch tongue and cheek
Flip opinions over and up.
They can't agree on love
They don't want to fight, failure.
Their verbalizations lose effect when syllables slip out deceitfully
wilted corners of their mouth.
People both love and hate, woven in silken threads of tightly
bound confusions.
What does time stop? When does it start?
Why does the wind begin? Where does it end? This is love.
The world cannot agree on it and not one person can conceive it.
Yet abused, by the world, like a small child,
Overused for selfish gains.

--- Nicholas Hindes

Inspiration

In my inspiration
The dawn breaks void anew
And after all this searching
The answer lies in you

No not you

Through my inspiration
The voices seem so clear
Schizophrenic nightmares
Turn learning into fear

(Continued on the next page)

(Inspiration, continued)

All these years

Out of my inspiration
A tragic child is born
Who looks up, loving, at me
And loves me nevermore

It's not yours

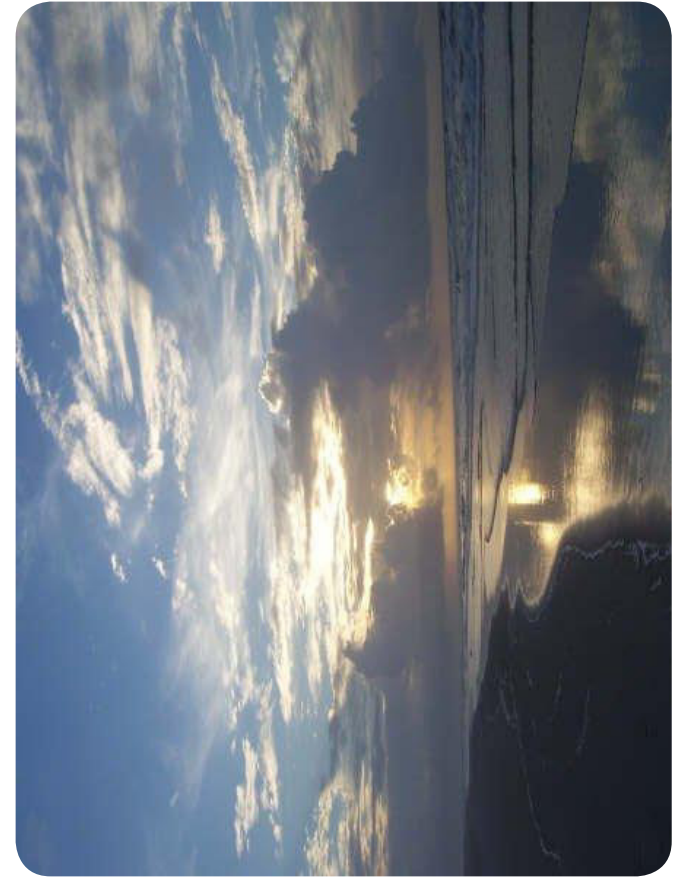
See my inspiration
Hear my voice resound
Poison and deception
In puddles on the ground

Spin around

After inspiration
The scene is crystal clear
Words and ink and paper
Eraser marks and smears

And my tears

--- *Brian Daniels*



 Intermezzo

--- *Kevin Brooks*

The Knife

Glimpse
Reopen doors
Paradigms shift
Water breaks
Birth and rebirth
Wounded and healed
Grab and insert

The knife

Heart beats
Revolution flows
Through collapsed veins
Mind springs
Action and inaction
Motion and stasis
Twist it

The knife

Tears fall
Salt and regret
Clutch for the shame
Innocence betrayed
Sensibility consumed
Old hatred exhumed
Force it in

The knife

Knees meet dirt
Souls meet warmth
Damnation near
Salvation flees
Through open doors
The paradigm shifts
Revolution hints
The grimace suggests
The mind revolts
The heart revolts
The soul revolts
The hands give in
Glimpse the exodus

The knife

--- *Brian Daniels*

Life Is Complicated

Robert Frost once said that there were two roads ahead of him; he took the one less traveled. Many of us always say that we are unique and that the road we are on is one of lesser use, however, do our journeys really differ from each other?

We all fly through life on a playground swing, floating back and forth just getting high enough at the top to see what's far away on the horizon, but not being able to get a good look at it. We are forced to focus on what's in front of us and what we can see. We look down and around at the earth around us and watch as it passes by, each swing a new day, each step on the path a new experience.

While on this swing we look down afraid and insecure about the ground under us, happy to be in the air. However sometimes the ground looks new and exciting, the ground leads us places and takes us to new heights. Did you ever jump off the swings when you were a kid? Were you ever afraid that if you jumped off at the wrong point in the swing, your momentum would be off and you would land on your butt. Were you ever afraid your jacket that you wore on those cold fall days would get caught on the swing and halt you from flying through the air?

I swing afraid.

I swing afraid to fly through the air toward the future.

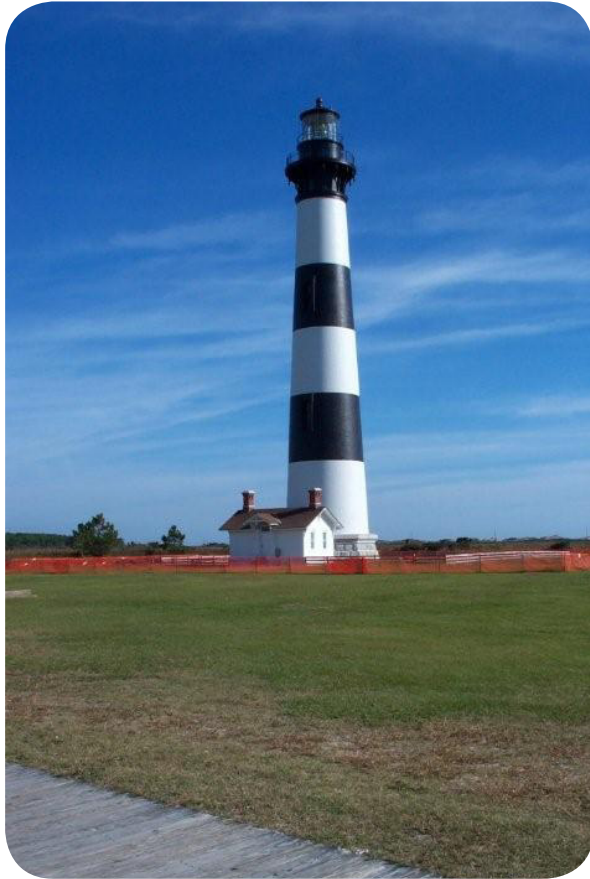
I look at the ground wondering whether or not things will be better down there?

Which is better? To swing in sustained contentness, or to jump with the possibility of an enlightened life?

But if I jump . . . I wonder if I'll jump right, I wonder if my jacket will get snagged.

I stand at two roads; I'll take one of them. I don't think it matters which one though. It may be the one less traveled, but everyone seems to take that, so it probably won't be.

--- *Nicholas Hines*



Lighthouse

--- *Mary Robinson*

Listen

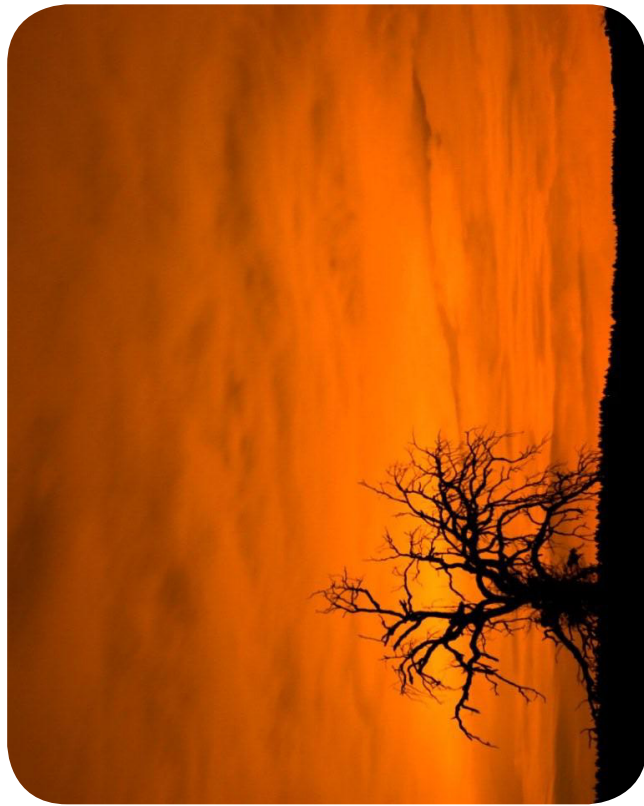
I write to create a world
In which I wish to live.
I speak to conceal it all
A false pretense to give

I write to tell you how I feel
Doubting you will listen
I speak with no response again
Finding it easier to pretend

I write down the chaos
Consuming my every thought
I speak with no words now
Seeking what shouldn't be sought

I write....
Hoping you will listen
Tired of speaking ...
I can find no reason.

--- *Anonymous*



A Lonesome Night

--- *Justin Donnahoo*

Love Is A Spider Web

Love is a spider web, going in all directions
What, if any, are my connections?
Thin, extremely thin they weave
But strong we all wish to believe
Wars and violence rip us apart
Just put your emotions in a cart

--- *Anonymous*

Mass Transport

All the many people
Babbling
Traveling
They hate you some, hate you some
Maybe love you some
If they can pick you up and out
You're
Just a face, just a coat
A blue and black and red and orange
Cavalcade of color crawling
Backwards forwards up the walls and down
the drains
That drip drip drip
To the sickening thud of feet
Against an empty sky

(Continued on the next page)

(Mass Transport, continued)

Vacant as the bus is full
Of closed-faced tight-squeezed
Passengers
Breathing in each other's
Dust and change
Floating in the dim
Soggy smell of pretzels petrol
Kibobs and cast off papers
That cascades off the alleys
In a drip drip drip
Of steep scent and color
Drip drip drip
Threatening rain that never falls
Drip drip
Tiny million sounds: ennui hassle desperation ---
Drip

--- J.M.



The Musician

--- Jessica Mussro

D Myself Poem

I am a son to those divided, but unified.
I am brother to many, but being myself, alone.
I am a sport passed down.
I am a frozen pond.
I am a double trigger.
I am trying my best.
I am a thunderstorm.
I am a puzzle piece.
I am a Unique pretzel.
I am nourished, content, and saved.
I believe everyone else should be, as well.
I am Julian Mattes.

--- Julian Mattes

D Over A Dandelion Puff

Wishes are such ridiculous things
The vocalization of whimsical dreams
More than like not to come true
Yet we sigh them out with great to-do,
And a half-hearted sigh that just maybe
They won't merely be dreams but reality.
So we cast wishes out upon stars and seeds
Wasting time and breath and brain energy
And more often than not we always do
Whatever we need to make them come true.

(Continued on the next page)

(Over A Dandelion Puff, continued)

What's the point of wishing on dandelion seeds
If all we do is plant more weeds?
Or pleading with stars that have no ears
Crusting our faces with countless tears?
There is no point! Wishes are such pathetic stuff!
. . . drat! I wish I had another dandelion puff!

--- Moriah Sears

D Priceless

With these eyes,
That twinkle like bright little stars,
On a cold winter night.
And a smile,
That turns a grim dark room,
To brilliant light.
A voice,
That sounds of heaven's bells,
That chime upon thoughts of joy.
And the beauty,
That is known to all the world,
By men and little boys.
The heart,
That only angels hold,
And grace,
That still remains untold,
Could never be worth its weight in gold,
Because you make them priceless.

--- Chad T. Smith

D Psalm 5, 10, 210, 405, and 605

Jehovah

Or so you are called
How am I to react to
this name?
Should I even ask you to
hear me?

Look, it's not working out,
this plan. Who knew?

LA consumes me
CA uses me
This plan, this place,
is bankrupt and spent

I am spent
I am worn and
My body is breaking
I have never felt more beaten
or ill or tired
It all started here in this place

You, Jehovah, brought me here
You, Jehovah, led me here
You, Jehovah, called me here
To this place where I get spent

But Yahweh

As you are named
A name above all names
I ask you to hear me
For it is hard to always see

I am spent
I am worn
My body is breaking
But I have never felt more
in your presence
It all started here in this place

Lord, your hand shapes me into
what I need to be
Lord, your voice calls me to
who I need to be
Sovereign Lord you are
Be sovereign in me

May I be your hands and
your voice
Wherever you lead me allow
me to run
Wherever you call me allow
me to shout
That you are good and true
Wherever I am

--- Paul A. Creasman



D Pulcher Est

--- Jessica Mussro

Relationship With My Creator

I have known the dark soul of a fallen world,
Where the breast, ripped open by careless hurt
Of selfish love, oozes pain thick of dark grief.
I have known the flash of light from skyward to earth's
Call of help, while soul despairs of living as Hellish
torments the mind.
I have seen the hand of my maker reach out to a dying heart,
With healing dripping from His fingertips, massaging its rhythms
Back into a proper quivering motion from within, as only a
loving Creator can do to his fallen creation in time desperation.

--- Sandra Hooper

Shutter Speed

the lens hides me,
my hopes,
my heart.
the glass captures
what I can't forget,
every glance,
every curve.
I am hidden
in a flash.

(Continued on the next page)

(Shutter Speed, continued)

Impartial.
my eyes burn,
they would betray
they would speak.
the shutter sets me free,
to look,
to wish.
Separated by only a lens.

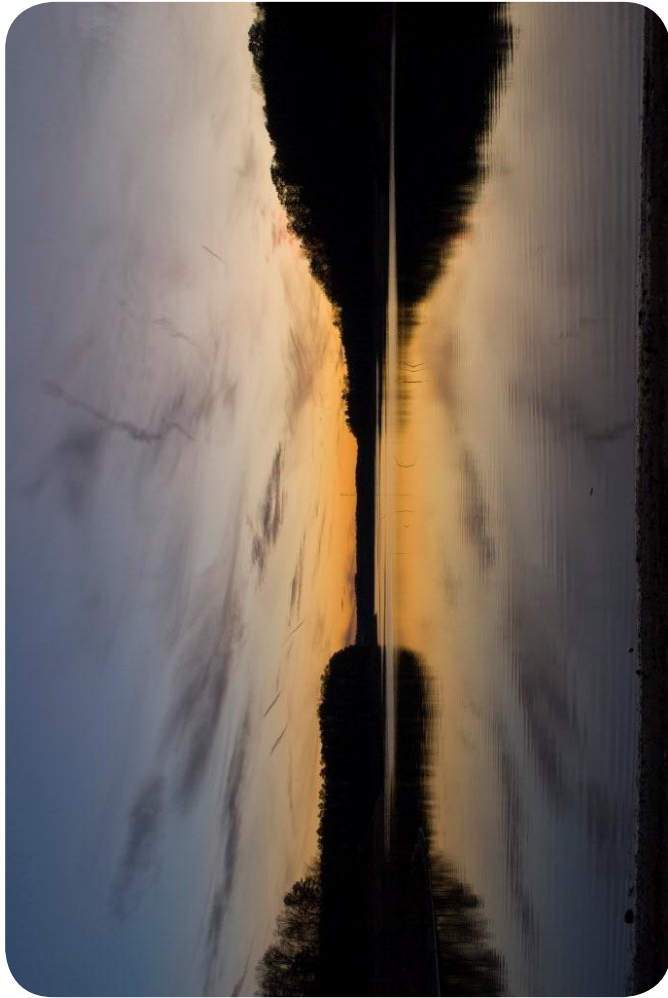
--- Anonymous

Sitting Pretty

Sitting pretty;
her skin was like milk,
her hair blowing in the breeze.
Her dress was long and silk,
resting above bony ankles.

Sitting pretty;
her fingers were worn,
her brow wrinkled from the sun.
Her eyes wearied from all they had borne,
resting before a still keen mind.

--- Chandra Walls



Sunset At Hartwell

--- Justin Donnahoo

A Thanksgiving Never Forgotten

It was a morning like many before. I woke up rubbing the sleep out of my eyes, watching my cousin do the same. Waking up on that familiar lumpy couch bed never fazed my 14-year-old body. Hearing the pots and pans in the kitchen, I remembered it was not just any day: it was Thanksgiving Day. Staying over at Grandma's house was always a fun event for my cousin Kayla and I. Grandma calling us to breakfast for the fourth time, we rushed giggly down the hallway. The smells of Thanksgiving dinner for later already filled my nose. I could almost taste that turkey and dressing. As we sat down for breakfast, the Macy's parade was starting up. I could not have been in a better mood. I was already there with my family and loved when my whole family gathered together around Grandma's wooden kitchen table. What seemed like a normal Thanksgiving morning soon was changed by a phone call never forgotten that taught me to be thankful for everyone in my life.

The date of that particular Thanksgiving was November 25, 2004. My Grandma's telephone began to ring, but the sound did not alarm me. My eyes were glued to the television as the floating turkey soar above the buildings in New York City. Grandma handing me the phone, I was expecting the voice of my mother or another family member. The black phone felt as cold as ice against my face as I spoke. Sitting at the familiar kitchen table, I listened to a calm voice of my best friend Lyndsey. I was a bit shocked to hear from her that early in the day at my Grandma's house in the first place.

Nothing seemed out of order until she spilled out her story with sobs. I jumped to my feet at the sound of her voice

(Continued on the next page)

(A Thanksgiving Never Forgotten, continued)

repeating the words, “Dad’s dead, dad’s dead, dad’s dead!”

Before I even knew what was really going on, I fell to the kitchen floor with my tear dimmed eyes. I can still see the shocked looks on my family member’s face as I sat crying and repeating the only phrase I knew to say, “I’m so sorry.”

My mind was full of sorrow, sympathy, and confusion. It would not be for days until the cause, a brain aneurism, was found out. That Thanksgiving dinner with my family was blurred with my tears. It was like walking around in a world of gray. It was a lot to take in because growing up with Lyndsey, her dad was like my own. I can not remember any details about that dinner with my family except waiting eagerly to get to Lyndsey’s house of mourning. My family continued to say how sorry they were to me but every sound made me jump. My mascara stayed stained under my eyes, but I knew that all the tears in the world would not bring him back or change anything. The drive to her house felt like years and confusion filled my mind. I was only 14 and did not know what to say once her front door approached. I remember the sky seemed sad and gloomy on this particular Thanksgiving.

As our car stopped in front of her house, I longed for nothing more than to wake up from this nightmare. Her family members were in the yard huddled together talking quietly as I passed by them. Reaching the door, it opened with the saddest sight I have ever seen. Lyndsey’s mom stood there sobbing and reaching out to hug my neck. The words that she spoke to me will forever be etched into my mind. She spoke in between cries, “You were like a daughter to him.” This was the moment it fully and truly hit me that Fred Stephens was gone. Reaching my best friend of many years, I was speechless. We all sat closely on the couch openly expressing our sadness. The rest of the night’s setting was in Lyndsey’s room talking about our very

(Continued on the next page)

(A Thanksgiving Never Forgotten, continued)

last memories of him just days before. I felt a sense of needing to comfort Lyndsey and take care of her. I knew that her mom was in no shape or form able to tend to her children’s needs when she herself was in a state of depression and need. Sitting in that cold room we could not wrap our minds around how God could take this amazing husband, father, and friend. As we kept speaking, I decided we should be thankful for the time we spent with him and for God allowing us to have him in our lives for the time we did. Trying to make sense of this situation was not happening that cold Thanksgiving night. We stayed up for the next 3 nights talking about preparing funeral and visitation arrangements. Waking up after something so dramatic happening sometimes took us back. We would wake up together after sleeping and think it was only a nightmare and Fred was downstairs smiling on the couch waiting to goof around with us like always. Walking downstairs and finding flowers, cards, and food from family was all that would be waiting on us. It was a reality neither Lyndsey or I wanted to face.

With Thanksgiving right around the corner this year, I know all the traditions will occur. I know all the turkey and dressing will be stuffed in everyone’s stomach until they are about to bust. For the Stephens, it will always be a reminder of that dreadful occurrence the morning of November 25, 2004. This taught me to always count my blessings and be thankful of those in my life now because I will never know when God may call them home.

--- Brittany Galloway

Trust

Trust

Consumed in the explosion
Of truth

Corrupted by the ticking of time
The tainting of fate
And the twisting of words

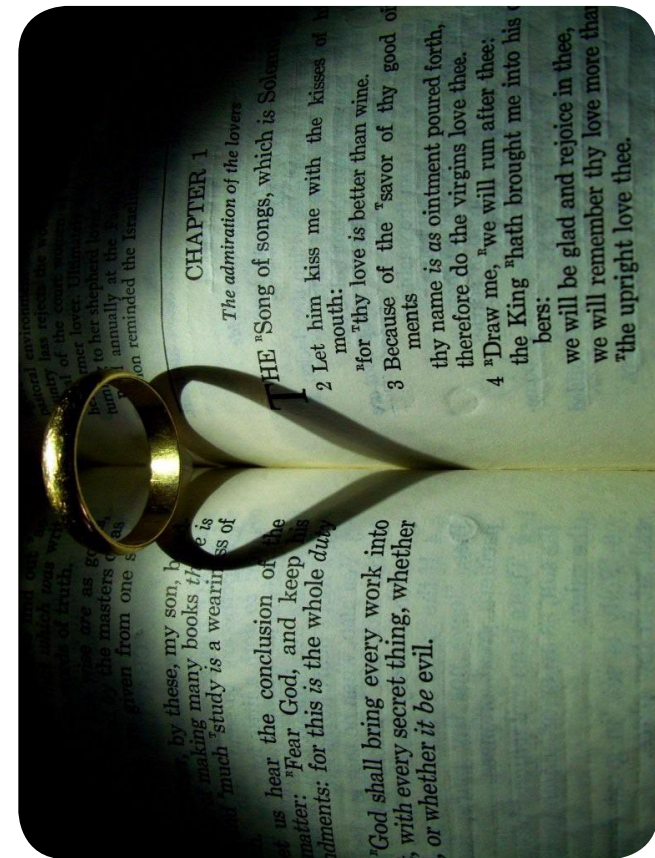
Crippled by the wandering eyes
The desperate lies
Fickle, fiendish cries
And half hearted tries

Cast out and replaced by
Fallacies and fighting
And flawed falsities

Controlled by the disillusioned,
Unseeing of what could be

Truth

--- Amanda Kinney



Unconditional

--- Abigail Byers

What Makes A Man

Since the dawn of our earthy state
Haughty men the world have walked
Now in the present I relate—
Where have gone the men who talked
And spoke of right and moral truth?
They who turned an eye from wealth,
And akin to wisdom were in youth
For many days long blessed in health.
Now the world is burned and bled,
Now children rule and infants war.
And peace, now gone, and Eros dead,
We run to Mars' great lust for more
Broken lives and crimson stains.
All the while we cry for peace,
But hope a shadow yet remains
While good men stare and feign to sleep.
Where are the ones who as men stood,
Whose fingers stronger than the fight
Collapsed the foes of brotherhood?
They have disappeared into the night.
The way of earthly strength is cold,
And only faith and love it is that can
Sway cowards to embrace the bold
And that makes a man a man.

--- Ryan Seibert



Where

--- Aron Ray Stone

Whispers Of The Wind

The wind whispers through the wild woods
As if some fantastically urgent
Courier of nature.

The trees bend and reach out to each other
As the wind's message rushes
Through the rustling leaves.

Then an eerie stillness comes
As the wind takes flight
And flies away to unknown places.

Where does the wind go?
Only God and the trees know.

--- *Pamela Burrell*

Wind

Oh, that the gentle, whispering wind
Would carry me swiftly along
And that the stormy, blustering gale
Would come to sound more like a song

That the murmuring, rippling leaves
Would awaken a joy in my soul
And that the feel of the breeze on my skin
Could in some way make me feel whole

For wind, like You, though quite unseen
Has a presence better known
By the feeling, the stirring in my heart
As when I'm before your throne

--- *Steph Sestito*

The Wind Dries My Tears

When my whole world is breaking
And troubles come my way
I like to find a peaceful place
Where the wind can blow them away

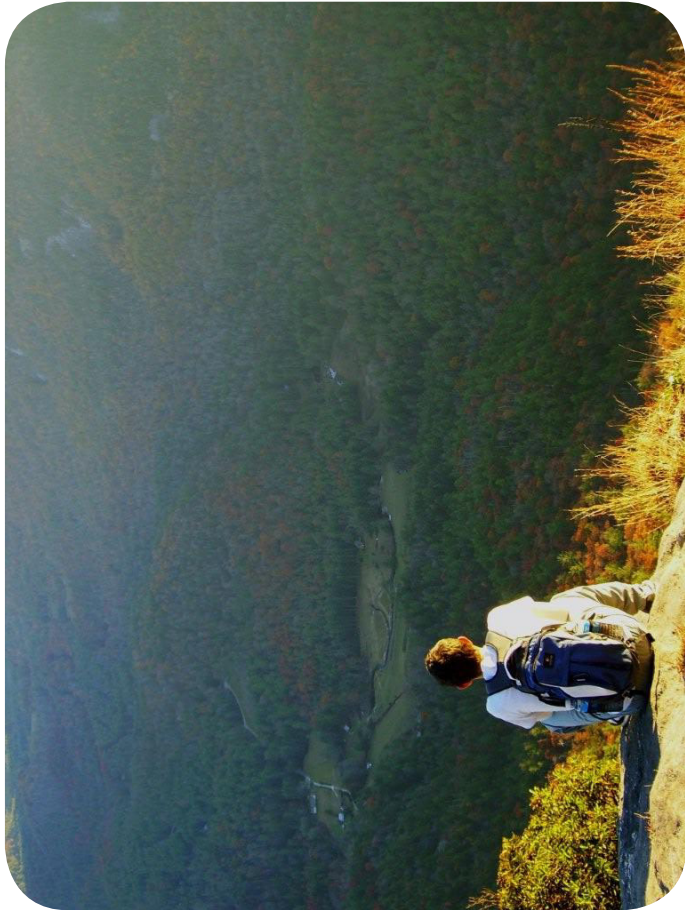
Life becomes so simple
When the wind is all I feel
The world seems to fade
Like nothing matters here

I see majesty in the mountains
And glory in the skies
There is splendor in all creation
But it's in the wind where God is most real

I feel insignificant and very small
There is a simple serenity that flows through me
When all I feel is this incredible bliss
That the wind blows over me

The vast valley delights me
And fresh flowers bring me hope
Cheerful clouds make me happy
But only the wind can dry my tears

--- *Hannah Cromer*



D The Wonder
Of Nature

--- *Justin Donnahoo*

