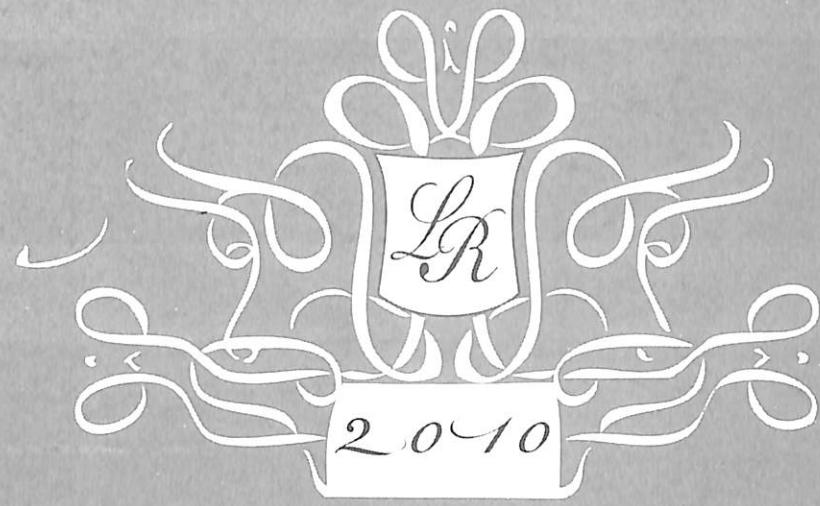


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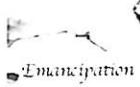
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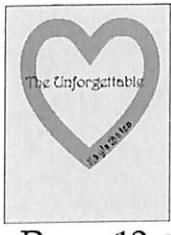
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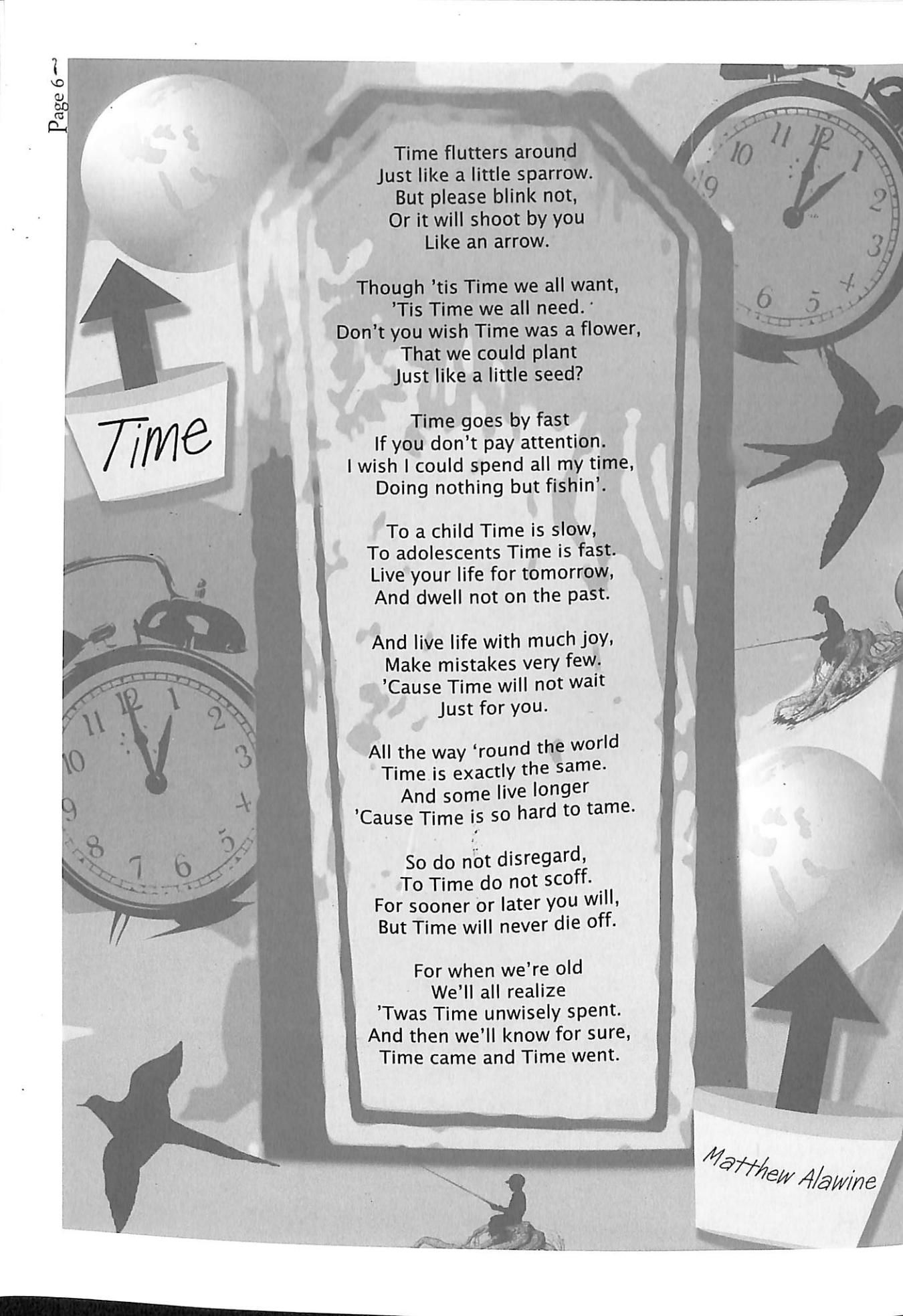


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Time flutters around
Just like a little sparrow.
But please blink not,
Or it will shoot by you
Like an arrow.

Though 'tis Time we all want,
'Tis Time we all need.
Don't you wish Time was a flower,
That we could plant
Just like a little seed?

Time goes by fast
If you don't pay attention.
I wish I could spend all my time,
Doing nothing but fishin'.

To a child Time is slow,
To adolescents Time is fast.
Live your life for tomorrow,
And dwell not on the past.

And live life with much joy,
Make mistakes very few.
'Cause Time will not wait
Just for you.

All the way 'round the world
Time is exactly the same.
And some live longer
'Cause Time is so hard to tame.

So do not disregard,
To Time do not scoff.
For sooner or later you will,
But Time will never die off.

For when we're old
We'll all realize
'Twas Time unwisely spent.
And then we'll know for sure,
Time came and Time went.

Matthew Alawine

THE FINAL QUEST

First round, we host the Aggies to be the best
 Our proud entrance to the bracket of war.
 A game, so hostile, savage —full of gore.
 Left to wonder, what do we fight for?
 Dreams are dashed, stolen by our guests.

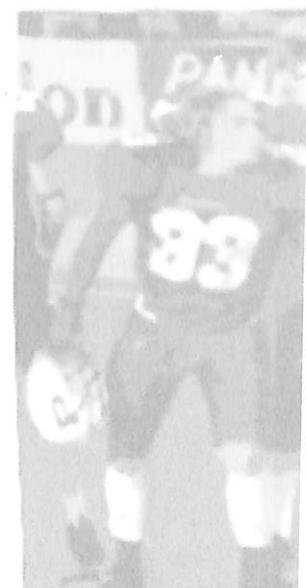
Left with the taste of defeat,
 Hearts & bodies sore; aching on our feet.
 Goodbye to old friends,
 Movement among the ranks.
 Victory pushed a million miles away.
 Only one title for us; it will be a great test.

Slow, cold winter. Lifting, maxing.
 A new schedule—starting over.
 Setting goals and biding time.
 The last Winter workouts,
 The last Spring drills.
 A final press to be the best.

Sun's rays blazing, and
 Endless hours to be amazing.
 Timeless bonds being created,
 Living freely and elated.
 All knowing what is to come.
 Summer's over; gearing up for the final conquest.

At last—the season starts so slow.
 Feeling invincible, we put on a show.
 Still searching for our first of three prizes,
 Season progresses—the strong rise.
 My band of brothers, doling out a quiet demise
 Drilling, toiling, with no thought to rest.

Playoffs start, every week could be our last,
 Veterans Memorial Stadium.
 The championship game—and all aghast.
 Riding the success of our labor,
 Sailing with full mast.
 The battle is over, a title for West.



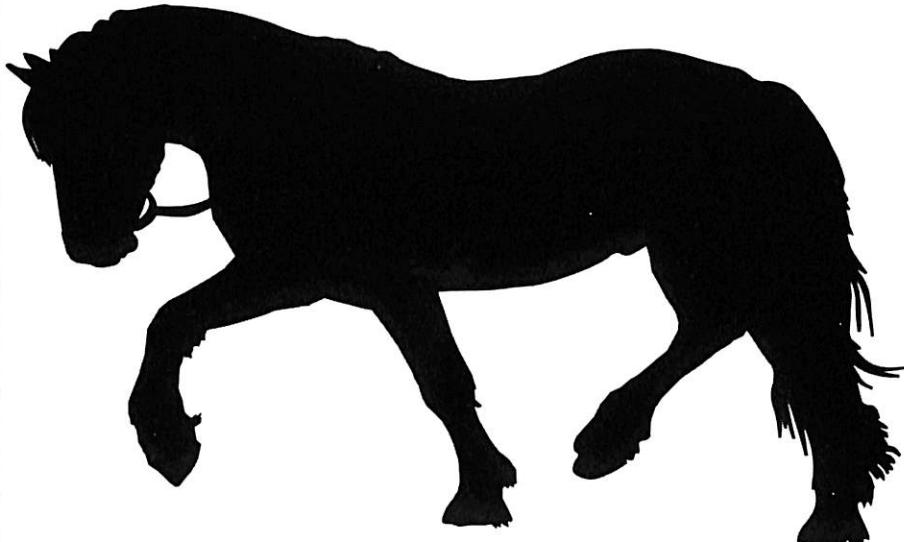
HENRY SANDERS

THE TRICK

The dry feed rattles
In the dusty bucket.

The golden horse
Becomes, instantly, alert,
Ears raised, listening.

I sit the silver bucket
On the soft dirt.
As she begins to eat,
I, cautiously, slip
The halter over her long head.
"Gotcha!"
I whisper.



BRITTANY BRYAN



The Sight

Adam James

I. The Burial

"Set me down, Sam," Mama Clancy said. "Take me on." She turned to her boy, her grandson Sam, and touched him on the cheek. "I'm done with 'im." Sam nodded, and put his hand on his grandmother's shoulder. They walked away from the pine box that sat in the center of the room, cradled by two of the best chairs in the house. When Mama Clancy was securely seated on the crude bench that lined the east wall of the house, Sam turned and made his way back to the coffin, his hand brushing the edge of the dinner table as he passed. He stopped a few inches from the edge of the box. He lowered his head.

"Bye Papa," he whispered, raising his hand and gently touching the cold flesh of his grandfather's face with his fingertips.

"Don't forget his two cents, Sam," Mama called from her seat on the bench. Sam nodded, and reaching into the front pocket of his best pair of overalls, removed two coins. "Them wheats?" Mama asked. Sam took a coin in each hand and rubbed his thumbs across the flat sides. He paused, flipping them over. "Yes Ma'am. Wheat."

"Don't give 'im them." Mama sighed. "Give 'im Injuns. Papa liked them Injuns."

Sam nodded, and stepped to the fireplace, towards the heat, and felt his hand along the top of the mantel. "Here they are," he mumbled, taking two coins and replacing them with the ones in his hand. "Indian's head."

Sam stepped back to the box and, reaching in, placed the two pennies, heads up, over Papa Clancy's cold eyelids. He reached down, feeling for the lid. He hoisted it and positioned it just right over Papa's coffin.

"Hammer 'n nails to ye left," Mama called to him.

Sam reached down and lifted the hammer and the old tin can full of nails and proceeded to fix the lid to the pine box. His aim was sure as his hand rose and fell with swift, sure strokes. Sam was used to doing things for himself. He had built the coffin himself only hours before while Mama washed the blood from Papa's back and dressed him in his only other shirt, a soft cotton one she had sewn herself from old flour sacks.

"Weren't your fault, Sam," she told the boy as she stepped to his side. Sam turned his



head at the sound of her voice. "Well, come on, let's get done. Yer Pa wouldn't have us fret too long on 'im."

Mama stepped to the foot of the box and lifted. She led, and they slowly made their way out of the house and down the small path that led past the barn and into the grove of trees where Papa had gone to smoke his pipe when the day's work was done. There they laid him down, at the foot of a great stone in the center of the ring of oaks. Sam remembered how Papa would sing as they sat there relaxing on that stone, waiting on Mama to call them in for supper.

"Ain't much to say," Mama said as she took Sam's hand in hers. "His time."

He nodded and began to dig. The earth gave willingly to his spade, almost as if it had been waiting, readying itself for Sam's importunity. Within an hour the job was done, and Papa was nestled in his final resting place at the foot of the old stone. Sam wiped his brow with the back of his arm and turned to his grandmother. Mama Clancy smiled and took Sam's hand.

"Come on, Sam," Mama said. "We got a pot o' stew a' waitin." They turned and started back up the path towards the house.

They walked in silence for a moment, their feet stirring up dust that was swept away by the light breeze. Sam lifted his face to the sky; the wind cooled his face and swept through his shaggy blond hair. For a moment he thought he could hear a tune, carried on the wind like a fleeting memory. It was one of Papa's old songs, he realized, and he hummed along as they made their way back home.

II. Mama and Sam

The Clancy's house was small but comfortable. Papa had told Sam on many occasions the story of how he and his father had built the house when Papa was just a boy. They had cut the trees themselves from that very spot, and built the little cabin that was the only home Sam had ever known. Four generations of Clancys lived their lives out in that small house, nestled in the pines of the great forest which surrounded them.

When Sam was very young, before he lost his vision, his father had been there with them. One of the few images he could remember was that of his father's face, looking down with love as he cradled Sam in his arms. But his father had died when he was only two, so Mama and Papa had raised little Sam. They taught him how to "see" with his hands, and Sam grew up knowing how to do for himself, doing some things better than most sighted people could.

Now Mama and Sam were the only ones left. They sat for a while at the table after finishing their meal and talked. Mama held Sam's hand and looked into his blank eyes.

"Jus' us now, Sam," Mama said. "And I'm not too long fer this world, me."

"No, Mama, don't say that—" Sam started, but Mama hushed him with a soft pat on his hand.

"You're a good boy, Sam." Mama spoke softly, lovingly.



Sam could hear the crackle and snap of the coals as they burnt to embers in the hearth. Papa had built the fire that morning, and Mama had boiled them eggs for breakfast. But that had been that morning, when Papa was still alive. It seemed like an eternity to Sam.

"Go on t' bed, now," Mama told him. "Get some rest." Sam rose, and made his way over to his bed. He didn't need to feel his way, he knew it by heart. He was asleep as soon as his head hit the straw-filled mattress.

Mama covered him with a quilt, one that she had made from an older one, along with scraps of Sam's and Papa's clothes that they had worn out. She stroked a piece of Papa's old shirt that she had sewn in to fill a space. The boy's chest rose and fell under the quilt's familiar comfort.

"Yer mammy died bringin' you in this world, and it weren't fer nothing," Mama Clancy whispered as she looked down at Sam. "Born under the caul, that means yer special." She smiled and shed a tear as she made her way to her own bed.

"You're a good boy, Sam."

Sam's head swam with sleep; it washed in like a flood. *Wash it away*, Sam begged. *Wash this day away*. The pain of Papa's death was setting in, was finally coming home to him. He had tried to push it away, to be strong for Mama, but now it came as he slept, knees curled up to his chest. A low sob grew in his throat, escaping his lips as a muffled grunt. Mama stirred, but didn't wake. They had both had a long day, the longest day Sam had ever known.



III. The Dream

Sam couldn't remember a night that he hadn't dreamt. Most of the time his dreams were of nothing, the events of the day, the sounds of nature. The blowing wind. But some nights Sam's dreams were different. Some nights he dreamed of things to come. A full day would unfold in his head the night before it came. He dreamed of the storm that had torn the roof off the barn, and the next day the storm came, driving them inside. They had huddled together in the far corner of their little house until it passed. Some nights his dreams scared him.

Sam dreamed mostly in sounds, but sometimes he "saw" colors, the deep red hue of a fire or the bright white of the sky. They danced on the backs of his eyelids almost as if they were teasing him. His father's face, the only real image he remembered, was in his dreams most every night.

This night his dream began with the crackle of coals in the fireplace. He raised his head and turned around. All was black except for the hint of red where he knew the fire still burned. He could hear Mama's soft snores from across the room where she lay, covered in her shawl, on her own bed. Sam thought he was awake for a moment, but then the voices came, and he knew he was dreaming.

Mama's voice stood out, at first a whisper, then growing louder and stronger. She spoke in an eerie, almost otherworldly voice. Sam recoiled from the sound, even though he knew well enough what was happening. He was dreaming the day in reverse. The idea was queer to him, and the talk was repulsive to his ears. He had dreamed this way once before, and he could make out a few words if he listened hard enough.



He listened as he and Mama talked, sitting at the table. The feeling that he was an outsider looking in overwhelmed him. Sam sat frozen on his bed and covered his ears, wishing it would end. The voices grew quiet, and then stopped altogether. The rattle of bowls, the clank of the ladle in the black-iron pot as Mama scooped their stew, the door closing and then opening. They were gone. Sam

knew where they were going, ambling backwards up the path to Papa's grave. For once he was glad he couldn't see.

Sam stood up and walked to the fire. It was cold, and he held out his hands to warm them. The crack and pop became more steady, and a deep red bloomed in the blackness, filling his eyes with the warm glow of a growing fire. *Don't make me*, he pleaded with his mind. *Ain't once enough?* But he could hear it blowing in, that wind which would take him back through that endless day, would make him relive every tortured moment. He closed his eyes, and when he opened them again, the glow from the fire was gone.

Mama's voice, speaking in that maddening sing-song language that made Sam cringe.

His spade cutting into the dirt. They were back in the ring of oaks, and Sam listening in horror at the sounds of him digging Papa up. His mind cried out in pain at the heavy thud as they raised the box out of the earth and onto the ground. Sam closed his eyes tight and covered his ears. *No, no, I can't. No –*

“NO!” he screamed to the sky, to the other Sam and Mama that carried Papa back up the path towards the house. The wind had come up again; this time it was a gale that blew him along with them, ripping up his clothes and dragging him up the path back to the house. It blew him past the house and through the yard where he had built Papa’s coffin. He could hear the other Sam’s hammer falling, then rising as he disassembled the box, he could hear the slosh of water in the washbasin as Mama painted the blood on Papa’s punctured back. A gust of air lifted him off his feet and onto the roof of the barn.

Sam fell to his knees on the half-finished thatched roof, weeping and cursing his “gift,” as Mama called it.

“Papa,” Sam cried. Then it came, the gurgling rattle of Papa’s voice from below. A thud, and then a fast shoop as Papa’s body was lifted from the fence-post and back up onto the roof.

Sam moaned low in this throat. He could have stopped it, he knew. He could have saved Papa, if only he had known. If only he could have known.

“Wake up wake up wake up,” he cried in agony. Sam squeezed his eyes shut and covered his ears.

IV. The Sight

The cool breeze whipped through Sam’s hair and cooled the sweat on his face. He opened his eyes to the sharp white glow of daylight. *Where am I?* he thought, his mind racing. *Am I awake?*

A tune seemed to blow in with the breeze, one of Papa’s old songs. Sam closed his eyes and hummed along, and his mind began to clear. The straw in his hands seemed to fit perfectly into place on the roof of the barn, and he went about his work as if he had never stopped.

“Like that song, don’t ya, Sam?” Papa chuckled as he tied a bundle of straw into place. Sam smiled.

“Yes sir,” he said. “It’s my favorite. Will you sing the whole thing?”

“Oh, well,” Papa said, grinning. “I reckon.”

“Hey Papa?”

“Eh?”

“Watch your step down there, on your left. I think that beam’s rotten.”

“Huh?” Papa stopped and looked down. “Well I’ll be...”

He looked back up at Sam. “How’d you know that?” the old man chuckled, shaking his head. “I’ll be.”

“You’re a good boy, Sam.” Papa Clancy began to sing as he descended the ladder to get a new log for the roof.

Sam closed his eyes and hummed along.



~Artwork designed by
Melissa Williams

The Unforgettable

Kayla Bates



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Events that change a life are not always dramatic; they often come from something as simple as encouragement from a friend when life has us down or in the form of a small child who sees the world as an exciting, beautiful place instead of facing the harsh reality we have come to accept as life. For me, this life-changing experience came from a Peruvian boy named Elvis. We had an encounter that lasted twenty minutes at the most, but this encounter changed my view of life in ways words cannot describe. In March of 2009, I went on a medical mission trip to Peru. Because I was the youngest person making the trip, the group leaders put me in charge of odd jobs that, at the time, did not seem to have any significant meaning. My first assignment was to hand out pieces of candy to the children in the medical clinic as they saw the physician. I had no idea that this small gesture would lead me to Elvis.

Elvis, a six-year-old little boy, was different from the other children; he was the only child that would not take a piece of candy from me. It was out of character for a child of his age to refuse candy or attention from Americans. I realized he was shy and made it my mission to get to know this young boy. I speak very broken Spanish, and Elvis did not speak English. I realized that communications would be difficult, but nothing could stop me from reaching this little boy. I sat down beside Elvis and asked him his name. When he said Elvis, the first thing that came to mind was "The King." I tried to explain to him there was a famous singer with his name, but, between my misused words and his young age, the conversation was futile. He just looked at me with these huge eyes. It was almost as if he were asking, "What are you talking about crazy American?"

I decided the best way to relate to this boy was with my book of stickers. While the candy was of no interest to Elvis, the stickers were a success. He looked at each sticker and carefully chose one for himself. When he chose a picture of a heart, he pointed to it and said "corazon!" I understood that he meant heart in Spanish and, in turn, told him the English translations. Elvis picked up on what I was doing and started pointing to all types of different objects. He would tell me the Spanish word, and I would return with the English word. We took turns translating words for one another for a good twenty minutes, but then it was time for my crew to travel to the next village. I told him goodbye, and he once again, looked at me with those eyes. However, this time they had a longing in them that said, "Please do not leave me." He jumped up, hugged me, then grabbed my sticker book and proceeded to do something I will never forget. Elvis found a matching heart identical to the one he had chosen for himself and placed it on my name tag. He then touched my heart with his small hand and took my hand placing it on his heart. This was his way of saying, "Kayla, I am made just like you, we are bound by this."

I left that village with a broken heart. I later discovered that Elvis was orphaned; he was the village child, going from house to house relying on grace from the people of his community. This explained to me why he was so hesitant to trust strangers. No one had ever expressed love to this child, but he was so willing to try to understand me on the deepest level he knew possible. Elvis will never have the opportunities that I have already experienced in my life. It seems so unfair how an individual's place of birth can dictate simple luxuries such as nutrition, shelter, and education. Elvis reminded me how truly blessed I am. I went to Peru with the attitude that would change the Peruvians; I never imagined that a six year old orphan would completely change my outlook on life.

Corazón=Heart

I Thought He Walked on Water

Madison Mitchell

Country singer Randy Travis recorded a song several years ago called "I Thought He Walked on Water." The song was about the singer's grandfather, but it expresses exactly the way I feel about my grandfather. My Pop was a big man, intelligent man, and a loving man.

My Pop was big. In fact in college his nickname was "Big Mitch." He was 6'3 and weighed 245 pounds. He played college football at Livingston State Teachers College, now called University of West Alabama. Although he chose to play at Livingston, many other schools recruited him to play for them. Some of these schools were Auburn, Tulane, and Ole Miss. In fact, the legendary Ole Miss Coach Johnny Vaught made the trip to Ward, Alabama, to sit on Pop's parents' front porch and talk to them about Ole Miss football. During the summers Pop worked at my great grandfather's saw mill. An older cousin of mine, Grady Pearson, said that he once saw Pop pick up a fourteen foot log and walk out of the woods carrying it on his shoulder. "He was ready to go home for the day and didn't want to wait for the mule to come back to drag that last log out of the woods," Grady said.

Not only was he big, he was very intelligent. He taught school for about twenty years. He wanted a job teaching in Sumter County, Alabama, but the only position open was for a science teacher. Pop was a history major in college, but he had taken several science classes, so he told the principal he could teach science. He taught General Science, biology, chemistry, and physics. He spent several summers going to the University of Alabama and earned his masters degree. He took enough courses to earn a doctors degree, but never wrote his dissertation. In 1966, he became principal of Sumter County High School in York, Alabama. Then, in 1969, he was hired by a group of businessmen to found a new school which would be known as Sumter Academy. Pop developed the design for the building, decided on the curriculum, and hired the faculty. The school opened in 1970. My father has told me many stories about how smart Pop was. He said that there was almost nothing that he could not do. Sometimes, when working on the family farm where he raised cattle, a piece of equipment would break down. My Dad says that Pop would stand and look at the tractor or corn picker, or whatever, and figure out how it worked. Then he would look closely

to see why it was not working properly. When he found the problem, he could almost always use some other piece of equipment to replace the broken part and get the machine running again. Usually, it worked better than before. One time, there was a calf that was born with something wrong with its front legs. He was not able to stand up. My Pop used pieces of a cigar box and some Ace bandages to make splints for the little guy. The calf was then able to walk around and keep up with his mother.

Along with being big and intelligent, he was a loving man. Nothing could compare with the feeling of climbing into my Pop's lap. I can still remember the way he smelled. I can still remember the feel of his calloused hands as he patted my back. We visited him at his apartment almost every day. When we opened his door, he would be sitting in his chair, and my sisters and I would race to see who got to sit in his lap first. My Pop would always take my two sisters and me shopping for our birthday presents. Not only did the birthday girl get a present, but the other two did as well. He would tell the two who didn't have the birthday that they could have something that cost no more than ten dollars. When the birthday girl asked how much she could spend, Pop would say, "The sky is the limit." When Pop went to the grocery store he spent more money on Reeses Peanut Butter Cups and Snickers candy bars than on groceries. When we visited Pop, we would always run to the candy box that he kept on his kitchen table. Pop loved to make us laugh. When we left his apartment, he would walk out on the porch with us, and as we drove away he would pretend to do a ballet dance because he knew it would make us giggle.

September 12, 2002, was the saddest day of my life. That day I came home from school and my Dad met my sister and me at the bus. He carried us over to a little bench at the edge of our yard, and it was there that he told us that our Pop, the man who was so full of life and who loved me so much, had passed away in his sleep the night before. I could not believe what I was hearing. I thought it had to be a mistake. My Pop was gone. He was eighty-one years old. I had never really thought of Pop as being old. I never thought there would be a time when Pop would not be there for us. I miss him every day.

My Pop was a big man, an intelligent man, and a loving man, and I thought he walked on water.

Hunting Memories

Trey McPherson

AS WE LOAD THE OLD RED TRACTOR AND HEAD DOWN TO THE CAMP.
WE ARE HOPING THE RECENT RAINS HAVE BEEN ENOUGH TO LEAVE THE GROUND DAMP.

IN THE WARM SEPTEMBER SUN, MY FATHER AND I DISC THE SOIL AND PLANT THE SEEDS.
HE HAS TAUGHT ME ALL HE KNOWS ABOUT HOW AND ON WHAT. THE DEER LIKE TO FEED.

OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, WE WAIT FOR THE LUSCIOUS GREEN GRASS TO APPEAR.
OUR TRAIL CAMERA IS MOUNTED ON A TREE IN HOPES OF GETTING A VIEW OF SOME TROPHY DEER.

WE SIGHT OUR SCOPES, CLEAN OUR GUNS, AND GATHER OUR GEAR.
PREPARING FOR THE BIG OPENING WEEKEND THAT IS DRAWING NEAR.

ON OPENING MORNING WE'RE SITTING IN A STAND SOMEWHERE IN LAUDERDALE COUNTY.
WAITING ON THE PRESENCE OF THAT DREAM BUCK TO PLACE IN THE BIG BUCK BOUNTY.

WE HAVE BEEN UP SINCE DAWN, SHIVERING IN THE COLD MORNING AIR.
LISTENING FOR THE SOUNDS OF APPROACHING DEER.

AS NATURE AWAKENS,
I WAIT IN MY STAND WITH ANTICIPATION.

WILL I SEE THAT ONE MONSTER DEER TODAY.
OR WILL I HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL ANOTHER DAY?

USING THE GRUNT CALL AND RATTLING THE HORNS, I TRY TO DRAW THEM IN.
THE DEER SCENT THAT I HAVE USED IS BLOWING IN THE WIND.

TRYING NOT TO MAKE THE SLIGHTEST SOUND.
I SCAN THE AREA BY LOOKING ALL AROUND.

JUST THEN I HEAR IT. THE SOUND I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR.
LEAVES CRUNCHING ON THE FOREST FLOOR!

AS THEY ENTER THE PATCH, I CAN SEE THAT IT IS NOT JUST ONE DEER, BUT THREE.
TWO BEAUTIFUL BROWN DOE AND A MIGHTY BUCK WALKING PAST THE BIG OAK TREE.

I TAKE A LOOK IN MY SCOPE TO GET A BETTER VIEW.
THE RACK IS HUGE AND IT'S THE DEER OF FEW.

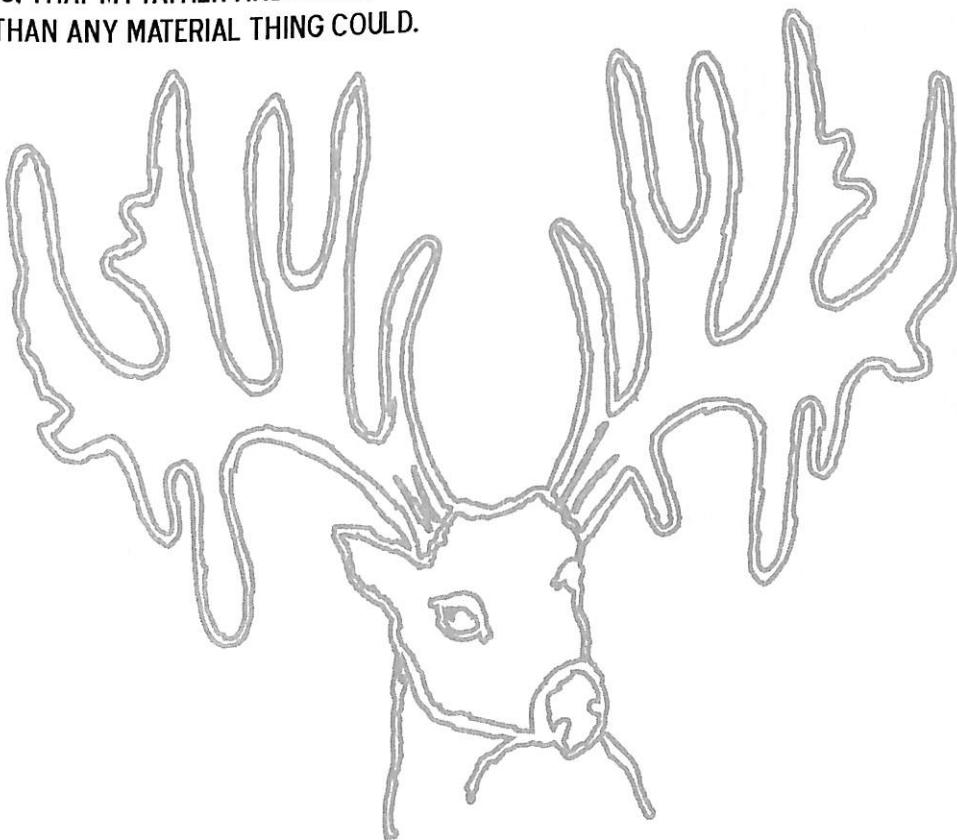
IT IS THE DEER THAT I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR.
I TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND THINK ABOUT WHAT MY DAD TAUGHT ME BEFORE.

I PUT THE CROSS HAIRS ON HIS FRONT SHOULDER.
THEN I WATCH AS THE BULLET TAKES OVER.

THE DEER HITS THE GROUND. IT IS A GREAT SHOT.
HE DROPPED RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR GRASSY FOOD PLOT.

I WILL REMEMBER THIS HUNT FOR A LONG TIME TO COME.
AND I WILL, ONE DAY, TELL MY CHILDREN HOW IT WAS DONE.

THE MEMORIES, THAT MY FATHER AND I HAVE, OF SHARING TIME IN THE WOODS.
MEAN MORE THAN ANY MATERIAL THING COULD.



The Package

My hands trembled and fumbled the package delivered by the UPS driver in his standard issue brown uniform and fake smile. I signed my name on the dotted line, and he was on his way. I walked inside and crashed down onto my sofa clutching the small box. I fought to steady my breathing, calm my racing heart, and gather the courage to open the box. I knew what was inside: my mother's eyes were in this box.

My mother's eyes were in this box

No, not literally, it was just a picture, but, for the first time, I would look into the eyes that stared into my own for eleven months before placing me in the arms of strangers. Twenty years of wondering and longing had led me here. I had begun searching for my mom seven months earlier. Then, on what was a beautiful October day, I received the call that would change me. I had been on the phone with family, sharing the news of expecting my first child. Two hours later, the laughter and joy had morphed into tears and grief. I vaguely recall hearing the words, "Your mom has passed away," but I vividly recall crashing to the floor. "This cannot be happening," I thought. I had always heard the saying, "When one life is taken, another is given." So her life for my baby's? It was so unfair, but, honestly, a trade I would have made anyway. With a deep breath, I shook as I tore the seal.

I shook as I tore the seal

I tenderly lifted the picture and stared in disbelief. Her eyes—playful and full of life—were the same ones etched across my own face. I sat holding the picture and examined every little detail about her. There was the expected out-dated hair style, the not-so-stylish clothes, and her hand lying tenderly across her belly; she must have been pregnant with one of my sisters. Seeing that the tears ran freely and I was glad I was alone, alone with my grief, my anger, my pain, and my love for a woman I had never met. The package had been delivered, and it held so much more than a picture.

Judi Rodgers



My Mom

Blannie Dove's Love

Artesian
Royal



In two thousand and six, I
was a senior in high school. I
was on the phone almost every night.

A remarkable moment in my life is when I

came to understand my great grandmother. In this instance, the term great grandmother is an understatement. Blannie Dove turned one hundred years old in March of two thousand and nine. However, my uncle Chester died not long after homecoming in two thousand and six. Ma Blannie asked if I could stay with her for a couple of nights after the loss of her son. I packed a bag for the first night. I figured I could wake up fifteen minutes early, and not even miss the opening credits for "Charmed." I had no idea how meaningful the experience would be. The time I spent with my great grandmother became the ultimate learning experience. Ma Blannie showed me the importance of maintaining family structure, of being a morning person, and of identifying common interests.

Firstly, I was intrigued by the fact that history was literally sitting in front of me. I tried to compare her body to a one hundred year old oak tree. I thought that inside the trunk it would be alive with color and dark rings. Her hair was thick, black, and lightly streaked with gray. Her hair was like the strong limbs and branches of the water oak tree. Ma Blannie represented the tree of life. She said, "Your family can be like a ladder to help pull you out the hole." Ma Blannie continued, "Just when we think we at rock bottom our family pulls us on up again. It's how we survive." Ma Blannie looked towards a large pecan tree outside. Ma Blannie said, "Jus like them roots on that tree yonder, a solid foundation won't budge." At that point in my life I never understood the power and importance of family structure.

Nevertheless, I was never a "morning" person. At my grandmother's there was a rooster in the neighborhood that notified me of morning's arrival. My grandmother would wait an hour after the rooster crowed every morning to say "Tee don't you have to get up for your lessons?" "Yes m'am," I

would answer. I told my grandmother, "Ma Blannie, I'm just not a morning person." Ma Blannie continued, saying "Sometimes we just have to make do." She said, "Lessons is important so sacrifices must be made." I valued school but at that point I began to see why teachers repeatedly ask us to be quiet. School means more than a standardized test to many generations. The following morning I put a smile on mostly because Ma Blannie reflected one. I respected her for sitting quietly in her own house until I sluggishly got out of bed. From that point I tried not to be a gripe in the morning.

Mostly, I sat with Ma Blannie watching local programming. One night, we sat watching *Wheel of Fortune* when my grandmother asked, "Where you find those boots?" Surprised, I told her I found them at a shoe store in the mall. "How can you walk in that high heel?" my grandmother asked. "I'm used to walking in them now," I said. My grandmother scratched her head and smiled. "I used to love my heels," she said. My grandmother asked me to look under the bed. Under the bed I saw at least ten boxes of hats and a large picture album. Inside the album were pictures of my grandmother when she was forty years old. To my astonishment she had on a nice pants suit and at least four inch heels! "Where were you going?" I asked. She replied, "Oh we just went out for a night of dancing." I was delighted to hear my great grandmother once dressed similar to me and enjoyed the same activities.

To this day, May Blannie is still determined to take care of matters. Our family constantly helps to make this possible for her. A nurse came to live with my grandmother after a few months. In the end, I learned more about myself than anything. Ma Blannie showed me that adaptability is important in all of life's functions. Each person in my family is vital to my success. When I look at my grandmother I see more than a full head of hair at one hundred years old. I see what I aim to be in life, a survivor.

"Jus like them roots on that tree yonder,
a solid foundation won't budge."

THE TEMPTATION OF BOUDREAU

Boudreax leaned back on the stump, finally able to get some rest. For over an hour, the bullfrogs had kept up an intolerable racket, but Boudreax had finally tuned it out. He closed his eyes and loosened his grasp on the fishing pole, preparing to drift off to sleep. While some would say that the swamps and bayous of rural Louisiana were not a safe place in which to doze off, Boudreax had been doing it his entire life.

The middle-aged Cajun was once again out fishing in the middle of nowhere. Fishing was one of two ways Boudreax enjoyed himself. The other way was watching football. In regards to the latter, Boudreax was passionately devoted to his favorite team, the New Orleans Saints. Ever since Boudreax was a child, he had watched every game the Saints had played. Every few years, it appeared that the Saints might do well and Boudreax would become hopeful that they might actually reach the most hallowed of places in football: the Super Bowl. And every time he got his hopes up, something would go horribly wrong and the Saints would lose. Though embittered, he refused to abandon his favorite team.

Boudreax owned a hardware store in the small town where he lived. Many of his customers, knowing of his passion for the Saints, would often talk to him about their own respective teams (as not all Cajuns were as loyal as Boudreax) and how they had won their various respective victories. He had become a laughing stock within his own community.

"I can help you change that," a voice said.

Boudreax nearly fell off the stump he had been sitting on. He opened his eyes and looked around. A man stood before him. The man was average height, wearing old blue jeans with the knees worn through. His shirt was black with a gold fleur de lis on it: the symbol of the New Orleans Saints.

"W-what did you say?" Boudreax asked.

"I said I can help you fix your problem with your favorite sports team," the man replied. His voice was smooth and oddly soothing. Boudreax instantly trusted him.

"How can you do that?" Boudreax inquired.

"It's quite simple, really. You just have to make a little deal with me, nothing important, and the Saints will win their games, no matter how grim it looks. Why, they'll even make it to the Super Bowl."

"How did you know that's what I wanted?"

"Let's just say I've heard of your commitment to the Saints."

"Why would you want to help me?"

"Because I'm helping both of us. As you can see, I am also a fan of the New Orleans Saints. I'm just making sure we both get exactly what we want."

"Well...OK...what kinda deal did you wanna make?"

"The Saints win their games in exchange for something tiny you hardly ever use...your soul."

Boudreax stared at him for a moment. At first, he didn't comprehend what the smiling man had said.

Then, it all started to make sense.

"You...you're the Devil, ain't you?" Boudreux asked.

"Who else could make the Saints win?" the man replied, still smiling.

"You really want my soul?" Boudreux asked incredulously.

"Of any mortal I can find, yes, even you Boudreux."

Boudreux no longer needed to ask how the man, who was not truly a man, knew his name. Boudreux looked around the swamp for a moment, taking it all in as he thought. He gazed at the cypress and willow trees, seemingly bent over with the burden of the moss that they bore throughout their branches, as he contemplated this terrible choice. He stared at the long grasses growing nearby and the cattails growing in the water as he thought of the consequences. He listened to the song of the bullfrogs and hum of the insects as he considered the possibilities. As if reading his mind, the Devil spoke to him.

"Never again would you have to listen to the taunts at your store."

Boudreux imagined what it would be like to brag about his own team winning for once. "Speaking of your store, there's a lot to be gained by knowing the outcome of the Super Bowl. Imagine all the money that could be made if you bet everything you owned on the Saints...you could multiply everything you have by tenfold. You wouldn't have to live in some pitiful shack while running a derelict hardware store. You would be rich; richer than you could ever imagine."

The Devil's words were as sweet as honey and as appealing as the finest wine, or in Boudreux's case, Budweiser beer. After another long moment of thought, Boudreux spoke.

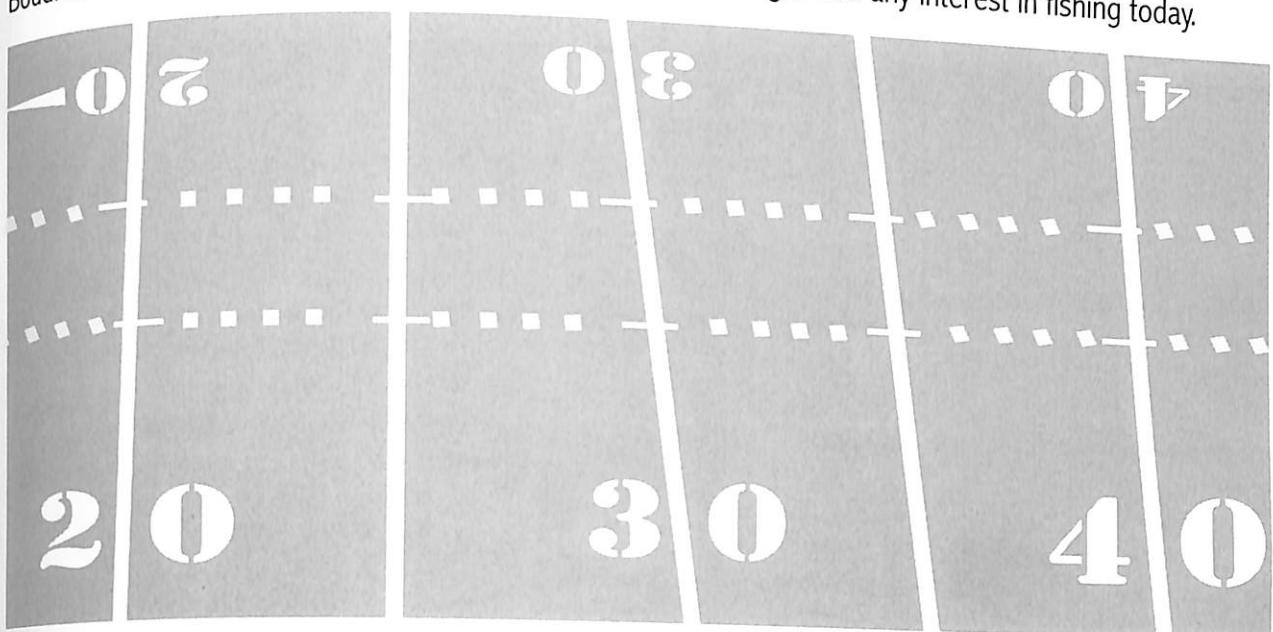
"And you're sure they'll win?"

"Absolutely."

"Alright, I'll do it."

"Shake on it."

He shook the Devil's hand and the Devil laughed. He turned around and walked off into the mist of the swamp. After only a few feet, all that could be heard were his footsteps, and then those too disappeared. Boudreux walked the other way, back towards town. He no longer had any interest in fishing today.



The first place Boudreux went was the bank. He mortgaged his home and sold his store. Whipped into a frenzy at the prospect of his change in fortune, he immediately left his hometown and drove across the treacherous swamp roads (if you can even call such a pitiful trail a "road") to New Orleans. It didn't take him long to discover the shady underworld of sports gambling. It was fairly prevalent, since the first game was only a few days away. Boudreux spent what little money he had not put up for gambling on a small motel. He anxiously awaited the Saints' first game in only a few days, but he was still just a little worried that he had made a mistake.

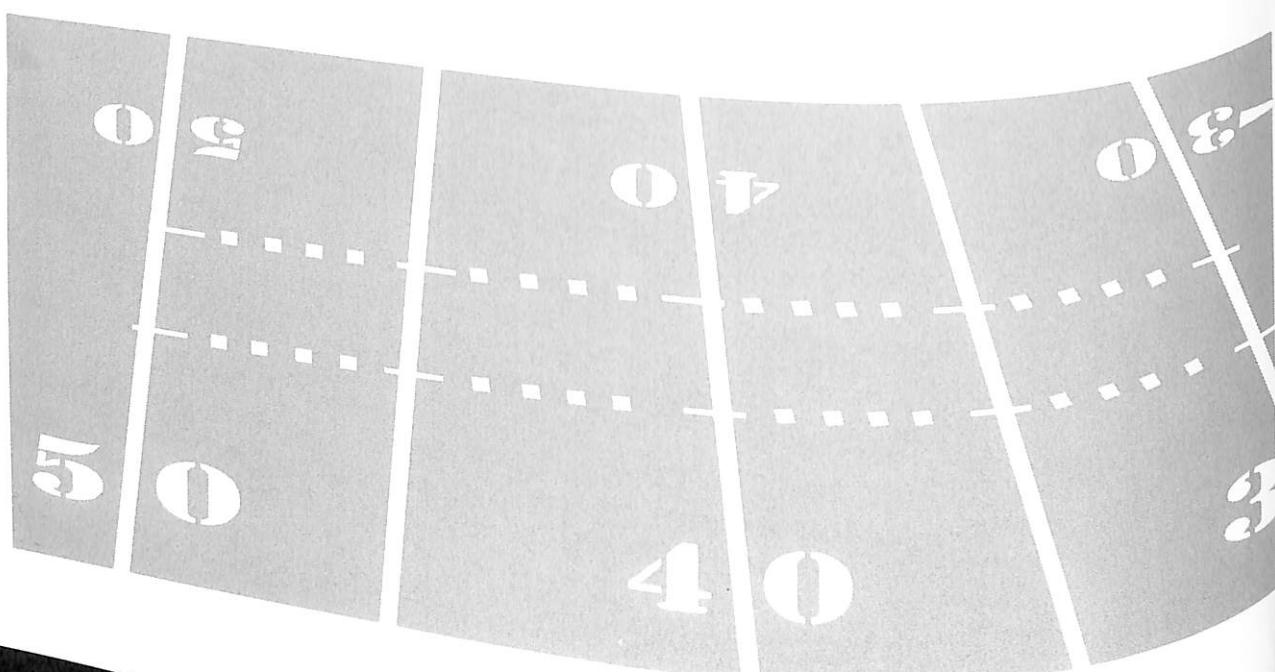
He shouldn't have worried, as he watched the Saints triumph from the small TV in his room. He watched the next triumph too, but on a larger TV in a hotel. By the fourth game, he was watching from a penthouse suite. In a startling moment of wisdom, Boudreux stopped betting, holding his winnings, until the actual Super Bowl itself. His actions (regardless of who or what may have secretly influenced those actions) proved to be brilliant when the Saints suddenly lost several games. Boudreux wasn't worried though. He knew they would make it to the Super Bowl. What he was worried about was that he had made one critical mistake: the Devil had only said the Saints would make it to the Super Bowl. Boudreux had forgotten to make sure that they'd win!

When it was finally time for the Super Bowl, Boudreux had a front row ticket on the 50 yard line. He took his seat and anxiously awaited the game. As the kickoff was underway, Boudreux could feel his heart pounding in his chest. After the first quarter, he had to remind himself of all the comebacks the Saints had made. By halftime, he was literally shaking with anxiety. Finally, the game came down to the last minutes, and it was still close. Boudreux's heart was beating faster and faster and he felt dizzy and lightheaded. His vision swam before his eyes. As a buzzer sounded, Boudreux collapsed.

When he awoke he was on a dark highway, and a man was next to him. He recognized the man, in his Saints t-shirt and faded blue jeans. It was the Devil.

"What? What's going on? Where am I? The game! I'm missing it!" he exclaimed.

"Sorry, but I'm afraid you can't go back," the Devil replied.



"Because you're dead."

"I—I can't be dead."

"Oh, but you are. You died of a heart attack. I guess there was just too much suspense for you to handle. So now your soul belongs to me, as part of our little deal," the Devil grinned as he spoke.

The Devil walked him down the Highway to Hell. All the way, Boudreux moped about his misfortune. He'd never know if the Saints finally won the Super Bowl. At last, they'd reached the gates of Hell. Dante's words were engraved overhead, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here." Boudreux had already done that very thing; his dream had come so close to being real, but now it was gone forever. The Devil was still smiling at his trickery. Suddenly, the Devil stopped walking and gasped. Boudreux looked up from his despair and gasped as well. He could not believe what he was seeing. Hell was iced over!

"How did this happen!" screamed the now furious Devil.

A smile slowly spread over Boudreux's face.

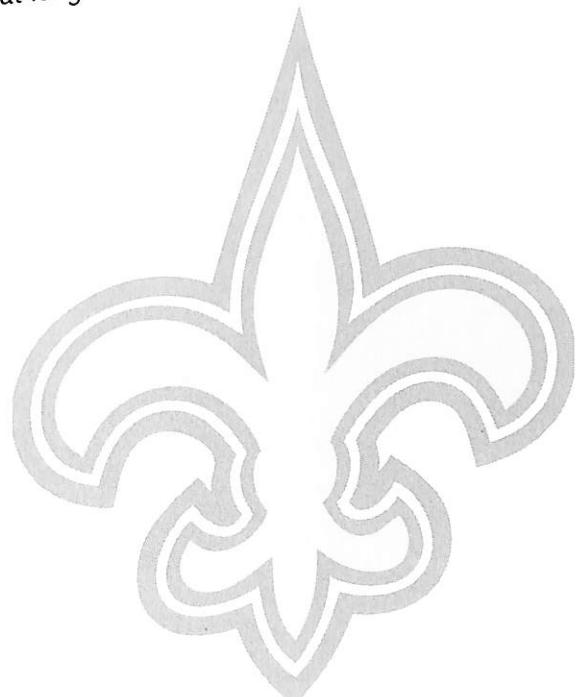
"What are you smiling about?" yelled the indignant demon.

"Hell froze over...the Saints must have won the Super Bowl! They won! They finally won!"

The Devil stood there, jaw open in shock, staring at the Cajun. He swore to himself that he would never trick another soul from that accursed swamp. They were too much trouble. Finally, he shrugged and walked off. At least now he'd get to wear that nice coat he got a few centuries ago.

So, Boudreux's dream finally came true; the New Orleans Saints had finally won the Super Bowl. Even in the depths of Hell and throughout all its tortures, Boudreux continued to celebrate their victory. He bragged of the Saint's many miraculous comebacks to all he met, both demon and damned. Boudreux was finally happy.

But to this day, amongst the moss laden cypress trees and the overburdened willows of the bayous of Louisiana, you can hear the celebratory whoops and cheers of Boudreux, whose dream had come true, at long last.



Gloaming

*When I lie beside him late at night
and look upon his still and sleeping face
I see the changes in the dimming light.
The lines are deep and form a kind of grace,
amalgam of the phases of his life ---
youth's bright blaze, the fading glow of middle years
exhaustion from long plodding, and the strife.
I dare not stir for fear he will awake
and see the tears of wonder in my eyes
which he will take for sorrow or for hurt.
No way I can persuade him otherwise.
So I'll stay quiet by till day is near
when we arise together one more time
and hold the hours dear.*

Glo. Ann Rabb



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—Feb. 25, 2011



Categories

Short Story

Limit, two entries. Must not exceed 10 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 fifty 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	Work
City/State/Zip Code:		
Phone: Home	Sr. High School you attend:	
Check one:	Soph.	Jr.
Short Story Title(s):	Community Member	
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, 2011

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

Wandering List

Community

Community Essay:

- 1st: Artesian Boyd - "Blannie Dove's Love"
- 2nd: Dreshea Rolle - "Bahamian Dialect"
- 3rd: Anne McKee - "My Aunt Eula's Garden"

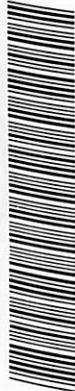
Community Short Story:

- 1st: Adam James - "The Sight"
- 2nd: Suzanne Bruner - "It's Not So Bad"
- 3rd: John Johnson - "Monster"
- HM: Vaughn Brown - "Easter Escape"

Community Poetry:

- 1st: Clo Ann Rabb - "Gloaming"
- 2nd: Clo Ann Rabb - "Emancipation"
- 3rd: John Bonifant - "Mississippi"

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