

## Crossing Eden

### *Tre Manchester*

On the banks of a white river I sit in wonder, reflecting upon time lost. A mind can slip to unknown reaches, to places once thought buried deep beneath the scarred layers of the heart. Wandering windswept plains in the era between adulthood and death, I learned empathy is not sanctity. Empathy allows subjection through objection. Holiness cannot be achieved without confession, an outright acceptance of emotion.

I've been held back in search of a sanctuary. I've walked forgotten trails, and paths that once teemed with life, but were left vacant when time carried on in ignorant light. How can one become whole when fragility is ever proven, ever certain? Perhaps the reason for a sanctuary is due to a brittle construct of the heart... pangs radiate below, and they must surface. To cross to Eden is to wade through emotion... to accept it. Thus, my time on this bank shall be my requiem, and my redemption.

Adolescence seems visceral and surreal in memory. A looking glass contorted by a kaleidoscope lens. In the present there are birds and grass, but a lack of flame in the kindled brush of life. In the past, there was fire. A crimson creation of contradicting complexity, for youth knows no death, but it surrounds. A child born, a flower grows in the garden, another parallel of life. Destruction bridged the years when Sam and I played.

Fifteen, a war overseas, yet we knew not the ideal of death. To sacrifice for another living was a foreign enigma, like the jackboot crack upon the pavement block. At home in the garden, the flowers grew.

Sam shouts and grabs a bindle. I laugh and sprint along.

Sam holds a finger to his lips, an order to stay silent. A maiden's gown. A broom upon the steps, dust flickers through the air, an illumination of grandeur glamour, minuet shedding of life; a ray of sun caught by the eye. Hunched low, slithering motion, the smell of grass, a breeze in time, a flower watches, waving goodbye. *Mother, cradle thee in thy blankets of life.*

Spinning tires, laughter escapes, no longer prisoner to the games of trickery that strangled voices. True freedom's an imbedded idea from Masters of an age. Even now my mind savors the taste.

Mouths in motion, speaking words that transcribe emotions, conversations of innocent love. Trees tower beside, dirt under the tire tracks. Leaves drop from above. A blue machine, windows unseen, bodies visible, sound escapes. To evade the opaque cloud of debris, we turn down, down a slope of green and into a sea of wheat. Our hands' instinctual action: to skim the tops. Mechanical transportation, driven by our feet,

we speed toward our destination, a larger goal. A patch of  
deadened growth, crippled by absence of Nature's loving milk.  
We laugh, and at home, the flowers grow. *Carry me to thy  
kingdom above.*

The white river's grove: a canopy and trove, a creation  
of Eden's founder. Green is the water, shimmering in the light.  
Dawn beheld the beauty, but we savor the coolness of night.  
Giddy, like the children we tease, our youthfulness sings in the  
encampment of our adoption. Feet in the sand, no dirt beneath,  
bare bodies in motion, sprinting toward the water's edge.  
Above us, the trees rule like lords over the grove, protectorates  
of the embassy in the garden kingdom. Diving and laughing,  
our voices make the leaves change.

With grace and nature beside us in life, we lay out in the  
sun, shimmering like diamonds under light. We dream of an  
Eve, innocent love tainted by the tirade of adolescent feelings.  
The trees cry; their petals sever from the vein. In the garden  
back home, the flowers grow.

Twilight fades and suddenly we question the morals in  
life. Fingers dig in the sand underneath, an insolent attempt to  
exemplify the questions. *Constantly a struggle.*

Under the stars, hunger gnaws, but we find restraint.  
The rabbit escapes. An owl approves. Resilient in the fire, our

skin glows orange. Catching eyes through the flames that lick the open air. Friendship is the only entity living in the dark. Shivering under the incandescent glow of the moon. At home, the flowers grow.

Shimmers upon the water, a glowing ball of light, birds take flight. It is their only attempt to reach heaven. Yawning. A rinse in the lake. Slumber grips the eyes. Sam heads home, I travel on.

At summer's end, we defy Nature's rule and rekindle the flames in the pit of our Eden. Fluorescent orange overwhelms the eyes, decaying trees whose bark has run dry. The sand is cold to the touch; our feet dance the waltz of temptation, while our toes test the quality of water. Birds in hiding, our presence intrudes. A ray of light bends through the grime, yet I dive. Vicariously, Sam watches, fretful of the leap. Calling names, threats that bear no weight. The plunge. *Coddle thy being, escape from these chains.*

Blinding murk; dry, cracked leaves. Sticks walk without guidance of a higher being. Dust falls thicker. Panes chip, revealing their undercoat of grain; a window to view the panic.

Absence of breath, strangulate my emotions. Choking upon Nature's loathing milk. A heart that stops, eyes that shimmer, yet glaze like film over the serene lake. The birds fall

from heaven. Their songs do sing. The war still rages, a landing  
upon a beach.

At home in the garden, the flowers once grew.