

KAMELIAN

Kishwaukee
College
Literary/Arts
Journal

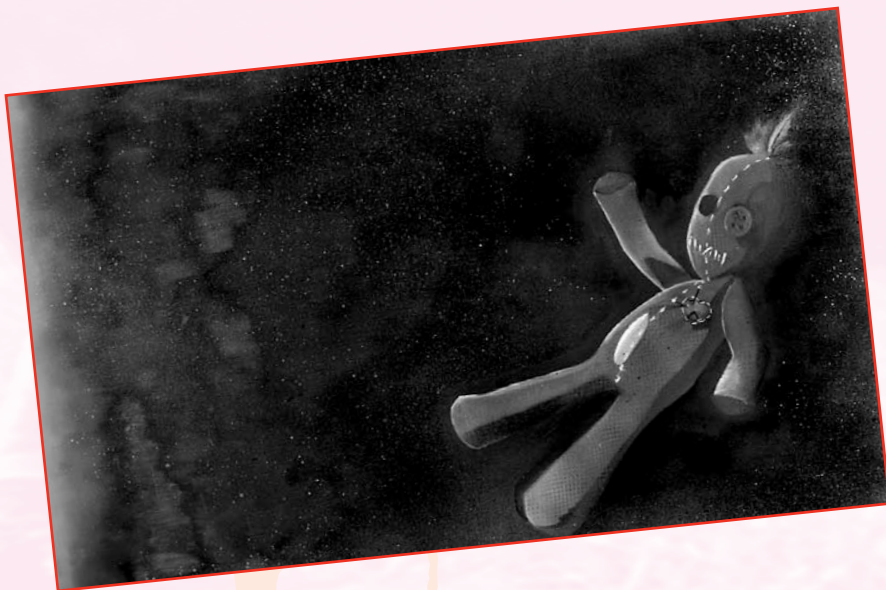
2009



Kishwaukee College Literary/Arts Journal

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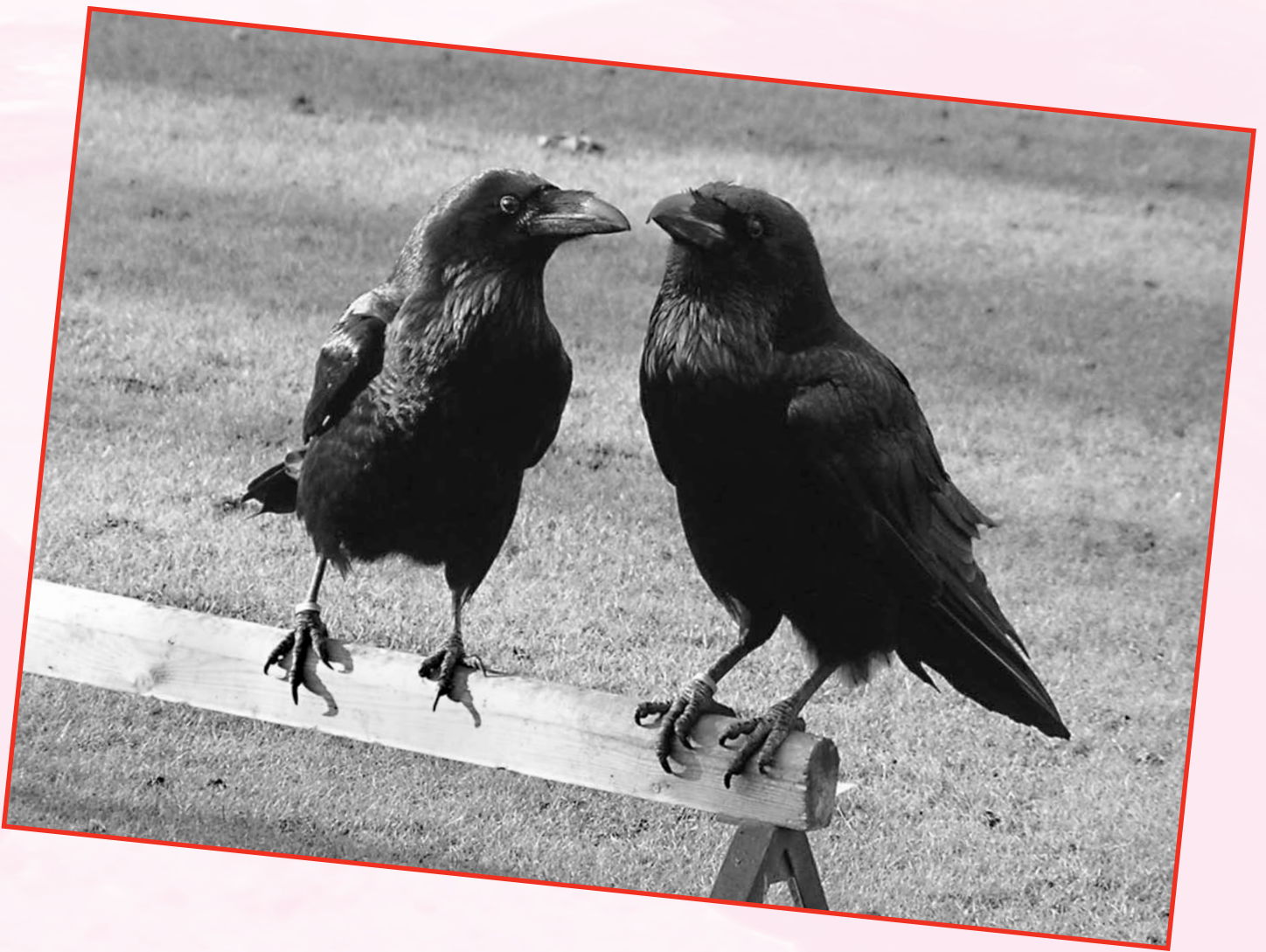


On the cover...

JOSH QUICK
BEAN SOUP

Spray Paint, Acrylic,
Nails, Particle Board

24"h x 40.75"w x .5"d



"BANDIED TOGETHER"

CATHY HACKLER

SECOND PLACE
PHOTOGRAPHY

"Banded Together"

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KAMELIAN 2009

AWARDS

TWO-DIMENSIONAL ART

SCOTT REXFORD
FIRST PLACE

ANDY HONGISTO
SECOND PLACE

PAUL BRUNK
THIRD PLACE

THREE-DIMENSIONAL ART

SARA THOMPSON
FIRST PLACE

CATHY HACKLER
SECOND PLACE

LINDA MEKSHES
THIRD PLACE

PHOTOGRAPHY

CATHY HACKLER
FIRST PLACE

CATHY HACKLER
SECOND PLACE

BLAIZE DIAZ
THIRD PLACE

ESSAY

YUKA HIROSE
FIRST PLACE

ELIZABETH FINKBONER
SECOND PLACE

KELSEY PALMQUIST
THIRD PLACE

POETRY

ZACHARY EFFLER
FIRST PLACE

ZACHARY EFFLER
SECOND PLACE

LORRAINE MICHIELS
THIRD PLACE

SHORT FICTION

PATRICK R. MACINTYRE
FIRST PLACE

OWEN DUVALL
SECOND PLACE

SCOTT FLEETWOOD
THIRD PLACE

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VELCRO SHOES

ZACHARY EFFLER
FIRST PLACE
POETRY

“**W**hy is your brother not right in the head?

Was it something that your father did,

Or something that you said?”

It surely wasn't the mother.

It couldn't have been the mother.

She was dead when he was new

And never got to velcro on his shoes.

She died moments after

Her husband, her babies father, your father –

My father – pulled that living wailing thing out of her.

I wasn't watching.

I didn't want to.

I heard her labored breath, heard the desperation

Rushing from her aging lungs.

There was a moment of unexpected silence, between

Her breathing ending and brand new breathing beginning,

Small young lungs filling the air with wails.

I looked to the reflection on the blank t.v.

It wasn't good enough.

I turned around.

Her hair, a silver crown splayed across the empty white.

Her face frozen in the efforts of the final push;

Everything she had.

Knowing she had to win. She did.

Sometimes even when you win you lose

She never got to velcro on his shoes.

THE SCIURINI INQUIRY

Death has an odor all its own; one every living being knows instinctively, but usually does its utmost to deny. In particular, humans excel at masking that uneasy, hereditary sense-knowledge with such evasive questions and comments as, “What is that smell?” or, “That reeks!” It’s as if by doing so, the finality due all mortals is pushed even deeper into the recesses of the mind than normal – a, “what you don’t know can’t hurt you,” type of thing. In essence, Man gives himself an excuse to be shocked by death, rather than to be forced to dwell upon it; to acknowledge it; to stand by powerlessly and accept its inevitability. The sudden and unexpected causes less fear and anxiety than the long awaited and known; but, unlike most, I don’t try to fool myself. I know that death awaits us all, and judging from what my nose was telling me, that anticipation was over for one of God’s creatures close by.

It was darker than the inside of a sable coated feline – and just about as damp and miserable, too. The rain had been falling for days without let-up or surcease, very nearly biblical in its fury and endurance, yet there still didn’t seem to be any sign of relief in the foreseeable future. My feet were wet, and my rusty hair, highlighted in white more and more with each passing year, was plastered to my skin. Rushing headlong into my mid-fifties, the wrinkles and folds grooved into my face and too-wide nose ran like miniature creek beds with the tears Heaven had been shedding for nigh on a week. It for sure wasn’t adding anything to my looks.

But for all my beauty-challenged visage and advanced age, there was one who still called me “pretty girl” – the guy who was, at this very moment, walking beside me. His name was Pàdraig. Six feet tall, weighing in at 25 stone and built like a pot-bellied stove, he and I made quite a pair. A heightily, rotund Massachusetts bred Yankee of Scottish decent and a short, red haired, Illinois born Chinese-American shaped like a tornado. Don’t think for a moment that *that* doesn’t gain attention. Yet for all our differences, we were identical in that, beneath a pair of devilishly curved brows, peered chocolate brown eyes that glow tawny in just the right light, perhaps the only attractive exterior feature of which either of us could boast.

Without hesitation, I headed toward the smell and I could tell by the almost imperceptible hitch in Pàdraig’s breathing that he had caught wind of it, as well. He was blind as a bat – always had been without his glasses – but his senses of smell and hearing were developed to a frightening degree. Oddly enough, his peripheral vision was also phenomenal. It was freakish how he could stare right at something a foot in front of him and not see it (even *with* corrective lenses), but was able to catch the slightest movement of an object ridiculous distances off to either side of him. Not that any of that was helpful now – it was too dark to see anywhere but inward.

This veering suddenly off into a new direction was an old story. Pàdraig knew of my penchant for trouble – for, quite literally, sticking my nose where it didn’t belong – but rarely complained when I dragged him into one of my adventures. With varying degrees of success, he’d do his utmost to rein me in a bit if things got a little too out of hand, but, for the most part, he understood and played along.

A millisecond before the white beam splashed onto the soon to be Atlantean, vert sward, I heard the snick of a flashlight’s on button. Sweeping the torch side to side, Pàdraig and I continued forward, simultaneously exited and apprehensive at what our investigation would turn up. A few steps later, we come upon it.

“Jeez. Oh, man! That’s not good.”

Did I happen to mention before now that Pàdraig has a most eloquent way of expressing himself? Yep, he does, alright, though it tends to go out the window whenever he’s embarrassed or startled. Off hand, I’d have to say that this less than profound utterance was a reaction to the latter. Not that I could fault him.

Truth be told, I’d never seen such a mess. The main torso looked more or less intact, with the odd limb here and an unidentifiable piece of skin there. Average male, maybe a little paunchy, with brownish-black streaked gray hair. He’d been healthy in life and was obviously old enough to have a family, but was still far too young to leave them mourning. Curiously, there was very little blood, which told me that the butchery had taken place after death.

One other thing; the decaying collection of flesh spread out before us was no stranger to either myself or to Pàdraig. Though not friends, or even being on what you would call regular speaking terms, we had been casually acquainted with the deceased – and now he was lying deader than the proverbial doornail on our front lawn. As I moved closer, I shot a quick glance at Pàdraig just in time to catch him looking back at me in disapproval.

“What do you think you’re doing?” he said, in that I-don’t-approve-of-whatever-it-is-you’re-thinking-of-doing voice.

What was I supposed to say? He knew me well enough not to even ask such a stupid question, really. I had to find out what was going on here, and that was exactly what I intended to do. So, giving Pàdraig my best I-think-you’re-great-so-please-don’t-spoil-my-fun look, he relented, as usual, and gave in to me and to his own natural curiosity.

Men! They’re so easy – especially this one.

I’d first met Pàdraig way back in September of 2000. He’d turned 40 that very day, but didn’t look a day over 18, blast him. The Mac an t-Saoir blood that flowed through his veins seemed impervious to aging, proving that the MacLeod’s weren’t the only lords of longevity from the Highlands. “My name is Pàdraig, and I am a Mac an t-Saoir,” he was wont to say, as if that explained everything – be it his youthful appearance or his love of the cold or anything else – and, as far as he was concerned, I guess it did.

Like Pàdraig, I’m also descended from an ancient clan, but where his was renowned for their shipbuilding, white cows, and poetry (as well as causing the occasional, albeit necessary incidences of appalling havoc), mine was anciently, *purely*, founded in protection and battle. The joy of the fight and carnage sings within me, my royal blood searing with delight at the thought of violence. Fortunately, or unfortunately, depending upon how you look at it, Pàdraig has managed to mellow me out somewhat over the hundred months or so we’ve known one another. However, he hasn’t been able to tame me completely and knows he never will. Happily, in stark contrast to most men, he doesn’t view this as a problem. Having spent his own formative years growing up wild and reckless, he doesn’t begrudge that feral streak in others; rather, he sees it as a means of identification – a way of fitting in with those similar to himself.

For all of that, he is still just a man and subject to certain laws of nature: the wiles of women, the antics of cute animals, and to his own inquisitiveness. If I’m careful and subtly take advantage of at least two out of three of these weaknesses, er, I meant to say, endearing qualities, I’m pretty much able to bend him to my will at will. And here’s where Pàdraig’s entirely warped sense of humor comes in handy, because he’s aware of the fact that he’s being manipulated, yet finds it funny he’s so easily played. Actually, the more outlandish and bizarre the situation and outcome, the greater his appreciation of it.

Sighing, as if with long suffering, Pàdraig lets go with, “Okay, let’s make it quick and don’t make a mess. It’s way too dark and wet out here to be clowning around for too long, and you know we have to get on the phone about this.”

Yes, the phone call. Ten minutes after that call the scene will be trampled underfoot and we’ll be out of the loop. As Pàdraig fumbles with his cell phone, which he loathes almost as much as algebra, mincemeat pie, and hot, humid heat, I sniff around to see what I can see.

As I’m studying the area, I hear portions of Pàdraig’s conversation. Evidently, the person on the other end of the line doesn’t share Pàdraig’s sense of urgency. His, “Right here, on my front lawn!” fails to elicit the properly sympathetic response. Good, that gives me a little more time.

“Well, *you’re* not standing here looking at it and smelling it!”

Oh, boy. Pàdraig is getting all wound up. Ordinarily, I’d sit back and enjoy the show, but the clock is ticking; I gotta get a move on. So, with dogged determination, I circle the area and gather what information I can from the waterlogged ground. Pàdraig helpfully shines the mini-flashlight around as I probe and study, the beam wavering a little or a lot – depending upon the frustration level he happens to be experiencing at any given moment during his phone conversation.

An “Oy!” explodes from Pàdraig’s throat as he vigorously snaps down the lid of his cell, and I can tell by the tone that it isn’t a good oy. For the sake of clarity, I guess I should explain here that the word oy is used by Pàdraig to express most of his emotions. Depending upon his mood, oy can mean he’s happy, hungry, full, surprised, in pain, depressed, exhausted, appreciative, impressed, or, as he most definitely is now, irritated.

“Well, pretty girl” – I really love it when he says that – “evidently, picking up dead squirrels on a stormy evening isn’t high on anybody’s list of priorities. At the earliest, it’ll be dealt with late tomorrow morning.”

As far as I’m concerned, Animal Control can leave *Sciurini carolinensis* there indefinitely, though I don’t need any more time to figure out what’s happened. It’s pretty obvious that the tree squirrel, unquestionably the meat I most love to chase, was hit by a car or truck, probably struck a mortal blow by the undercarriage or else he’d’ve been crushed flatter than a pancake out in the road. Living long enough to make it to the lawn, Monsieur Sciurini expired before he could get to his red cedar haven. As far as I can figure, maybe a day later, two at most, a lawnmower took care of the rest. The man that cuts our lawn does so hurriedly with a behemoth four-wheeled machine and doubtlessly failed to see the relatively diminutive corpus in the high grass.

A car goes slowly by, its wipers slashing at the rain pelted windshield. The interior lighting emanating from the dashboard, and the streetlight shining directly overhead, illuminates the driver’s face. I see the all too familiar look of incredulity as he gapes at me, as if to say, “*What is that?*” Holding my head high and extending my rear legs in the best show-stance fashion, I stare back with confidence and pride. Using Pàdraig’s example, I think to myself, “My name is Ruitian, and I am a Shar-Pei.”

PATRICK R. MACINTYRE
FIRST PLACE
SHORT FICTION

WHAT DOES THE DAY TO HOLD

The day is not yet born into the sun's golden bath. Early is the time for Spring to blossom its beauty on us. Delicate petals stem from thin stalks of pure emerald. They are young, soft, new. The sun comes to kiss the flowers good morning. They are aged, worn. Lady Wind has taken her toll. Still the flowers hold their majesty with stubborn dignity. The sun has past its zenith, setting lower and lower. Fall has come. The flowers wither, die. Emerald turns to amber. Red blossoms like the flowers once have. A lone butterfly dares to come abroad, thinking of better days that once brought sweet nectar fields into bloom. The sun sinks, casting its sad purples and blues into the blackening sky. Jack Frost has finally come. None dare breath life into the flowers. Lady Wind emerges and sweeps the petals away. Only the straggly stalks remain. Brother Winter lays his icy hands across the field. Now drifts from angels above fall to brighten the land. But, lo! Here comes the footstep of a miner. In his pocket full shines the golden nuggets of his long day's work. He slowly goes by, fresh white crunching under him. A rabbit hide dangles from his broad belt, its skull swinging with a dull melody. The sun dies into the blackened sky.

Winter has its time till the sun bears the world into spring, always following its path.

SARAH
CARTER



CATHY HACKLER

UNTITLED

SECOND PLACE
THREE-DIMENSIONAL ART

Ceramic

4"h x 7"w x 7"d

SUFFOCATING

KATHLEEN
PIERONI



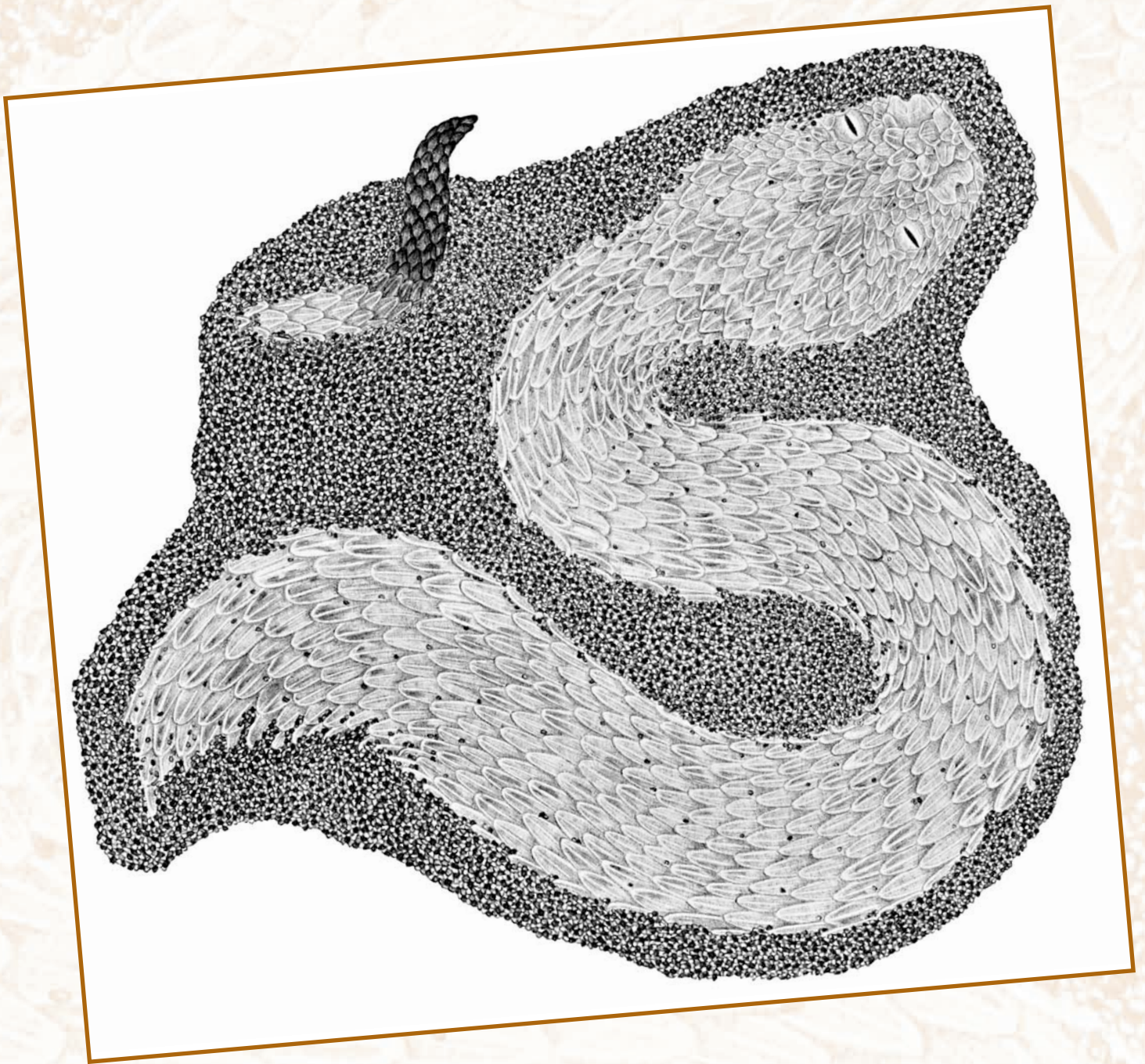
IN THE CLOSET



NATALIE CALHOUN

Oil on Canvas

18"h x 24"w x .5"d



SCOTT REXFORD

UNTITLED

FIRST PLACE
TWO-DIMENSIONAL ART

Ink Pen on Paper

P12

8"h x 9"w

HALF-EMPTY CUP OF LOUD-MOUTH SOUP

C an you say a whole lot
in just a few words
or use the whole lot
for all that they're worth?

MICHAEL HOLLAND

Cagey smile? Or do you cage your smile up?
Happy as a clam? Or are you a Sourpuss Sue?
Not some kind of a brand of brace-face wielding smile, but
like the kind of a man with a case of the wanton blues?

Suppressing expressing
what's bothering you?
Suggesting, just guessing
what, of other things, to do?

What's bothering me today
may be bothering you, too:
many multimillion dollar high-class butt-rape campaigns –
my mangy shoes a sorry cast of duct-tape and shoe-goo.

How about the probability of political gains
for farmer's commodities like grains?
Hunger and poverty inevitably remain –
not oddities but more of a main thing.

Don't you all know –
doesn't it make you mad –
we don't always grow
food on food-producing land?

Biologically feeding the mean Machine.
Unwittingly harming; testing and assessing ethanol.
By not logically even achieving green supreme,
while relentlessly starving the less acquired, requires gall.

Land capable of producing demand.
Man capable of reducing the land.
Mono-crop chop-block horrors boarder
presidential cock-blocks from future reformers and restorers.

Environmentally advance –
entirely mentally, per chance.
Take a second glance
to understand this delicate dance.

Or how about trickle down economy?
Will wealth begin to rain?
I've more faith in the fickle side of astrology
than administrations that remain playing more of the same old game.

We do what we know: we reap what we sow –
irrigate, try to be meager, and wait for more pleasing gains.
We need a keen arrow like a shot from a bow;
it irritates waiting for a leader to try to ease our pains.

“No, good point, but I don't feel that way; I've lost hope.
To me, it's a moot point, but thanks for bringing it up. What's that you wrote?
I'll just keep thinking things I may say – while failing to vote,
and I'll keep drinking things from my half-empty cup – I'll continue to mope.”

Fill up another half-empty cup of loud-mouth soup,
you foot-in-mouth finger pointer.
Unless, of course, you have some sort of inexplicable use
for placebo ointment reporters.

Ineffective and affectionless
without even attempting this?
You'd better find an alibi – you'd better find an accomplice;
we'll live in a living hell, says I, if apathy remains commonplace.

THE FINAL GIFT

As a little girl in Japan, "I will do it later!" was my preferred phrase; it worked perfectly, especially when my parents told me to do things I didn't want to. It was my big-time favorite, at least until that particular day. Until then, I somehow believed I could always fix or catch up on anything later. However, one incident taught me a lesson in a very hard and saddening way that there is not always a second chance.

It was eight o'clock in the morning in 1994. I was 12 years old, in the final grade of elementary school. Under the spotless blue sky, it was an ordinary morning that started just fine. The gray asphalt surrounding the school building was covered with a pink carpet of fallen cherry blossoms. Students were walking into the school, merrily exchanging greetings with their classmates. Among dozens of fellow students, I found my next-door neighbor and classmate, David, as he was getting out of his father's blue sedan by the school gate. I greeted him, and he greeted me back with a big smile.

"I love you, son!" His father shouted at him when we almost reached the door. As soon as he heard that, his face blushed. I knew exactly how he felt at that moment. It is not customary to say, "I love you" in Japan. To David, a sensitive 12 year-old boy, hearing "I love you" in front of a dozen of his classmates was too embarrassing, even when everyone knew that he was half-American and his father was American. Without a word, he turned away from his father, blushing.

"Why do you not say anything back?" I asked him as I trotted after him.

"It's too embarrassing to say I love you in front of everyone." He shyly responded. "I don't want them to think I am a sissy, plus I can always tell him that later at home." He made his point; do-it-later seemed to work perfectly.

It was shortly after the lunch break when a secretary from the principal's office dashed into our classroom and interrupted our fifth period class. She looked very anxious and whispered to our teacher. Then she called out David's name and escorted him out of the room. Even though I was a child, I could sense something was wrong; a premonition of bad news tightened my stomach. Ten minutes later, he came back crying. Without a word, he started to pack up his belongings. A dark and disconsolate silence wrapped the

entire room. "My dad died," he tearfully squeezed the words out of his mouth in reply to my meddling questions. It was the worst possible news I could ever imagine. Suddenly, his words from earlier that morning, "I can always tell him that I love him later," flooded back into my mind and kept repeating over and over again like a broken record.

A couple of evenings after the funeral, I visited him. He was sitting in his room alone. His face was pale, and his eyes were red and swollen. In the dark room with no lights on, he told me that he thought the same thing as I did when he received the news. He said he very much regretted not responding to his father's "I love you," and also ignoring his father's words and turning his back on him that morning.

"I loved him. I loved him very much," he mournfully said. "I thought I could always tell him that I love him. Dad died because of me, because I was bad." His words speared my heart. I knew it wasn't his fault. According to his mother, his father died from a heart attack. The attack itself wasn't fatal; however, nobody was around when it occurred in their backyard while he was mowing on his unexpected weekday off. Unfortunately, it took a few hours before someone finally found him. I thought hard for words to say, but aphotic emptiness surrounded me, and I could find no words. I knew for sure that his father knew very well that David loved and respected him in spite of his actions that morning. However, I didn't say that. No words seemed good enough to comfort his shattered heart.

Twelve years old was still the age of innocence. Ironically, the time to learn the realities of life came earlier than expected. The passing of David's father's was devastating to him, and for me, too. Over the next couple of years, I saw him struggling to overcome the emotional trauma, which wasn't easy. However, I believe that David's father left us one final gift within this adversity that we would never forget – you won't always have a second chance. We must treasure each opportunity to share love and joy.

**YUKA
HIROSE**

**FIRST PLACE
ESSAY**

STRANGE DREAMS

In the dull glow from the light switch,
a girl, bare feet stepping gently
across the wooden floor. Her jeans
brushed together softly at the ankles.

Her hands held a blanket up to
her chin, eyelids drooped
as she went to the first
door on the left.

She looked back and sighed. Her body
shrank, pressured by the weight
of uncertainty. Then her eyes closed.
A small smile fluttered across her face.

Slowly she reached out from the
warmth of the blanket and touched
the cold knob. She turned and pushed,
letting a thin patient light slip inside.

Sleepy floorboards creaked as
restful breaths fell from the lofted
bed, and trickled down the silence
over her nerves.

SECOND PLACE
POETRY

ZACHARY EFFLER

Denim hissed slowly to the ground
and the quiet emptiness swelled in the
room before an old chair complained
tiredly as the girl stepped onto it.

Her hand searched under the covers.
She found the familiar hand
and squeezed it patiently. In the depths
of a dream, the boy returned the gesture.

Releasing his hand she waited,
poised on the brink of decision.
The walls listened. The girl
hoisted herself up onto the bed.

She slipped into the comfort of
certainty, and eased herself against
her boy's warm, friendly flesh. She smiled
contentedly and closed her eyes to rest.

GLASS RING 1

SARA THOMPSON

FIRST PLACE
THREE-DIMENSIONAL
ART

Silver & Glass

1.5"h x 1"w x .5"d



TOKYO EYE

CATHY HACKLER

FIRST PLACE
PHOTOGRAPHY



KURTIS YOU
WINKED



PAUL BRUNK

Soft Pastels

15"h x 20"w

MONSTER BY THE SEA

ANDY HONGISTO

SECOND PLACE
TWO-DIMENSIONAL ART

Digital Print

7" h x 9.5" w



BEAN SOUP



JOSH QUICK

Spray Paint, Acrylic,
Nails, Particle Board

24"h x 40.75"w x .5"d

LEANING TOWER



SARA THOMPSON

Silver & Copper

1" h x 1" w x 1" d

IRIS BROOCH



LINDA MEKSHES

Carved Corian

1.5" h x 1.5" w x .5" d

THE ROADS HAVE EYES

BLAIZE DIAZ

THIRD PLACE
PHOTOGRAPHY



ROSE TRIO



LINDA MEKSHES

THIRD PLACE
THREE-DIMENSIONAL ART

Cast Silver

Rings
1" h x .875" w x .375" d

Pendant
1" h x 1.875" w x .1875" d

WHO AM I?

KELSEY PALMQUIST

Who am I? I am Picasso's forgotten subject;
the stroke of wind in Van Gogh's "Starry Night."
I am the tears of laughter of the Scottish dancers;
the wildflowers that cover the Swedish hills in spring.
I am the recessive gene in my father's eyes,
yet the second prime child in my mother's brood.
I am the sound when wine glasses meet at a wake;
the howling of a wolf at night who waits for its neighbor's call.
I am a child's first favorite crayon.
I am the snow that falls upon the tongues of playing children,
but the base of a flaming fire.
I will be found where the ocean meets the sky. I am blue.

THE WRITTEN REMAINS

The words that I believe in more than any other
Are written on my chest; a dramatic effect:
The blank ink against the pale house of my heart.
I know the thought may shock you, when you think of who I am;

For a while I was unsure if I wanted the reminder,
Now I know it doesn't matter, I will always feel this:

Connected to these concepts

But like a kite more than an anchor

Firmly set as aged concrete with these ideals.

Rather, I am the one below; subservient to the kite that glides

On gentle breezes made by lovers' sighs.

I strive for such lofty perfection

But know my place:

Writing Love all of the time

On my skin and in my mind.

NATHANIEL
WHITTENHALL

THE CURSE OF INFINITY

Everything around me was darkness. I couldn't remember how I had got there, or how long I had been there. *I'm probably dreaming*, I thought.

"You're awfully rational for being in a dream, aren't you?" came a voice behind me.

Turning, I saw an angel floating toward me, tall, dark haired, and with magnificently spreading wings. "Oh. . . I'm dead, aren't I?" I asked.

"Yes," he confirmed. "Provided you're Samantha Lasett."

I nodded. "I'm not as broken up as I ought to be."

"Most people aren't, once they're sure there's something afterwards. Now, if you'd be so kind as to follow me into the light?" he asked, stepping aside and gesturing towards a near-blinding circle of white light.

"You actually have that?" I asked, complying. "A bit clichéd, isn't it?"

"You have only yourself to blame. At least on some level you believed it, so it exists. Oh, I suppose I should introduce myself. I'm Kael, an angel of the third sphere. I'm here to show you around and answer any questions you may have. A heavenly bellhop, if you will."

As we came to the end of the tunnel, I froze at the sight awaiting us. Ornate, opalescent gates, miles high, stood rather improbably atop fluffy white clouds. Whatever lay past the gates was totally obscured by the light beyond the tunnel, now so bright it hurt.

"So, I've made it?" I asked. "I'm going to Heaven?"

"Perhaps. Not without a trip to Purgatory first, though. Don't worry, it's usually not for any longer than you were alive."

"What?" I exclaimed, "I don't want to go to purgatory!"

"Tough. That's how your religion works."

"Wait a second," I said, thinking furiously. "You just said that the tunnel of light existed because I believed it did, correct?"

"That's right," Kael nodded, a grin beginning to spread across his face.

"Well then. . . does purgatory exist because I thought it did? Because you've got your facts wrong. I may have been Catholic, but I never really believed in purgatory. Or Hell," I added quickly.

"Well done!" exclaimed Kael. "Nice use of loopholes. If that's the case, then you can skip Purgatory and go straight into Heaven."

"Does that mean there's something past Heaven, too?" I asked, seeing how far I could push this.

"Excellent. . . That's right. Heaven isn't the end-all be-all that you Christians think. For that matter, neither is Jannah for Muslims, Aaru for ancient Egyptians, or anything else in which you humans have believed. They're all just there to placate the egos of the dead. No one wants to die and find out that they've believed in the wrong thing all their lives, especially if they died for that belief. So, all of the various afterlives exist, each person going to the one they believe in. It's the same with God; you view Her as you wish. For instance, I see Her as a sixteen-armed woman with the head of a newt. Gender and form would be completely different for you."

"What happens to atheists? Do they just go to oblivion?"

"Ah, that's a special case," Kael answered, and as he did, his voice took on a quality of regret, of disagreement with this divine policy. "Atheists usually expect oblivion after death, but God is omnibenevolent, so She doesn't want anyone to just fade away. They get the next best thing: they float alone in darkness for eternity."

"That's awful!"

"Which is why they are allowed to leave and join the other afterlives any time. It usually doesn't take long."

"Theists don't spend much longer in their respective afterlives, either. After they get bored of lying on crystallized water vapors and lumping praise and adoration onto some deity or whatever, and are willing to accept that maybe they were wrong in their beliefs, they go off to their final destination."

"And what's that?"

"This,"—the cloudscape around us dissolved and reformed as. . . it's impossible to describe. Everyone who ever died, every structure and landscape imaginable surrounded us, all, somehow, within easy walking distance.

"How. . ." I trailed off.

"To incorporate everything while still being easily accessible, the afterlife occupies different dimensions than the usual four. Space and time fracture as necessary here for convenience's sake. Go have fun," he concluded, grinning.

I experienced everything the afterlife had to offer; every activity, event, and sensation. I went to all the various afterlives, living in numerous incarnations of Heaven, visiting Niflheim, Xibalba, Elysium, and thousands more. I was even reincarnated several times. I met everyone who had

ever lived, each of them becoming like family. However, like all families, after a few million years they started to get on my nerves.

Eventually, I asked God for permission to go back and explore Creation. He agreed, and I went down and watched my life from the outside. After that, I watched first hand the lives of everyone I had met in the afterlife, friends, family, complete strangers to me in life, until I knew them all by heart.

I explored the universe, every planet around every star in every galaxy.

I counted every subatomic particle, just because I could.

At odds for anything else with which to keep myself occupied, I returned to Heaven and asked God if I could try my hand at creating universes. Once again, He agreed, under the condition that I not attempt to affect His creations. I created a billion galaxies and more, seeing them all through to their assorted ends, trying out every idea I had.

Now thoroughly bored out of my skull, I went back to the afterlife to see what else might catch my interest. Finding Kael on my return, I said, "I'm bored. What else is there to do here?"

"Would you like to be a goddess?"

"Already done that. I've run out of new ideas, I've been one so long," I sighed.

"That's just creator's block. Why don't you take a stroll around Creation for inspiration?"

"I have—eight times."

"Is that all? I've just come back from my two thousand and some tour."

"Doesn't that get a little dull?"

"Yeah, but after Earth's largest ball of twine, anything is interesting. Let me think. . . you could go into a state of heavenly bliss."

"That sounds pretty good. What is it, exactly?"

"All your wants are eliminated. You're never hungry, thirsty, bored, anything. Basically, you sit around for the rest of time and smile."

"That's. . . almost grotesque! You just lie around like a vegetable, forever?"

"A *happy* vegetable," Kael corrected.

"No thanks. It sounds awful; it sounds like that would kill anyone's individuality. You'd just be a corpse filled with endorphins, no personality, no soul, nothing. I'd rather be bored for the rest of my existence than have that done to my mind."

"I feel exactly the same," said Kael, suddenly serious. "But you've only just run out of things to do. I've been like this for millennia. Hell can never make people as miserable as Heaven can. But we're never allowed to stop, to die again, to make it all end. Neither of us has used up a single percent of our immortal lives. Compared to a mortal's life, we've just been born; the doctor hasn't even slapped our respective behinds yet. And we will never get any closer to death. We'll just go on, forever."

Paling at the prospect of eternal boredom, I asked, "But can't God give us something else to do?"

"Like what? You've seen everything She's created. Do you have any new ideas?"

"Well. . . no. But couldn't He let us die again?"

"It's like what I told you about atheists; God loves us too much to uncreate us. She thinks She knows what's best for us, even if we're miserable. She's like a parent who doesn't want us to get hurt running with scissors."

"But there's still a chance we won't need to exist forever. We aren't the only ones who feel this way. Many others feel the same. If God won't let us go, we'll force Her to."

"You're not talking diplomatic force, are you?"

"We've all asked, and been turned away. Our last option is to form an army."

"But. . . how would you kill God?"

"We probably couldn't, She's like us. But She can't defeat us without killing us, so we've nothing to lose. If we can conquer the afterlife and imprison God, maybe we'll find a way to kill ourselves. If nothing else, we can complicate things for Her."

"So. . . are you with us? Are you willing to risk everything to defeat God, or do you want to live in mind-numbing monotony for eternity?"

I thought about it. I couldn't say no. I had nothing to gain and everything to lose, which was exactly what I wanted. I agreed.

Eventually, the call went out. The Dead flooded in from the far-flung reaches of assorted universes and massed into an army of boredom, angels and demons as our allies, and stormed the afterlife, only to find God expecting us.

"I'm sorry," He began, his voice echoing across the crowds. "I wanted to keep you in existence for as long as I possibly could, but I see that there can be no peace with all of you so discontent. I will allow you to leave, to go into oblivion."

I watched as myriad dead were uncreated, one by one. At last God came to me. "I'm so sorry I've made you endure this so long. I was wrong to make you stay. I just didn't want you to leave," He said, and embraced me. "I love you. More than you could possibly know." As He spoke the last word, I felt myself fading from existence.

"Thank you. . ." I murmured, and vanished forever.

OWEN DUVALL

**SECOND PLACE
SHORT FICTION**

MOON

You are always there, up in the sky, beaming upon the world
Even when I feel the world is shutting down on me
You still keep blazing my way ahead
So that I can find a way home

Please don't illuminate my tears
Just for tonight
Give me darkness in the sky
Allow me to shine

By the next time you are here
I will be all right
Because you have taught me
When life is lowest
It's only moving up
Just like you always wax after waning

You always look complete
Even when you are waning
Your brightness in darkness of night
Gives my weary soul the power to live

Please don't see through my glass heart
Just for now
Cover my tears and emptiness with your glare
Allow me to hide

When you see me again
I promise I will be smiling
Because you have taught me
Life is not a fixed story
I can start over
Just like you always start from the new moon

YUKA HIROSE

THE PROCRASTINATOR

Afterthought is his

Best work

Conjuring it up after a full week's

Dreaming, but please make note he wasn't

Forgetful.

**KELSEY
PALMQUIST**

LUCY

Ginkgo tree branches

create negative spaces shaped

like diamonds that bring out

the sky

**KELSEY
PALMQUIST**

ODE TO ROME

ZANETA TAYLOR

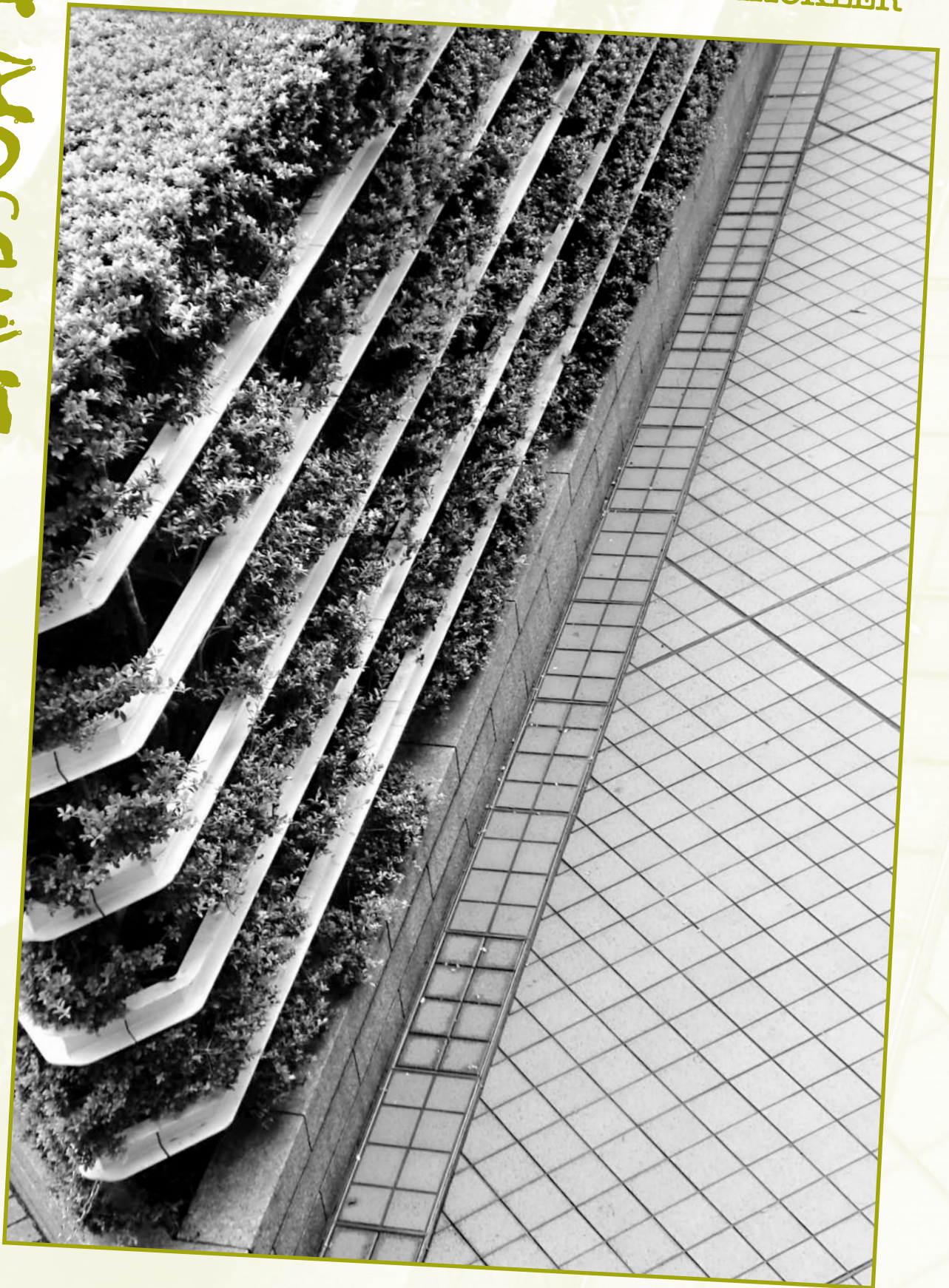
Ceramic

17"h x 12"w x 8"d



VERTICAL LANDSCAPING

CATHY
HACKLER



WHAT WE THREE SHOULD BE DOING



PAUL BRUNK

THIRD PLACE
TWO-DIMENSIONAL ART

Spray Paint, Prismacolor Pencils

26"h x 32"w

P31

TRAM VS. ROBOT

ANDY HONGISTO

Acrylic On Canvas

42" h x 17" w x .5" d



BURNED-OUT

He walked into the kitchen as it started to rain outside. The light coming in from the small crack between floor and door caught his eye; his kid sister's room. She sometimes left it open, but I made sure it was always closed. I didn't want to infect it. It always smells like lilacs, the bush with its purple buds all over her window. Clean and pretty, the way it should look for a perfect little girl.

He quickly closed the door and walked to his room. He always leaves his door closed. It's damp and dark. Dirty and clean clothes are strewn about in heaps on the floor and anywhere else. He looked at the thick canvass he had painted black last year hung over the window letting no light in. There was one rip in it, and in the morning, the sun somehow at some point shown through that hole right on his face and woke him up. He'd actually get angry at it. Turn away that warm sun. It made him feel dirty.

He took his pack out and lit another cigarette, stepped in his room and closed the door. The only light was the red ash from the top of his smoke. The clouds and rain kept that sun from shining in like it always did. He liked it that way.

LORRAINE MICHIELS

**THIRD PLACE
POETRY**

CARPE DIEM

Why am I going to study in Ireland? There have been people who advised me not to go since it is expensive and the same courses are provided at Kishwaukee. Yet, there also have been people who explained to me life can only be truly lived if one follows his or her heart. My heart yearns to experience Ireland. The 1600s songwriter Robert Herrick once wrote, "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, / Old Time is sill a-flying: / And this same flower that smiles to-day, / To-morrow will be dying." We should all take in his words by conquering our goals and living our dreams while we can. I have carried the dream of traveling to Ireland for a long time; therefore, I have been able to think about what I hope to accomplish academically and personally in Ireland, what I hope to experience there, and how I should prepare for this academic challenge.

As a student majoring in Anthropology, I study how people live and once lived in the world. I will not only observe, but I will also become a part of the Irish life. First, I will find out the general information like how subjects are taught, how students and instructors act, what people of all ages do in their off-time, and how and where people eat. Then, I will talk to people to discover what the general interests are as well as their beliefs. I will discover how the Irish people work on issues like the environment and what they do to keep the second lowest crime rate in Europe. Finally, I hope to become a better student overall. Since most of the European academic learning process is forming essays, I will improve on my writing skills. I will also become a rounded student from integrating new study skills and traditions that I learn from my instructors as well as my peers in Ireland. When I return to Kishwaukee College, I plan to share what Ireland has taught me to clubs, instructors, friends, and family so that they can take these ideas and assimilate them into their lives for teaching, studying, and living.

Even though I enjoy learning about all different cultures, I cannot help but be carried away with my own. I have always taken an interest in my own heritage, and a part of my background is Irish; going to Ireland would be like a pilgrimage for me.

Like any pilgrim, I wish to experience the growing atmosphere of my forefathers. I want to be where they lived their lives: I want to smell the burning peat, see the emerald hills, taste the food grown from Irish soil, hear the music playing on the streets and in the pubs, and I want to be able to feel the love of the country from her people's pride and kindness. I wish to experience a world where time has a different value. People of Ireland seem to take time for each other; they do not care where they need to be next, but where they are at that moment. By taking time to talk to people, I hope to gain friends with similar interests like horseback riding, hiking, or playing music. I plan to take all the traditions and customs I learn from my instructors, friends, and the general public in Ireland and make them a part of my life. Then I will pass the traditions and customs down to my future children. By going to Ireland and being a part of the Carlow community, I will better understand my ancestors, which in turn will help me better understand myself. I will gain a new confidence in me that will help me become a stronger leader in the career world. Since my focus with Anthropology is linguistics I plan to improve from the Irish-English to Irish Gaelic. I want to honor my ancestors by keeping the Gaelic language alive. Plus, it is a great way to understand the minority in Ireland.

How else do I plan to prepare for this challenge to live and study in Ireland? First, I am going to start saving money in order to pay back loans. Second, I will begin a list of belongings I want to bring with me. I am also going to continue reading about Ireland. I will read books of non-fiction like Irish laws and history, and I will read books of fiction like Irish folklore and *Gulliver's Travels* by Swift. Currently, I am reading novels by James Joyce, learning Irish music, and watching movies that either take place in Ireland or are about the Irish past.

So, why am I going study abroad in Ireland? I want to learn new ways of thinking and view different angles of life; I want to walk where my ancestors walked; I want to discover what James Joyce never left and what Gulliver found; I want to be able to share the moments I had with my fellow Kishwaukee scholars, so that we may find ways to improve our school and or community. It is time for me to seize the day by gathering my rosebuds; then I can safely say I will smile during my days of reminiscence.

**KELSEY
PALMQUIST**

**THIRD PLACE
ESSAY**

NEIGHBORS

Your name is ignorance, yes? You were born of a mother
who did not scream and an arrogant father?
You wouldn't remember that. But I, I was there
The day you were born. I witnessed your mother
Who did not scream, her mind and body numbed
To a point of dangerous passivity. I saw your father
Standing, arrogant, his arms crossed. His eyes
Depicted everything you would one day become.

I remember several years later you walked
Through a gap in your fathers unfinished fence
as I sat in my tree. You came right up and said to me,
"I'm going to marry you" I looked at you and thought
you must be the stupidest girl I have ever met.
And it was true at the time, though since,
I have met far more stupid girls,
And far far more stupid men.

I looked down at you and said quite plainly,
"I will never marry you."
Your name is ignorance, no? Born of a mother
Who did not scream, and an arrogant father?
I could never marry you. I was there
The day you were born after all,
And I saw everything you would become
In a pair of dark arrogant eyes.

**ZACHARY
EFFLER**

THE CLOCK SHOP

At 3:00 A.M. on Sunday morning, Officers Stark and Johnson of the Community Welfare Division of the St. Louis Police Department pull up to the front of the church. They had gotten a call from one Janice Foster in the apartment across the street, reporting that loud bangs and crashes had been heard during the last hour. The neighbor seemed genuinely concerned about what was going on inside. The officers quickly take a first impression of the neighborhood. They see a quiet little subdivision that seems to have grown around some older houses and buildings. From what they can see, they deduct that the neighborhood is very peaceful, quiet, and serene. Their training, however, has taught them one major thing: crimes and misdemeanors happen anywhere and everywhere. So they listen in silence for noises, or any clues to why there would be such a disturbance of the peace. While they observe quietly, a deputy pulls up in another squad car and calls the officers to attention to give them their briefing.

"Officer Johnson, Officer Stark," he begins, "we just got a call from downtown. They pulled the records on this church, and apparently it was renovated into a living space years ago, after the city diocese termed it desecrated and condemned. The records say Kyle Von Stepell is the current owner, and that he runs a clock repair shop from inside. He turns 32 in January, is just under six feet tall, and he has long black hair. His father was an immigrant from Germany, from a family that has made fine clocks for years. His mother was a native of Mexico, who traveled over the border whenever possible. They both died in a freak storm a few years ago, so he has been on his own for a while. He runs a little shop in there for the locals who need clocks and watches repaired, and he also gets a tax deduction for taking people's unwanted antiques and storing them in the church."

Just as the deputy runs out of breath, there is a loud crash from inside the building. The officers rush up to the door, unbuttoning their guns as they approach cautiously. Leaning on the sides of the door, Officer Stark slowly reaches towards the handle and pushes the door inward. With an ominous screech, the door swings open and bangs against the wall behind it. Peering around the doorjamb, the officers sidle into the room and view

an empty church sanctuary, barren except for some dimly burning candles around the altar. Officer Johnson creeps softly along the wall towards the back rooms, staying as quiet as possible. As he pushes the door in, he recoils as the stench of burning sulfur engulfs his senses. Coughing and reeling, he backpedals straight into Stark, who catches him and holds him steady.

"You do not want to go in there, man," Johnson says, "God in heaven, that reeks like no other." Stark maneuvers Johnson against the wall, and steps past him while covering his mouth with the top of his uniform. Calmly surveying the scene, he notices that nobody is in the room, but it is filled with random clocks and antique items. There is a cloud of smoke in the air that seems to penetrate through his skin, though he knows it can't possibly be able to. He notices a stained glass window across the room, so he walks over and opens it. The smoke seems to pour out into the still air of the night.

Stark calls Johnson into the room and they search the room together. As they look around, they notice a large clock has the face pulled out and thrown on the floor. The officers look around wonderingly at the random junk that has been piled up on the various tables and floors, picking some pieces up and toying with them. Suddenly, Johnson spies the source of the acrid smoke: a large green candle with diagonal stripes of gleaming black spiraling around to the base. He blows out the candle and the room goes completely black. There is a loud crash and Johnson snaps his flashlight out of his belt, shining over towards where Stark had been standing a moment ago. He doesn't see Stark anywhere and he wanders over to where the large clock face has been replaced in the base. Next to the clock, Johnson sees a black object on the floor and, picking it up with trembling fingers, he realizes that it is Stark's gun.

Behind him, there is a flicker as the green candle relights itself. As he spins with his gun at the ready, Johnson notices that the dancing flame atop the wick has changed to a deep blood red. Looking up and to all sides, he can't see any sign of anybody anywhere in the room. His police-trained mind can't comprehend what is going on or why the candle is acting like it is. Suddenly, there is a creak

to the side, and the door opens. Just as Johnson is about to shoot, he checks himself at the sight of the deputy come to see if they need any help. Seeing Johnson obviously in a state of shock, the deputy grabs him by the arm and pulls him out into the sanctuary. As Johnson moves into the brighter room, he starts to babble and tell the deputy what is going on. With a sneer of indulgence and disgust, the deputy makes the officer sit down against the wall and walks toward the back room to check out the scene. As the deputy walks back, there is yet another crash from the back room.

The deputy calmly walks through the door and calls back to the obviously frightened officer, "There's nothing to be afraid of here. It's just a loose clock face that fell onto the floor. Wow, this candle smells horrible!" As the deputy turns on his flashlight and leans toward the candle, Johnson regains his senses long enough to shout.

"Don't do that, you stupid idiot. Are you insane?" The door swings shut as the deputy puffs on the flame, ignorant of Johnson's pleas. There is no crash from behind the door, but instead there is a loud bang. The officer slowly gets up and heads toward the back room, convincing himself that the deputy is just an idiot and is probably back there having a good laugh with Officer Stark. He pushes the door open just in time to see the candle light itself again, another deep red flame springing up. He almost trips over the deputy's flashlight, which rolls away towards the clock. The face of the clock is still on the floor, but Johnson notices that the window is no longer open. Then, he hears the sound of barely audible footsteps. Shining his flashlight towards their source, he tensely watches as a trapdoor begins to open in the floor. A head of long black hair is the first thing through the hole, and the frightened black eyes of a young man look out at the officer.

"Come up here slowly with your hands over your head," Johnson barks, "and I'll do my best not to shoot you." The man, who Johnson has now decided is Kyle Von Stepell, comes the rest of the way up hesitantly. Then his eyes dart to the center of the room.

"Who lit that candle?" he asks. "Why would the police come break into my house, point a gun in my face, and top it all off by lighting my candle? Is it a crime to own a candle nowadays? Or do I just get some special treatment?"

Officer Johnson blinks, lowers his gun, and replies, "You mean you didn't light the candle? Where did you just come from?"

"I was in my workshop downstairs, fixing a clock for Mrs. Foster down the street," Von Stepell replies, "and you still haven't answered my question. Why are you in my house?" The officer begins to explain how they had responded to the call about screams and crashes from the church. Von Stepell begins to cough from the harshness of the smoke, but keeps listening to Johnson's story. As he reaches the part about Stark and the deputy disappearing, however, Von Stepell leans over quickly and blows out the candle to get rid of the smoke. There is a loud thud, a crash, and then silence.

About noon on Sunday, the police arrive in force to look for their comrades, who have not responded to their radio or returned to the station. As they open the church doors, they see a grisly scene. On each wall, there is a corpse hanging flaccidly in the fashion of Jesus on the crucifix. Each man has bled out completely, trails of blood leading towards the center of the room. The police recognize three of the bodies as those of Stark, Johnson, and the deputy. The fourth body hangs limply above the altar, its long black hair covering its face. Visible now in the daylight, a giant clock lies imbedded in the center of the sanctuary floor. The hands and numbers are made out of crystal, and the crystal is filled with the dark red of blood. As the officers watch, the second hand begins to tick, but it is apparent that it is the only hand not completely filled. As the liquid sloshes around, it causes the hand to stop. Two of the officers step around to the back room to try to determine what horrible occurrence has happened overnight. The rest of the officers hear one of the pair exclaim, "Wow, this candle smells horrible!" A loud crash echoes from the back room almost immediately, and the second hand on the floor clock begins to move once more.

**SCOTT
FLEETWOOD**

**THIRD PLACE
SHORT FICTION**

THE ADDITION OF

Only two short months ago, all was quiet and serene in my home. My daughter and I would share an afternoon playing "Sorry" or have quiet time watching a movie. We managed homework and meals with ease. Our routine was set as we settled into another school year. Then I received a phone call that there were two boys in need of a home, and would I take them since I was on the list to be a foster parent. I signed up for this, so I said yes and started my journey of being a mom to multiple children. Mornings are rushed and meals have become more involved. There is more laundry and dishes, but the games are more fun and there is more laughter. I delegate more chores and everyone pitches in. Being a parent to more than one child has its challenges and rewards, and going from having one child to having three overnight is a life-changing event.

There is always a race to see who can get to the van the fastest, who can ask for seconds before anyone else, and who can play with which toys. I have never had to negotiate play time before. My almost nine-year-old daughter has always been able to follow directions, has been independent, and for the most part can occupy herself. My foster boys, ages nine and six, are a different story. They are constantly fighting and questioning my authority, which stems from coming from a house with no rules. There is a never ending stream of questions of why and how come.

Sometimes I am told that I am not being fair. I have explained to each of the boys that privileges come with responsibility. If they are not being responsible then they do not get the privilege. I have never had to explain that to my daughter before because I have always laid out my expectations very clearly and she has, in general, followed my lead. My oldest boy has asked several times why my daughter, even though she is three months younger, gets to stay up later. I have had to explain that she has earned that right by proving to me that she is able to get up and function in the morning without much prompting, and he still has trouble getting up even when he goes to bed early. I think I have found one of the secrets to success when parenting more than one child and that is peer pressure or the threat of being left out. When one goes outside to play, they all want to go outside and play. I can then use that as motivation to get the others to comply so they can join the one outside. I also find when one is already sleeping, it is easier to get the rest of them to sleep. I have seen a dramatic improvement in my daughter in this respect. She has had some difficulty in the past with whining and when I think back over the last few months, she has been communicating in a much more grown up manner. I wonder if the peer pressure of others in the house is making her think twice about her actions. This is a definite plus for me.

I have also found that the same correction does not work for all children. I'm sure those of you out there with more than one child are laughing at my revelation, but it took trying for several weeks before I found what worked for each child. With my own child spanking has been the discipline of choice and it has worked well.

FOSTER CHILDREN

There are restrictions with foster children, however, so I set out to find what worked best. The first time the boys got into a fight I put them each into a corner. That seemed to work but did not have any lasting effects. The next time, I had them write sentences, such as "I will not fight with my brother." The littlest boy sat down and wrote them without even thinking about it and ten minutes later asked if he could go out to play. The nine-year-old, however, sat at the table and whined for an hour and a half about how hard it was. All I have to do now is threaten sentences to the older one and he straightens up. I have found with the six-year-old that naps and earlier bed times work best for him.

My daughter and I have always shared quiet times together. She is a very still, well behaved child when she is alone. The first week I had all three children was total chaos. My so-called quiet child turned into something I had not seen before and jumped right into wrestling and screaming at seven in the morning. I wondered what happened. I had never had to control three kids before and while I was correcting one, another one snuck off and was doing something else. Was I totally losing control? Was my quiet time a thing of the past? It took a couple days to come up with a solution, but I found one. I instituted "quiet time" from the time they wake up until seven am on weekdays, and eight am on weekends, with nap time on the weekends as well. The quiet time on Saturdays only lasted a week. The second week the boys decided they wanted to wrestle and tease each other so I gave them straight-backed chairs in the kitchen to sit on for the remainder of quiet time. I have had to do this every week so far, but I hope they get the picture real soon.

My daughter's love language has always been physical touch. She just loves to sit on my lap, give me hugs or hold my hand. It took me quite a few years to learn this and apply myself concerning her recognition and expression of love. With the addition of two children it has become confusing as to who needs what when. Sometimes I feel like I need to be three different people speaking three different languages. I try to get each child alone at some point during the day and just spend a few minutes with each of them, and let each know they are special and unique. I have never had to worry about switching gears when it came to communication, but that is something I have to remind myself daily, that I can't treat them all the same.

I was asked by the referring Pastor in my interview to become a foster parent how I was going to manage my time since I am single and three children is a lot more work. I laughingly said I would have to give up TV. To be honest, that has been one of the biggest changes. We spend evenings doing homework instead of staring at the tube. One of the kids always needs help with something and the one thing I have not mastered yet is how to help all of them at the same time. There are many more chores and household duties, but now I delegate. We play a game where I write down the things I need done and they pick the slips of paper. I actually enjoy doing the jobs around the house because now I have three little helpers who fight over who gets to help the most.

**ELIZABETH
FINKBONER**

**SECOND PLACE
ESSAY**

THE TEMPLE



CATHY HACKLER

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