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# THE MCC LITERARY REVIEW

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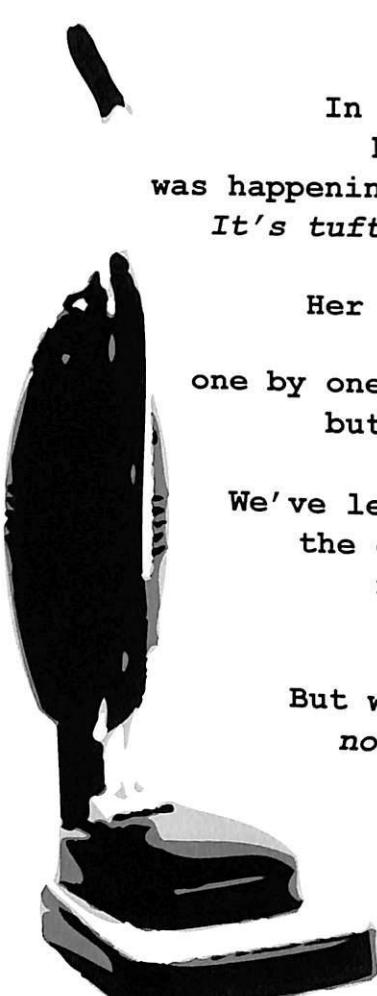
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# Diagnosis: Breast Cancer



In mid-July, the vacuum cleaner stalled,  
but not because of what she thought  
was happening. She sliced its bag for proof of going bald.  
*It's tufts of hair, she swore, keep getting caught.*

Her fear grows longer, thicker every day -  
she scans black, velvet dresses  
one by one. And no one now denies the strands of gray,  
but no one draws attention or confesses.

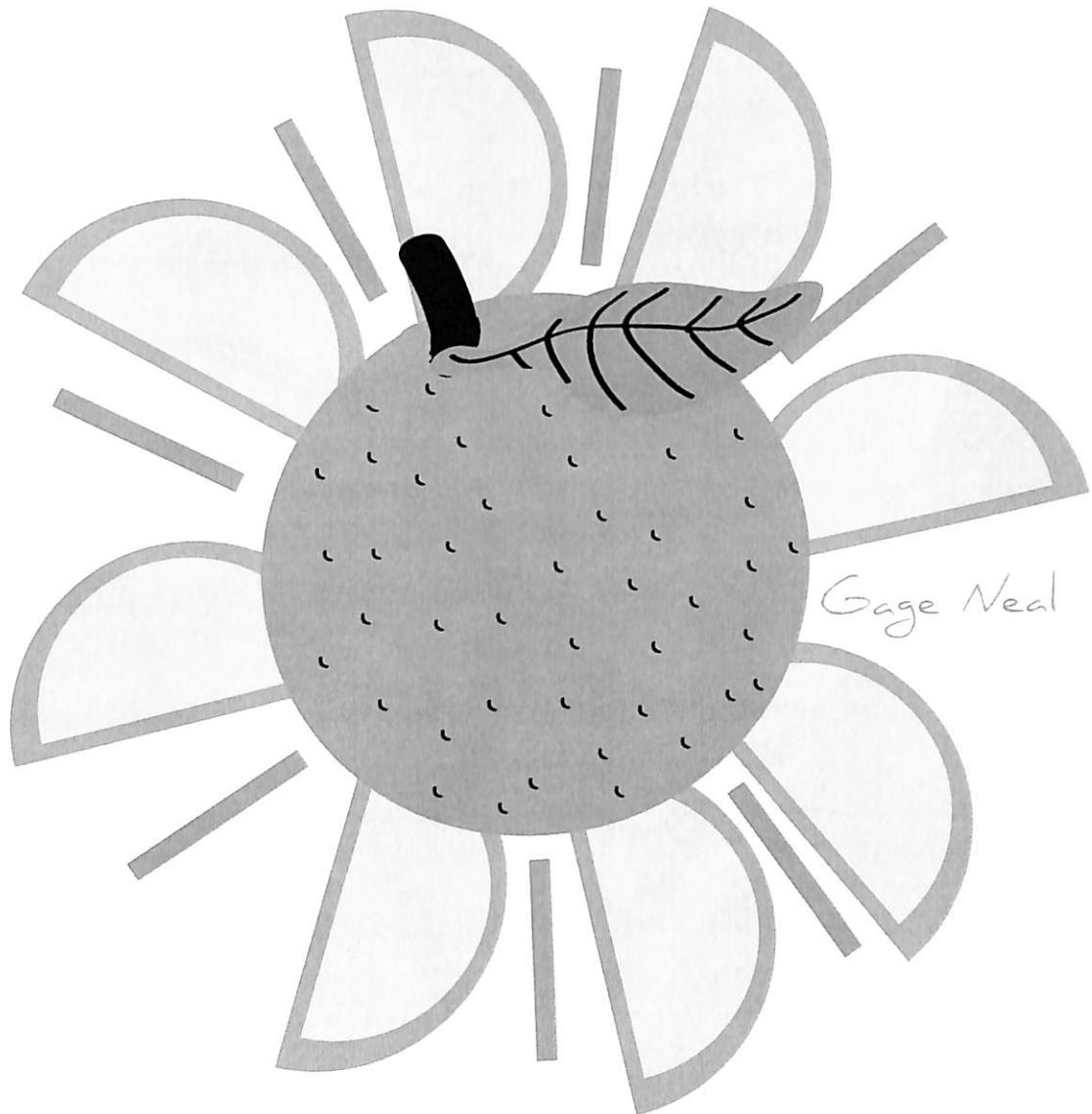
We've learned the words we aren't supposed to say,  
the ones the doctor week by week addresses:  
no pluck, no brush, no cut, shave  
until the paranoia's given way.

But what about the words that she represses:  
no cure, not sure; this cave, the grave

Samantha S. McKinnis-Moore

Haiku  
Orange Slices

I peel the orange  
The ripe and juicy slices  
Sunshine for my tongue



© TROLLS



CHRIS MALLETTÉ

Girls are like locks  
that are difficult to crack.  
They're a period of your life  
you'll never get back

You love them; you hate them  
you don't know what to do  
but you can't live without them  
you know this is true

It starts with "Hello"  
and then "What is your name"?  
but little do you know,  
that you're playing her game.

She pulls you in with her looks  
and personality, too  
but you have no idea  
what you're about to go through

You want this; she wants that  
doesn't matter what you say,  
because one thing is for sure  
she'll have it her way.

She'll ask you trick questions  
like "How do I look?"  
and like a helpless fish  
you're caught on her hook

There will be nights of pure silence  
and yes, she might cry  
she says it's your fault  
but you have no idea why

Years might pass  
and it all seems the same  
no matter how long it's been  
you're still playing her game

But when you take a step back  
and think of the fall  
all the good times you had  
she's the reason for them all.

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# Good Luck America

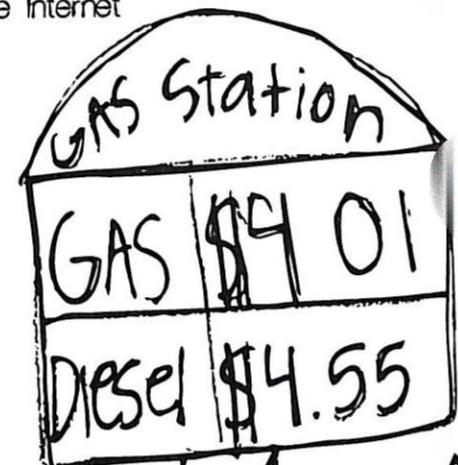
Starting off on my run  
Hoping I will soon be done  
Up the hill around the bend  
All I see is trash piled five foot ten  
Old oil cans, tarnished silver coins, a dead keyboard  
And the rest of the pile is junk galore  
What do we get?  
High gas prices, an old social security system and bans on the Internet

One half mile down the street  
I face some vicious dogs who can't be beat  
They snarl, they bark, they are ready to pounce  
As though I owed them a large amount  
They stare at me with hungry eyes  
Searching for a way out of their demise  
How much do we owe?  
Fourteen trillion dollars in dough

Another forth mile down the road  
I discovered a man who looked in need of a tow  
Jumper cables in his hands  
Stuck knee high in quick stand  
Determined to get his car running again  
But everything he tried caused more helplessness and pain  
Can we get a move on?  
Can we jumpstart the economy and move along?  
Can we save our country from peril?

Down the block  
A gated entrance with a padlock  
Around the house that was for sale  
His mortgage not met  
Way too far in debt

Is hope dead?  
That's what I dread  
Is this fair?  
How can we prepare?  
Good Luck America



Sean J. Shumate



Ariel Elliott

I glanced at the clock; it was 7:21. I climbed from the bed and began the daily routine. First, it was to get Emily to school. I made her breakfast, fussed over getting her supplies together, made sure she had brushed her teeth, and finally I was driving her to school.

"So there's supposed to be a new girl at school today!" she chattered away happily in the backseat.

"You don't say? Well, if you and her turn out to be friends, why don't you bring her over to play?"

"Okay!" she exclaimed excitedly as we pulled up to the school.

"Have a good day!" I hollered as the door slammed shut.

I watched as she skipped up the steps and into the school. It was 8:21. I still had plenty of time to grab a bite to eat from the food shop before I needed to clock in at the police station. I drove down the street and noticed someone had occupied my usual parking spot though.

"No harm done," I thought as I pulled into the next available parking spot, number 21.

I pushed the restaurant door open and heard the familiar bells chime as the smell of bacon greeted me.

"Hey, Tony! You want the usual?" a friendly voice called out as Bethany stepped from behind the counter with her usual grin.

"You know me too well," I replied as I pulled up a stool and grabbed a newspaper. "Newspaper prices have gone up again?" I asked. The paper was now \$1.21.

"Gas prices are up to \$3.21 as well." Bethany added as she set the meal in front of me: black coffee and a cheese omelet. "Times are getting harder and harder."

"No kidding." I replied as I took a bite of omelet. "Your food is as good as always though." I said with a wink.

"Well thank you," she said with a sly grin. "That's still going to be \$4.21 though."

I paid her, finished my meal, and made my way back to my car. I stopped and stood dumbfounded as I gawked at my car's new, unexpected paint job.

"My car!" I gasped.

My car was now completely spray painted black with the number 21 written all over it in red paint. I saw a slight movement in the driver's seat. Was that black hair?

"Stop!" I hollered as I ran to the driver's door. I flung the door open and stood confused at an empty seat though. I started at the seat for a second then looked in the back seat, but no one was there either.

"I could have sworn...maybe it's the shock," I thought as I climbed into the driver's seat.

In the windshield, a small business card was awaiting me. I picked it up and analyzed it. It contained one word: *can*.

I flipped the card over, but there was nothing else. What did it mean? Was the word referring to cans of food? Was the word the beginning of a question? I tucked the card into my shirt pocket. It was probably just some kids pulling a prank. They were going to be in some serious trouble when I caught them though.

I started the car up and made my way to the police station. I was going to have to file a report on this as well as get another car. I made my way down the streets and pulled up to the station to be greeted by confused stares. I ignored them, clocked in, then made my way straight to the sheriff's office.

"I need a new cop car." I said as I entered the office.

"What's wrong with your old one?"

"Some black spray paint...to make a long story short." I muttered.

"Tony!" he cried then sighed. "Remember to file a report, and I'll send a message telling service to deliver new keys to you. You let the hooligans get this one, and you're out of luck; you hear me?"

"Understood," I replied with a nod, exited the room, and made my way to my office. The clock read 9:21, and a small envelop was waiting for me on my desk. I sat down and ripped the envelope open sending tiny, shredded pieces of paper from inside the envelope sprinkling everywhere. Great.

I picked up all the paper confetti, dumped it on my desk, and turned my attention back to the envelope. There was another card similar to the other one inside. I carefully pulled the card out to find the word *you* typed onto it. I patted my pocket and hastily found the other card. *Can and you?* I looked at the confetti again and noticed small red marks on some of the them with what appeared to be pencil on the others.

"This is madness," I whispered under my breath.

I carefully began to piece together the tiny shreds of paper as though they could be a puzzle. The writing was difficult to read, and I have never been the best at puzzles, but I leaned back in my chair as I placed the last piece in place. In bold red ink, the number 21 stood out while smaller, pencil written 21s surrounded it. What was this about?

I grabbed the envelope and made my way down the hall to the chief mail woman.

"Can you tell me who sent this envelope?" I asked as I tossed the envelope onto her desk.

"There's no address, so it had to be hand delivered, Tony. There's no way for me to know."

"You don't keep these kind of things on record?" I exasperated.

"If you have a problem with the system, take it up with the sheriff; otherwise, I advise you to get back to work," she replied annoyed.

I glared at her while I grabbed the envelope but left. Maybe this was a giant game...That's insane. Wasn't all of this crazy though?

I sat down at my desk again and looked at the pieces. I carefully brushed the pieces back in the envelope and set it to the side. I looked at the cards. *Can...you...21...*they made no sense! The clock blinked as the time changed to 10:21. There was that number again. I sighed and decided I needed to get some work done.

I pulled out some forms that needed to be completed from a run that was made yesterday as well as the car request form. I filled the car form out and took it to the form group. After looking at the file, he said the keys would be on my desk in an hour.

I trudged back to my desk and filled out a few more forms, but I was preoccupied with thoughts of 21. What kids would pull this type of prank...and on a cop car at that? Wouldn't they be in school? Well, not if they were playing hooky.

I twirled my pen back and forth in between my fingers....There was the black hair I had seen in the front seat. The person wouldn't have had time to get out of the car before I got there though. I was quite certain it was just a figment of my imagination. I glanced at the clock; it was 11:21. I stood up and decided it was time for a break.

I made my way out of the building and to the break area. None of these events made any sense. I walked to the snack machine and pulled three quarters from my pocket for some cheese chips. I looked at the code to type in.

"Of course it's 21P," I thought glumly.

I punched the buttons ignoring the fact it contained the number 21. So what? It's not like the kids would have set that up.

I heard the cheese chips tumble down. I pushed the snack door back and reached in to grab them. I felt around and grabbed what felt similar to a hand. I yanked my hand out startled. That wasn't a hand...Was it? I dropped to my knees and peered past the snack door only to see the cheese chips lying there. I took a breath and hesitantly grabbed the cheese chips. Another card was lying beneath the snack. I set the cheese chips back down and picked up the card instead. It had the word save on it.

I tucked the card into my pocket and ran my hand though my hair. What was this about? Who was sending these cards? What did the cards mean? I spun around and went back into the building. This was too weird; I needed answers. I turned a corner quickly and crashed into the mail woman.

"Sorry! I have to...pee badly!" I blurted out as I bolted. I made my way to the bathroom and pushed the door open. All the urinals were unoccupied, and the only stall was clear; I was alone. Good.

I turned the water on one of the sinks and splashed my face. I looked up at my terrified face in the mirror and set my hands on the edge of the sink.



Destruction of Government Property



Time



Witness's Sketch

"Get a hold of yourself." I thought out loud. "You're becoming paranoid; nothing is going on. It's just some cards from someone wanting to scare you. You imagined the rest."

Suddenly, a movement in the glass caught my attention. I backed up slightly and gawked at a red question mark appearing on the mirror. I looked quickly to the other mirrors to see a number sign on the first mirror, the number 21 on the middle mirror, and the question mark being finished on the last mirror.

Can you save #21? Was that the message?

I walked closer to the mirror and hesitantly touched the glass. I couldn't wipe the writing away. It was as though the writing was actually inside the mirror.

I stood there analyzing the mirror and was startled by two hands suddenly emerging from the mirror to cling to my shirt. The small, gray hands clung strongly to me as the hands used me to help pull the rest of the thing through the mirror. I let go the scream that I had been holding back and shoved the creature's hands away causing me to stumble backwards onto the floor. I watched in shock as the hands now clung to the sink, and a skull covered in dark, long hair emerged from the mirror. The creature raised its head to start at me with its jet black eyes.

My heart raced as I struggled to my feet and burst through the bathroom door frantically. I stumbled down the hall to my office and slammed the door behind me. A set of keys was lying on my desk; the keys were for the new car. I grabbed the keys and ran from my office and out of the building to the car parking lot. I looked at the number for the car on the keys and nearly dropped the keys at the sight of the number 21. I located the car and took a breath as I sat in the driver's seat. I adjusted the rear view mirror and looked to see the creature glaring from the back seat.

I twisted around in my seat to face it, but the creature had vanished. I sat back heart racing and looked in the rear view mirror again. The creature was nowhere to be seen. This wasn't a prank anymore; something really weird was going on. I started the car, pulled out on the road, and focused on driving.

I was on 19th Avenue and decided to turn the police scanner on. I nearly rear ended the car in front of me when a voice asked for anyone near 21st Avenue. I hesitantly asked for

The call was to warn of arguing from room 21 at the local motel that could lead to violence.

Was it a coincidence? Was it connected with all the strange events that had been happening today? I glanced at the clock; it was 12:21.

I picked up speed again and spun into the parking lot. I drew out my gun as I crept along the pathway outside, following the numbers on the doors. I didn't hear any arguing as I drew closer to the room. I noticed the curtain was slightly cracked and took a deep breath as I looked into the room. There wasn't any light inside except for the bathroom light, but I was baffled by what I could see.

The haunting creature stood dominant over a lifeless human body. The creature wasn't that tall, but it still struck fear as it held a small, sharp knife in the hands that had just clung to the sink of the police bathroom. I watched as the creature slowly turned towards the window to face me; it knew I was watching. This time amongst the black, tangled hair I saw a smile of satisfaction upon its face. I blared into the walkie talkie for backup as I kicked down the door, and I walked in with my gun raised. The creature had vanished though, yet the victim remained on the floor in a pool of blood. Where had the creature gone? I quickly examined the room to see the walls had the number 21 carved into them repeatedly. I left the room shaken.

Police back up arrived moments later, and evidence was taken. I gave an eye witness account due to being first on the scene and was held up with questions until four. Finally released for the day, I drove home to find Emily sitting on the porch swing waiting for me. I parked, and she came running up to the cop car excitedly.

"Daddy, guess what? The new girl is so amazing! She is so nice and has such pretty hair! She got a little sick from the nervousness of a new school today, but she and I are friends, and she came over to play just like you said she could!"

"Oh, now really?" I said cheerfully. "Well, where is this mystery girl, and what do you know about her so far?"

She grabbed my hand and tugged me towards the front door. "I finished my homework before her, but I told her I had to wait for you, and she said that was okay. She's so nice though! She liked the color blue, and she has never moved before now," she chattered on excitedly as she pushed the front door open. "Oh! And she loves the number 21!" Emily exclaimed cheerfully as I looked up to see a girl sitting at my kitchen table. I would have recognized that long, dark hair, those stunning black eyes, and her smile that iced my soul over anywhere.

"Oh, Emily, I've changed my mind," the girl said with a menacing smile, "My favorite number is now 22."

# SHUT HAPPENS



@#\$%!!

Jeremy  
Sollie

For the third time that day I was in the hospital, clutching my bandaged, bloody, thumb. It was spring 2002 and I was in the hospital waiting room after being taken out of school. While everyone else in my grade was having recess, I was waiting to give blood in a lab. Looking back, that was the day I realized that following instructions does not always lead to the best results.

Before all of that happened my class was lining up at the door to go to the bathroom. My teacher, Mrs. Hamburg, told our class to 'line up at the classroom door when you are done, but don't go in!' Afterward our class was lining up at the door, and some of my classmates started going in. I told them that we were not supposed to go inside, and stupidly stood in the doorway blocking everyone. Jami Broadman, a girl in my class, had the grand idea of shutting the door while my hand was still there. She followed through with the plan, and I watched as my thumb disappeared behind the door.

I was in shock for a few seconds as I stared at the block of metal incasing my thumb. I yelled for Jami to open the door, and after what seemed like an eternity she did. My thumb was completely red, and I cradled it as I walked over to Mrs. Hamburg. I waited to get her attention - I stupidly felt I needed to be polite- and showed her my thumb. Once she saw it, she appropriately freaked out and rushed me to the nurse. The nurse, packed with towels and band aids, resembled a medic in the war. My thumb was crudely wrapped and I was told to lie down. After lying down for a while my mother picked me up, and I was taken to begin my odyssey in the hospital.

Once my trip to the hospital was over, I was sent home with stitches in my thumb. Eventually the stitches were taken out, a few by the doctor, and a few by my trembling hands. The doctor thought letting me take some of the stitches out would lessen the anxiety, when in reality the fear of messing up and seeing my thumb unravel made it seem like a real life version of Operation. I was told my nail would fall off, and it didn't take long before it did. The nail was placed in a sandwich bag and carried wherever I went, like my own medal of honor. When the nail was passed around the class, the reactions alternated between giggles and dry heaving. And even though I don't remember the day vividly, I wouldn't be surprised if Jami Broadman smirked.

As I think back to the loss of my nail, I realize how ironic the story is. I followed instructions like I should have, and though I overreacted, was punished for it. This experience was one of the first times as a kid that I realized life would not always be fair, and that bad things could happen for seemingly no reason. While the event was not life altering, it was certainly memorable, as it is clear ten years later as it was then. And two years ago when I returned to the old classroom door and saw the outline of my nail in the door hinge, I almost smiled. Because even though paint would eventually take away any trace of that day, the story of what happened there will live on. And it's all Jami Broadman's fault.



VAUGHN BROWN

"Now you be sure and lock up, Donna. There's all kind of meanness going on these days. Them two just broke out of Parchman and they ain't found them yet."

"I wish you'd let me drive you to Jackson tonight, Miss Emily," I said. "It's nearly nine already and it's a long way to the medical center."

"That's sweet of you dear, but you got exams in the morning and I want my own car to go back and forth to the hospital as I see fit. My cell phone will work on the highway and I got my Colt." She pulled a long-barreled revolver from her zebra print shoulder bag and waved it in the air.

"Okay, I hope your son will be all right. Just be careful, watch out for deer and call me when you get there."

"No need to worry you. My daughter-in-law knows I'm coming and she'll have the Highway Patrol looking for me if I don't show up," she said as she climbed into the seat of her white Grande Marquis. Her head was barely above the steering wheel as the heavy car scrunched out of the gravel driveway.

"Maybe this wreck will teach that fool son of mind to keep his foot off the gas pedal," she yelled out the window as her tires squealed on the blacktop. Lord help any deer or criminals that get in the way of that eighty-year old woman and her car.

A chilly wind sent a whirlwind of leaves scurrying around the ancient oak in the front yard as I watched the headlights disappear down the road. I hurried up the steps into the white Victorian house, turned off the porch light and peeked out through the lace curtains. Renting a room in the country was cheaper than an apartment and quieter than the dorms at State, but I was amazed how dark it was without any streetlights or other houses around.

At midnight I put aside my textbook and turned off the lamp beside my four-poster bed. If I didn't know how to solve linear equations by now, I never would.

The old house creaked and popped as it cooled down. Tonight, I realized, was the first night I've been here alone.

Why did I watch that ghost hunting show on TV last night?

Without any moonlight coming through the window this evening, the room was so dark I might as well be wearing a blindfold. My battery operated alarm clock from Wal-Mart didn't even glow in the dark. It had a button to turn on its light.

A creak sounded like the front door opening, but I know I locked it. I thought I did anyway. Could Miss Emily be coming back? I doubt it. She would call out to me.

Another creak sounded like the floorboards when I walk down the hall. I've heard that sound before from the house at night. Well, I might have.

There can't be anybody in the house, though. What are the chances that someone would break in on the only night I'm here alone? Unless they were watching, of course.

I lifted my head and looked toward the bedroom door. No light came from between the bottom of the door and the threshold. If someone was inside, they had to be as blind as I was. Unless they had those goggles the Army uses, of course.

I stayed completely still, listening.

Was that the doorknob turning?

I held my breath.

Tap.

That was near the door.

I had left my purse with my pepper spray on the other side of the room.

Tap, tap.

That was closer to where I left my purse.

Tap.

That was about where I left my purse.

Tap, tap.

That was on the same wall as the head of my bed.

Tap, tap.

That was halfway to my bed.

I rolled over and jabbed the switch on the nightstand lamp.

POP!

A greenish flash left white spots floating in my field of vision. The room went black again. I froze.

My heart thudded so hard it made the bedsprings squeak.

I realized that the flash and pop came from the light bulb burning out.

Tap, tap.

That was right by the nightstand!

I threw off the bedcovers and dashed barefooted toward the light switch by the bedroom door. Something thudded into my right hip and spun me around.

My hands slammed against the wall and I fumbled for the doorknob. My left hand brushed against it. I jerked the door open and flipped up the light switch with my right hand.

I stumbled out of my room and fled down the hallway to an old walnut hat tree and snatched it up.

"GET OUT!" I shouted down the hall and held the antique like a baseball bat, ready to strike with the heavy base.

Nothing. Not a sound.

"Get out now and I won't hurt you," I said.

Nothing.

I crept down the hall and took a quick peek into my room. Nobody.

"Come out from behind the bed," I said and moved to the center of the room still holding my weapon at the ready. Nobody was behind the bed.

Tap, tap. Behind me!

"NOOO!" I screamed and swung the tree around like a battle axe.

"If you're a ghost make that sound again," I said in desperation.

Tap.

My heard did a double back-flip.

Something flashed by the corner of my eye and cast a faint shadow on the wallpaper as it passed by the overhead light. I twisted around and saw it.

A moth.

A southern pine sphinx moth. I remembered seeing one in biology class.

Tap.

"You little stinker," I said out loud.

The insect blended perfectly with the old flowered wallpaper and I noticed my armchair was knocked away from its ottoman. That was what I hit with my hip.

The hat tree made a good crutch as I pulled myself up off the floor. I eased over to where the moth rested on the wall. I started to smash it with my hand, but changed my mind and cupped it in my palm instead. It fluttered gently against my palm as I took it to the front door and released it into the chilly night air.

Back in bed, I reflected on the power of fear and how it transformed a harmless creature weighing a fraction of an ounce into a murderer and a ghost.

Did I lock the door?

Fellow classmates, I call on you today to witness the extinction of the pencil. As we enter 2012 filled with so much technology, we sadly watch the pencil fade into the forgotten alcove of the past. Where have they gone we ask? When it comes to education, interactive websites such as Facebook and Twitter, and cell phones we come to realize just how much we abandon the classic pencil.

When it comes to our education, computers have almost completely taken over. Think about it. When we walk into almost any classroom today, basically anywhere we look there are computers constantly in use. When we are assigned research papers in school where does the information come from? That's right, the internet. The internet offers so much information so easily it takes almost no time at all to get information on any topic. Do we even write down our assignments in class anymore? Now Blackboard makes them easy to find, and easy to print. Almost everyone who applied for college was accepted there through an online application they had to fill out. That dreadful ACT we all had to take to get into that dream college of ours, required an online sign up. For most of us that sign up we required over and over. Pretty soon, future schools will rely solely on anything computer based.

Websites, now that's a totally different story. Today, there are 800 million active users on Facebook. The average person has 130 friends, but we all know we are well above average. Do we really even know all our so called Facebook friend or are most of them complete strangers? The only reason our parents have Facebooks is so they can monitor what we say and do online. I would bet most of the people reading this have either had or have a Twitter account. 200 millions tweets are posted on twitter every day. That's 2,200 tweets per second. Instead of writing down things we might need to say or tell our best friend, most of us post them online for the entire world to see, and we wonder how all our business gets out.

Is it safe to say that most of us have unlimited text messaging and calling on our cell phones? Most of us probably start texting from the minute we wake up to the minute we go to sleep. Yes, we're all guilty of it. Because cell phones are so convenient with their touch screen keyboards no one has the need to write anything down anymore, like maybe a list for the grocery store, because it's so much faster on our handy Iphones. I remember back in middle school drawing out games such as hangman or mash to entertain my group of friends. Now, we just pull out our Iphones that even 3rd graders have these days and click on one of the millions of downloadable apps.

So think about this. How many times do we as individual log onto that Facebook account of ours or access Google to help us out with our homework. In a couple of years when we go to the store and get school supplies for a new year of high school or college will No. 2 pencils be on our list? Or will it be more like printer ink, computer paper, or a maybe even new mouse pad? The world is changing rapidly and quite possibly not for the best. At the rate our society is going today in the year 2012, with relying so much on technology, our children may never know this No. 2 pencil that got us through elementary school, and we'll have no one to blame but ourselves. Shut down the computer, and save the pencil.



# Haikus of the Unknown

Dylon Andrew Grayson



No one knows the pow'r  
Of the essential Unknown.  
Here, take the old flame.

The candle's been lit  
It is timet to see what is  
Hidden in the dark.

There is much to know  
About today's yesterday  
And when you were old.

And today you are  
But tomorrow you will be  
The old and the new.

From Ambrose Bierce  
Who was hanging from the bridge?  
T'was Peyton Farquhar.

Just before his death  
An eternity had past.  
His dream was now gone

His mind displayed it.  
All his senses had felt it  
T'was a mere second

The human mind can  
And the human mind might  
Make bliss before death.

Yes, the mind is deep  
The mind can too be shallow.  
How do you use it?

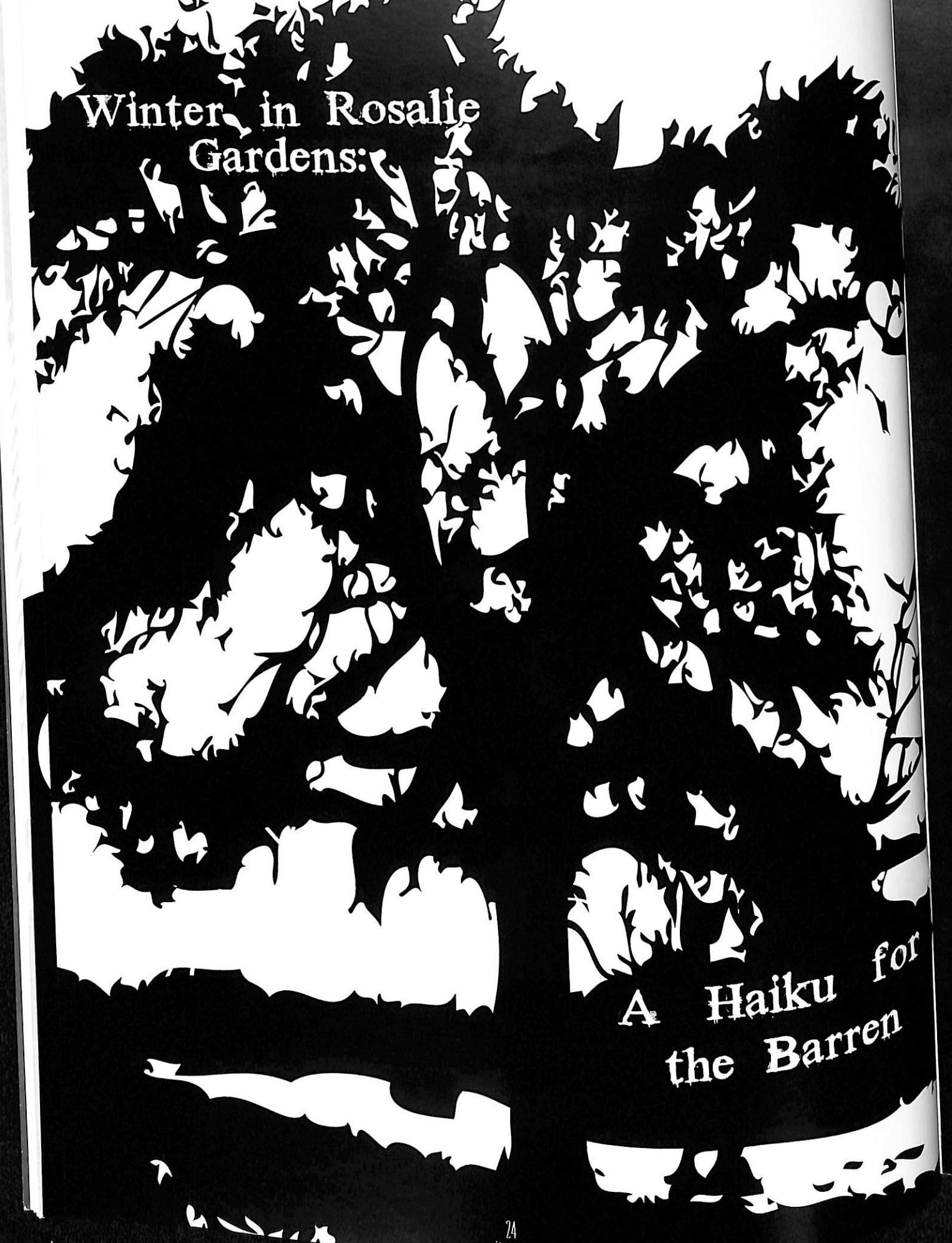
Do you waste away?  
Or fathom the day today?  
You must choose wisely.

You must find hidden  
Treasure within your mind set.  
The journey is tough.

Tabula Rasa  
Spoken by the ole John Locke  
Get experience.

Sigmund Freud was close.  
Do you know the mind?  
Can you fathom the abyss?

When you go to sleep  
Your mind sets sail to the place  
That is called Unknown.



# Winter in Rosalie Gardens:

A Haiku for  
the Barren

The roots of that oak,  
stunned by the weight of that ice:  
belly full of bones.

-Samantha S. McKinnis - Moore



# MOTHER'S MEMORIES



CHRISTINE A. MAUST BEACHY

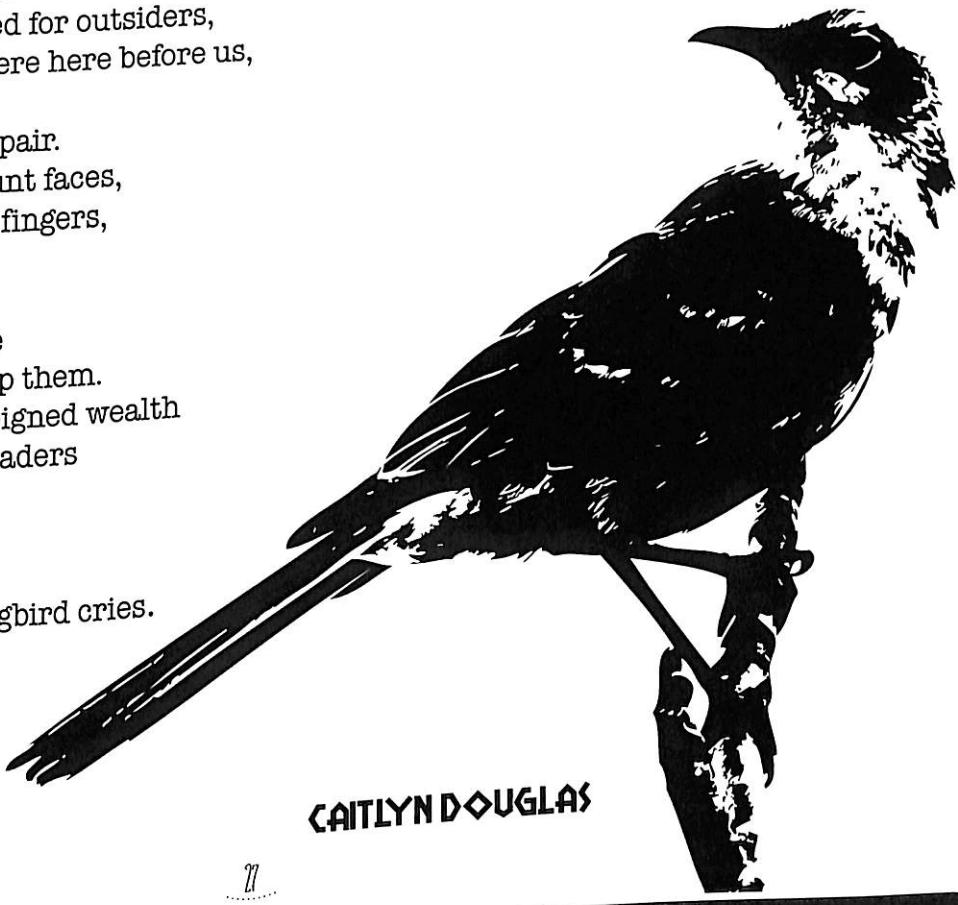


**Today I am tired  
Tired of seeing the clock numbers burning red in the night  
The alarm of three year old feet padding the floor in the dark  
No space between piles of clean clothes to find a new idea  
Irrational house guests  
So much crying  
The very people who don't pay me for my service  
Yell for my attention  
Barely able to maintain personal hygiene with a college education**

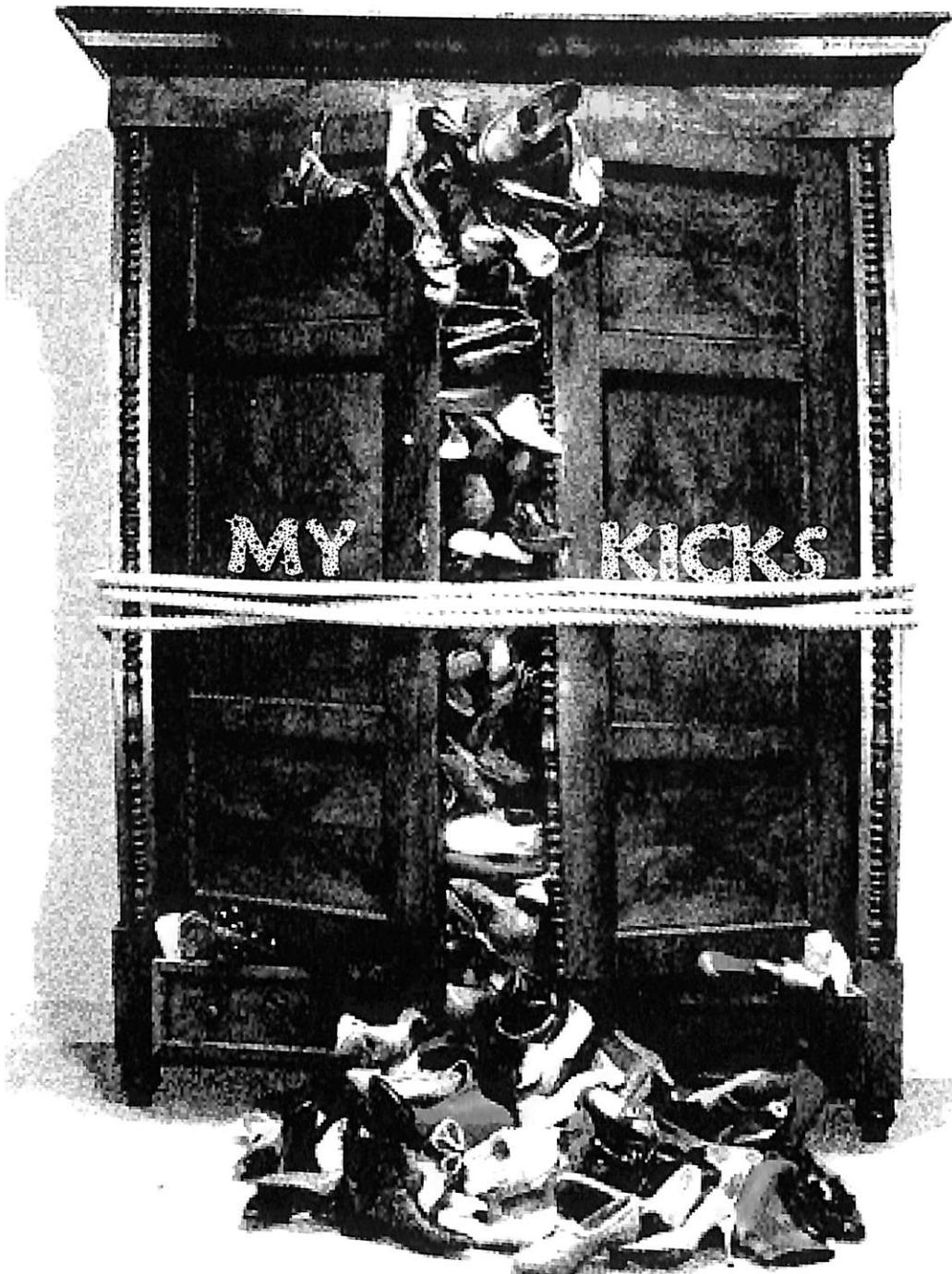
**And I know  
I will blink  
Wake up  
And I will wonder when the moments became years  
Wish to reach back and touch my sleeping baby  
All I will have are a few embellished memories  
A disordered box of photographs  
And the nostalgia that comes with rest**

# MY MISSISSIPPI

Vivid teardrops on Native trails,  
Entwined around colossal white monuments.  
Each little log cabin lurks in the back,  
Screeching its own dark history.  
Pines tower, scowling down,  
Scorning the progress of industry, prevalence  
And the ones who allowed themselves  
To be driven.  
A shocking cobalt sky stretches out  
To smother any further pretense.  
Flat, bare lands seek to expose,  
Intending to turn the long-standing tables,  
Against the rebel Aryans.  
In this realm, Atticus always wins the trial,  
And at every proclamation of injustice,  
Overseers turn in their graves.  
A burning cross yields to the destruction  
Of those self-proclaimed authoritarians,  
The ones who lit its flames.  
The places partitioned for outsiders,  
The outsiders that were here before us,  
Bring in prosperity,  
And despite this, despair.  
Its children, with gaunt faces,  
Were taught to point fingers,  
Down bottles,  
Speak hate  
At the hands of those  
Who professed to help them.  
False coalition and feigned wealth  
Will fall with those leaders  
Who warranted  
Such gutless deceit.  
We are the things  
At which the mockingbird cries.



CAITLYN DOUGLAS



KATIE MARCHESI

Shoes are like people,  
You see them in all places.  
There are all sorts of colors  
And different kinds of laces.  
I like my shoes purple;  
I have some that are green.  
I have all types of shoes  
And I always keep them clean.  
Tennis shoes are my favorite.  
I like the way they feel.  
But when I go out on the town,  
I always wear my heels.  
When I step foot on the sand,  
I slide into my flip flops.  
I strap on my Nikes,  
When I hear a little hip-hop.  
Sometimes I feel lazy,  
So I slip on my house shoes.  
I walk around the house  
In my favorite Mickey Mouse shoes.  
Although I'm not a fan,  
Sometimes I wear my boots.  
When I wear them with a dress,  
I look extra cute!  
The weather's indecisive.  
When it's cold, I wear my snowshoes.  
Sometimes when I swim  
I like to wear my toe shoes.  
When my shoes are tired,  
From carrying me all day,  
I open up my closet  
And I put them away.  
Shoes are like people;  
Different colors, different styles.  
Anytime I speak of shoes,  
On my face you'll see a smile!

# Rejection

Scott Nabors

Most everyone in the world has dealt with rejection at some point in his or her life. To some, it happens so often that it just seems like a part of life. Others might not even know what it is like to be rejected. There are many different ways to deal with rejection. There are the people who will fight back and the people who will cower in fear. I am a person who sets out to prove my rejecters wrong. When I get rejected in something, I do my very best to make my rejecter regret it. No matter what way one deals with rejection, I feel like it is a surefire way to test one's determination, build one's character, and challenge us as human begins.

First, rejection seems to always want to test our determination. It is almost as if life wants us to fight back. Since I was able to walk, my dream was to play professional baseball. I began playing at a very young age and fell in love with it. I was criticized during my whole career because I am shorter than most. In high school, I did not get the starting position I had hoped for. Someone who was slightly taller than I beat me out. Wanting to find a way to play, I asked if I could pitch. My coach said, "You could pitch if you were two feet taller." Knowing why I had been overlooked for such a mediocre aspect of my physicality fueled my fire. I set out to prove my coach wrong, and I was not going to give up.

Secondly, rejection is perhaps one of the easiest character builders of our time. I believe that life knocks our emotions so low to see how we will bring ourselves back up. Knowing someone is against me drives me more than anything. I cannot stand the thought of someone thinking that I cannot do something just because of my height. I continued to work hard in practice every day and respected my coaches. When it became obvious that it was not going to work out, the opportunity arose for me to transfer to a private school. It had a much better education and offered me a starting position in both football and baseball. It was a place where my talent was appreciated regardless of my disadvantage. I changed schools and was doing so well with grades and sports that my old coach told some people that he had made a huge mistake. I held no grudge against my former coach. He will always be the most influential person in my life. He was the one who put me in a situation to utilize my talents and earn a better education. I knew all along that my dream would be almost impossible to reach, but I refused to be turned down. Because I did not succumb to the early rejection of my life, I was now in a position closer to step two of my dream, playing college baseball.

Third, rejection resembles a challenge. In my eyes, it is life saying, "Hey, what are you going to do about it?" When I am challenged with something, I do not stop until I have beaten that challenge. I had thought that changing schools would make it much easier to play college baseball, but I was wrong. As it turns out, the coach there had something against me too. I did not understand how none of my coaches like me. I worked hard, respected all authority figures, and helped anyone every chance I got. My new coach knew that I was dying to

play college baseball. When I asked him for some inside help, he told me that I was too short to play college baseball. This was hard to believe seeing as how I am the same height as he and was leading the team in almost every aspect of the game. Knowing that I was on my own, I took charge. I attended numerous college tryouts, spent hours on the phone with recruiters that I called, and worked harder than ever to receive the opportunity to play anywhere. I will never forget what the head coach of a university told me. He said, "Kid, you maybe five foot six, but you play like you are six foot five." It was the greatest compliment I had ever heard in my young life. For once, someone finally noticed my hard work and passion for the game of baseball. Being told to my face that they liked me, I expected at least a phone call from the university, but it never came. It was not until after graduating that I learned of what had happened. Recruiters had called my coach about me and said they were going to call my parents to talk about playing for their school. The problem was that they never called. It confused me that recruiters loved me until they talked to the coach at my new school. I was later told that he had told the recruiters that I was not interested in playing for them. Knowing that it was my dream to play the game that I had loved for so long, he said those blasphemous things anyway. I had never been so angry in all of my life. I tried every way I could think of, worked harder than anyone who ever played the game, and even prayed for something good to happen, only for that one man to ruin any chance of it. I have not and will not forgive that person for what he did because he also did it to a teammate of mine. There is something to be said when major universities call the coach, but for some reason, the only school calling at the end was the lower college he used to coach at.

By the end of my senior season, I had everyone asking why in the world I was not playing at the next level. This was my goal. If I was going to be denied my dream, I was rest assured going to prove to everyone that I deserved it. Without the rejection from my coaches and non-believers, I would not be the type of person that I am today. There was a constant challenge from all around me to show them something special. I accepted that challenge and beat it. I proved people wrong everywhere. I had people who did not even know me thanking me after games for the display of passion and intensity that I played the game with. The thought of that new coach cringing at my success now makes me smile. Although it was not my ideal way of how to beat him, I did beat his rejection. Rejection is like a tool, a tool used to chisel away from us the immaturity and help mold who we are going to be. Without some type of rejection in our daily lives, we would not have to work for anything. No one would know what it is like to achieve their goals because it would all be handed to them. I love proving people wrong. It is what drives me now and always will. Rejection is life testing us on how to deal with future problems. Embrace it.

976801



My Monochromatic Existence

DUSTY WEISNER

After years of dedicated practice, my speed had quickened, my accuracy sharpened, and my knowledge expanded. When I had begun, my miniature carrot-like fingers still possessed the baby fat of an innocent child, but that quality did not hinder my desire to learn how to play. Stirring me from my thoughts was the sound of my name. I trembled as I slumped awkwardly onto the stage, and I sat on the bench, wiping the moisture of my hands onto my khaki church pants, and looked at the crowd of parents and students with angst. I knew the crowd expected much from me, but their high expectations and my pride heightened my sense of insecurity. Making one sound that was not melodious would just as easily catch the attention of the audience as a moaning stomach in a noiseless classroom. Staring at the monochromatic keys, I could not remember my first of seven compositions. The keys, brighter and more distinct than I am accustomed to, appeared to me unfamiliar, which sent the hair all over my body standing on end; but in reality they were the same 88 keys with which I had grown up. Finally, after almost beginning the piece an octave higher than written, I attacked the keys.

Although my fingers may have appeared to the audience to create fire from their velocity, my digits were numb from freezing. One time my fingers slipped and struck an extra note that thankfully escaped the crowd's notice. Had I not fully prepared myself for the show, my trembles would have shaken the memory of those pieces clear from my head resulting in embarrassment and anxiety attacks. However, at the end of my first composition, my mind became placid with the cheers, and I felt complacent from my partially completed accomplishment.

Continuing, I sailed from classical to 1920s jazz to contemporary music. As I preformed "Live and Let Die" by John Lennon, I grinned at the murmurs of many of the parents singing along as they recollected memories. Finishing my last piece, I was so comfortable I might have been able to repeat the songs once more but with a large audience and still maintain a composed stature. Something unexplainable happened that day. The grand piano and I became one.

Despite being thirteen, I, for once, recognized the piano as part of myself; it was who I am. All the variations and possible melodies created from the piano were the different paths I could take in life. Each key represented each one of my skills and abilities, and when stroked correctly and simultaneously in a significant pattern, created a harmonious melody.

After that recital the piano became a pathway for emotional communication. If grief took my mind, I could play a piece expressing the longing for happiness. If excitement got the better of me, I could pound the keys with rhythmic jazz. If I longed for peace or stability, classical and romantic compositions were preferable. One who heard me play could easily distinguish in what mood I was. I did not endeavor to make known my emotional status by my art, but rather the bondage of piano and soul instinctively picked the composition that adequately portrayed the emotion.

Not only has the piano communicated my emotions, but the instrument has also excelled my religious zeal and given me opportunities of a lifetime. Because of my talent, I lead the praise band at our church, and I improvise according to my mood. Nothing in the world can satisfy my soul like seeing the faces of the children of God upturned to worship Him with adulation. Also, being a part of this band has increased my chances for receiving college scholarships.

Since before I have been able to speak, I have treated the piano with awe and respect. Only through lessons have I been able to attain an almost humanly connection with the instrument. As I recollect my memories of my grade school years, seldom do the memories not relate to the piano. If there was one memorable object that defines me, that object would without a doubt be the majestic black and white banner that coveys messages beyond its physical limitations.

# WINNERS

of HIGH SCHOOL

## POETRY

1ST PLACE

HAIKUS OF THE UNKNOWN

DYLON ANDREW GRAYSON  
WEST LAUDERDALE

2ND PLACE

GIRLS

CHRIS MALLETT  
WEST LAUDERDALE

3RD PLACE

I HEAR WORDS

DUSTY WEISNER  
LAMAR

HM

ORANGE SLICE

GAGE NEAL  
LAMAR

## ESSAY

1ST PLACE

SHUT HAPPENS

JEREMY SOLLIE  
CLARKDALE

2ND PLACE

THE MYSTICAL ADVENTURES OF  
CHILDREN WITH EXCESSIVE IMAGINATION

MADISON LEE  
LAMAR

3RD PLACE

MY MONOCHROMATIC EXISTENCE

DUSTY WEISNER  
LAMAR

HM

A TRUE SUPERHERO

ALYSON MITCHELL  
WEST LAUDERDALE

## SHORT STORY

1ST PLACE

21

ARIEL ELLIOTT  
ENTERPRISE

2ND PLACE

GARDENS OF NEW YORK

ROBERT BILLUPS  
WEST LAUDERDALE

3RD PLACE

HOST RUNNERS

ROBERT BILLUPS  
WEST LAUDERDALE

# WINNERS

## POETRY

1ST PLACE

MY MISSISSIPPI

CAITLYN DOUGLAS

2ND PLACE

DIAGNOSIS: BREAST CANCER

SAMANTHA S. MCKINNIS-MOORE

3RD PLACE

WINTER IN ROSALIE GARDENS

SAMANTHA S. MCKINNIS-MOORE

HM

A TICKING TIME BALL

SARA HILL

## SHORT STORY

1ST PLACE

TAP, TAP

VAUGHN BROWN

2ND PLACE

MOONBEAMS

MANDY MCCOOL

3RD PLACE

I WAS SENT TO MARS

DONNA HARFORD

## ESSAY

1ST PLACE

REJECTION

SCOTT NABORS

THE .....  
MCC LITERARY  
REVIEW 2012

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DIAGNOSIS: BREAST CANCER  
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# THE MCC LITERARY REVIEW 2012

THE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DIVISION OF MERIDIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS PLEASED TO SPONSOR THE LITERARY REVIEW CONTEST EACH YEAR AS A METHOD OF ENCOURAGING WRITERS TO SUBMIT POETRY, SHORT STORIES, AND ESSAYS. OUR ENTRIES ARE ALWAYS OUTSTANDING, AND WE ARE BLESSED TO HAVE SO MUCH CREATIVE WRITING TALENT IN MERIDIAN AND SURROUNDING AREAS. THEREFORE, THE LITERARY REVIEW CONTEST AND MAGAZINE SEEKS TO SHOWCASE SOME OF THE BEST WRITERS OF OUR AREA.

THE CONTEST IS OPEN TO ANY HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORE, JUNIOR, OR SENIOR FROM ANY SCHOOL IN OUR AREA. WE ARE PLEASED EACH YEAR TO RECEIVE SO MANY OUTSTANDING ENTRIES FROM THE LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS. FURTHERMORE, WE WELCOME ENTRIES FROM ANYONE IN OUR COMMUNITY. AT MCC, WE STRIVE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY, AND THIS IS JUST ONE MORE WAY WE REACH OUT TO ANY CREATIVE WRITERS WHO WRITE FOR THE SIMPLE PLEASURE OF PUTTING THEIR IDEAS ON PAPER.

AT THE CONCLUSION OF OUR CONTEST EACH YEAR, THE ENTRIES ARE DIVIDED INTO TWO CATEGORIES, HIGH SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY. THEN, THE ENTRIES ARE FURTHER DIVIDED BY GENRE. OUTSIDE JUDGES EVALUATE THE WORKS AND AWARD FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD PLACES IN BOTH HIGH SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY POETRY, SHORT STORY, AND ESSAY. THE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DIVISION IS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE MCC FOUNDATION IN FUNDING OUR MONETARY PRIZES.

FINALLY, MERIDIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE PUBLISHES THE LITERARY REVIEW MAGAZINE. THIS MAGAZINE IS A COMPILATION OF THE BEST CREATIVE WORKS WE RECEIVED THAT YEAR, BOTH HIGH SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY. THE MAGAZINE IS DEVELOPED BY OUR GRAPHIC DESIGN STUDENTS, AND THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LAYOUT AND ARTWORK FOUND IN EACH YEAR'S MAGAZINE. WE THEN USE THE MAGAZINE AS A SHOWCASE FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR'S COMPETITION.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE INFORMATION ON OUR LITERARY REVIEW CONTEST, PLEASE CALL MERIDIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND ASK FOR JOSHUA MAEDA, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DIVISION COORDINATOR OF THE CONTEST. WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO TALK WITH YOU ABOUT SUBMITTING YOUR WORK AND ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE.

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