

LITERARY
REVIEW
2007





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Reflections

I sit quietly in my swing and watch him.

Slowly, meticulously, intuitively he maneuvers the plow.

The apple-red tractor snakes its way along the long rows,

It's not just butterbeans he plows –

It's earth, his land, gifts of the soul and spirit.

His gray head bobbed by a dirty cap,

His still-musclcd body clad in a son-in-law's striped shirt

And his own frayed jeans.

I sit where I sat some 30 to 40 years ago –

New house, but same home.

Flashbacks of his earlier toys – tractors, dozers, saws, campers.

Flashbacks of his hard work, iron will, incredible strength.

Call it nostalgia, if you like.

I call it contentment, peace, pride, and pure love.





“It’s earth, his land, gifts of the soul and spirit.”





Graceland

Amos Grace sat in the pew the Sunday after his conversion and wept, wept for the boy who had lost his heart, the boy whose life was beaten out of him. He wondered about that boy or should he say, "man," whose momma gave his heart away so he could continue to love. His mother said that at ten the boy had the experience of a lifetime. He and thousands of others stood around the reflecting pool and listened to "I Have a Dream" and wondered about America, the land of the free and the home of the brave. The boy knew that the lyrics were not meant for him. America had written his people a bad check that had come back marked "insufficient funds."

As a black boy growing up in the Mississippi Delta, the future seemed bleak, but he had dreams. He would finish school in the one room schoolhouse where Miss Annie Bell and Miss Davis did not spare the rod. He had dreams. The bus took him away and brought him back. He had renewed hope. The rows of cotton were long, the heat oppressive but that did not matter. He was going to be somebody. He finished school and moved to Washington where he taught school, coached little league, and became a youth leader at the AME Zion Church.

This weekend he was back in Money where he was born. He walked into the general store and smiled at Miss B. They had grown up on the same plantation. Her husband frowned. The boy was a bit too uppity to suit him. That night they came to his mother's house, dragged him down to the river and beat him within an inch of his life. They took him to University Hospital. They kept him on life support, but decided it was hopeless. His mother was approached about making him an organ donor. She consented and his heart, eyes, liver, and numerous other organs and tissue were harvested.

Amos Grace, too, was near death that morning. He had been in the Sunflower Hospital for three months. "Mrs. Grace, I am sorry to tell you this, but your husband's condition has deteriorated. He has less than six months to live if he does not get a transplant. The waiting list is long. Even if we do find a donor, there is the question of finding one with matching tissue. Without a new heart your husband will die."

Then the call came. "We have a donor. Get your husband to University immediately." Through the Mississippi darkness they sped. Headed to Jackson and a new heart, perhaps a new lease on life. The wait at the hospital was interminable. Laboratory work up was necessary. Finally, word came, "Everything is ready." The surgery took hours. He was in the hospital ten days. Finally he went home. He was happy to be alive. He felt better than he had felt in a long time.


As he sat there on his porch staring across the delta he wondered about the donor. Whose heart did he have beating in his body? He had to know. What happened to the donor? How did the donor die? Was the death his fault? His prayer, his family's prayer, had they in a way caused the death? He had to know.

After several months, he spoke to his wife. "Sugar Baby, I got to know whose heart I have. They said the information is available if I want to know." His wife and other family members advised against it, but he insisted. "You have the heart of that black that was beaten almost to death on the Sunflower River." He was told. He sat there in disbelief, stunned, shocked. He had a black heart beating in him.

He, a loyal supporter of the KKK and even the Kludd or chaplain for his chapter at one time. At ten he had stood with his father in the middle of Old Man White's field and watched the ten feet cross cast its gleam over the night sky. He listened to the Grand Dragon as he told of the dream he had, a dream that America would be the land of the free and the home of the brave, a place where white people were free. To make sure that the delta continued to be the land of cotton where old times were not forgotten he went on many night raids to make sure that the "N-----s" stayed in their place. Now he had a black heart, the heart of a N----- that had been beaten within an inch of his life for smiling at Miss B who he had grown up on the plantation with.

Amos Grace spent days and weeks pondering this situation. He had to meet that N----- boy's momma and talk to her. He didn't know what he wanted to say, but he had to say something. Nobody would know if they kept it secret. Nobody would know that he had a





black heart. But day after day he sat on that porch and prayed as he had never prayed before.

Brother George, pastor of Mt. Olive Baptist Church, came to visit him often. They talked of the operation and his new lease on life. Finally, he poured out his feelings. "Brother George, I done done wrong and now my heart is heavy. I don't think I can go on. I got a N----- heart in my body. I just can't take this." Brother George was a good man. He prayed for and with Amos trying to help him understand God's grace and mercy. He told him the story of John Newton, the author of "Amazing Grace." He said that Newton had been the captain of a slave ship. One night the ship encountered a violent storm. Newton said he knew that he would have died but he called out to God. Newton married, gave up the sea, became a minister, and later composed "Amazing Grace" and other songs. After Brother George left that day, Amos sat there on the porch in his rocking chair humming "Amazing Grace" and reflected on his life, the life of John Newton, and prayed for deliverance.

Amos asked Brother George to set up the meeting with Walter's mother. She was shocked to learn who had gotten Baby Boy's heart, but she agreed to meet with him. They were to meet down by the river. Both were fishermen. She brought her pole and pail. She cast her line in the water and waited. Finally Amos Grace and Brother George walked up. She glanced sidelong at Mr. Grace. The last time she saw him at the general store he was all bent over and his face was as white as a sheet. Now he looked healthy, alive, but she knew what kind of man he was. She knew about the white sheets. She sat and waited. He sat down and cast his line in the water. Neither said a word. He got up and walked away. Brother George said, "This is hard for him; give him time." She didn't say anything but cast her line further out in the water.

On Thanksgiving evening Annie Mae was sitting in the swing on her porch. A pick up truck pulled up in her yard. She just sat there. The swing creaked. The fireflies lit up the night. Frogs croaked. The white man just sat there in his truck with the motor running.

Neither said a word. He finally backed out of her yard and drove away. He stopped at Mt. Olive when he saw the lights on as he passed by. Brother George was sitting on a bench in the yard. He invited Amos to stay for evening service.

The choir began: "Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me I once was lost but now I am found was blind but now I see." After the singing and praying Amos stood up. "Do you know what I found out about the author of 'Amazing Grace?' John Newton was born in London in 1725. He was the son of a commander of a merchant ship that sailed the Mediterranean. At eleven he went to sea and served on several ships. Finally, he became a sailor on a slave ship. Finally he became captain of his own ship, one involved with the slave trade. He had some early religious upbringing from his mother who died when he was a child. May 10, 1748 as he was attempting to steer his ship through a violent storm, he experienced what he called his 'great deliverance.' He believed that when he called out to God 'Lord, have mercy upon us.' God answered and spared his ship. Newton later gave up being a slaver and became an ordained minister. Between 1760-1770 he wrote four verses of Amazing Grace."

"That's great, Amos. You read all about John Newton, but did you learn anything else? The song tells us that with grace we can overcome, with grace our sins can be forgiven. We have much to be thankful for. First and foremost, we must be thankful that a child was born to a virgin, that at twelve the boy was found in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors hearing them and asking them questions. When asked why he tarried, he said to his parents, 'I must be about my Father's business.' That business was healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, making the lame walk. Through many dangers, toils, and snares we have already come. Grace has brought us safe thus far and grace will lead us home."

At the end of his speaking Brother George said: "The door of the church is open the door of the church is open. All you have to do is give your life to Christ. On this Thanksgiving evening we have so much to be thankful for. In a month we will celebrate the birth of Christ but we are most thankful that He laid down His life for us and that on Easter Sunday He arose. Is there one? Jesus is calling. He's tenderly calling today. His grace has brought you safe thus far and his grace will lead you home. Will you come?"

Amos came forward.

"Do you wish to say anything Brother Amos?"

"Yes, I once was lost but now I'm found was blind but now I see."

That night Amos Grace pulled into the yard at Walter's mother's house, turned off the engine of his pickup truck, walked up the steps and knocked on the door. Annie Mae invited him in. He sat for hours telling her of his joys and sorrows. And they wept for the black boy whose heart was still beating and giving life to a white man who once was lost but now was found, was blind but now could see.



**"Yes, I Was
Once Lost But
Now I'm Found
Was Blind But
Now I See."**





The Guardian

An old picture fluttered from the fingers of a girl. The wind was strong at the top of the building, carrying the picture over the side and down towards the crowded street below. A shadow had fallen over the building as the sun hid behind a cloud. No one was there, and there were no places to hide. She was determined that today, she would finally meet him.

It was all so perfect. Why hadn't she thought of it before? Running in front of the car had been stupid, of course. The car could swerve and miss her, and how would she have spotted one person on the crowded streets? Her attempted drowning had also been stupid. There had been too many people there also, and the lifeguard was there for a reason. Cutting herself had been another failed plan. Even if she was starting to catch on by then, she had forgotten her parents, who had interfered that time. There had always been someone else to interfere, but now there was no one, and today he would finally have to come out.

People said she was crazy, and part cat, claiming that is where she got all the extra lives she seemed to enjoy throwing away, but she knew that this wasn't true. She knew that he was just behind the stage, pulling all the strings to keep her safe, and he was always getting someone else to do the job for him, which infuriated her.

She grinned.

The funny part about it all was that he couldn't control her, or at least not directly. She could always tell when he was interfering; a friend could be talking to her about doing something that her parents probably wouldn't approve of, and then suddenly they would stop and bring up something completely different. In a weird way it was like having a second parent slash guardian angel that was just a little too perfect at his job. So, by purposely and randomly putting herself in danger, she was successfully thwarting him in controlling her life, or at least giving him a headache.

Yet today was the day he was going to have to come out. Up here on this building there was no one else to control. Up here there was just her, and he couldn't control her. Yes, she had finally come up with the perfect plan, one not even he could stop with mere puppets. She would call him out today, a call he would have to answer.

Carefully she stepped up onto the foot-wide ledge and kept her eyes glued to the sky. She had a fear of heights, but as long as she continued to look up, she was okay. Now that she was ready, her stomach began to knot in fear, and her determination started to waiver. She admitted that she had at times wondered if her imagination weren't just over active or if perhaps she had been hanging out too long with the strange people she called her friends.

Yes, her friends were an interesting topic to think about, but she shook her head. Now was not the time to dwell on them. She had to act fast before he realized what she was planning. Up till now it had been just a normal day with her being forced to go with her dad to work.

After the little cutting incident, which Amber blamed on Trix for giving her the idea, her parents had decided that she could not be left at home alone. Her mother had a particular patient to see, which Amber had absolutely refused to go anywhere near again, and that had left her with her dad, sitting in his small, dull, four-sided, white-washed office. The sad part about it all was the computer and phones were confiscated by her dad who was doing "work," which meant he couldn't be disturbed, which meant Amber had been left staring at the random things scattered about his office.

After counting the ceiling tiles for the fourth time, she had asked her dad during a break between calls if she could go and get a snack, complaining that she was hungry. Well, that had been her cover story at least. Her grand idea had come to her while she had been staring at the ridges of a balled up sheet of paper lying a few feet from the trash can. She knew if she had asked to go up to the roof that her dad would have flipped; hence, she came up with her cover

story. He already thought she was suicidal, even though she had explained quite clearly she was neither crazy, nor suicidal. Then again who believes someone that randomly gambles with her life?

At the moment, she was standing on the edge of the roof contemplating how best to jump. Maybe they did have a good reason not to trust her; she was sure she wouldn't trust herself if she were in their shoes.

"I wonder if this is what people mean by their life flashing before their eyes?" she wondered aloud. Well, it was time to act or back down, she thought, and so she inhaled a deep breath and leaned forward. Time seemed to slow down even as her heartbeat sped up, sending her blood racing through her veins. She felt gravity start to catch her, and a wild excitement lurched in her stomach - like when you suddenly drop and your stomach seems to jump into your throat. She didn't know whether to be afraid or happy, and then the thought that maybe she really was insane and he wasn't coming crossed her mind. What if she had jumped to her doom, believing in something that wasn't real? Boy, would she feel stupid standing in front of the golden gates.

Then suddenly she stopped. Gravity was still pulling on her, but something had caught her shirt, which was at the moment choking her. Whatever had grabbed her shirt pulled her back up straight so that she was again standing on the edge of the building, but now wearing a shirt stretched almost a size bigger.

It took her a second to realize that the streets with the cars flashing by and the sidewalks alive with people moving on them were not getting any closer. Her nerves were still set in falling-to-death high alert, and she shook slightly all over as the realization that she was not falling finally came home. A wondrous feeling of joy filled her as she realized she was going to live, and only after this realization did she wonder how she had been saved.

That is what brought her back to why she had done all of this in the first place. Fearing that in her dazed state she had given him enough time to re-disappear, she spun around to try to find her savior.

He wasn't that hard to spot, however, wearing only a simple black shirt and blue jeans, with slightly wavy black hair and brownish-amber eyes, and drinking a coke through a straw. Amber wouldn't have been surprised if he had said some corny line about drinking coke like he was in a coke commercial at the moment, seeing that he looked so relaxed that it bordered on boredom. However, his eyes seemed to be watching her movements closely, and Amber realized that it was because she was still standing on the edge of the roof, and he might be expecting her to make another attempt at taking her life. Well, as people say, or her tenth grade Spanish teacher said, don't be afraid to try things once, but if you don't like it the first time, don't be stupid enough to try it again. Not wanting to test her luck a second time, she hopped down off the ledge to show she had no intentions of trying to jump again.

"Who are you?" she asked.

He just sipped his coke, like her question didn't need an answer.

"Can you talk?" she asked again.

"I can talk. I was just wondering what you were doing up here. It's apparently not to watch the clouds."

"I was waiting for someone," she replied, a little snappier than she had intended to be.

"Let me guess. You got tired of waiting?" he asked back sarcastically.

"Yep!" Why not mess with his head a little? Yes, it was obvious; she had given him too much time to think about what she had been planning. Drat him for being so darn smart all the time, but she did wonder from what little dark corner he had dragged this guy out.

This guy had stopped his sipping to stare at her for a few seconds. Then, as if he'd come to a conclusion, he resumed his sipping and said, "Crazy."

"I'm not crazy!" she said indignantly.

"You were going to jump because someone was late. I'd call that crazy!"

"No, silly," she said with a grin that actually gave her a slightly crazy look. She was such

a good actor, she thought with a hidden smile. "That was to make him come!"

"Him? As in a boyfriend?" the question had a queer undercurrent to it that Amber couldn't figure out. Amber thought about it for a second, wondering how much more she wanted to mess with his head before she finally decided on telling him the truth. The truth was always stranger than fiction, according to her history teacher.

"No, my demon guardian."

This statement just so happened to catch him at the exact moment he went to swallow his drink, causing him to start choking. She wasn't sure whether or not to settle on being mad because he obviously didn't believe her and consider her job of weirding him out a success.

Finally clearing his airway enough to talk, he asked, "Your demon guardian? You are crazy!"

"I'm not crazy!"

"Then prove it!"

"Fine. I will." She went to pull something out of her jacket pocket, but stopped and her face fell slightly.

Surprised at the sudden change in her, the guy moved forward slightly. "What's wrong?"

"My picture. I dropped it," was all she said as tears started to fill her eyes. Her picture had been the only proof that her demon guardian was real, but now it was gone. Oh, why had she been so stupid that she had let it go! She felt like banging her head on a wall because she had been so stupid.

"Hey, why are you crying? Don't cry." The guy was at a loss for what to do as the tears started to fall down her face.

"It doesn't matter anyway. You'd just laugh like everyone else." That probably was true, she thought to herself. Everyone had always laughed when she told them about the picture. No one had ever believed her; she didn't think even her friends did. At least, they were supportive, in their own way.

"I wouldn't laugh," he replied in a gentle, but serious tone. Surprised by his answer, she looked up to meet his eyes.

"Really?"

"I promise."

"Thanks."

"By the way, my name's Blake," he said, holding out his hand and putting on a goofy grin, which actually made him kind of cute.

"Amber," she replied and shook his hand firmly like her father had taught her when she had been a little girl. His grin widened into a smile and he nodded like a deal had been sealed, and strangely it felt like one to Amber too.

"You want to go get a coke?" he asked.

She just smiled back in answer, and they left the top of the building. She looked back at him as they walked, and for the first time she noticed the leather choker around his neck and the silver star that hung from it. It was the same star that had been on her shadowy guardian in the picture.

value
YOUR BEST VALUE...EVERYDAY

YOUR BEST VALUE...EVERYDAY

Poetry Assignment

Poems are hard to write
Especially ones that rhyme
You may stay up all night
Wasting your valuable time

Trying to find a word
That will make your poem rhyme
You then think it is impossible
To do this all the time

You then start to wonder
Where did poetry come from?
Why would anybody write them?
They are not even fun

You suddenly realize
It is getting late
You start to reread your poem
And find a horrible mistake

You start to get frustrated
And think about calling it a night
You look out the window
And see it is very bright



YOUR BEST VALUE...EVERYDAY

In trying to write a poem
You stay up all night
For an English assignment
You very much despise

You are very tired
And didn't get any sleep
you have to rush to school
Trying not to weep

You finally get it done
On your way to school
You make it to your English class
Trying to keep your cool

You hand in your entry
Hoping you did well
It's all done and over with
You just hope you didn't fail

The Day My Daddy Died

When someone you love is taken away, there is never enough time. No matter if it's days, weeks, months, years, or eons...

The heart can't seem to handle an absence that is the beginning of its beat. My daddy died today...and eighty-six years of living, still did not prepare our hearts for God's will. Forty-nine years of knowing him still did not brace me as his life dimmed.

My daddy died today and yesterday I prayed that his suffering be stayed; yet I wasn't ready to accept his calm face as he eternally slept in the hospital bed in desperate escape, wearing a diaper that made my heart ache. Needing a telltale sign that life just slowed and finding none, the blood no longer flowed. I was not ready to let him go...

My daddy died today surrounded by a family's dismay, seeing his strength slipping away before our eyes each day. A strong, proud man never in need of a helping hand, riding a bike at the age of eighty-plus, able to out talk the lot of us. Dwindling as sifting sand to a small fragile man, a diminishing strength behind the pain, he steadfastly refused to claim.

My daddy died today and we, left to mourn his passing, know within our hearts that everlasting, the originator of our field of flowers is resting with the omnipotent power, in serenity of death, the pain belied that he endured during his living, decried.

The warmth of his hand as I for the last time, touched my father's soul casing is a memory that will forever be mine.

My daddy died today and in the faces of my sisters, brothers, nieces, nephew and my mother, I saw the blessings his life had given. I saw the strength we inherited even when we didn't see it during his living. I saw the love of a family that will miss the essence of my daddy's character and mourn the passing of his spirit, from here to forever after.

My daddy died today and now I know why God granted me the many days we sat on his porch together, as he told me about the life of a man I didn't know even though he was my father. Now I can see the dark cloud blessings of seeing his strength weaken to a point of realizing that God had indeed blessed him to live, to understand the one thing only God can give...LIFE.

Life...this one granted abundantly through the blessings of a loving, overflowing, caring family, our riches and wealth realized, magnified, and deeply exemplified...on the day my daddy died.



AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

I attended MCC in the late '70s and have taken various continuing education classes through the years. I am married to Marty Harper, have two sons and one grandchild.

---Patsy Harper

2006 Graduate of MCC and MSU. Mother of four; grandmother of seven; married two years to Earlie Jones; native Meridianite returning of twenty-plus years in Tampa, FL.

---Hattye McGlothlin Jones

I am an long-time educator with 35 years invested in a profession I love. I am married with one child and one grandson. I am active in leadership concerns of the community.

---Barbara Rawson Jones

Grew up in Port Arthur, Texas; married a Mississippian; have lived in Meridian since 1952. I have been a painter here for many years. I taught English at MHS.

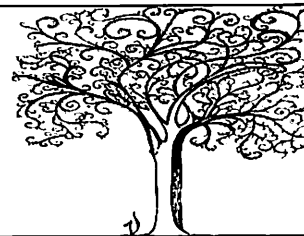
---Clo Ann Rabb

I am a husband and a father with a deep passion for good writing.

---Michael Vanveckhoven

I'm a Junior at NCHS and I'm in the band, on the cross-country team and I take a pottery class. I've been writing for a few years, but this is my first time to enter a contest.

---Ellen McCaskill



My full name is Jane Elizabeth DeWeese and I am 17 years old. I love music and I love to dance. I play a djembe for fun. I work after school in a dance studio and I play the flute.
---Libby DeWeese

I am a little unorganized and an extreme procrastinator. My humor helps me through tough things. I like to make people happy and dreaming big is a hobby of mine. I want to make an impact on the world.
---Heather Hasselle

Age 16. Attend WLHS. Born in Oakland, CA. Have an 18 year old sister.
---Joshua Graham

I am a seventeen year old senior at Philadelphia High School. I am a cheerleader, and I also enjoy writing and playing songs on the guitar. I plan to attend MSU and study pre-physical therapy.
---Eliza Lauderdale

I am a twenty-eight year old wife and mother of two. I am currently pregnant with my third child. I will be in the nursing program next semester.
---Maggie Riley

BA-Jackson State U; Master's and specialist MS State U. Instructor Natchez Public Schools, Quitman Consolidated Schools, Meridian Public Schools; Milken Award, Star Teacher, Teacher of the Year.
---Mable Hoskins Oatis

TIME

Everyone has questions about life. Some can be answered while others cannot. Everyone wonders what will happen in the future, what their lives will become, where they will go and who they will meet. They wonder who they will marry and what they will remember. There is only one answer to all of these wonders. It is time.

I grow impatient and I want time to speed up. I get tired of waiting for the future. There are also those occasions when I wish the whole world would be still for just one moment. Expectedly, it never happens. Time does not slow down and time does not speed up. It is the only constant thing on earth. It just keeps on going and going like it always has, and always will. No one will ever know what the future holds. No one will ever catch up with or exceed time.

We also are unable to control time. We lack the ability to cease its continuance. Time is something we cannot grasp. Time is independent. Timing is not always perfect and we are left with no one to blame; no one but the ticking seconds that perpetually advance. Time does not follow along with anyone's schedule. We set our day according to it. We are slaves to time.

Time ages us. It can weaken us or it can strengthen us. It gives us wisdom. Time has made us who we are today, and

it will make us who we will become. Its longevity is what we dread, and its expeditiousness is what makes us desire it. It is quite contradictory that at times we wish the clock would slow down, and at other times we wish it would accelerate according to our liking.

It is true that time has the ability of conquering all of these things. It is true that we want the detrimental moment to pass with rapidity, and we want the enjoyable times to linger. Ultimately, when it is all said and done, we can all agree; it flies by way too fast. Years pass us by in a blink. Inevitably, there is no way any human will ever be able to grasp the hands of time and manipulate them. However, if we enjoy life, take advantage of every opportunity, learn from our mistakes and finally release our resentful grudges then maybe it will be possible to avoid wasting the time we have. Indeed, there is a lesson to be learned in this. Every day, whether it is good or it is bad, seize it. Take advantage of the inestimable time we have here on this earth. Take these actions, because before you know it, it will have lapsed away faster than you can spit out the letters, "T-I-M-E."





my Father
is my
Hero

My best friend has always been my father. No matter how hard life has been, we have never failed to love and support each other. He always tried his best to provide me with whatever I needed, even under the most unfortunate of circumstances. Watching my father struggle with being a single parent and going back to college at the age of forty-two has influenced me to be a stronger person.

My parents divorced when I was twelve years old. I went to live with my father in his apartment in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He was working as a door to door life insurance salesman, and he always seemed to get home late. After several months of struggling to pay bills and helping me deal with a nasty divorce, my father decided to steer his life in a new direction. He had chosen to go back to college, and we were moving to Meridian, Mississippi.

We moved to Mississippi to be closer to my dad's family. We needed a support base, and they were willing to help us start over. We did not have a car, so my grandfather would let us use his, which was a faded blue Impala that was so old it did not have an FM radio. We also did not have a washing machine or a dryer, so my grandmother would wash our clothes. My father got a job at Wal-Mart, and we had to get food stamps because this job paid so little that we could not afford to eat. In our tiny apartment, the air conditioner leaked constantly and molded the carpet, which left a musty smell.


Our furniture had been purchased at the Salvation Army and was well-worn and tattered. Even with our situation as gloomy as it was, my father still kept a positive outlook. His faith was the one thing that helped us survive the next three years.

In August of 1993, my father started college, and I started my sophomore year of high school. My father excelled academically. He was a member of two championship Scholar's Bowl teams, and he was President of Phi Theta Kappa, which is the honor society for two year colleges. At graduation, he received the H.M. Ivy Award, along with other accolades. He graduated in May 1996 at age forty-five with a degree in nursing. He soon passed his board exams and became a Registered Nurse. The pride I felt for my father could have filled a room. That feeling was reciprocated two weeks later when I graduated with honors from high school.


As my father stood before me in his stark white nursing uniform, I could not help remembering what he went through to achieve that moment. He was the first person in our family to graduate from college. I will be the second. All of his hard work, endless studying, and unwavering faith remind me that I can succeed if I believe in myself.

JUST
TO
NAME A
FEW

You are like a stain that won't wash out,
A bad word that I can't shout,
A rainy day that makes me pout, and
A prank caller I can't figure out




You are like a car with no gas,
A test that I can't pass,
Week old milk that didn't last, and
A train that just has crashed,
But that's just to name a few.



You are like a guitar with no song,
A piece of gum that's flavor didn't last long,
An answered question answered wrong, and
A puzzle piece that didn't belong.

You are like a half-empty cup,
A habit I can't give up,
A fear that makes me jump, and
A road with way too many bumps,
But that's just to name a few.

You are like a party that gets busted by the cops,
A bowl of milk with no corn pops,
A two-eyed Cyclopes, and
A bucket full of dirty mops.



You are like a dead bug on my windshield,
A basketball player on a football field,
An eighteen wheeler that forgot to yield, and
A big fish that I just couldn't get reeled,
But that's just to name a few.

Twisting **M**y **T**ongue **I**n **P**ig-**L**atin

Sun draped his arm across the horizon,
and moon spilled her moonshine in holy grails of wine
where the caged birds whistle such a sweet tune,
and sing to the blues

Twisting my tongue in Pig-Latin
Curling my lip in a mean-mug
Smooth rugs; you'll skin your knee on the silk
So to get off the ground...strap on your wings, child
We're in flight now
Ode to the simple things
Yes, flying is such a simple thing

Do you remember we danced with all that jazz
remember how good we were at being bad,
and we left our footnotes in undried cement,
but footnotes fade like ink to the page,
and cement dries leavin' a tell-tale sign
Of our history of "laugh out loud"

you've morphed into a metaphor
you remain only in my poems now

I shall forget-you-not; you are the strokes of my pen
where you end is where I begin
'cuz when the ink dries
the words will live on in echoes

God adorned this pig with wings
so he could enjoy the simple things,
and I may have a shiny red nose,
but my jingle bells still ring...righteously,
and I'm in flight now
words don't reach you when you're not so close the ground
so close to me
Ode to the simple things
yes, flying is such a simple thing

The sun is sometimes eclipsed by the light of a full moon
and I'm in love with a caged bird that sings the blues
with wings like mine – that I can overlook
just as long as he never lets go of my hand

SO WHAT if I can twist my tongue in Pig-Latin
science can't classify everything
and to put it simply:
I'm nothin' but a pig with wings
that happens to enjoy the simple things



Success

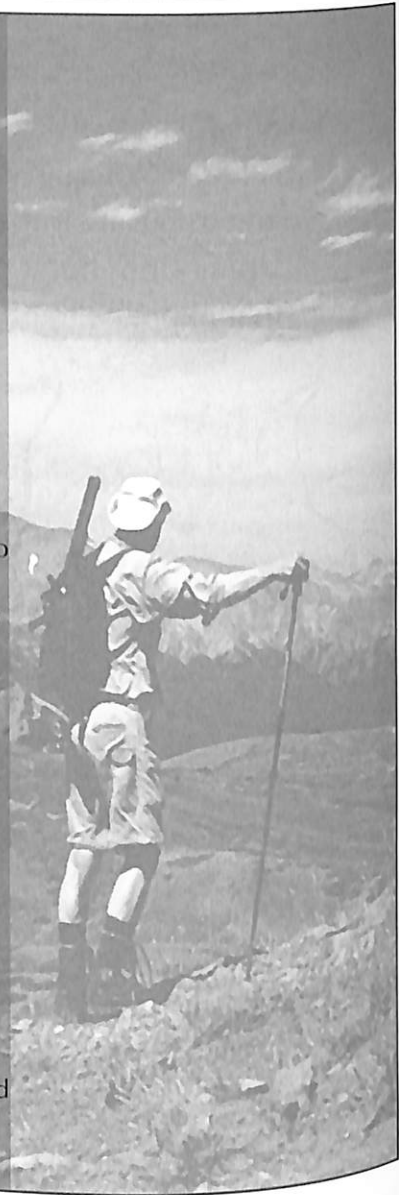
Success is one of life's greatest rewards. It can be delivered as fame, acceptance, or wealth – success in its most notable forms. Not always a fair gift, it is occasionally awarded to people who do not deserve it; however, success, in any guise, can be achieved by all, but it is more easily acquired when certain qualities emerge when one is young. Most teens who are successful possess individuality, confidence, and knowledge.

During a lifetime, one person can imprint billions of people's lives with his or her own thoughts or ideas. The individuality and creativity that impacts others are identical to what a teenager needs for success. People either exalt or exclude those that enlighten a room filled with the empty, conformed minds that so often engulf today's society. A teenager that expresses individuality is the sun, which is a star among trillions of stars, but, because of its distinctive attributes, it is the most important star to mankind; furthermore, a teenager's creative individuality is important because it illuminates the path to success.

Confidence is an aphrodisiac that envelops a successful person and enralls others, enticing others to succumb to its enchantment. Confidence is an aura that encompasses its wearer with the leisure of an old coat. It lures people into the same sense of comfort as an infant in its mother's womb. With confidence, a teenager can develop the ability to think for himself or herself. Successful teenagers need confidence to capture any audience before them. With captivating charm, a successful teenager is able to relay his or her ideas to superiors and have these thoughts considered. Teenagers covered in an aroma of confidence will become successful.

A wise man is not someone who chatters constantly, but someone who directly gives advice. Knowledge is an important quality to have to become successful. It is important to know a little about everything because situations can occur in which the information may be useful. Knowledge impresses. People remember what impresses them. A successful teenager needs knowledge to have many options when it comes to pursuing a desired future. If a teenager can use the knowledge he or she gains to the best advantage, it will make him or her successful.

Individuality, confidence, and knowledge are important qualities a successful teenager needs for success. A teenager needs individuality to make a lasting impression. Confidence in a successful teenager shows others that he or she is not afraid to express his or her opinion. A teenager that is knowledgeable will find that success comes easier to him or her. To become a successful teenager certain qualities are needed. With these qualities, a teenager can become successful.



MISSISSIPPI...

*Green fields under a sweltering sun,
Bare feet on a dusty tree-lined road,
Crickets and katydids on warm
black nights,
Gallons of iced tea and
the cold wonder
of watermelon.*

MISSISSIPPI
DREAMLAND

MISSISSIPPI...

*The stillness of a fall day,
Long Indian summer suddenly changing to
glorious autumn,
The golds, reds, and oranges of leaves against a clear
blue sky,
A different slant to shadows and a hint of cool in the air.*

MISSISSIPPI...

*Gray, rainy winters,
Long evenings by the fire,
Hunters ruminating over the one that got away,
Biding time until spring.*

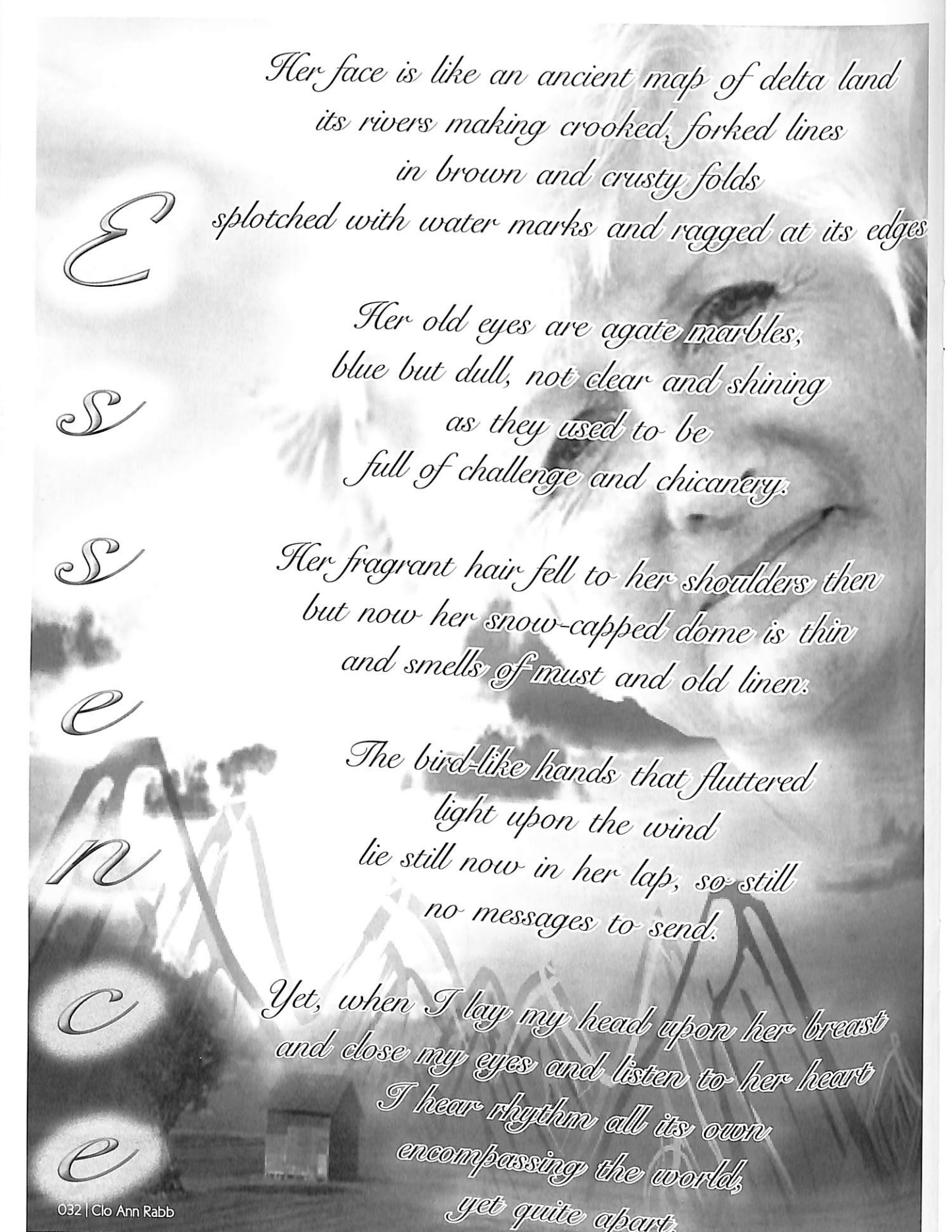
MISSISSIPPI...

*The first hyacinth and daffodil,
The smell of the raw good earth,
Butterflies and bees on new grass,
The first swim of the year, washing off the weariness of winter.*

MISSISSIPPI...

*My homeland.
My dreamland.*





*Her face is like an ancient map of delta land
its rivers making crooked, forked lines
in brown and crusty folds
splotted with water marks and ragged at its edges*

*Her old eyes are agate marbles,
blue but dull, not clear and shining
as they used to be
full of challenge and chicanery.*

*Her fragrant hair fell to her shoulders then
but now her snow-capped dome is thin
and smells of must and old linen.*

*The bird-like hands that fluttered
light upon the wind
lie still now in her lap, so still
no messages to send.*

*Yet, when I lay my head upon her breast
and close my eyes and listen to her heart
I hear rhythm all its own
encompassing the world,
yet quite apart.*

Redneck Sonnet

Your love is like a fresh hit of Skoal,
The first tasty juices exploding,
Stinging with bite and flavors that roll,
Around my gums that hang on, eroding:
To kiss you is like the woosh of a Budweiser can,
Releasing cold tastiness upon its opening,
When in your grasp I am, no doubt, all man,
And I pray that this will never have a closing.
But now you're messing with my cousin, Ronnie.
And I am experiencing a fit of rage,
You said all that was over after Donnie,
That you were turning another page.
So I'll just sit here and drink this beer,
and think about our good times of yester year.

The Day I Cried the Blues



*"Late Last Night" my hips felt the "Boom Boom" of a crazy drum
I woke up this morning and my head felt numb
I had a taste but I wanted more
Yea, a spicy sax and a trumpet roar*

*"Rag, Mama, Rag" that's what I wanna hear
I slip on my soulful dress red, long and sheer
"Shake your Boogie" and slouch your back
The House of Blues is where it's at*

*I shimmied up to that 12 string picker
"Let's stay together," I whispered
His sausage fingers bounced on the keys
That piano man sang low and with ease*

*Here in the South they just play
In the rain, on the porch, after church on Sunday
Take it from me and kick off your shoes
This was the day I cried the blues*



WINNERS HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION



1st PLACE
HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY

SUCCESS
by rachel morgan
newton county high school

2nd PLACE
HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY

TIME
by heather hasselle
northeast high school

3rd PLACE
HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY

MY DADDY'S OLD BOOTS
by katie bradley
philadelphia high school

HM
HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY

THE OLD BARN
by ellen mccaskill
newton county high school

1st PLACE
HIGH SCHOOL POETRY

TWISTING MY TONGUE IN PIG LATIN
by devonté gardner
meridian high school

2nd PLACE
HIGH SCHOOL POETRY

IT'S A WOMAN'S WORLD
by meagan martin
philadelphia high school

3rd PLACE
HIGH SCHOOL POETRY

THE DARKNESS
by samantha dykes
newton county high school

HM
HIGH SCHOOL POETRY

LOVE FOR A WOMAN
by dontra winfield
meridian high school

HM
HIGH SCHOOL POETRY

STORM AT SEA
by sadie payne
newton county high school

1st PLACE
HIGH SCHOOL SHORT STORY

THE GUARDIAN
by ellen mccaskill
newton county high school

2nd PLACE
HIGH SCHOOL SHORT STORY

THE DRIVING LESSON
by emilee lanier
newton county high school

3rd PLACE
HIGH SCHOOL SHORT STORY

TIME FOR MURDER
by bobby branning
west lauderdale high school

HM
HIGH SCHOOL SHORT STORY

FATE
by christi vanderwalker
kemper county high school

WINNERS MCC & COMMUNITY

1st PLACE
COMMUNITY ESSAY

THE DAY MY DADDY DIED
by hattye mcglothin jones
meridian

2nd PLACE
COMMUNITY ESSAY

MY FATHER IS MY HERO
by maggie riley
meridian

3rd PLACE
COMMUNITY ESSAY

A REAL TALE OF HAPPY EVER AFTER
by cathy webb
mcc faculty

1st PLACE
COMMUNITY SHORT STORY

GRACELAND
by mable hoskins oatis
meridian

2nd PLACE
COMMUNITY SHORT STORY

THE GIFT
by lawanda shields
dekalb

3rd PLACE
COMMUNITY SHORT STORY

THE LIBRARIAN
by edmund hartman
collinsville

HM
COMMUNITY SHORT STORY

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE APPLE
BLOSSOM ASSOCIATION
by anne mckee
meridian

1st PLACE
COMMUNITY POETRY

ESSENCE
by clo ann rabb
meridian

2nd PLACE
COMMUNITY POETRY

THE WAKING OF THE WOODS
by lauren taylor
clinton

3rd PLACE
COMMUNITY POETRY

HISTORY'S PERMANENCE
by hattye mcglothin jones
meridian

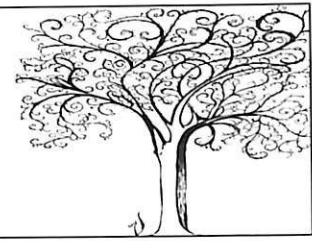
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COMMUNITY POETRY

TRANSCENDENT JOY
by paula cole
meridian

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MISSISSIPPI DREAMLAND
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