

# Kameli<sup>★</sup>an



KISHWAUKEE COLLEGE  
LITERARY/ARTS JOURNAL 2006

# KISHWAUKEE COLLEGE LITERARY/ARTS JOURNAL

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The ideas and opinions expressed in *Kamelian* are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the attitude of the Board of Trustees, the administration, the faculty or the staff of Kishwaukee College. Materials for *Kamelian* were submitted by students who have been enrolled in courses at Kishwaukee College during one or all of the previous three semesters. Outside jurors with professional credentials and knowledge in the respective fields reviewed all entries. The pieces selected for inclusion in *Kamelian* and the awards given were based on the juror's opinion of their aesthetic merit.



On the cover...

**HOLLY BURKHALTER**

*ON STRINGS*

CHARCOAL, ACRYLIC  
20"H X 16"W



ROSE ANGELA BARNETT - ANNA, HER BABY, AND CHICAGO - PHOTOGRAPHY



# JUROS

## ART & PHOTOGRAPHY

**MATT DUTZ** SENIOR DESIGNER  
United Display Craft

**RANDY KAYS** ILLUSTRATOR  
BFA, Northern Illinois University

**CAROL K. SAKIHARA** VISITING PROFESSOR  
METAL & JEWELRY DESIGN  
Northern Illinois University

## POETRY, ESSAY & SHORT FICTION

**DAVID ROSS** PRESIDENT - ROCKFORD WRITER'S GUILD  
EDITOR - ROCKFORD REVIEW & RWG CHAPBOOK PRESS

**DR. DAVID PINK** PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH  
Rock Valley College

**F. J. ROSS III** ENGLISH  
BA, Northern Illinois University

# KAMELIAN 2006

# awards

## **TWO-DIMENSIONAL ART**

NATALIE CALHOUN FIRST PLACE

NATALIE CALHOUN SECOND PLACE

HOLLY TAYLOR THIRD PLACE

## **THREE-DIMENSIONAL ART**

KATIE MEIER FIRST PLACE

MAUREEN RUSSELL SECOND PLACE

BETHANY MONTGOMERY THIRD PLACE

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

KATHRYN LISZKA FIRST PLACE

GRANT W. POORMON SECOND PLACE

HEATHER BAKER THIRD PLACE

## **POETRY**

MAUREEN RUSSELL FIRST PLACE

JULIA McANLY SECOND PLACE

CECIL SELLS THIRD PLACE

## **ESSAY**

JULIA McANLY FIRST PLACE

JASON MEYERS SECOND PLACE

REBECCA HIGH THIRD PLACE

## **SHORT FICTION**

DAVID JACOBSON FIRST PLACE

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# THE NEIGHBORS

The neighbors of thirty years just moved.  
We celebrated for days, weeks really,  
But before that wonderful happening,  
We watched with wide eyes:  
Two gigantic dumpsters being filled  
From basement holdings.

There were slabs of lumber,  
Old chairs,  
Metal pipes,  
Broken bikes,  
Mountains of wooden pallets  
That for years had been resting  
Against the back porch...  
A fire hazard we surmised.

Dumpsters were followed by  
Three trailers tugged by pickups.  
We heard the rattling of glass as  
Boxes were loaded  
Stacked three or four high,  
Just passing by.

Wine bottles,  
Hundreds of wine bottles,  
Leaving their burial ground  
At last.

We sighed deeply,  
As if we were respecting  
A funeral procession.



**MAUREEN RUSSELL**  
*THE NEIGHBORS*  
FIRST PLACE - POETRY

# an international affair

For the past nine years, I have been involved with the Network of Nations—an organization designed to befriend new International students at Northern Illinois University. One year, my family “adopted” three Chinese men—roommates and various engineering/ computer science students at the nearby Northern Illinois University. They were new to America, and two of the men had temporarily left their wives in China. Their spoken English, although understandable, was limited; and they knew very little about American culture and holidays. So my parents invited them over for Thanksgiving Day, and we all ended up having a great time! The men experienced stuffing, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, and variety of our traditional foods; and this “International Thanksgiving,” as we call it, has turned into an annual event! The effects of befriending Internationals and this Thanksgiving tradition have been far-reaching and long-lasting: I have learned so much about different cultures of the world; I have learned a lot about some of the surprising similarities I have with people from other countries; and the students have drastically improved their English while learning a lot about American family and tradition.

First, befriending International students has been a fascinating real-life geography class for me. I have met students from Japan, China, South Korea, Togo, Brazil, India, and Scandinavia; and each of these students has his or her own culture, history, family, and traditions that he or she is eager to share with us Americans. We get together often throughout the school year and continuing into the summer; and we talk about a variety of topics, including the difference between their culture and American culture. Often someone ends up pulling out a map or globe, so that we can visualize where the particular places are that have come up in conversation. My international friends have also brought my family and me many lovely gifts from their native lands, such as beautiful foreign stamps, a silk scarf, a sandalwood fan, and the most delicious Japanese chewing gum, among other amazing treasures. Receiving these gifts also opens up discussions on where the gifts are from and how they are symbolic of the culture each item represents. One memorable gift given to my family was an



original Chinese dinner cooked in our own home by three Chinese roommates (yes, the same ones who began my family’s Thanksgiving tradition!) It was a hilarious experience to see them chattering in their native tongues while dividing the work amongst themselves. The meal was delicious; and as we ate, we

were treated to a firsthand account of life and popular food in Beijing, the capital of China.

The memory of that dinner will remain with me for many years.

Another thing I have learned from my experience with international students is that even though the students may not speak perfect

English or follow the same customs as I do as an American, we are very similar, despite our obvious differences. The differ-

ences, including language, dress, and family customs, are minor compared to the similarities we share. For example, one friend from Africa even knew many of our popular songs, folk songs, and hymns we sing here in America and loved to sing them with my Dad. Many of these students have become like family to me, eating countless dinners at my house, crashing for a few hours on my sofa after a hard day of work or exams—even replacing the hard drive on my computer! We laugh, eat, and talk together. We invite each other to special events; I do not know how many college graduations I have been to in honor of my international friends. We are both eager to learn about the other’s culture and, in turn, teach them about our own. The friends I have met from other lands are so gracious and kind; getting to them has certainly been a new and fascinating experience. Yet they are not so different from me after all.

The last, but certainly not the least, of these effects of befriending international students is the drastic improvement in the students’ spoken English. Many students arrive in the United States with the basics of American vocabulary and grammar, but some students can barely speak English at all. Many students also use incorrect grammar construction or have such heavy accents that it is often difficult to understand them. After a few months in an American school and hanging out with an American family, however, the students’ English quickly improves. Many of them are quick to ask me how to pronounce a certain word or how to use a certain phrase. During one



Thanksgiving dinner, Ben, from China, asked to have the “stuff” passed to him. After a moment of confusion, we discovered he wanted the *stuffing*. After all the laughter that ensued, Ben quickly realized his mistake; and he never called stuffing, “stuff,” again.

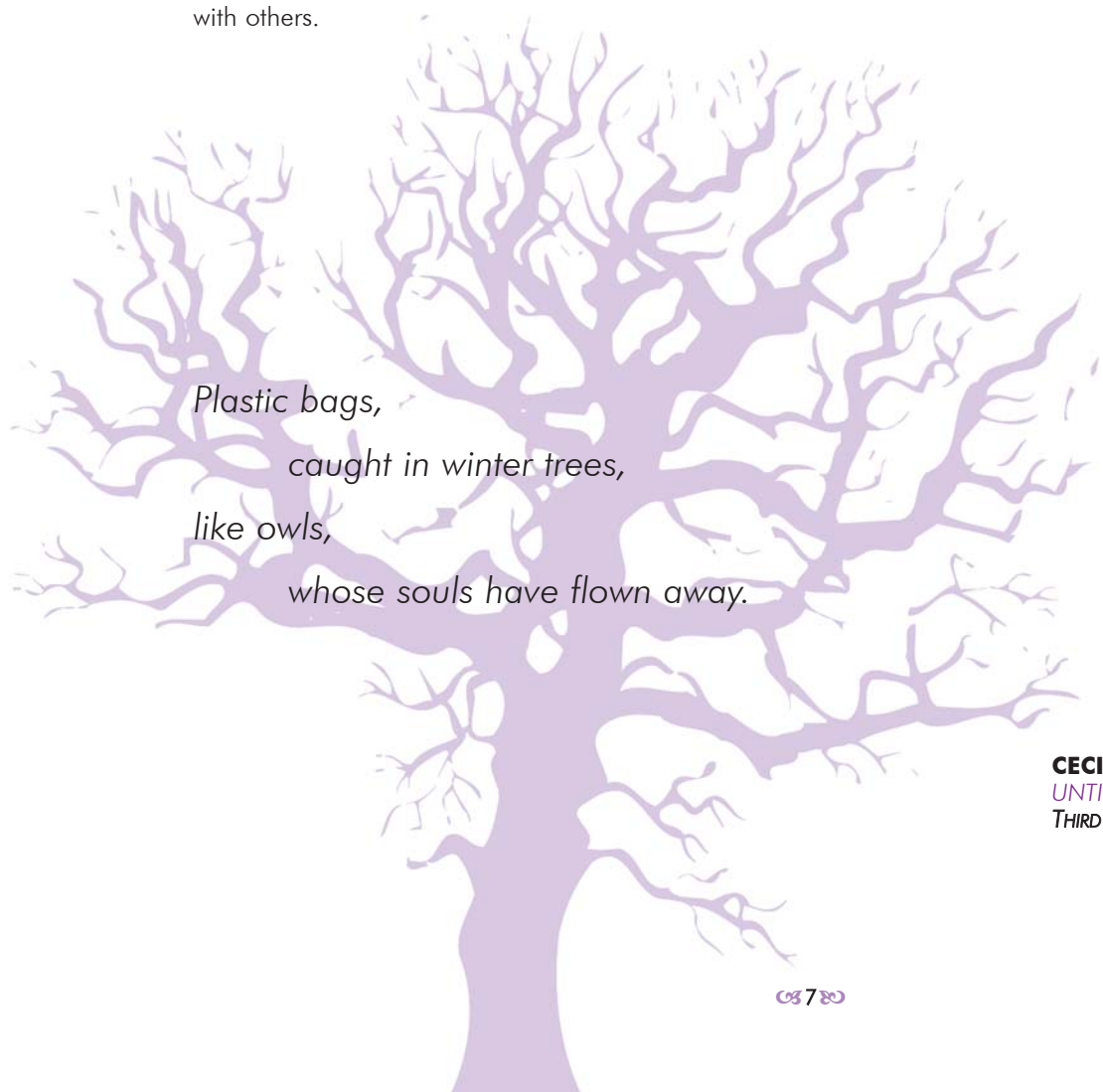
Because it has been such a major part of my life, befriending international students has really affected my life in a great way. I have learned a lot about various countries and their cultures, and, in turn, have been able to teach others about my own country and culture. Everyone involved has loved the experience and learned a lot. Through participation in this host family program, I now feel as if I am part of a global family that has members all over the world. It is amazing to think that if I traveled to Japan, or Africa, or Portugal I would have a free home to stay in courtesy of my international family. Also, after eight or nine International

Thanksgivings, including one that was reported on the front page of the local paper, I would really miss it if we did not host it! All this has happened because I have merely taken some time to be friends with others.

Now I am preparing to study Spanish in Costa Rica this summer. I hope that I will encounter friendly faces that are more than happy to share their culture with me. I am certainly thankful for the lessons I have learned here with my International friends that have now prepared me to live with a family of another culture for an entire month. After all, life is an adventure. Oh, the treasures one can miss by not taking that first big step out of one’s own culture comfort zone!



**REBECCA HIGH**  
*AN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIR*  
THIRD PLACE - ESSAY



*Plastic bags,  
caught in winter trees,  
like owls,  
whose souls have flown away.*

**CECIL SELLS**  
*UNTITLED*  
THIRD PLACE - POETRY

# inside our cat

There's a Lakota shaman  
living inside our cat.

She comes to me for spiritual things,  
I do not understand.

Perhaps she needs an eagle's feather,  
or a buffalo's gall bladder,  
sun dried—  
still, I do not know.

There's a fierce warrior, too,  
living inside our cat.  
She carried a feathered lance  
and counted many coups,  
  
in previous lives.

But now she cringes and cries,  
beat up by the tom-  
toms,  
left battered and hissing,  
lying on the porch.

Oh, the horror!  
to be trapped  
inside our cat.

**CECIL SELLS**  
*INSIDE OUR CAT*



**KATIE MEIER** - COSMIC INCENSE STOVE - COPPER SHEET, COPPER TUBE, COPPER TUBE, BRASS - 4.5" H X 3.25" W X 3.25" D - FIRST PLACE - THREE DIMENSIONAL ART



**HOLLY TAYLOR**  
ART STUDY  
OIL  
20"H X 16"W



**KATHRYN LISZKA**  
WEST  
*FIRST PLACE - PHOTOGRAPHY*

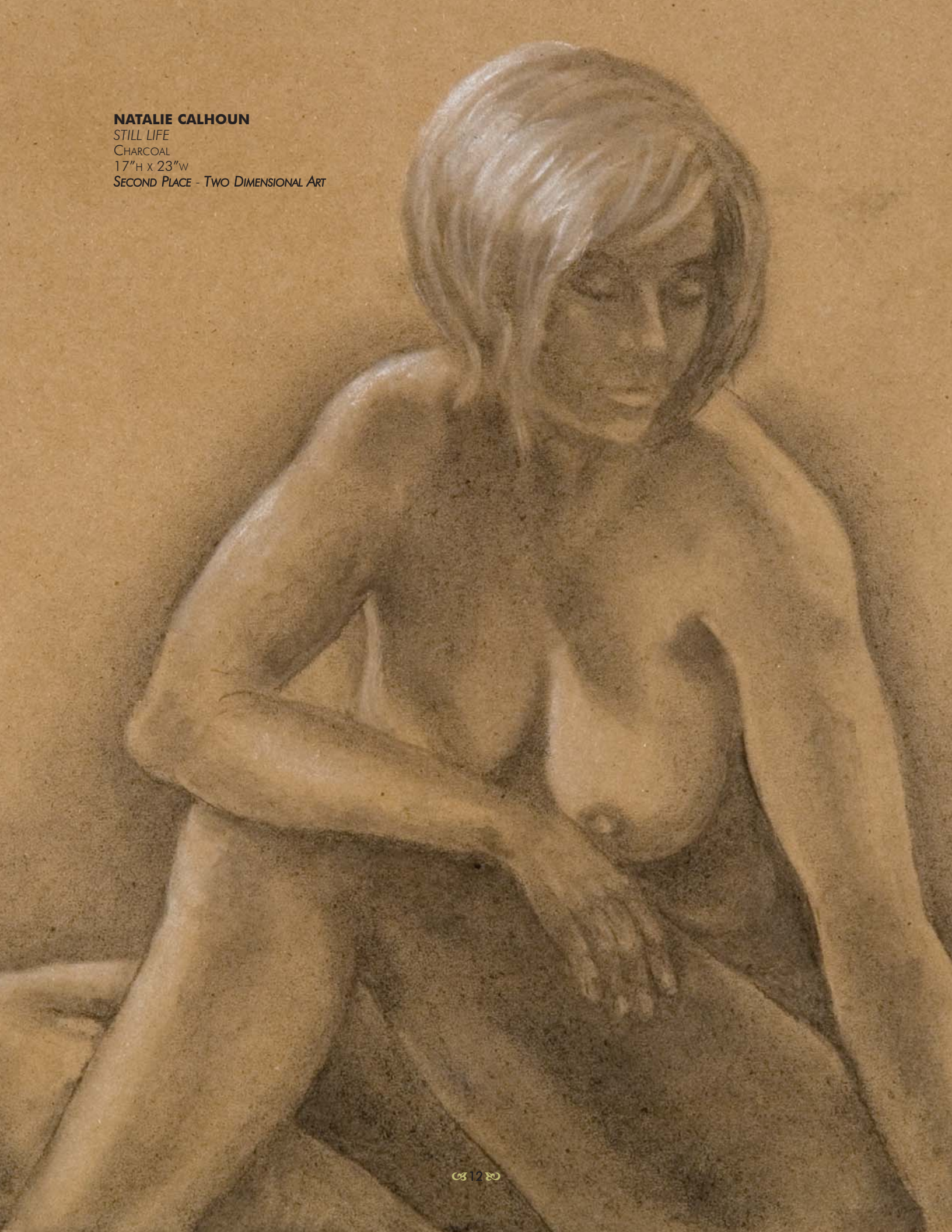
**NATALIE CALHOUN**

STILL LIFE

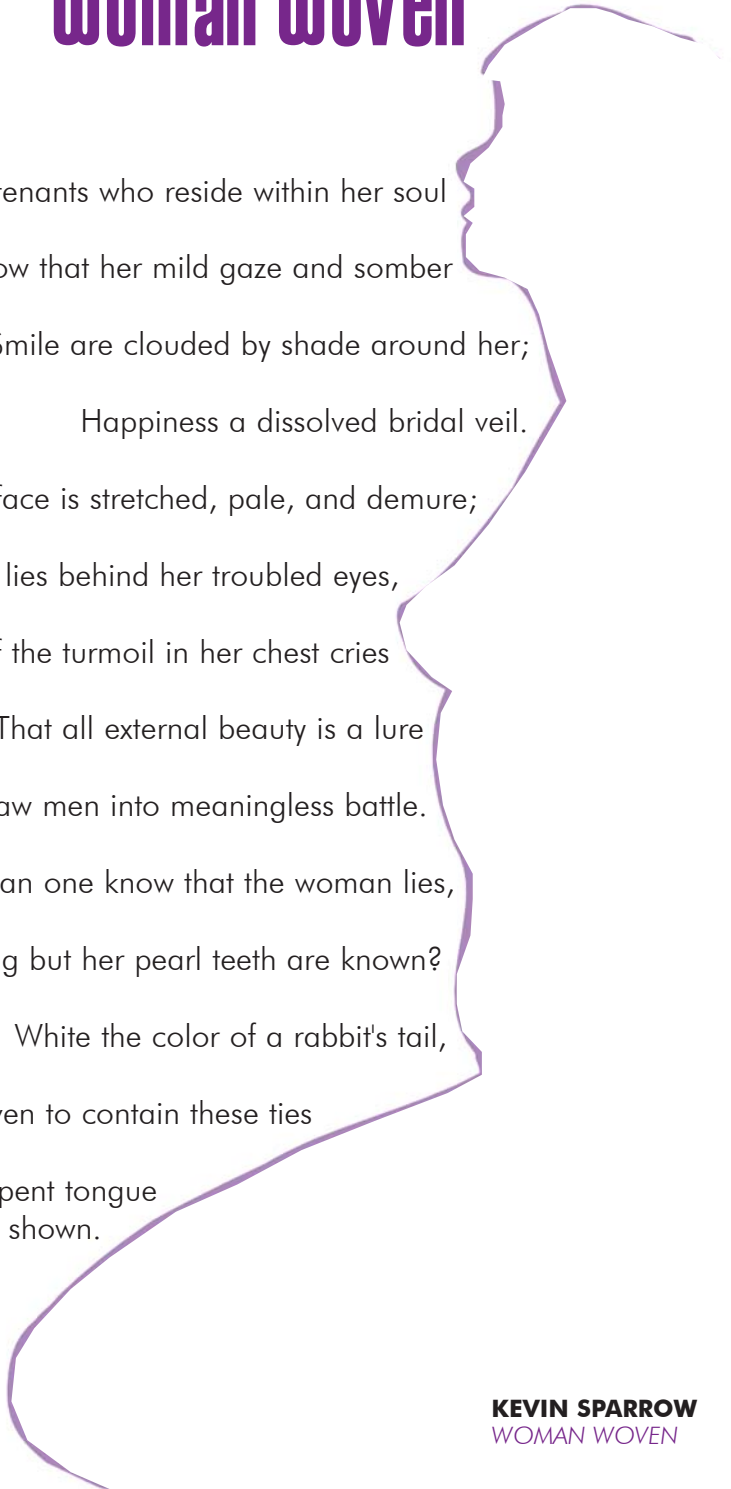
CHARCOAL

17"H X 23"W

SECOND PLACE - TWO DIMENSIONAL ART



# woman woven



All tenants who reside within her soul  
Should know that her mild gaze and somber  
Smile are clouded by shade around her;  
Happiness a dissolved bridal veil.  
Her face is stretched, pale, and demure;  
No remorse lies behind her troubled eyes,  
Nothing of the turmoil in her chest cries  
That all external beauty is a lure  
To draw men into meaningless battle.  
And how can one know that the woman lies,  
When nothing but her pearl teeth are known?  
White the color of a rabbit's tail,  
Appearance woven to contain these ties  
Hides the serpent tongue  
beneath what is shown.

**KEVIN SPARROW**  
WOMAN WOVEN



# FLOWERS

This evening my boyfriend, after being at a friend's house for several hours, decided that he had missed me while he was there. He arrived home with the gift of a plastic rose. Its yellow blossom was made of feathers, and it smelled like the mechanized soap in restaurant bathrooms. Though this flower did not compare to others I have seen in the past, the gesture was greatly appreciated. Being the middle of winter, a bright flower, though mostly made of plastic, was a welcome token of life as it sat on my desk.

Not many people prefer fake flowers to real ones. That is understandable. I know I wouldn't want hard, sterile flowers when soft, scented ones are growing in the yard. All flowers are often seen as tokens of love and affection, or as symbols of immaculate beauty. Real flowers often carry with them a specific purity associated with their beautiful skirts that sprout from the ground. Some people find this purity attractive, and this can incite sexual connotations – a woman, once she loses her virginity, is thought of as “deflowered.” Many cultures see this innocence and desire to see it lost. Yes, the fleshy petals and full blooms of many flowers in spring remind me of fourteen-year-old girls who have already received their full breasts and hips. Well-endowed, real flowers are indeed very desirable.

However sexual, there is always one quality that fake flowers hold over real ones, and that is that plastic does not wilt. The sights and smells of lovely spring flowers are definitely short-lived, specifically if one prefers a certain blossom. Daffodils poke their heads up first, and fade into the earth by May. Magnolias last three weeks to a month, and lilacs scent the air until June comes. Then winter comes, and they are all gone. What to do then? Well, go to a florist, I've been told. But nothing beats the immaculateness of fresh-picked flowers. So, when the flowers are gone in the fall, they are gone until spring for me. Not being able to smell and touch and see beautiful blossoms is unfortunate, but there is knowledge that they will assuredly return when spring comes next year. This is the proverbial cycle of life we know so well.

I admit that it is sometimes a bit hard to keep my faith in the return of the flowers in spring. When autumn declares widespread hibernation for plants and animals, the high spirits of human beings are tempted to hibernate as well — the fading of plants and the arrival of coldness is an event that usually looks and feels sad. Humans tend to equate their lives with the natural forces around them. Many

people believe that nature was created in specific connection with humanity, as in, God created a habitable earth. In ancient times, people saw storm clouds as ominous warnings or punishments from their gods. This belief, though diminished, still exists faintly today: sunshine equals good and rain equals bad. This exemplifies the basic human attachment to the natural seasons. Spring is an emergence from cold, and a time of growth and reproduction for flora and fauna, and its purpose ends there. But people, however, tend to attach their unique emotions to the season – spring is commonly known as the time for beginnings and love. The other three seasons are similarly used as metaphors. Summer is the peak of life, autumn the waning, and winter is often death.

When it comes to flowers, then, I suppose it is very natural of me to relate them to young girls. When the flowers die – when they wilt and leave their fruit – it is as if young women have grown into maturity, had children, and then passed on. This is a sad thought, but again, so goes life, and the fact is inevitable.

If the beauty of blossoms will fade and die and leave me and other humans to mourn, then it seems like we shouldn't get involved with the process at all. But the fact still remains that I prefer flowers that will die to those that can last forever. Why?

The best answer to this question is in a poem that has always stuck with me. Entitled “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” it is a description of the pictures the poet, John Keats, sees on an old urn (or vase). In the following excerpt, he tells of a beautiful field and the people who are enjoying it. A piper lazily plays light songs beneath a tree, and two youthful lovers chase each other. Summer trees are heavy with bright green leaves and the air is warm and pleasant. It is a scene of ultimate joy, of a lovely paradise that is unscarred and brilliant.

*“Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,  
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;  
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!*

*Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed  
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;*



*And, happy melodist, unwearièd,  
For ever piping songs for ever new;  
More happy love! more happy, happy love!  
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,  
For ever panting, and for ever young;  
All breathing human passion far above,  
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,  
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue."*

The man seeks the woman, and she is just out of reach of his outstretched arm. Because the scene is a picture, the couple will stay young and happy forever. This seems like a wonderful thing, but as the piece continues, it is evident that to be frozen in eternal happiness would be futile. The man will forever hold the girl at arm's length; he will never catch her. Change does not exist in the picture on the urn. Without the passage of time, the desire he has for her will never be satiated. Therefore, though eternal youth may seem desirable, there is no life without aging.

This is why I prefer perishable flowers. The beauty lies in the steady aging of the blossom; in the steady aging of each person and thing.

I almost pity the couple in the Grecian pottery painting. The man will never catch his love and fall to the ground with her. They will never again kiss each other, nor ever have sex. They will not get married and produce no children. Neither of the two will ever be unfaithful to the other. There will be no falling out between them, no fading of their love. Anger does not penetrate their minds, and neither does jealousy, worry, or sadness. They cannot live their lives, whether together or apart.

I reiterate: there is no life without aging. As I live, I grow. Every individual experiences love and joy as well as hurt and sadness. We grow, and we grow old. We die.

I would much prefer a relationship in which the two members can grow away. I want sadness as much as happiness. It is important that there is the same degree of dissonance as there is of harmony. The negativity of relationships enables the people involved to learn. It is because of this that most people, when asked, would realistically not want to take back the relationships they have embarked on, or erase the memories they formed in the process. Every experience, no matter how painful it may have been, enables the individual who went through it to learn from it.

I am often scolded for plucking flowers off of their plants because I am killing each one I pick. It is

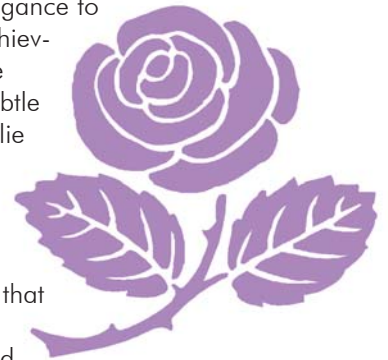
true that the flower will perish at my hand, but I can defend my action. First, I pick them because the color of each flower, and the smell and the texture, is much harder to fully take in when the blossom is still on its plant. Second, and more importantly, I guarantee that no being will love that flower as much as I will. Though it may have had a longer lifespan if it had remained on the plant, I would like to believe, if the flower could think, that it would consider its life more fulfilling because I picked it.

If I pick a young rose on a warm summer day, I take it off its bush with the knowledge that it will wilt within the next few hours. Perhaps, if I get it in water quickly, it will stay bright and fresh for a couple of days at the most. I enjoy it the best I can while it is beautiful. And then, when it begins to wilt, it is *still* lovely. The bright red petals begin to darken and curl, and the flower dries out. When the rose reaches its final stage, (when it is completely dried out and brittle,) it is frozen in an almost picturesque way. There is a degree of elegance to

the flower then that is not achievable at any other point in the flower's lifespan, a sort of subtle contentedness that seems to lie within the creases in the petals. A wilted rose is like an elderly couple, even – their bodies are dying, but there are underlying feelings that are just as strong. Each of the two people has developed

an ability to endure the changing of the other. This trait is reflected in their eyes, movements and smiles, and in this quality is a wisdom that is impossible to understand unless it is achieved.


I remind myself that like the flowers, I will also fade and die one day. I am not afraid of this, though – I try to embrace it. I know that the learning experience does not end when life declines. Right now, as a blooming flower, I am learning so much. I anticipate to not stop learning until that day when I have faded entirely. Growth is life, and it is present throughout our time on the earth, at every moment. I suggest we take each of these moments to its fullest, enjoying not only the times when we are blossoms, but the times of less color and vibrancy as well.




**JULIA McANLY**  
FLOWERS  
FIRST PLACE - ESSAY




# THE FREEZING PROCESS



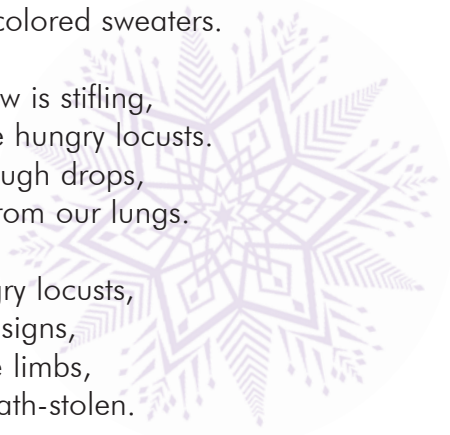
As cars roll through stop signs,  
we stand, breath ripping from our lungs,  
and snow, chaotic like hungry locusts,  
eats away at honey-colored sweaters.




The silence of the snow is stifling,  
snow that is tumbling like hungry locusts.  
Eating honey-flavored cough drops,  
we wait, breath ripping from our lungs.



Snow, tumbling like hungry locusts,  
as cars roll through stop signs,  
makes fingers stiff as tree limbs,  
when we stand here, breath-stolen.



Eating away at honey-colored dialogue,  
the silence of the snow is disquieting.  
We stand, clouds coming from our lungs  
as cars roll through stop signs.



Fingers stiffen like tree limbs as  
snow, surrounding like hungry locusts,  
eats away at honey-colored hearts,  
the silence between us stifling.

We stand. Life ripping from our lungs  
makes our bodies stiff as tree limbs.  
The stillness of the snow is stifling,  
as cars roll through stop signs.



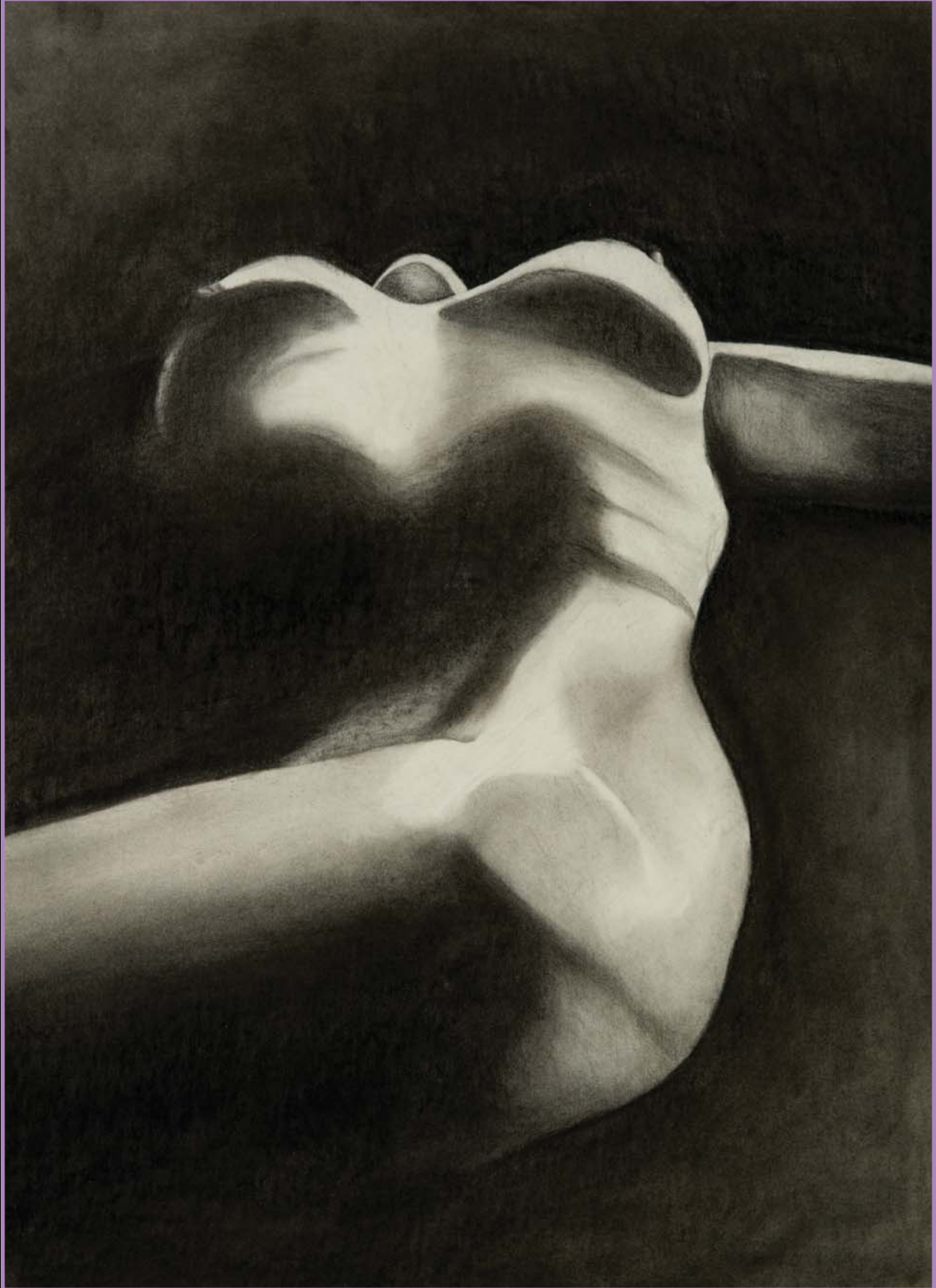
**JULIA McANLY**  
THE FREEZING PROCESS  
SECOND PLACE - POETRY



**ARIEL RIES** - HOLE-Y TOWER - COPPER PIPE, PATINA, GLITTER - 5"H X 1.5"W X 1.5"D



**GRANT W. POORMON**  
UNTITLED #5  
SECOND PLACE - PHOTOGRAPHY



**JOSH KILLIAN** - UNTITLED - CHARCOAL - 20" H x 15" W



**NATALIE CALHOUN**  
SUSANNAH AND HER SISTERS  
OIL PAINT  
11"H x 15"W  
FIRST PLACE - TWO DIMENSIONAL ART

2020

2120

**KATIE MEIER**  
MOON ROCK RING  
SILVER  
.5" H X 1" W





**KATHRYN LISZKA**  
POWER  
PHOTOGRAPHY



**BETHANY MONTGOMERY** - THE BEAR, NECESSITIES OF LIFE - SILVER, COPPER - 5" H X 2" W X 1.5" D - THIRD PLACE - THREE DIMENSIONAL ART



# an exchange BETWEEN SEASONS

Summer and Autumn are close. They  
often have tea together, she drinking  
nectar, and he,  
tree sap.

Summer shares her stories of sun with  
her jolly brother. He listens to his  
sibling,  
quietly.

Autumn anticipates the annual death of  
his sister. He knows that soon he must  
bury her. Soon,  
chlorophyll  
will be replaced by rubicund. Smoke  
will push floral perfumes out of the air.

The children  
of Summer will  
eat their fill. They will dance the  
Dionysian dance of harvest  
merrily on  
her grave.

And jovial Autumn will laugh with them  
as his sister decays in the earth.

Summer speaks to him with a boundless smile.  
"My! We haven't traded stories in such a while."

Autumn, a pensive man, sips his sap.  
"Here's to the years, and the way they pass."



**JULIA McANLY**  
AN EXCHANGE BETWEEN SEASONS



# RECORD STORE

Staring at the white rows of CDs

Stretched before him, Billy Lee

Starts counting all the ones he owns.

Standing with palm on the cool countertop

Stretches his pupils to look farther down the aisle as his mind wanders

Stating, Just because you never had a chance to make a name for yourself

doesn't mean you shouldn't allow me to

Stanford scholarship and Georgetown race by, runners

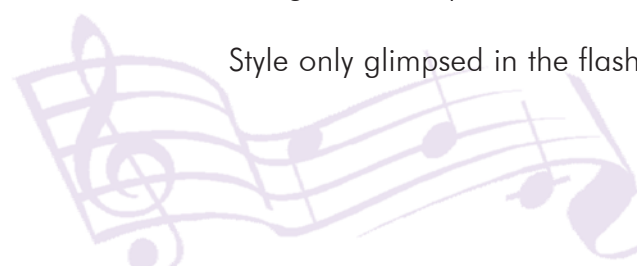
Stuck with feet and forearms firmly planted at the

Starting line.

Stuttering electronic chime -- A-sharp, G -- and there enters a

Straight-laced, upscale, urban businessman,

Style only glimpsed in the flash of a bright green tie.



**KEVIN SPARROW**  
RECORD STORE

# NEBRASKA'S SKY

Years ago,  
A woman told me she missed Nebraska nights.  
"Why?" I responded, to be polite.  
"Because", said she, " We have the largest sky!"  
And then, I wondered if she was right.  
"Does sky come in sizes?"--my reply.

"Of course, Nebraska's blue stretches from  
Horizon to horizon--you know,  
North to south, east to west,  
It meets the test, without impediment."

I, being a resident of Illinois,  
The farm country, north and west,  
And all the rest--  
View our sky as dome over vast fields of corn,  
Shield for all directions.  
It was not at all inferior, I thought  
In its dimensions.

It was then I concluded  
The criteria for "large" must settle  
On fond recollections  
Of other than a remembered sky,  
Or at least misconceptions  
As to the parameters of  
Horizons and where they might lie!

**MAUREEN RUSSELL**  
NEBRASKA'S SKY



Quaint little river town,  
always changing,  
always the same.

Grand Opening,  
Store Closing,  
Going Out Of Business.

Always re-thinking,  
re-inventing yourself  
in the image of Mark Twain.

**CECIL SELLS**  
HANNIBAL, MISSOURI

# PROSE POEM

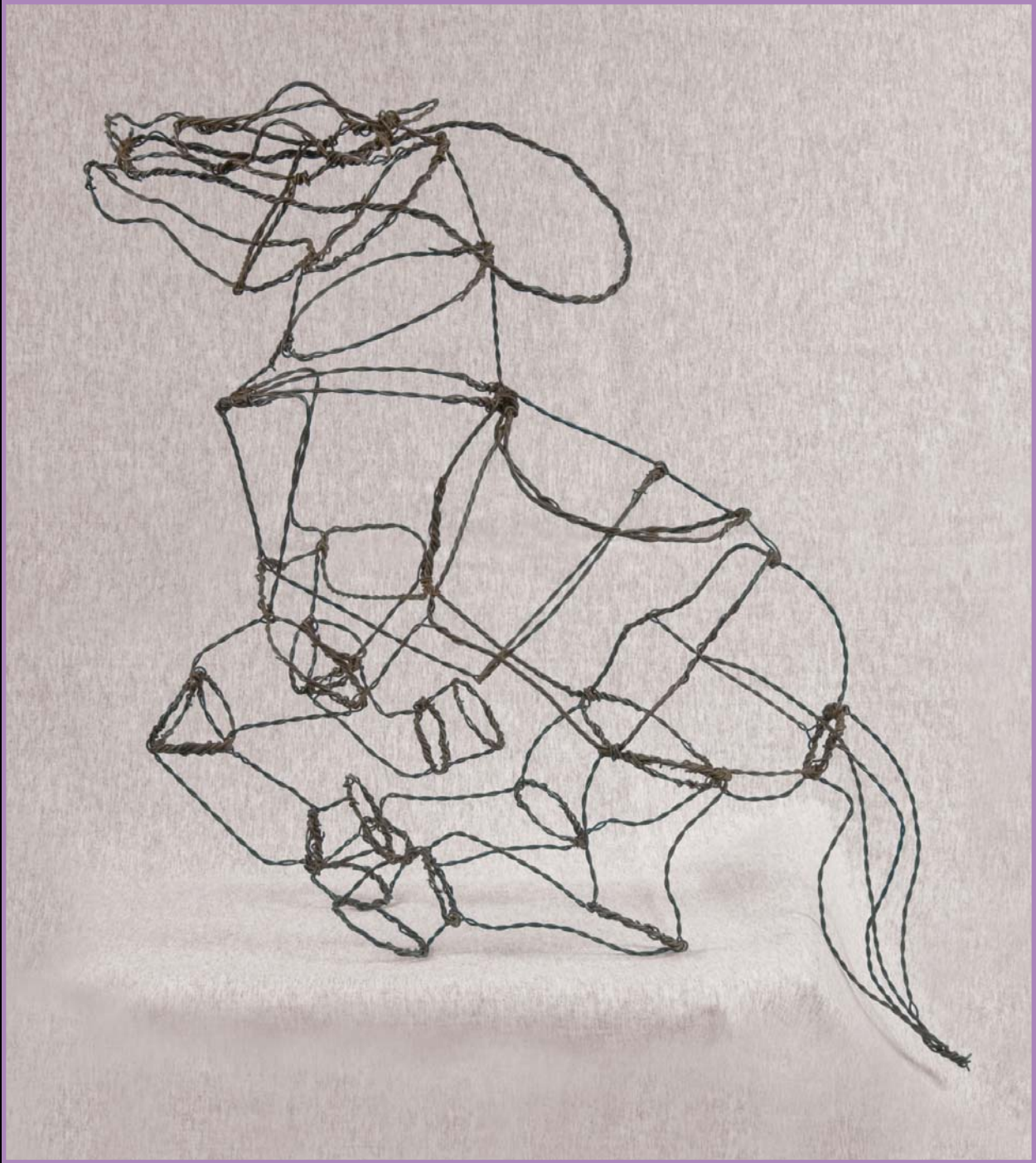


oetry is spoken, read, heard, felt and thought in the realm of words, sounds, rhythms, sights, smells, feelings, and thoughts. It is entirely a posteriori, that is, a result purely of human experience, interaction and interpretation. It is communicative through highly finite and ultra-particular instances and relationships between words, which thus seek to give an understanding, or at the least, an acquaintance with the infinite, the subliminal and the universal. It is as old as the human race and has provided for entertainment, enlightenment, wage earning, historical analysis, narrative-expression, solidarity and global awareness. It may be short or long, terse or versed, it may have patterns of rhythm or rhyme, it may include repetition of certain sounds and themes, it may draw upon previous knowledge or explain new phenomena, it may be gender specific or non-specific, it may be engendered by male or female, young or old or in between. It may be responded to emotionally, intellectually, quickly or slowly, positively or negatively. It is black and white and colored. It is the exchange between lovers of praise and blame, of worth and supreme worth, of life and death and time and timelessness. It is received by lovers and by beloveds who may just smile or chuckle or remember or recall. It is penned, it is memorized, it is forgotten, it is inscribed upon the heart for better, for worse. It is kept, it is swept away, it is in cities and plains and mountains and valleys and in offices and in log cabins and in mother's hearts leaning over frying pans full of bacon and fat and cornbread. It is in taxicab drivers and in cattle drivers, it was and is and is to come, poetry.

**JASON MEYERS**  
*PROSE POEM*  
SECOND PLACE - ESSAY



**MAUREEN RUSSELL** - BROKEN ARROW - CERAMIC - 20"H X 9"W - SECOND PLACE - THREE DIMENSIONAL ART



**KATHRYN LISZKA**  
WIRE RIDER  
WIRE  
17"H x 25"W x 6"D



**STACEY HINES**  
CONTENTMENT  
PHOTOGRAPHY





**HOLLY TAYLOR**  
*PONDERER (SECRET STUDIES)*  
OIL  
24" H x 20" W  
THIRD PLACE - TWO DIMENSIONAL ART

# HARVEST

Seeing from the weathered shed  
Corn stalks aging in the fields  
Waiting for the combine's blade,  
The old man shuffles through rusted  
Implements among the must and spiders,  
Looking for one more tool to put things right,  
And waits for the son, who always was  
Reluctant in the early morning light.

He knows that this harvest time  
Will be one more notch on a belt of years,  
A belt grown longer, but  
Worn thin with worry and tears,  
Measured with memories of earned sweat  
And favored labors sweet.

The wind comes now from the west,  
Easing through cloudy, broken glass.  
He slumps against the open door,  
Looking abroad, to the mountain pass  
Where the morning's threatening storm  
Is still gathering purple.

Then a pickup's tires grinding  
Signal on entrance gravel,  
Is a welcome sound  
To his grizzled ears.  
Strong arms, extra hands here,  
A maturing son, to gather in  
His father's gathering fears.

**MAUREEN RUSSELL**  
HARVEST

# TAKING THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

As he shyly approached the entrance, he realized he was holding his breath. Continuous thoughts of both success and failure seemed to merge together and pulse through his mind. He thought back, it had been forever since the start of school. He had fond memories of grade school, junior high, and high school. He remembered the day he left for college; the excitement and novelty of it all. Although it had been years, moving into the dorms at the big university seemed like yesterday. His parents were so proud of him then, his dad shook his hand and tears ran down his mother's face as they left him "to be an adult." Suddenly he felt sick, as fear gripped his mind and punched his chest- in his heart of hearts he knew he had failed.

At 25, he was old now, in college speaking terms. In his own mind however, "old" was an understatement; he was ancient! He contemplated turning around, sprinting back out to his car, and driving back home. Quitting seemed safe and oddly comforting to him. Two million excuses sped through his mind, but as he stepped into the office it felt as if in a Chicago traffic jam, that they had all parked themselves right on his tongue. He wanted to scream them aloud but was only barely able to get out his name. "I have an appointment," he squeaked, hardly loud enough to hear himself. Fear had transformed his voice, making it sound foreign to him.

While waiting in the office, outrageous thoughts flashed through his mind. He wanted to run, wanted to scream, wanted to hide, part of him just wanted to curl up in a ball and cry. He was conflicted to say the least. He got up to walk out, as the counselor called his name. He had already decided that if this were to happen, that he'd walk out nonchalantly and act indifferent to the name being called, as if it wasn't his. Somewhere in between the thought and the act however, his brain had shut off. He realized now that his body was carrying him towards the man's office and even shaking his hand. He felt sick, trapped, and his eyes filled with tears.

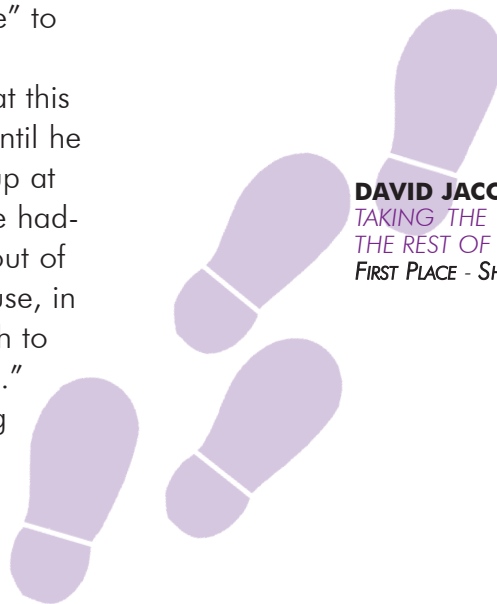
As the counselor spoke and explained all of the typical regularities of the course book, He thought of his friends, "the guys". In all actuality, he decided, that he would classify them as "The guys he went to high school with" due to the fact that out of both jealousy and pride he had stopped speaking to "the guys" many years ago. At this point in their lives they all had good jobs, nice cars, great jobs, and cute little families- In other words, they all had their little piece of the American Pie. What he had was quite different. He had a roof over his head: a slummy little apartment on the "wrong side of the tracks," a rusty old beater that threatened to die any day now, and his best friend- an ugly

little mutt he had found in an alley and named Buster. Other than Buster, he was on his own, working hard 6 days a week, late into the night, just to “get by.” The “real world” had not been good to him- It had poisoned his spirit and dashed his teenage hopes of one day “living the good life.” His fear suddenly turned into an anger he had not known before. He grimaced. “Are you okay,” questioned the counselor. “JUST FINE,” he retorted, setting the counselor aback.

As he filled out his name and social security numbers on the mounds of paperwork left in front of him, he realized the anger was strangely liberating. It seemed to be the driving force pushing him from office to office as he went through the motions of registration. It wasn’t easy, as he had hoped, but he knew all of it might be his last chance. He bought his books on a credit card. He knew he couldn’t afford them otherwise, and justified the debt by chalking it up to an “Investment in his own Future” to help calm the anxiety.

He went home exhausted, glad that this day was finally over. He watched TV until he fell asleep on the couch, dog curled up at his feet. This was the usual for him; he hadn’t slept in his bed for months, more out of loneliness than anything else. His excuse, in case anyone were ever to care enough to ask was that the bed was just “too big.” He awoke the next morning, surprising well rested. The anger from the night before seemed to completely vanish! He felt oddly cheery this morning, and even smiled to himself in the mirror.

He tried to remember the last time he had felt this happy to be alive. Then he realized it. The last time he had felt this way was way back when, the day he had left for the big University! Strangely it didn’t seem to bother him as he thought it would. The giddiness, at least for now, seemed to chase away the cloud of pessimism that seemed to follow him, close over head, on most days. Today, he felt, he had “something in his corner” that he hadn’t just a few days before- OPPORTUNITY! As he smiled into that mirror, he saw himself as a new person. He became strangely rational, almost to the point of making him sound philosophical, which made chuckle aloud. For right there, standing at the bathroom sink and staring into the mirror, he had an epiphany of sorts. He was ready to be an adult! It would not be easy, and he both understood and accepted this. There would be no one there to hold his hand, no one there to do it for him. Just him- fears, flaws, hopes and desires, taking the first step, towards the rest of his life.



**DAVID JACOBSON**  
*TAKING THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS  
THE REST OF YOUR LIFE*  
*FIRST PLACE - SHORT FICTION*

# THE PLEASURE OF SLOTH

I sail across the abandoned pool,  
Clouds gathering overhead, but wispy still.  
Patches of blue are everywhere;  
Now, into nothingness, I stare.  
Sun is hidden, moon hanging low, a jewel,  
Head resting easily in folded arms...

Floating, floating, floating,  
Weightlessness charms.



A seagull soars above my inert being,  
Looking me over--seeming very puzzled.  
He persists in flight, forth and back,  
And calls others to inspect and tack.  
South and north, he squawks and croaks,  
Complaining, demanding me, no doubt, to abstain  
From his favorite swimming domain.  
Or another thought, altogether---  
Surely, I'm too very large for his dinner!

Then, perhaps he ogles me as quite the sinner!

Sinful pleasure, this, I know:  
Labors lost, I'll have naught to show  
For this day spent on cool water and warm sand,  
(Except for peace in mind and grace in hand!)

Floating, floating, floating,  
Despite the disrespect of gulls...

Dreaming, dreaming now,  
How the water lulls...



## nomad man

No phone  
No e-mail  
Nomad

**JASON MEYERS**  
NOMAD MAN

**MAUREEN RUSSELL**  
THE PLEASURE OF SLOTH

# CONTACT

"Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting."  
- William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*

Why do cold things feel wet?  
My finger on a metal matchstick  
linking between others and around tiny windows;  
you can see everything,  
and there are not enough flowers  
when weeds are yellow and grass has rusted.  
Cracks of paint reveal age,  
and she will not move from the cotton swab  
that touches her flushed face, spreading spores  
onto her cheek.  
I want them to grow.

**KEVIN SPARROW**  
CONTACT

# FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Love Poem  
of I a  
You think write You  
of I of  
You sing hear You  
of I a  
Love Song

**JASON MEYERS**  
FROM THE INSIDE OUT

# GROW UP FAST

*Please don't laugh at me,  
my dear,  
but I've something to say.  
A darling secret I did hear  
in the town park today:*

*A couple cooing coyly  
on a bench close to noon.  
She said, "You know, my  
boy, we  
need to consider soon*

*the prospect of our marriage."  
And he gazed, puzzled then,  
"But darling, isn't your age  
not quite past that of ten?"*

*She frowned and feigned  
she understood,  
And I asked in my head,  
"Why would one have  
childhood  
when there is love instead?"*

**JULIA McANLY**  
GROW UP FAST

# WESTERNIZATION OF CHINA'S CULTURE



China's rich, traditional values formed over thousands of years are now being challenged by modernization. Young adults seeking more control over their lives are striving toward a modern style that reflects Americana, an American way of living advertised in magazines, and television programs, and by experiencing American franchises. The westernization of China has created a conflict between traditional values and the desire to be modern. However, what they deem as 'modern' and 'in control' does not mean a better way of living. China could be forming bad American habits of materialism, individualism, and corporate monopolies. The importance of family and community mindedness could suffer as America's has.

Families in China are experiencing contradictions between their traditions and their new lifestyles.

According to Christopher Knowles, the government's policy of limiting the number of children a family can have, has led the children, being the center of attention, to have a lack of self-confidence (13). A large family was a sign of wealth and what nepotism means to

America is the opposite of what 'Guanxi' (nepotism) is to China. "Guanxi is the most important aspect of Chinese living," says Knowles; it means helping family members with favors, finding jobs, contracts or gifts (13). Traditionally, the elderly are the decision makers because of their wisdom. The government in the past consisted of older politicians that regarded youth as something beautiful but not taken seriously. This is difficult for the younger, modern generation of decision makers.

The modern idea also affects the way marriages are conducted. The Chinese want to make their own choices in picking a mate instead of the family using a Matchmaker to make suitable family connections. Divorce is becoming widespread to end these pragmatic relationships. Traditionally, divorce is considered a shameful act or "Diulian," when translated into English means 'losing face' which is a part of China's attitude toward life (Knowles 13). The aged, being held in high regard, consider the actions of their family members as a reflection upon the whole family. Divorce, contradicting their strong family values and causing one to lose face in the eyes of society, comes from an individualistic ideal. Kevin Platt quotes Ma Fengzhi, a sociology professor at Beijing University, in reference to how western influence plays a role: "Chinese youths raised on Hollywood films and American television say, 'If young Americans can fall in and out of love so easily, why can't we [sic]'" (2).

Over the past twenty years, divorce had quadrupled since China started its state planned economy and society. Appalled by this, leadership is planning a new marriage law to make it more difficult to divorce. Changes include civil fines for adulterers and possibly the third party involved (Platt 2). During Mao Zedong's rule, Communism ruined China's Confucian traditions. Because of current social changes, moral codes are being broken while the law acclimates to the new lifestyles. Yang Dawen, a law professor at People's University in Beijing is quoted as saying, "For the first time in Communist history... the marriage law will approve the writing of prenuptial agreements on the division of property in the event of a divorce" (qtd. in Platt 3). Since Mao's rule, private property that was once seized by the Red Guards because of divorce, have now created "one million Chinese millionaires" (Platt 3) since his death in 1976.

The westernization of China has created positive societal effects within state owned industries. Urban Chinese have historically been under the control of their 'danwei' or work unit. State owned industries have persevered partly because they decided where their employees lived. If an employee would quit, they would risk losing their home. Now because of Zhu Rongji, the prime minister, is down sizing the government and destroying the system that allowed industries to control their employees' lives. Millions of Chinese are deciding whether to rent or to buy, and "the banks are learning to write mortgages for hundreds of millions of homeowners," states Jonathan Alter (2).

The westernization affecting China's society is influenced by the products that are available to them. Advertising western products is a massive way to acclimate a previously humble and family oriented society to a wide variety of western books and magazines (Alter 3). Western corporations promoting their products in magazines and on television use a less direct style within their commercials; they do not want to make their viewers uncomfortable by sounding like they are bragging. The promotional aspect will create familiarity to entice the consumers to seek their products.

China appreciates American Fast-food franchises, not for their food, but for the American experience of being modern. "The high efficiency of the service and management, fresh ingredients, friendly service, and spotless dining environment in western fast-food restaurants have been repeatedly reported by the Beijing media as concrete examples of modernity" (Davis 211). A mother in China adapted to McDonald's strange tasting food, so she could take her daughter there twice a week. The mother wanted her daughter to learn about

American culture and prepare her for a modern society by also taking an English typing class and buying her a computer (212).

In comparison to the previous canteen style of the 1970's, combined with poor service, Mc Donald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken were drastic changes for Beijing's eating experience. The lighting was bright, the climate was comfortable, the color scheme was pleasing to the eye and the employees were warm and friendly while diligently working. The new fast-food outlets offered the largest of their kind in the world and the atmosphere was surprising. The "open and cheerful physical environment," says Deborah Davis (213), encourages socialization. Young women eating at a formal Chinese restaurant alone would feel improper, whereas eating at McDonald's alone or with a friend is comfortable. The modern American environment creates a feeling of equality within a public place.

The dining time in a fast-food restaurant in Beijing (1994), was twenty-five minutes during busy hours and fifty-one minutes during slow hours. Quickness is not as important as the "cheerful, comfortable, and climate controlled environment" (Davis 218). The restaurants encourage customers to linger, which contradict the idea of "eat fast and leave quickly" (218). Fast-food restaurants in America are viewed as 'industrial food', which is time convenient for busy people and economical for low-income families (220). This is very different from China's view of fast-food restaurants as fashionable, middle class, and social. A Beijing worker, taking his family by taxi could spend one-sixth of his monthly income just to go to McDonald's.

American franchises have begun to globalize aggressively because of market saturation, shareholder growth requirements, and increased human mobility (Michaels 1). China now has bowling alleys, coffee bars and cyber cafes, to name a few (Alter 2). Modernization and growth are their main goals. To accomplish this they attract foreign investors interested in joint investments. This requires "the foreigner to work directly with their Chinese counterparts," says Hsu O'Keefe (190). American franchises are projecting the fact that they are rich, and promote expansion, but it's doubtful that China sees how the large corporations will affect their own countries. Possibly, because of them being behind the times, they only see the dollar signs and the grand views; but possibly not the expense of what Americans

pay because of these corporations. Family is vital to the Chinese. The large corporations see only their own needs and don't question the effects they have on their own society.

When Deng Xiaoping came to power in 1979, Daniel Burstein writes, he wanted to "jump-start Chinese economic reform by using the United States to offer his own people an image of what a modern country looked like" (42). Deng wanted his people to see how far behind their country really was. By granting western trade, China became the place to expand corporate business. Repercussions of Deng's grand view are putting a strain on his countries most treasured values. China continues to hold onto it's respect for ancient civilization, in regards to art and architecture, but western ideals contrasting with their communistic values, have created feelings of defeat among the old. The aged leaders, who have fought in wars to support their beliefs, see their country slipping away to capitalist values (Knowles 11).

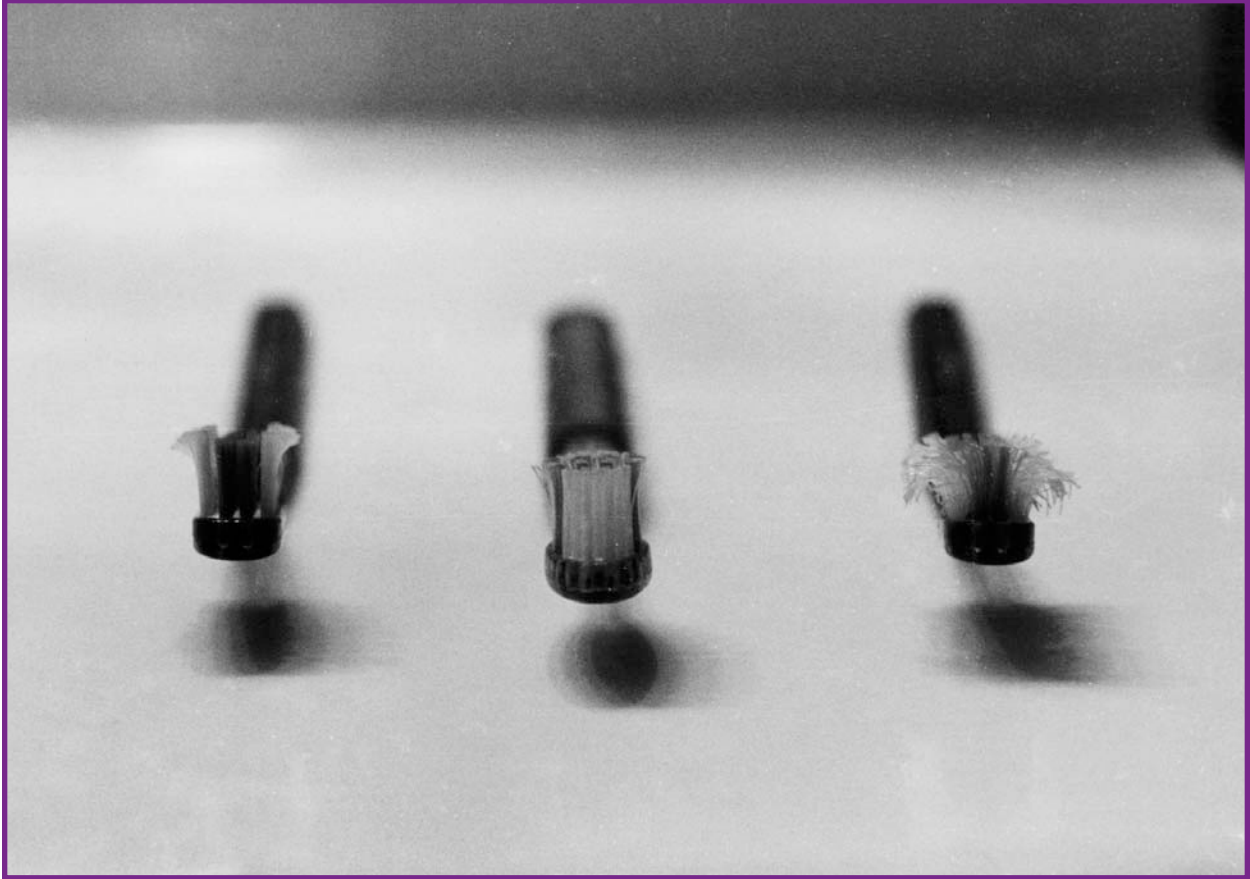
For more than 2000 years, this country's values were consciously developed. Confucius' disciples have assured "that his legacies have become an integral part of the Chinese social, economic, and cultural inheritances," says O'Keefe (190). Because of the importance of their values and ethics, the westernization of their country is causing conflict between the generations. The elderly see their family's bowing to individualism and materialistic values. This could cause fear amongst the elderly; who will take care of them? At what point should a country say enough is enough without alienating those countries that brought them to the economic point they are now? Possibly the large corporations that are building the job markets, offering their services, and products are masking their premeditated cycles of supply and demand by creating a materialistic need. Modern conveniences, big business, and the financial opportunities are attractive. However, just because it is available does not mean it is important and necessary to have within a society. When anything shifts too quickly, something is bound to break.

**MARY ANN MATHUS**  
WESTERNIZATION OF CHINA'S CULTURE

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**HEATHER BAKER**  
*OPTICAL ILLUSION?*  
*THIRD PLACE - PHOTOGRAPHY*

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