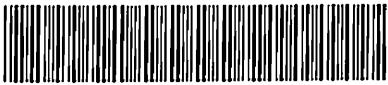


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073816

Dalton Newell

Nature is

Never has there been a man
who loves nature quite as much as this one
No matter where he is, he enjoys the simplicity nature brings.
Nature is beauty and beauty is love.
That's all you need to know.

When at the beach
he falls into a trance-like state
and is mesmerized by the repetition of the ocean's mighty waves.
Nature is beauty and beauty is love.
That's all you need to know.

When encompassed by the mighty mountains
he marvels at their towering forms
and adores their infinite illusions.
Nature is beauty and beauty is love.
That's all you need to know.

When in the rocky, snow-filled caps
in the northernmost parts of the earth,
he wonders why no one else appreciates this nature's worth.
Nature is beauty and beauty is love.
That's all you need to know.

When floating on the lakes so large
and surrounded by the sea
he thanks his God for creating this wonderful, natural peace.
Nature is beauty and beauty is love.
That's all you need to know.

Beauty

When wondering through the winding woods,
he is puzzled by the thought
of how long it must have taken to form such a masculine grace.
Nature is beauty and beauty is love.
That's all you need to know.

When flying through the sky so high
and peering over the earth,
he wonders if this is the place where God admires his work.
Nature is beauty and beauty is love.
That's all you need to know.

Nature is his favorite thing
whether it be big or small.
It all works together to bewilder him.
Nature is beauty and beauty is love.
That's all you need to know.

~~No matter where he is or where he is trying to go,
he will always love this precious nature
for which none is taken for granted.~~
Nature is beauty and beauty is love.
That's all you need to know.

၁၂၁၁

As I gaze across the sky,
A blanket of thick cotton
Covers the earth,
My eye strains to see the grandeur
Overshadowed by the sun's commanding splendor.

I watch the dark grey wall,
Peering into the night,
My journey's end nearing,
I catch a fleeting glimpse of beauty
As gold sequins sparkle on black velvet before me.

Then the clouds depart before me,
As a curtain that reveals
A spectacle as far as I can see,
What God sees as he looks down
The world wearing her evening gown.

And now I descend closer,
To each tiny votive flame,
Each beacon that grows larger
On their wicks or holders,
Increasing larger, brighter, bolder.

My eyes widen as I look in fear
As suddenly in my descent,
The candles all disappear.
I feel my vessel slowing down,
I am among the lights of Motown.

THE LIGHTS OF MOTOWN
SARAH CATHERINE BILLUPS



fishy situation



Lydia Burns

A scary thought for most parents is that their child will meet someone online, go somewhere with that stranger, and never come home. My father and mother are no exception to this rule. Being protective parents, they did not react well when my brother decided to try to meet an online friend in person.

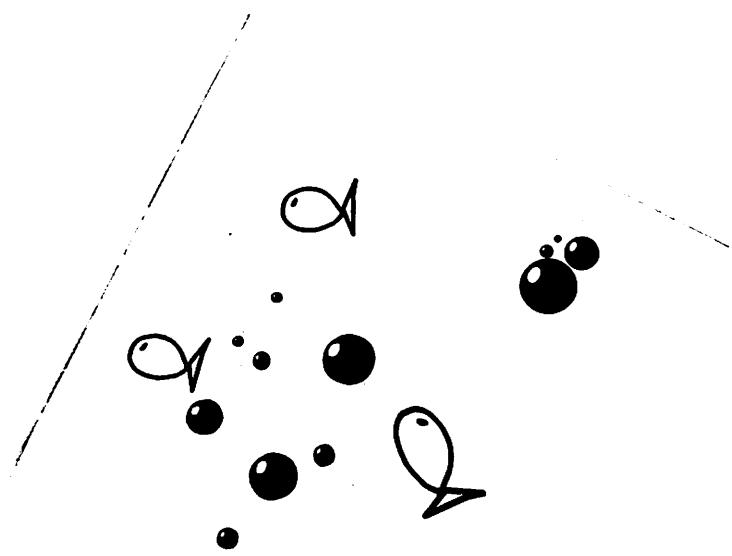
My brother, Daniel, has a remarkable fascination with native fishes. He absorbs information on the different fish species from the internet, books, and an online native fish forum called North American Native Fishes Association (NANFA). This forum is populated by colorful characters such as "Fish for Brains," "Bassmaster," "Minnowmizer," and "Irate Mormon." After several years of swapping fishy facts and developing friendships with these fellow enthusiasts, Daniel was very excited when one member offered to drive two hours to Meridian, pick him up, and take him collecting. Fish collecting is essentially wading in a creek, stream, or lake with the goal of netting, photographing, and identifying native fish. A hobbyist might also use this as an opportunity to add species to his or her home aquarium or pond.

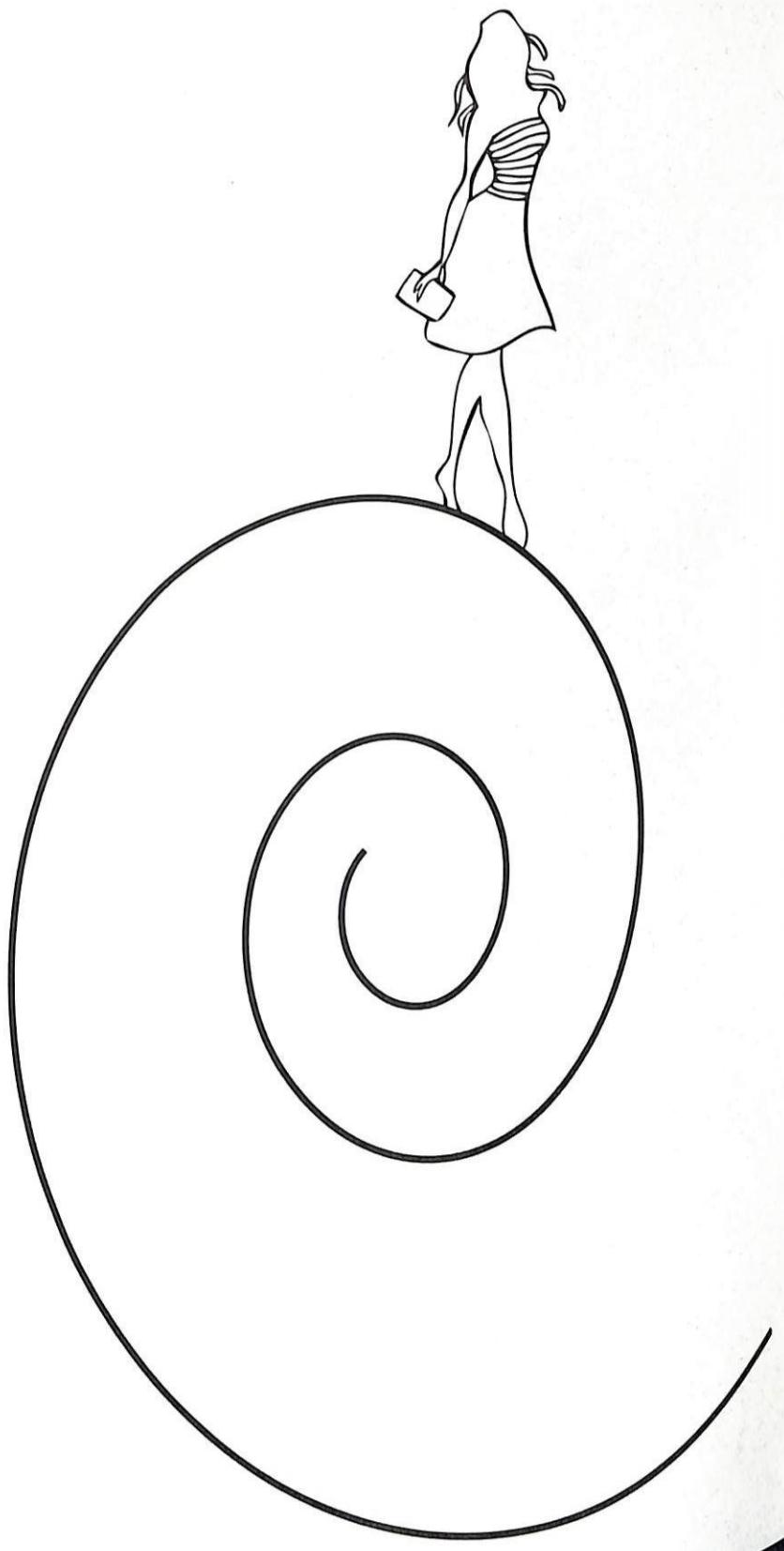
"Bullheadsrdfish" (Daniel's username on NANFA) and "Irate Mormon" (also known as Martin) messaged back and forth on NANFA, planning their trip. "Irate Mormon" wrote, "I am free almost all day - I can be there as early as you want. I don't have anything specific in mind to collect. We will just have to see what we find. Finding fish has a lot to do with experience, so I'm fairly sure that I can help you find some cool fish! Once you've been collecting with someone experienced, you get the idea quickly. I have an extra net you can use. Oh yeah, and plan on getting wet! You will need to wear appropriate footgear and leggings (shorts recommended)."

Martin added his contact information to the note, giving Daniel his phone number and an encouragingly mature e-mail address of iratemormon@iratemormon.com. Then, Martin continued, "If your dad approves, I will need to know where to meet you (directions to your house, for example). Your parents will wish to know if I am a pedophile, wacko, or something. Please let them know how to reach me! Well, okay, I am a wacko - who else does this for fun? If this is a no-go, that's okay too. I have a honey-do list I can work on, but I'd rather go collecting. :-)"

Luckily for Daniel, Martin was able to convince Dad that he was not some sort of pervert intending to kidnap a teenage boy and do something evil. The trip went off without a hitch, in spite of my parents' fears, and Mom actually only called to check on Martin and Daniel once. Martin later admitted that he had toyed with the idea of telling Mom that he was pulling Daniel's body out of the water when she called. However, he decided against this because he was not sure how she would react. He had tried this little joke before with the result of making some poor guy's wife "freak out."

This stranger from the internet became a good real life friend of Daniel's. He showed my parents that not everyone a person meets online is evil, even though sometimes these internet friends can get one into fishy situations!





Pointless Rules of Buying Handbags



Handbags should be beautiful works of art.

The intricate details of fine metal ware, exotic leathers, and prints are just a small part.

Fendi, Chanel, Prada, Gucci, Versace, Dior, and Valentino just to name a few

Are the creators of purses of the finest brew.

Handbags should be beautiful works of art.

Handbags of the flamboyant kind can be your best soul mate,

If only for a small price for such ornate.

Just throw them over your shoulder,

As if to never feel bolder.

Handbags should be beautiful works of art.

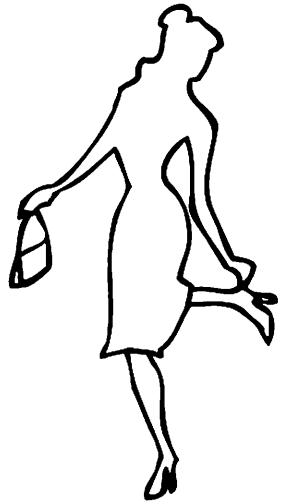
One's personality is shown through your handbag.

So choose a masterpiece and not some rag.

Never carry a fake,

Because that is worse than a melted cake.

Handbags should be beautiful works of art.



Choose only the handbags that are the finest,

Not one that falls out of the nest.

If it is not gold,

It is not bold.

Handbags should be beautiful works of art.

Only choose crocodile, leopard, alligator, fine calf, and skins of the sort,

Because it would be a tragic flaw to not be a good sport.

The strap and handle should shout sophistication.

Otherwise, you will be an abomination.

Handbags should be beautiful works of art.

Your masterpiece and your ensemble should match meticulously,

As to not appear in a manner that could be taken facetiously.

The handbag should not overwhelm your outfit.

For this would create fits.

Handbags should be beautiful works of art.

If these fundamentals are followed,

You will never be sorrowed.

Choose the handbag you truly love.

If not you will be done as a dove.

Handbags should be beautiful works of art.

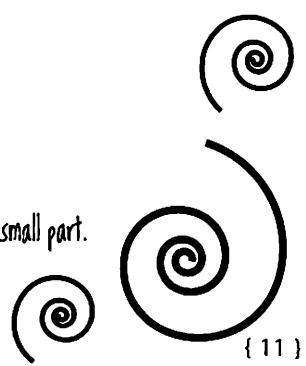
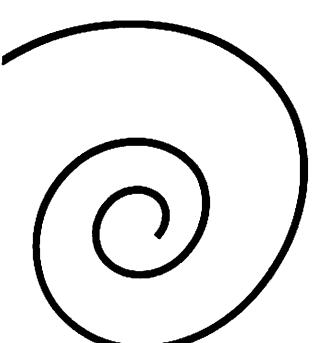
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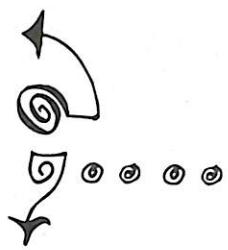
The intricate details of fine metal ware, exotic leathers, and prints are just a small part.

Fendi, Chanel, Gucci, Versace, Dior, and Valentino just to name a few

Are the creators of purses of the finest brew.

Handbags should be beautiful works of art.





Teaching the Death of Ophelia

Shauna Waters

A colleague caught me in the chaos of changing classes
streams of students surging like fish darting in and out of doors
to ask if I'd taught him.
to ask in a quite casual way.
if I'd heard the news.

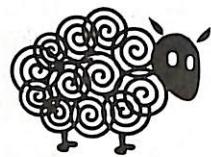
No matter what nonsense they pass off
in education courses
there is no adequate preparation for the heart
no lesson plan or disaster drill good enough
when one of your own
decides there is not one friend left in his young world.
decides to end it all.

No amount of Hamlet's abstract contemplation can soothe.
It's all smudged ink and icy ashes.
The divinest language only the infantile babbling of mud-filled mouths.
words are not nearly enough
when desks are emptied.
when self-conscious smiles are stilled forever.

Frozen fingers fumble text.
Act IV. Ophelia's pitiful end with song and garland.
the scholars' long, detached debate over her tragedy.
I do not want to touch the pages.
They lay slain,
pale and bloodless,
useless and mute,
unable to change or save a life.
dead leaves scuttling and rattling in a cutting, brutal wind.

At least with poor Ophelia
there was uncertainty, I think.
and I force my mind away
from the glare reflected from the empty blue seat in the front row,
from the long legs I used to have to climb over
with every circuit of the room.





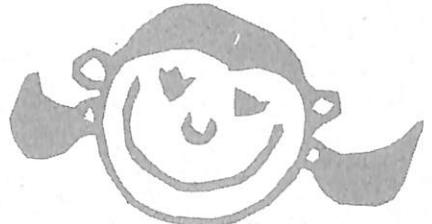
Nuisance

Kaley Hull

It happened the year I turned ten years old. It was a cold and dreary April day in Amesbury, Massachusetts. I was a little girl and did not understand anything about life, but that day I learned the best life lesson anyone could ever learn.

My name is Lana Lewis, and I remember the first day I met Marcy Green. It was the first day of school when I met the newcomer from a small town in Oklahoma. We both were in Mrs. Rawson's fourth grade class.

It did not take long to see that Marcy was the biggest nuisance I had ever met. Now let me take the time to explain Marcy. She was a small girl for her age. She had blue eyes and brown hair that she always wore in pigtails with a ribbon to match whatever outfit she had on. Marcy always had on a colorful outfit with white Ked's tennis shoes. Do not be fooled by her cute, innocent look, however. Marcy was a terror!



Marcy acclimated herself very quickly to our school. Mrs. Rawson loved her, but the students were only annoyed by her perfect little act. She was always the first to raise her hand to answer or ask a question. She was well advanced for a fourth grader. She read on an eighth grade level, and she already knew portions of simple algebra. She made a most irritating noise when she concentrated. It sounded as if she were hocking up a "loogie." It seemed to all of us that Marcy was out to put us down or make us look bad.

Despite her academic ability, Marcy was not at all athletic. She was very clumsy. As I mentioned before, she was small, and she just wasn't built for sporting activities. During recess we would split up to play kickball. Jake Gray, Lindsey Adams, and I were on one team. Tyson Phillips, Davy Campbell, Lisa Gerome, and Lucy Stevens were on the other team. One day as we were about to begin playing, Marcy shouted to Lindsey and me.

"Hey, you guys. Can I play?"

"Umm," I said as I watched Jake and Davy waving their hands in a "no way" motion behind her.

"It would make the teams even."

"That is true. I guess so," I said as I could feel everyone glaring at me.

"Are you kidding me?" Jake whispered in my ear.

"I didn't know what else to say," defending myself.

So we began to play. It was getting close to time to go in, and Tyson was up to kick. The bases were loaded. We were tied but only needed one out. Tyson kicked one straight to Marcy in the air. All she had to do was catch it, and it would have been the ballgame. However, she missed it, of course, and she fell to the ground. The ball went sailing past her. We lost because of Marcy.

Because we included Marcy in our game of kickball, she now thought she was part of our group. That was a big mistake on our part. Marcy was so loud, and everything she had to say made no sense to the rest of us. She talked like she was thirty years old. None of us cared about politics, the economy, and the latest news in America. We were fourth graders. We were interested in hide and go

MATURE!

Growing UP

Lawanda Shields



I smile to myself as I watch my thirteen year old son attempting to text his girlfriend without me catching him. Damion is my oldest son. He attends Kemper County High School. He is tall and gaunt, and he walks in a slow swag that lets one know that he is a "beast" on the basketball court. As I watch him ease his cell phone back into his pocket, I can't help but to compare him to the young son that used to be so shy that I thought he would be an introvert. This misconception was corrected after an adventurous sixth grade year that proved he was anything but an introvert. After that year, he was dubbed "class clown" to my shock and dismay.

I actually felt sorry for his teachers. I would catch myself often wondering out-loud how they got anything done with him constantly joking and horsing around in class. Once a model student, my son has slowly slipped from grace and landed into In-School Suspension. Sweet and innocent little Damion proceeded to get into altercations all year. When I asked him what happened he nonchalantly replied that "a man's got to do what a man's got to do." What exactly a man was supposed to be doing in the sixth grade remained a mystery to me, and thank God that year quickly slipped away and a newer, calmer year followed with seventh grade.

Sinai is his nesting ground. He was raised in the slow, aging community that lies ten miles from Preston, Mississippi. He loved it. Walking the road, shooting hoops, riding his bike, and hanging out at Tim-Tim's house are the highlights of his day. The boys of Sinai have their own little "click" a family. Actually, they are really a family. Everyone in Sinai is related by blood or by marriage.

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happy ☺

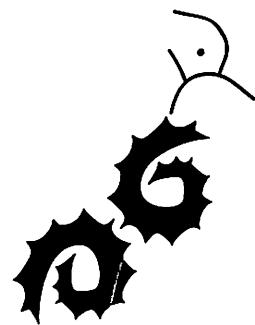
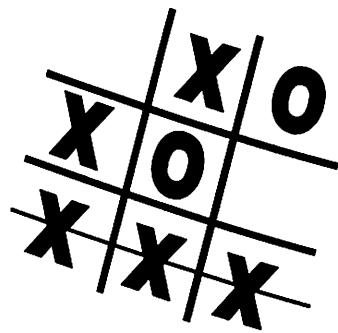
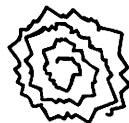
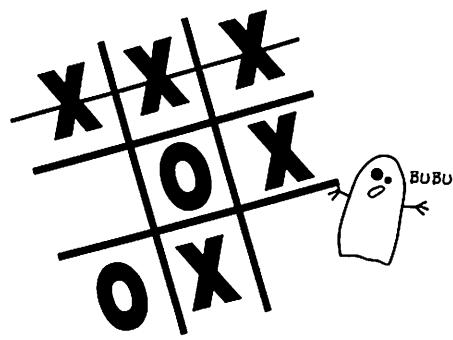
Having been an only child for eleven years, Damion was shocked to suddenly find himself with a little brother. For the first three days, this was great, but then the smelly diapers and constant crying interrupted his game plan! "Why do I have to give him my old toys?" was a question that I quickly grew tired of hearing. According to Damion, there was an intruder in "his" house. Someone was attempting to take his place with me. Someone was attempting to get his grandmother's attention. Someone was attempting to get the loot that had been his exclusively. It goes without saying that Damion was not pleased with his new baby brother as he always thought he would be.

"Damion," I call as I hear his cell phone vibrating in his pocket, "is that your phone?" I watch Damion closely to see if he would actually own up to the fact that he was texting after I had told him no more texting today. My thirteen year old looks at me slyly and laughs. The new deepening pitch in his voice does not go unnoticed. "Of course not. Didn't you say, no more texting, Mother?" I look at his father, and he returns a knowing look.

Puberty had rapidly taken possession of my son. He was growing up and becoming a man. He was no longer content to spend time with me or his grandparents. He wanted to hang out with the boys and talk openly about girls.

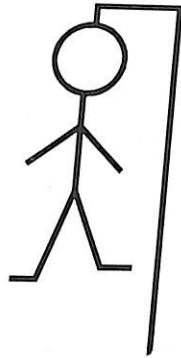
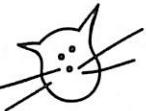
Transition was the name of the game. Spring was giving way to summer. Middle school was giving way to high school. Damion was changing swiftly from a child to a young man. No longer was he content to be whom or what he used to be. He was breathing in the new air of manhood while I was being forced to adjust to the fact that he was growing up.





joanie
bs

chachi ^



HA - MA -

A cricket hopped upon my stand today
While Betsy Breeze spun magnolia petals toward the rose bushes
Droplets from my face fell upon the marigolds
"I need more water, better water before I am placed." they whistled

A cricket hopped upon my stand today
Where Santos Sun burnished his excessive rays upon us
A hidden rock strike against my spade
"Don't bother me, don't bother me." it shouted

A cricket hopped upon my stand today
When Curtis Cloud drifted over, all dark and menacing
A worm wiggled his disapproval of home invasion
"Restore my roof, restore my rooms." it signaled

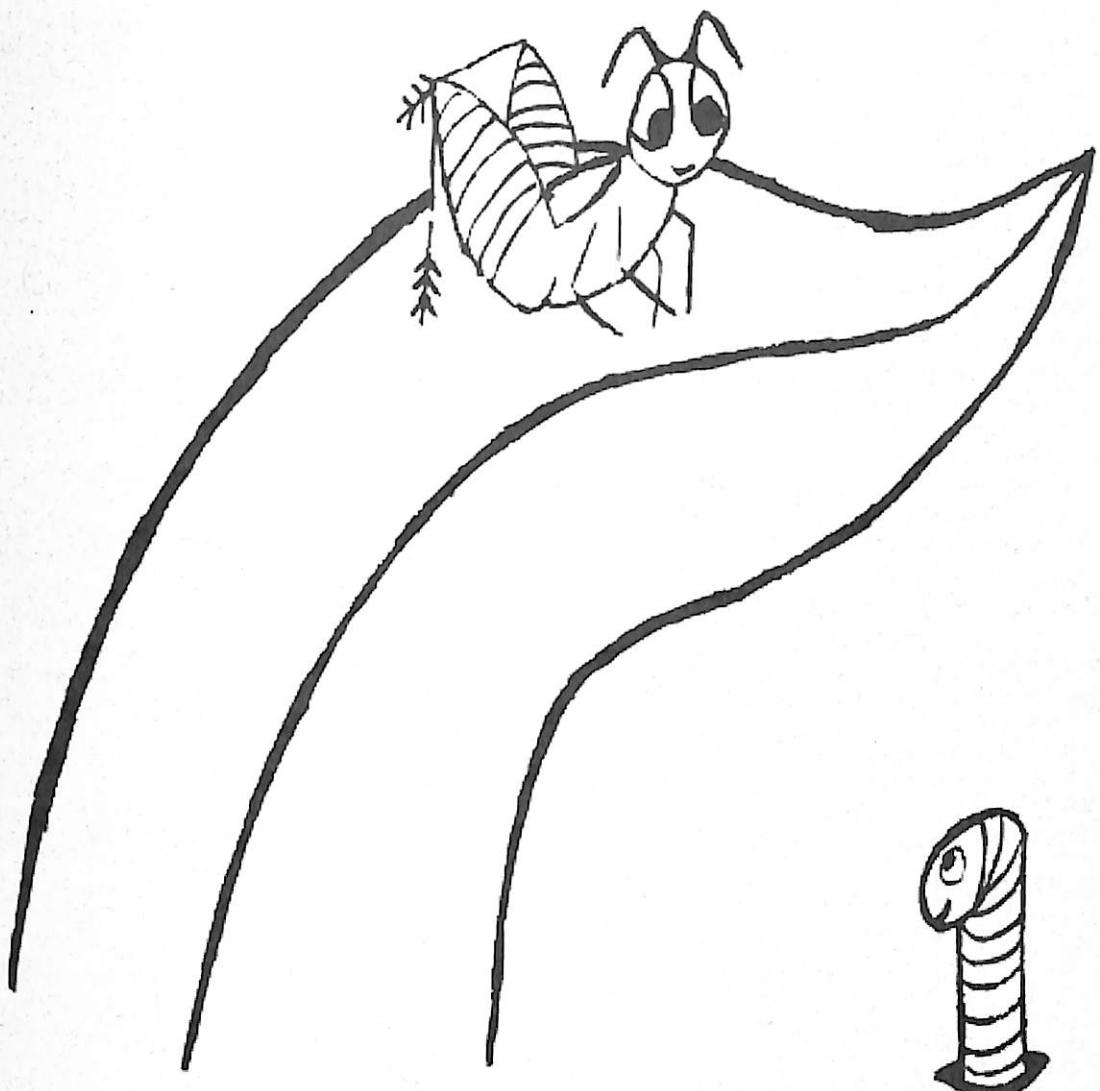
A cricket hopped upon my stand today
My arms implored my body to take a rest
A band of pain-runners in my back have awoken
By the floral shouts of protest against their relocation

A cricket hopped upon my stand today
Happily, Betsy shared her coolness
Mercifully, Santos dialed down his rays
Graciously, Curtis wafted off to a dryer place
Thirstily, the marigolds drank deeply of the piped water

A cricket hopped upon my stand today
His antennas flagged a silent message
His legs touched to tune for tonight's concert
Would he join others or do a solo?

A cricket hopped upon my stand today
My ears turned my head to him
Is that a song or are you just scratching?
A cricket hopped upon my stand today
And I was glad for the company

A Cricket



Bobbie Gulley

Like Pulling Teeth

I've made quite a few friends during my travels as secretary for Dentations Incorporated. From the conniving warlocks of Kansas City to the shy and secluded enchantresses of southern Antarctica, there's character and down-right weirdness throughout the magic community. A lady's gotta keep hold of her purse with all these fools running around teaching their pets how to steal and snatch and lord knows what else. I never would've looked twice at a house cat before I entered this world of foolery. But in my travels around the globe and beyond, I've met a righteous few. Shiloh's the most provocative on my short list of friends.

I consider our kinship to be sacred, and we're often mistaken as sisters, but we don't look at all alike with her short green hair and halter-top (revealing a pierced bellybutton) and tacky red lipstick. I can't stand her torn jeans either; it's like she stole them from a homeless woman. We lived through some of the most gorgeous, handsome times of fashion throughout the centuries, and somehow she got stuck on the punk rock movement of the 1980s. What kinda ladyship is that? There's no class in that, in the filthy. Me on the other hand, I'm a southern rosebud. I always have a fresh, scented magnolia pinned in my hair. My braids wouldn't look the same without it.

"What's that crawling on your head?" Shiloh stepped into my cubicle.

"It has its own essence doesn't it?"

"Don't you know what they make from Magnolia extract?"

"It's a beautiful flower, Shiloh, and none of your witchcraft can change that."

"The more 'beautiful' the ingredient the more explosive the result. It'd do you well to remember that, home-girl."

"How's your mission coming?" I asked.

"I'm thinking of quitting the tooth fairy business."

"Now you know Madam Blythe doesn't want us to call it that."

"This little angel...the cutest thing you'd ever see...he got a loose tooth that's been driving me crazy for months. The thing just doesn't want to fall out. I wanna take a hammer and—"

"Shiloh!!!"

"I know, I know. You gotta follow the protocol," she leaned against the wall and patted herself down for a cigarette.

"So what are you gonna do? You don't have any other calls?"

"Nope. I'm hung up on this one kid. Blythe's not gonna give me a new project until I yank this boy's tooth."

here?" "That's an eloquent way to put it," I cringed at the thought. "So do you need me to lend you a hand? Is that why you're

type of scene, but you might be able to blend in."

"I guess I don't have a choice. I can't have you wondering around the office looking for something to do," I assured her.

"I'm over it."

"Over what? Being idle? But you don't have a life."

"I'm over being the devil's plaything. He never returns my calls anyway," Shiloh lit her cigarette, blowing loops of smoke into the atmosphere.

"You and your filthy sense of humor," I sighed, preparing myself for a long afternoon.

We arrive a little after 10:00 PM. to a sleeping neighborhood. As usual, the teleporter didn't work out, and I landed in a Pine tree with my head in between my legs. Shiloh was hanging from a streetlight by one of those straps on her blouse. I could've used my own flight spell instead of one of those old honky green doors back at the office. Or we could have taken a cab.

"Oh, come on," she cooed, trying to unfasten her blouse. "Don't let that spoil your night," she dropped down.

"A lady doesn't climb trees. And you shouldn't be hung up on a pole either," I patted myself down, picking the twigs from my hair.

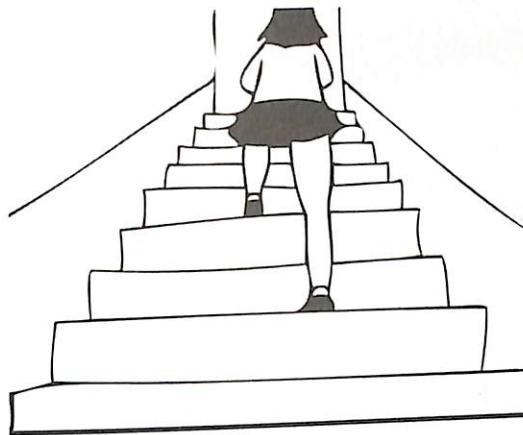
"Are you gonna bark all night? Let's go," she pointed to the kid's house and directed me to the porch.

I held my head against the front door to check and see if anyone was still awake. There was still a loud television in the background that could've kept someone up, but I didn't think much of it until I heard the channel change. Someone was playing around with the remote and unless it was the child in question, harboring our tooth, he didn't need to get in our way. I pulled the silk ribbon from my hair, loosening my braids until they draped over my shoulders. I laid the cloth over the door and smoothed it out until I could see through it and the door behind. It was foggy at first, but through the thin strip I saw an aged man wearing a tight, bulging t-shirt with what looked to be a pregnant belly. He was sitting in a love seat in front of the television. There was a bucket of potato chips in his lap along with the remote.

"Let me borrow that magnolia," Shiloh offered. "I can blow the door down."

"No, he'll let us in."

I dropped my ribbon to the floor and twirled around my fingers. I heard the TV flick off, and I'm assuming the lights as well if my spell was on point. I tapped lightly on the door until I heard a set of footsteps move our way. When it opened, I



Devonté Gardner

plucked the unsuspecting man on the forehead, and he fell backwards into a deep sleep, making a loud plump when he hit the floor.

"Where's the kid?" I turned to Shiloh. "Don't you know your way around?"

"Wow, you're good. You make me wanna brush up on my skills."

"Would you tell me where the kid's at already? I need to go home and re-do these braids. They've been up for a month."

Shiloh stepped inside. "This way ladies and gentlemen. If you'd be so kind as to follow me up this short flight of stairs and—"

"Save it, Shiloh."

We came across the boy's room in one of the hallways upstairs. I figured he was asleep this time of night, so I eased myself inside, telling Shiloh to quietly close the door behind us.

His room was unkempt with action figures and empty candy wrappers and clothes scattered everywhere. I could tell by all the pin-ups of wrestlers on the wall that he was a big fan of the sport. If he practiced anything he'd seen on TV, then we'd have gotten our tooth a long time ago.

Shiloh tugged at my shoulders. "Let me snatch it out. You wait here."

"Hold on. Isn't he supposed to leave it under his pillow?"

"Nobody does that anymore."

I watched her creep into his bed, crawling as close to his face as she could get. She rubbed her hands across his lips which brought them to a smile. I had never seen that spell before, but Shiloh was unique in her magic.

At this point, I had tuned them out and was planning my weave party for later on tonight. I figured Shiloh could handle a loose tooth on her own. She eased her finger into his mouth, followed by another, and she slowly began to pull.

"Come on, baby. You're so sweet. Let me get that-ahhhh," he bit down on her finger. Shiloh tossed her free hand into the air, directing the boy's body to the ceiling.

He flew through the air with Shiloh's finger still in his grasp. "Let go you little runt! I'm gonna fry you!" her free hand was glowing a bright red.

I flicked on the light. Startled, the boy released her finger and Shiloh eased up on the magic.

"Ya'll cut out all this foolery," I pleaded, looking over to the young boy. "Hey, kid. What's YOUR name? You're gonna let me have that tooth?"

"Buzz off, witch!"

"What did you call me?" I blinked in amusement.

Shiloh was too busy sucking on her bleeding finger to lend a hand. I figured I had to handle it myself. I placed my middle and index fingers together and wiggled them slowly, pointing them at the young boy. His jaws shivered and rattled like he had a cold and after a few moments, our tooth popped out and fell to the bed. Both the young man and Shiloh reached for it and bumped heads. Being the opportunist that I am, I scooped it up in all the confusion. The young man leaped at me, but before he could lay a hand we were back in my office.

"We could've taken one of the green doors," Shiloh, laying face down on the carpet, suggested. "I always use his closet as a medium between the two."

"Was I supposed to wait until he yanked out my hair?"

"What would I do without you, home-girl? You're top class." "Just take the tooth and check in with Madam Blythe," it was well pass my bedtime, and didn't plan on goofing around with Shiloh the rest of the night.

She continued her flattery. "You're the sultan of swat...pound for pound...the main attraction—"

"Shiloh, stop!"

"The MVP...the—"

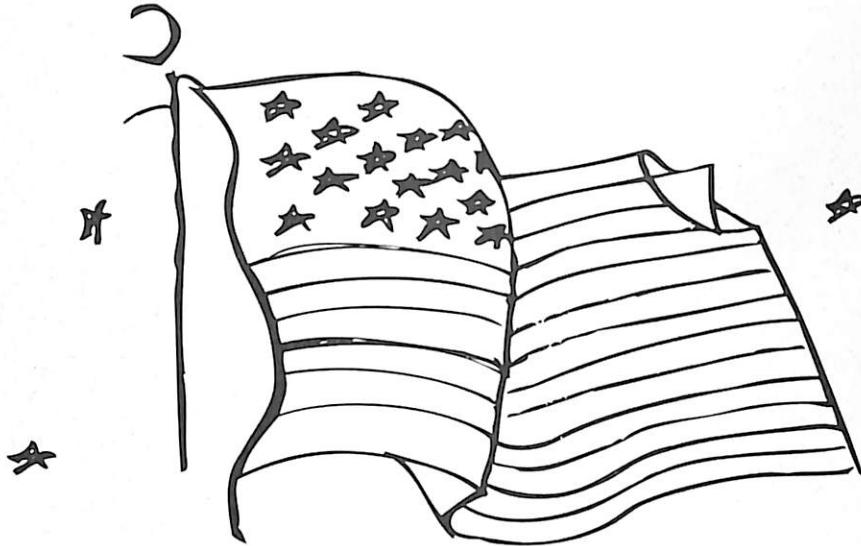
"Would you knock it—hahaha—would you knock it off?"

"The main event...the headliner...what would I do without you, champ?"



Protecting the American Freedom

Devon Pruitt



Over two centuries ago, the architects of our American democracy sought an abstract ideal that would later transform the course of the American way of life; our ancestors wanted freedom. Today, our freedom is not just something we believe in; freedom is a part of our culture, heritage, and purpose for living. America has proven herself to be the land of free people, free choices, and free opportunity. We must be tolerant, accountable, and cooperative in order to ensure all elements of freedom are given to all people.

Our tolerance, as a nation, reveals how we conserve and sustain our core values of freedom. The American freedom allows us to be unique individuals without anyone or anything infringing upon our "divine rights." Our freedom grants Christian Americans the right to celebrate Jesus in Houses of Prayer, Jewish Americans the

right to worship Yahweh in synagogues, or Atheist Americans the right to feel no religious obligation to any divine being. Furthermore, Romance is not limited to specific sexual orientations but to those who seek peace and happiness. We must remain open-minded to accept those things which we may find atypical or strange. Many view lyrics to certain songs as inappropriate language or unsuitable for children. However, freedom of speech allows artists to express themselves openly. It is our liberty if we choose to listen to those songs or dismiss them from our ears or our homes. Despite the majority, our freedom gives us the ability to respect other's beliefs and practices. We must not judge our fellow Americans but join each other as we live out freedom to its highest power.

Each American is accountable for assuring that our freedom is a vivid reality. If one fails, we all fail. If one succeeds, we all succeed. We are responsible to each other because we are the United States of America. It is the duty of the strong to carry the infirmities of those who are not as strong. If everyone is after personal gain, then American freedom will become a divided principle that cannot stand. It is critical that we understand that freedom is a treasured facet of our being. This nation must return to the village-rearing mentality where all persons were free to take assertive charge of the community. Freedom requires us to take our streets from drugs, alcohol, violence, and poverty. It is this sense of responsibility that provides the American people the sentiment of stability and solidity.

Finally, the measure of this nation's freedom depends on how we cooperate with one another. We will only achieve true bipartisanship if our nation sets aside our political, religious, and economic theories to execute the well-being of the American people. Thomas Jefferson adopted the "laissez-faire" ideology, which states that government should not interfere with the business or personal affairs of people. Whereas Alexander Hamilton believed that government could prove a fundamental asset in the functioning of the nation. Although Jefferson and Hamilton disagreed, both men had the country's interest at heart and both are considered geniuses in American history. We must learn to compromise, reason, and "agree to disagree" with each other knowing that when all is done, everyone has a fair chance at American freedom.

With tolerance, accountability, and cooperation, America will exceed the expectations of our forefathers. America has a bountiful field of potential ready for harvesting; all the same, these possibilities must be cultivated in order to see productive fruitions. If we are to sincerely impart domestic tranquility as inscribed in the Constitution throughout this nation, then our message and aim must be in the continued effort of protecting and preserving the American freedom.

Things Was Changing

Anne McKee



Imogene clung to the crusty-barked pine tree close by where Santa was sitting on the walking trail next to the school. Tears rimmed her brown eyes as she watched and waited. Maybe, just maybe, she would take a turn in Santa's lap. No, no—she couldn't. What would she say?

She watched her friend Misty skip toward Santa wearing her red boots with bells and tassels. "The most beautiful boots in the world," Imogene thought. Oh, how she wanted a pair of boots just like them. Misty had even let her try them on and they fit! Yes, it was as though the boots were made just for her, but she had to let Misty slide her little pink feet back inside the boots. No, there would not be any boots for Imogene.

Misty hopped onto Santa's lap and he laughed. She gave him her best smile and then asked for a pony—a real, live pony of her very own. Santa asked if she had been a good girl and studied hard and talked sweet to her parents. She nodded and then he said he would add the pony to his list for his Christmas Eve trip to her house. Misty squealed and hopped down. She waved goodbye to ole Santa and then waved happily over at Imogene as she stood by the pine tree.

Then Santa looked her way and asked if she wanted anything for Christmas. She squeezed her pine tree even tighter. Should she talk to Santa? Should she?

Earlier that morning she had pulled the last sock out of her drawer—the last sock without a hole. Yes, earlier she wished for those boots, but Momma said, "No, Imogene. You know we ain't got no money to spend on red boots. Girl, don't you know that?"

She had walked to the kitchen and grabbed a cold biscuit—a leftover biscuit but it was good. She tasted the brown crust and wiped the crumbs from her face. She then took another one and wrapped it carefully in an old paper bag. It would be her lunch. It was then she remembered. Today was the Christmas party. All of her class had worked really hard to earn enough points to go to the party. Not just go, but to enjoy all of the activities, like storytelling, and ornament decorating. They would roast hot dogs over a fire of stacked logs, and eat and drink good things like hot chocolate, popcorn, and candy. Then they would take a short trip through the walking trail where Santa would be waiting to talk to every student.

She hesitated at the kitchen door and her smile faded as she remembered her momma's words. The words rolled around in her head. No, she couldn't talk to Santa. No need in wasting his time with her useless requests. There would not be any Christmas presents at her house, her momma had said. But wait a minute, her eyes popped as she remembered the words of her teacher. Her teacher told the entire class that things are changing, and that the whole nation had made a change. A new President was elected in November and he would make the world a better place. "Yes, things was changing," she thought to herself. She ran back into the house.

"Momma, Momma," she yelled.

"Yes, Baby, you gonna be late for the school bus."

"But Momma, my teacher said things are gonna get better."

"What are you talking about, girl?"



"My teacher said we have a new President and that things are gonna get better."

"Oh, my baby girl. Don't you go counting on that now." Her momma's eyes welled with tears. The sight of her little girl wantin' things broke her heart.

"But Momma, we gotta believe. It's gotta get better."

That's when the crock-pot slipped out of her momma's hands and fell to the floor. It shattered into a dozen broken pieces. So like the pieces of a broken family and a broken heart. Her momma slumped to the counter, uncontrolled tears poured from her eyes and deep groans spilled out of her body. With gripped fists she banged the counter as if the scratched plywood was somehow responsible for the plight of her family.

Imogene hugged her momma with the strength of love and compassion that came from deep inside her little six-year-old heart. The two stood together holding onto each other and a beginning of peace found in their souls.

"Momma, don't worry, things is gonna get better. You just wait and see." With those words she ran out the door and down the rickety steps just in time to hop on the bus.

When Imogene walked into her classroom, the chatter and squeals were high-pitched as all the students readied themselves for the Christmas party. The teacher rapped on her desk. She explained that Santa had already arrived and their class would be the first to see him. That news brought more excitement.

Imogene seated herself calmly at her desk even though her insides were quivering like jelly. She wanted to talk to Santa and explain about her family. Maybe he would understand.

And then it was time to go. The entire class marched single file to the walking trail next to the school, and once inside, the students darted here and there throughout the park. For this special day, Santa would see everyone at the walking trail—the trail had been a school project and the students were especially proud that Santa had come to visit their trail. Imogene breathed in the smell of hot chocolate and popcorn as she searched for him. Oh, there he was all dressed in his bright red suit. He waved at the children and a line began to form. She filled her cup with the foamy brown drink—one of her favorites—and glanced again over to Santa.

Maybe she should just sit for a while and watch the others. She sipped the sweetness of chocolate—a rare treat. She looked at Santa again and saw that her best friend Misty was in line now. She finished her hot chocolate. She walked slowly toward the line, but stopped at the pine tree.

"One by one each child visited Santa, and after Misty's turn, Santa called to her. "Hi, little girl. Want to tell me what you want for Christmas?"

She finally nodded and made the long trip over to Santa. Should she ask for red boots with the wonderful bells and tassels? No, she remembered standing in the kitchen earlier that morning. She would ask for a new crock-pot for her momma. They needed to cook and celebrate, cause things was changing.



MASH

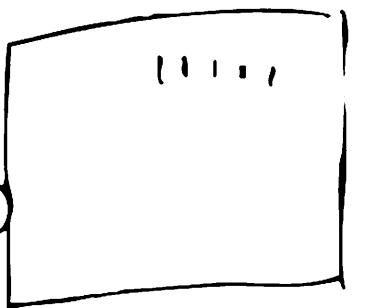
Boys

Scotty

~~Johnny Depp~~

Michael Stipe (Scht 4p)

Steve



Cats

Lamborghini

Erica

(Dog.)



Jobs

Screentest

Mont Star

(Cat Wrangler)

Sprint Bump

Colors (of Wedding Dress)

white

(Off-white)

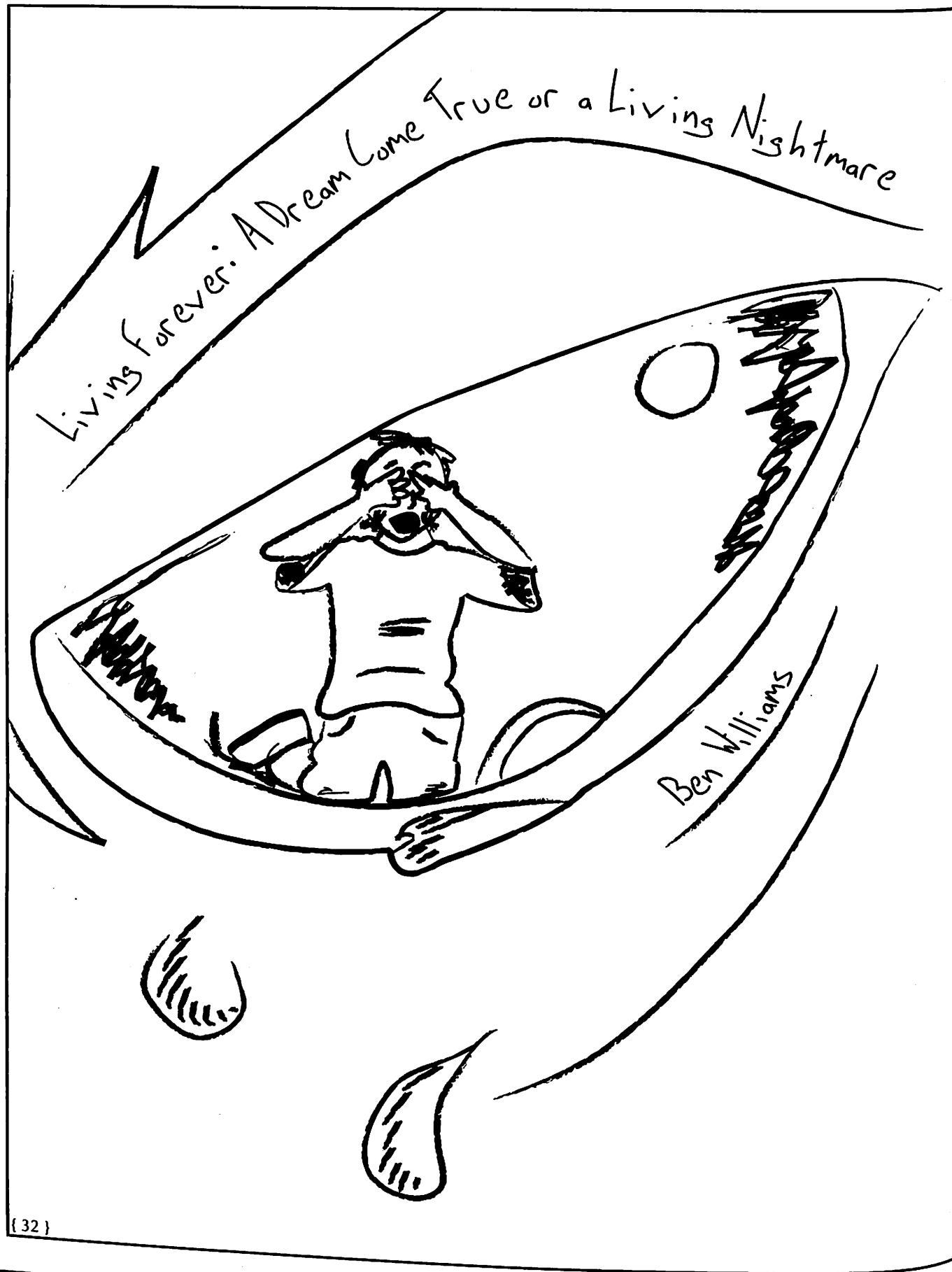
Pink

Boat





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If provided with the chance I do not think that anybody would turn down the opportunity to live forever. Many people would give all they had to have this opportunity. However, I think there are a few consequences that one should consider before making such a quick decision. I can think of two advantages and two disadvantages to this situation. The advantages are always being young and having no limitations. The disadvantages are losing friends and family and never maturing.

First of all, living forever would mean that one would be young forever. This is a great benefit. If I never grew old, then I would always have my health. That would be great because I would not have to worry about getting sick. Also, having my health would allow me to be able to run and play sports for the rest of my life. My bones would never grow weak and the little muscle that I do have would not turn to fat. Also, I would be able to keep my amazing appearance. I would never get wrinkles or grow a pot belly. This would allow me to keep my great success with the ladies. This would be important because I would constantly be getting involved in new relationships, as the ladies grew too old for me and my study young looks. Therefore, being young forever is a great advantage of living forever.

Secondly, having no limitations would be one of the great pluses of living forever. If I knew that I was going to live forever, I would take as many chances as I could. For example, I would not be afraid to go skydiving because I would know that I had no chance of dying. Also, I would take more chances in sports and social situations. For example, I would not be afraid to stand up in front of people because it would not matter if I made a fool of myself. I could do this because the people that saw me would grow older and I would not. Therefore, I would have a fresh start with the next generation of people. Also, I could try out as many jobs as I wanted to because I would have unlimited time to do so. I could be a dentist for a few years and then be a plumber for the next three years. In the same way, I could take as many vacations as I liked. If my boss did not like me taking them, then I could just quit. Thus, having no limitations would be one of the reasons to accept the idea of living forever.

On the other hand, a disadvantage to living forever is losing friends and family. If I was to live forever, the worst consequence would be watching my closest friends and family die. Usually, one gets to grow old with their closest friends, and he or she usually dies around the same time as his or her friends. However, if I was to live forever, I would have to watch those same people continue life without me and eventually pass away. That would be terrible because I would not be able to share experiences with them. I would have to constantly make new friends, and it would make growing close to somebody harder. The same would happen with my family. They would pass away, and I would still be stuck at the same age. The relationships I had with them would not be as strong because of the great age differences. Hence, the worst consequence to living forever would be watching my friends and family pass away.

Lastly, the second disadvantage to living forever would be never maturing. If I were to live forever, I would never grow old. This would mean that I would be left out of many experiences and lessons that can only come with age. For example, I would not be able to get married because my spouse would continue to age, while I stayed the same age. This would mean that I would not learn many lessons that one learns through getting married and loving another person. Also, this would obviously mean that I would not be able to have kids. Having kids provides one with numerous opportunities to grow closer to yet another person and to learn more lessons through that person. For example, I would never be able to teach my child to play baseball or show him or her how to ride a bike. These are experiences that are priceless but would not be available to me because of my situation. Thus, never maturing would be a terrible effect of living forever.

Concisely, living forever has its advantages and disadvantages. I could never grow old in a physical sense, but in doing so, sacrifice many priceless experiences. Also, I could take all the risks I want, but suffer through having to watch my friends and family leave my life. Therefore, I believe that living forever can be a dream come true, but at the same time, it can be a living nightmare.

Winners List

High School Essay:

1st: Devon Pruitt - 'Protecting the American Freedom'
Meridian High (Sophomore)

2nd: Mia Lynch - 'My Long Lasting Life'
Northeast High (Sophomore)

3rd: Ben Williams - 'Living Forever: A Dream Come True
or a Living Nightmare'
Northeast High (Sophomore)

High School Short Story:

1st: Kaley Hull - 'Nuisance'
Northeast High (Senior)

2nd: Courtney Harold - 'Problematic Perfection'
Northeast High (Senior)

3rd: Shelby Vaddell - 'The Tale of Queen Desdemona'
Northeast High (Senior)

HM: Jordan Brownlee - 'Real Strength'
West Lauderdale (Junior)

HM: Jeremy Hammack - 'thANTology'

High School Poetry:

1st: Sarah Catherine Billups - 'The Lights of Motown'
West Lauderdale High (Junior)

2nd: Dalton Newell - 'Nature is Beauty'
Northeast High (Senior)

3rd: Ericha Reed - 'Jane and Jill'
Northeast High (Senior)

HM: Colton Pace - 'Basketball'
West Lauderdale High (Senior)

HM: Meaghan Clark - 'Pointless Rules of Buying Handbags'
Northeast High (Senior)



Winners List

Community Essay:

1st: LaVanda Shields - 'Growing Up'

2nd: Lydia Burns - 'Fisby Situation'

3rd: LaVanda Shields - 'The Quilt'

Community Short Story:

1st: Anne Mcbee - 'Things Was Changing'

2nd: Angie Carravay - 'William'

3rd: Devante' Gardner - 'Like Pulling Teeth'

Community Poetry:

1st: Shauna Waters - 'Teaching the Death of Ophelia'

2nd: Cathy Webb - 'Waiting'

3rd: Bubbie Gully - 'A Cricket'

HM: Shauna Waters - 'Lost Coast'

coffee
/ / /

Graphic Art Credits

Hillary Downey

'Pointless Rules of Buying Handbags'

'Like Pulling Teeth'

Rickey Miller

'Fishy Situation'

'Growing Up'

Elizabeth Harris

'Living Forever: A Dream Come True or a Living Nightmare'

Notes By

Cover

Winners

Staff

Carrie Mitchell

'The Lights of Motown'

'Teaching the Death of Ophelia'

Casey Powell

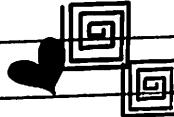
'Nature is Beauty'

'Nuisance'

Stephanie Jenkins

'A Cricket'

'Protecting the American Freedom'



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Stephanie Jenkins

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Carrie Mitchell

Casey Powell

Printing Services: Brown Printing, Meridian, MS



MCC's Literary Contest

February 25, 2010

creative

W R I T I N G

Enter your poetry, short stories, and/or essays.
Win cash prizes: \$75 for first place, \$50 for second
place, or \$25 for third place.

If you're interested, contact:

Morgan Boothe, Smith 128
mbooth@meridiancc.edu

Katharine Stewart,
Smith 127
kstewar1@meridiancc.edu

**MERIDIAN
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

The mission of Meridian Community College is to improve the quality of life in our community through excellence in teaching, diverse learning opportunities and services, and visionary leadership. Meridian Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion or age in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. Compliance with Section 504 and Title IX is coordinated by Mrs. Soraya Welden, Dean of Student Services, 910 Highway 19 North, Meridian, MS 39307.



LITERARY CONTEST

Sponsored by Meridian Community College

Prizes

There is a \$75 award for each first place; \$50 for each second place; \$25 for each third place winner. Prizes are furnished by the MCC Foundation.



Eligibility

High School Division: All high school students—
Sophomores, Juniors & Seniors.

***Community &
MCC Division:** Any MCC student enrolled in one
or more classes / non-high school
& non-MCC students / members of
the community 18 years or older.

*Area students attending other colleges are ineligible except
for MSU-Meridian.

Entry Deadline—February 25, 2010

Categories

Short Story

Limit, two entries. Must not exceed ten typewritten,
double-spaced pages with regular margins.

Informal Essay

Limit, two entries. Must not exceed five typewritten,
double-spaced pages with regular margins.

Poetry

Limit, three entries. Each poem must not exceed fifteen
typewritten lines.

Submission

Each contestant can enter one or all categories. Put
your name on the entry blank, NOT on the entries.
Entries will only be used for the 2009 contest.

**You will be notified by mail as soon
as the judges return the entries.**

Format

Each contestant should use this rule sheet for a title
page. Be sure to fill out all necessary information.
All manuscripts must be original and typed on white
8 1/2 x 11" paper. Entries will NOT be returned. Be sure
to include **TWO** copies of each entry.



MCC LITERARY REVIEW ENTRY FORM

(Please clearly print or type on this entry form.)

Name: _____
Street/Apt/P.O. Box _____
City/State/Zip Code: _____
Phone: Home _____ Work _____
Check one: Soph. Jr. Sr. High School you attend: _____
 MCC student Community Member
Short Story Title(s): _____
Essay Title(s): _____
Poetry Title(s): _____

Please give a brief biography of yourself _____

IMPORTANT: Must be signed! By signing you agree to allow the *REVIEW* to publish
your work if the staff votes to print it. For MCC entrants, we also reserve the right to submit
your entry to the state competition. Not all contest winners and/or entries can be published
due to printing expenses. Also, by signing you guarantee each submission is original and has
not been previously published.

Signed _____
Date _____



Deadline for Entries!

Entries must be
submitted no
later than
Feb. 25, 2010

Mail entries to
The Review
Literary Contest
Attn: Morgan Boothe
910 Hwy 19 North
Meridian, MS 39307

