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TYGR 2006: A Magazine of Literature & Art

Jill Forrestal

Olivet Nazarene University, JForrest@olivet.edu


Emily Benson

Olivet Nazarene University

Jonathan Swigart

Olivet Nazarene University

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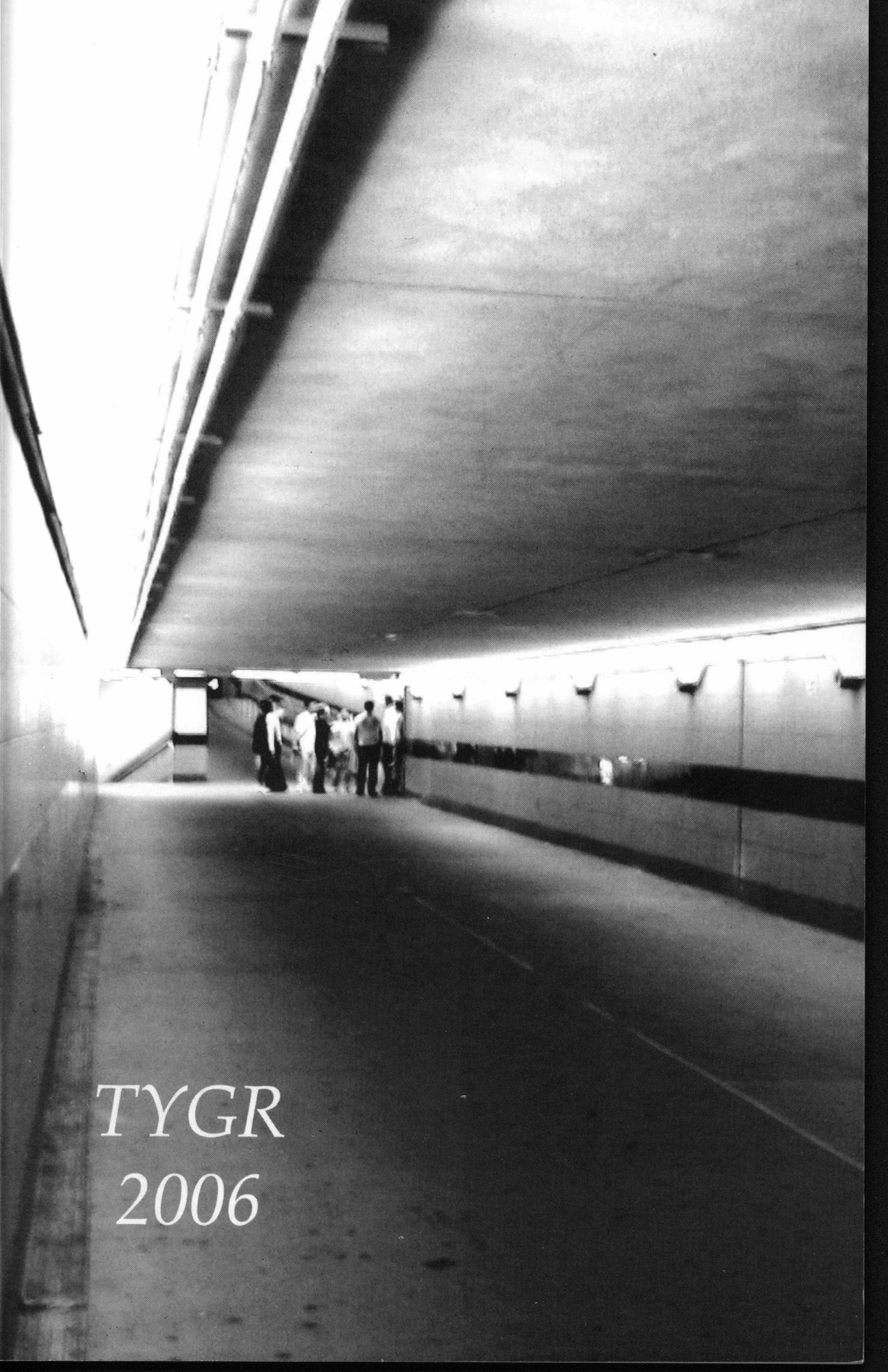
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TYGR
2006

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A Magazine Of Literature & Art

Presented By

*Olivet
Nazarene
University*

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Olivet Nazarene University

One University Avenue
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www.olivet.edu

&

The Department of English and Modern Languages

In conjunction with

The Department of Art and Digital Media

Present

TYGR

*A magazine of student literature and art for the 2005-2006
academic year.*

Production Staff

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Cover art by Alyssa Lytle "Tunnel"



Tim by Jordan Mitchell

Thinking

By Jessica Hulsey

Why can't I learn not to think
Instead of worrying away the day?
Daily, I want my will to shrink.

And Yours to take over. Then, I can sink
Into the wonders of my Lord — and stay
Still. Why can't I learn not to think?

Some days it feels like there is a chink
In my armor of God. I cry out and pray
“Dear Jesus, I want all my will to shrink!” —

Yet, the same problems seem to link
Season to season, and my faith sways.
Why can't I learn not to think?

Relax and live my life? I wish I could blink
And anxiety would disappear. Like a mass of clay,
God, I merely want my will to shrink.

Each morning, Lord, I will strive to sink
And let Your power lead the way.
Day to day, I want to learn not to think
So that little by little my will can shrink.

The Tea Set

By JoDee Baker

My mother never had anything of real value. Her small engagement ring was her only possession of any real worth. However, in the dining room located above the table was a perfectly marvelous tea set. The set had belonged to my great-great grandmother and my mother was entrusted with the heirloom upon the death of her grandmother. Anytime someone made a remark about the collection her eyes lit up and she felt it her duty to give the poor soul a brief run-down of the family tree. Our closest friends soon learned to avoid even eye contact with the lovely set for fear of my mother's watchful eye catching any stolen glimpse.

It was late one night when I arrived home after being out with friends, that I heard great commotion in the dining room. As I poked my head around the door, I saw my father standing with a broom in hand and the tea set in pieces. My poor mother was bent weeping over the tiny pieces of her beloved treasure. Her hands shook as she attempted to gather each tiny sliver. "No, no, no," she gasped between sobs. Never one to complain or upset easily, my father and I stared in disbelief at the tea set and my broken mother. We quietly slipped into the other room. It was only then that I realized my father's watery eyes behind his glasses. His hands were slightly shaking and his breath was off its usual methodic rhythm. I had never seen my father upset. He was brought up by the standard phrase 'boys don't cry' and held strictly to its code.

My father was a tall man with broad shoulders and dark hair. I had always thought of him as very handsome. He wore glasses on occasion; however, not as often as he should have due to their being an obvious sign of weakness. His demeanor was always one of calmness. Nothing ever seemed to startle him or make him angry. The sudden display of emotion upon my father's face that night was the first moment I looked at him not as my father, but as a human being with emotions and a life separate from mine.

I embraced him as tears began to slowly trickle down his cheeks. He pulled me in close and spoke into the top of my head, "Tell her I'm sorry. I'm so, so sorry." He loved my mother very much. Seeing her broken heart made his break also, and made me realize the love that they shared.

I released my father, assuring him that all would be okay and tip-toed back into the dining room to help pick up the pieces. My mother was in the same position as my father and I had left her, but the sobs had slightly started to fade. I went to my closet and found an old shoe box. I brought it back and bent down to help her gather the pieces. Slowly and silently we managed to pick up my mother's precious possession. She then taped up the box. Where she put it, I'm not really sure. I do know that she still has the set.

We never talk of the incident; a nice painting now hangs in its place. She and my father did not talk about the incident anymore that I know of. I often wonder if she thinks about what happened. It is certain that she is not a person to display her emotions. It breaks me to think that she alone bears the weights of her thoughts. The shattered memories should not be for her to carry alone.

A Snapshot of Love

By Tabitha Vegh

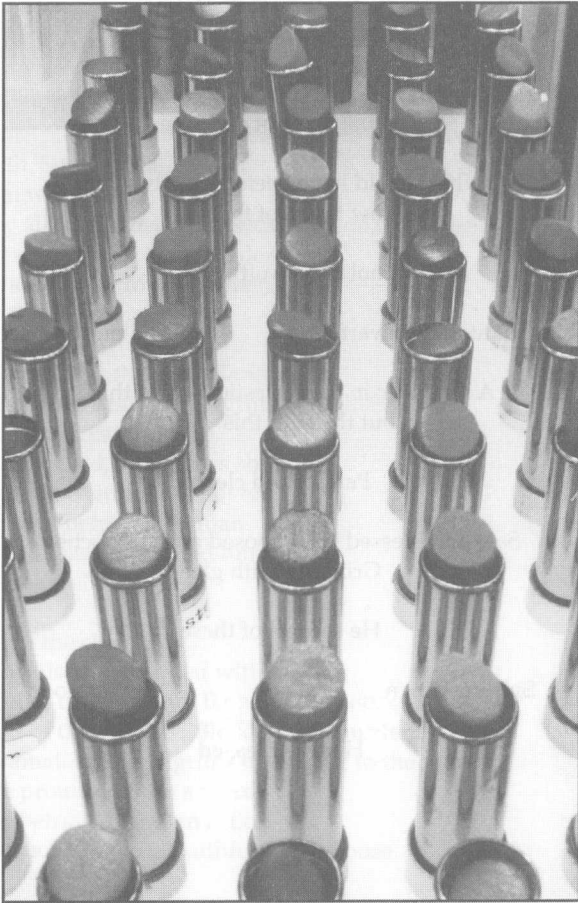
Her aqua eyes followed his hand as it held the wide brush soaked in vibrant red paint that was gently stroking the canvas that was becoming quite possibly the most incredible piece of artwork she had ever experienced.

His chocolate eyes were barely aware of her as he found himself drowning in the brilliant hues of fire engine red, sea foam green and canary yellow that while seemingly clashing were coming together to create a masterpiece he would call "Stoplights and Sunshine," though there was no trace of either object beyond their respective colors.

She wanted to remain in this moment for eternity; to again and again lose herself in the steady up and down motion of his strong, defined arm as he created.

He couldn't wait to escape this moment; to reach the next one, when the actual creating was complete and the creation came fully into existence.

This was their finest hour, for this was his greatest work, and she had never loved him more.



Lipstick By Emily Claus

God's Telescope

By Kayla Bailey

Innocent, small and naïve

Saved, redeemed and stain free What once was car ex-
haust and hot concrete

What would have been dark city alleys
now tastes of fresh air

Cool breeze off the sea

Important and powerful yet so much unseen

A tiny spec in the majestic ploy of things
but through this view

Perfect and clean

Safe and blessed Unexposed and untouched
Grinning with glee

He sees all of these

Smiling down It was good

He was pleased

House of Love, House of Blood

By Dan Aumiller

Hidden high up on a hill sits a house
Where pilgrims come and pay tribute to love betrayed long ago
North, South, East, West
From within and without
They all follow the hard brick paths to the house
Desperately seeking to understand
Always failing to comprehend
The duality of the house

Burning brightly in the darkness
Six lanterns draw the pilgrims with their flames
And illuminate the gate
Never locked, yet always shut
Eternally waiting for a lover
Eternally betrayed by man
A hand reaches out and touches
The heart of the house

Within the chambers
The walls are saturated with blood
Blood of the betrayed, Blood of the betrayer
Blood of the sacrifice, Blood of the murder
Passionately, the pilgrims make love to the house
Love promised with a word
Love betrayed with an action
Always failing to be faithful to the house



Rough Edges By Cirena Sifferd

These Days Are Not Our Own

By Leigh Sullan

Merely players of the stage,
We try to drink the limelight
Through straws of sweetened scripts,
Tasting just enough for ourselves.

In attics we put on plays,
Filling entire rooms
With princess costumes and swift soliloquies,
Hiding kings in corner trunks
To cover our complacency.

Broken records spin into panic
Teasing us with sardonic etching
We listen too closely and soon become
Landlords to our own kingdom.

Hours pass.
We fill them with
Acquisitive schemes
To embellish our ambitions,
As if this world was Eden.

The fruit falls from tree to hand,
Returning to dust. We have fooled no one
But everyone exactly like us:

Overtures of theatrical euphoria
Convinced us we were celebrities
When really we've forgotten...
These days are not our own.

Confessions on the Side of the Road

By Tabitha Vegh

He stopped talking mid sentence as he looked over to her and saw she was staring out the window not paying attention to him. He realized that she had been quiet for quite some time.

"Are you okay?" he asked. "You haven't said anything for like, fifteen minutes, and I've been rambling the whole time."

"I'm fine," she said softly, keeping her eyes focused on the strong, steady snow falling around them outside the car. "Keep talking."

He knew she wasn't okay, he could hear it in her voice. But he didn't push; she would tell him when she was ready.

"Okay..." he said uncertainly, and awkwardly resumed his story. Every once in a while, he would risk a peek at her, and saw that she was getting increasingly fidgety. Sighing, he pulled over to the side of the road next to a big, snowy field. "Okay, you're not fine. You're about to jump out the window! C'mon, tell me what's wrong."

She looked up into his face riddled with concern, and suddenly felt claustrophobic in the tight quarters of the passenger seat.

"I need air," she said, and opened the door, practically falling out in her haste. She walked a few paces, then just stopped and wrapped her arms around herself, her back to the car.

He got out of the car and followed her. He stopped a step or two behind her.

"Please, tell me what's wrong," he pleaded. "You know you'll feel better."

"No, I won't!" she practically screamed, turning around to face him. He saw that tears were streaming down her face. "How can I feel better by telling you what's wrong when you *are* what's wrong?!"

"What?" he asked, his eyes searching hers for a clue as to what she could possibly mean.

"You know how I feel about you!" she said before she could stop herself, and the words just began spilling out. "I don't even have to say a word and you know! And I know I shouldn't feel this way — I know I can't — but I do! You're all wrong for me, and most of the time I'm not even sure I would take a chance to be with you if I had it because even the thought scares me to death. But there is something about you that I just can't resist! Something that just won't let me let go! And I know it's so wrong! And nothing can happen! But everything you do just makes me fall harder. And I've been killing myself — wracking my brain since we met — to find a way to avoid this place! But I'm here — against my will almost! And I don't know what to do to get out!" She stopped then, more for lack of voice than lack of words, because by now she was crying so hard she could barely breathe.

He felt like he should say something, but he was speechless, so he just sighed deeply and waited for her to either calm down so she could speak again, or ask him to say something.

She was right, he knew. He had known for a long time. This wasn't the first time she had admitted this to him. But she was right; she didn't have to say a word for him to know. And he had to admit, he liked it, even though he shouldn't, he and he had at least a little taken advantage of that knowledge.

But faced with the ugly details, he felt incredibly guilty and sorry for dragging her to this place.

"I'm sorry," he whispered, for lack of anything more coherent or appropriate. "I know," she whispered back. "But it's not your fault. I knew better — I knew it couldn't happen — and yet I still let myself fall for you." She took a step toward him. "And I know that this is the exact opposite of what I should be doing, and I don't expect it to change anything. I don't know if you're scared, or just too comfortable, or really in love, but I know that you at least *used* to return *some* of these feelings that I've admitted to you just now, so I have to do this. I have to know, or I'll regret it for the rest of my life."

A fresh wave of tears began to spill down her cheeks as she whispered, "I'm so sorry," then pulled him close and kissed him hard. As much as his mind was screaming at him to resist, he couldn't, and he gave in and returned the kiss. Again, he had to admit that, despite knowing he shouldn't, he too had wondered what this would be like.

After a few moments, she pulled away and backed up, taking him in for one more moment, then turned and ran away, leaving him standing shell-shocked in the middle of the field. As she ran, tears blinded her, and part of her was praying he would chase her, while another part prayed he would get in his car and drive the other way out of town, and she would never have to face him again...

The Race

By Katie Huffman

The gun goes off, my feet know they must race,
I look ahead into a thunderous sea,
My legs begin to set into a pace,
The muscles in my body start to plea.
Sweat begins to bleed into my eyes,
My mind travels to another place in time,
I force myself to think about the cries,
Of the people standing along the sides.
I hear coach yelling from afar,
My heart pounds within the limits of my chest,
The feeling inside is so bizarre,
How much longer until I can rest?
I start to run the final stretch,
My body cries out until I feel the catch.



Untitled By Alyssa Lytle

The Greek Door

By Jessica Hulsey

Rushing down the busy street
Something catches my eye.
The raucous pandemonium
Melts away. Serenity takes
Its place and I stand fascinated.
The colors of Greece rein me in;
Wonder grounds my feet, immovable.

Peeking out beneath a flowery vine,
A half-moon window winks slyly.
Below, a well-worn step is evidence of many who have come
Before to seek out a new fate.
My breath quickens and my mind
Skips from thought to thought.

It is merely a plain blue door, I muse;
Yet—as I am about to reason
With myself the dreamer takes charge.
Where does it lead? Some secret garden
Filled with seraphs and wildflowers?
Or a labyrinth, ominous and menacing?
Can fear lie behind beauty?

Hesitating at the threshold
I am afraid to take the next step.
Should I find another place to explore?
Gently, slowly, I pull back the vine
With alluring red flowers,
I step into the comfortable shadows,
And turn the smooth burnished knob.

Captivity

By Amanda Bosworth

Orca defines beauty:
Black smooth sleek body
Revealing white underside
Muscular powerful frame
Blubber and grace meet

Trainer commands and
Orca plunges to the depths
Before speeding toward the surface
Lifting the trainer
Who denies gravity

The crowd roars with awe
Trainer wins accolades
Orca wins fish
Trainer loses fish
Orca loses liberty

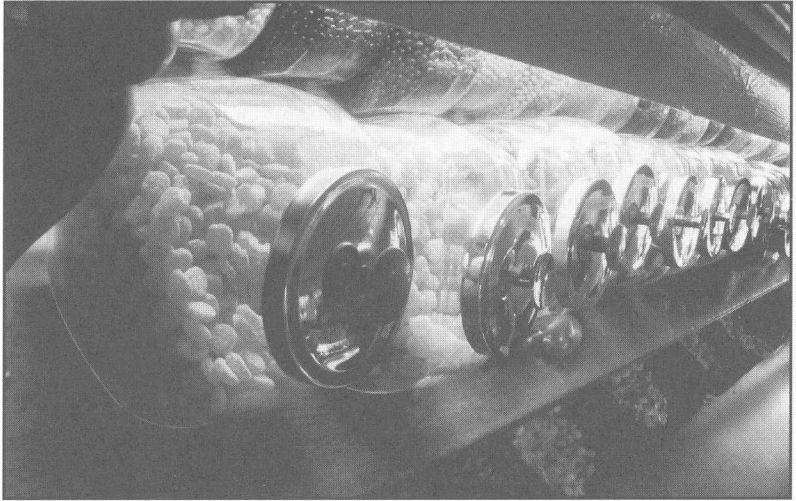
Ellington in Paris, 1958

By Molly Franken

Light opens the hall
As the breaking notes of a melody –
The keen of this mellow jazz crooner
From a mute baby grand.

Newport and Cleveland,
Paris and New York
Almost gasp.
He's nearly off the ground
With that velvet spiritual
That makes Harlem hum,
That flurry of life and ivory keys,
That sword of human light breaching the stillness.

But first, patience, because
Stillness is frail, cautious, hard,
Liable as life to be lost.
He gathers himself to make life,
To catch the light
Glancing off the glossy, black body,
To seize the song
Winging its way through darkness.



Candy by Emily Claus

All I Know of Jazz

By Molly Franken

He opens the guitar case on the carpet in front of him. It is a treasure chest, and it holds a slender black body, scratched pick guard and metal strings along a maple neck. The head says *Fender* and *Squire*—brand names any guitarist knows. He slips a hand under the head and a hand under the body, lifting it as one lifts a newborn baby.

I am seven-years-old, and this is the first time I've seen my father hold an electric guitar. Sitting on the black amp behind him, he plugs the guitar in and adjusts it in his lap. I wait for him to crank it up and wail. Instead, he runs a hand through his stubborn, dark hair, examines the strings and finally says, "Let's give it a shot."

My dad gave up playing guitar before I was born. If you asked him, he'd say he "gave up music." He'd say God called him to it, so he did it, no holds barred. Gone was the Fender. Gone was the Gibson. Gone was the sheet music. Gone were the hundreds of vinyls. Gone were the amps and cords and pedals and the thing he'd lived and breathed for since he got his first cheap, olive green electric guitar at thirteen. Sometimes he says he is Abraham and it is his Isaac, but God did not stop his hand.

He did save his classical guitar and eventually started playing it again. Consequently, we hear a lot of Beethoven, Bach and hymns at home. Especially Bach, though my mom always says his true love is jazz. He doesn't play it anymore, because our church says it's not "Christian."

I'm not even sure what jazz is.

All I know of jazz comes from a certain box of pictures in the basement. The tint of them is funny, because they're from the seventies or early eighties—his years as a professional musician—and he has wavy, shoulder-length hair and wears bell-bottoms and hideous salmon suits. In some, he stands on a stage like it's Madison Square Garden or the Super Bowl, eyes shut

and face contorted, head thrown back towards the orange spotlights. When I look at the man with short hair who sits on an amp in our living room and plays a second-rate instrument, I don't recognize the artist—a wild man—in the pictures.

The amplifier hums till he takes the pick from his mouth and strums some gentle chords, scales, and arpeggios that he practices on his classical. I want to ask him "What's wrong? What's going on? Are you crazy?"

Because my dad plays guitar in the same way he walked away from music. It's the way he quit smoking and how he talks to God. It's how he does everything: intensely, even fiercely, and completely. So you'd think he'd be a starving man at Thanksgiving dinner. He hasn't eaten in eleven years. But maybe he's still getting the feel of this instrument. Maybe the strings are no good. Maybe he doesn't know what to play. Maybe he's afraid.

But I don't say anything, because I am only seven and I don't know what to say. I only know I always understand my dad—always, but not now.

On the couch, my mother smashes the butt of her cigarette in her ashtray and shifts impatiently. She, unlike my dad, is no extremist. She can't quit smoking cold turkey and likes most things in moderation. "Hurry up and play something," she presses him.

My dad's dark eyebrows crease. He replied, sounding annoyed, "I don't know what to play."

To some extent, my parents balance each other. But, secretly, I've always thought my mom rather unfair. My dad left music in part to save their marriage, and still she gripes about the bits of time he spends with his classical guitar, or preparing pieces for church, or blaring soundtracks and tapes of Segovia on Sunday morning. I mean, what more can you ask of a man?

She says, "play something you used to play at the hotels."

In Aruba, he made a living playing in nightclubs and high-end hotels and, later, by teaching. My mother hated it, because he worked nights and slept or practiced

during the days.

"I don't remember anything," he mumbles.

"Oh yes, you do. What about *Besame Mucho*?"

"Hmm." He tests a few notes, a few bar chords.

"How does it go..." Humming, tapping one foot, his eyes turn toward the ceiling. We watch, still waiting; even I am growing impatient.

"Well, you should know it. It is our song."

I pipe up, "It is?" I've never heard it, or heard of it, before.

"Uh-huh. One time, when I was visiting Daddy, when we were dating, we had dinner at the Sheridan. There was this terrific violinist who played it for us, and it's been our song ever since." Her eyes spark as she looks at my dad "*Besame Mucho*. It means 'kiss me a lot.'"

I make a face. It doesn't matter if you're seven or thirty-seven. When your parents talk like that, it's revolting.

"I remember now," says my dad, gazing blankly at the floor.

At first, he finds his way through the song with single notes. Speeding up, he plays almost percussively, a pulsating tempo under a lazy, cool melody. It is a *bossa nova*, Brazilian music, and a fusion of samba rhythms with delicate jazz harmonies—just like my dad. I can all but hear the sighing of palms and see glistening lights against a night sky. His hand slides down the neck, bends and twists a dark tone. I stare as his fingers grow more agile, more alive. He improvises for a while—scales with a weird dissonance; interesting intervals of sevenths or ninths that my ears don't quite understand. Magic, he told me once as he rambled about color and texture and movement in jazz. At last, I know what he meant.

I glance over at my mom. She's cradling a cup of coffee, looking moderately pleased and not at all spellbound.

"See," he says pointedly to her. "I do remember." Placing a hand over the strings, he quiets the humming guitar. "What else? I think I know some Hendrix."

I recognize the next tune immediately. It's the Star-Spangled Banner, only distorted and much cooler than usual.

I smile at him, and he smiles easily back. "I don't know *anyone* who has a dad this cool," I think to myself. Every kid should think that at least once in their life. It's the best feeling.

He reaches down, switches off the amp. "It's getting late, doll. You need to go to bed." Coming over, he kisses me on the forehead and sets the instrument in its purple-velvet bed, running his nails across the strings. The guitar rings in response, "You know, the guy I borrowed this from is also selling another Fender. A *Strat*. I think I might see how much he's asking for it."

"What's a *Strat*?"

"A *Stratocaster*. That's the brand. Like a *Squire*, only better."

"Oh." Standing next to him, I lean over the case. It's not half so interesting when it's just lying there. "I think you should."

He looks at me. "I want to."

One week later, a new rectangular case lies on our living room floor. "*The guitar*," he tells me. The *Stratocaster*: blonde wood, black pick guard, and even prettier than the *Squire*. On the coffee table, he spreads some papers on which staffs and notes are crammed together, almost impossible to read.

"What's this?"

"Just something..." He shrugs, a grin creeping into his eyes. "Something I've been writing. Want to hear it?"

I nod furiously.

And except for the short hair and absent spotlights, he looks a bit more like that artist, that wild man, in those old, faded pictures.

An Odd End

By Andrew Bressler

An old man, perhaps in his seventies, stood on a big rock at the edge of a tall cliff. A spirited stream with clear mountain water flowed among the rocks about one-hundred feet below. A light breeze blew through the man's white hair. The sun shone brightly in the October-blue sky. All around, the grass was dead.

To any casual observer, he would have been an elderly gentleman enjoying a beautiful day in nature. The lines in his face and his rough leathery skin told of a life spent outdoors. His blue jeans and scuffed leather boots further confirmed this hypothesis. Yes, an old man out in nature. That was all.

But there was something else. Something behind that stoic face that no expression could show. A pain too deep to mention, an ache no therapy could control. The grass was not the only thing dead.

Ellen! Wouldn't this be a beautiful spot for a picnic? Sun-warmed on this big rock with such a view.... He glanced expectantly over his shoulder as though someone would be following behind him, a picnic basket on her arm, long brown hair swept back from her shoulders by the wind, stepping lightly over the rocks. But no one was there. A muscle in his cheek twitched as he turned his head back.

He kept doing that. Talking to the walls, reaching for a hand that wasn't there, looking for her face in a crowd. And afterward, there was always that painful reminder and that twitch in his cheek. How could the very thing that once brought him so much joy, now bring so much pain?

Ellen...Ellen...Ellen... It was a rhythm repeating over and over again.

But today, he couldn't let emotions get in the way. He had made up his mind. He had decided. He had hardened himself for this moment. He had thought about it and chosen this as the right spot. A cloudy day would have been more fitting, though. It was a shame to do it on such a beautiful day, a day so like the ones that he and Ellen — *No! Not*

now!

The man looked down at the water below. *You shouldn't be here*, a voice told him *You should be at the pastor's house. You should have taken that invitation to stay with your brother in Dallas. Or stayed with one of your kids – any of them, really. They all offered.* It was a stab of conscience. *I tried*, he fought back. *I tried. But it's too hard!* I needed to be alone! The voice stepped in: *Yes, needed to be very alone, didn't you?* He didn't want to fight anymore. He already had his mind made up "Shut up!" he said aloud. *What about your family? His family? His family who loved him?*

"To hell with them!" he said emphatically to the clear blue water. "To hell with them!" Yes, to hell. That is where he'd probably go if he jumped. And that would defeat the purpose. He could see the headline now: *Man Goes to Hell in Attempt to be With Deceased Wife.* What devotion, what love, what ... what stupidity. *No wonder the devil gets so many of us – so weak we'd sell him our soul to get out of a little suffering.* But he made no move to climb down from the big rock. Instead, he sat on it.

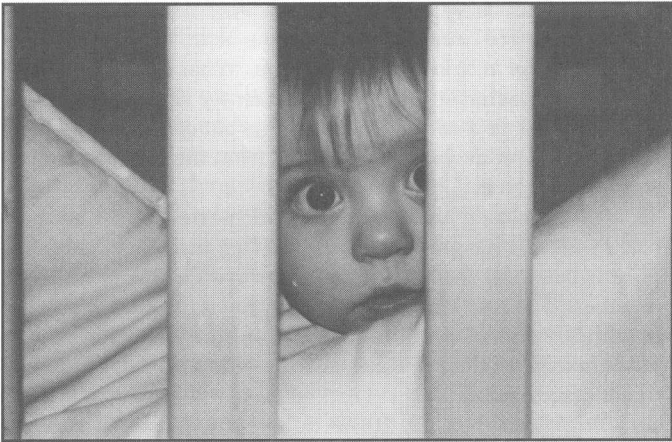
He closed his eyes, and the memories came flooding back, watering his grieving soul. The first time they had met ... how beautiful she had looked that day. Their first walk together. The first kiss. Her walking down the aisle dressed in white, beautiful white, the symbol of purity. Reciting their vows in front of their families and the whole world, binding that blessed knot ...

"God!" he said. It was no swear word, but a plea. A plea known only to the one to whom it was addressed. Something ran down from his tightly closed eyes, and he wiped at it hurriedly. Best not to cry. Only made one weak. And he hadn't come here to grieve.

More memories. The time they climbed Mount McKinley in Washington. Alaska. The Grand Canyon. Skiing in Nepal. The beautiful mountains, the crisp cold air, the powdery snow....

This last memory was so powerful that he felt if he opened his eyes, he would be there, a light snow falling, the clear blue sky above, Ellen on his arm. He looked up and found himself still on the big rock. Dazed, he wondered

for a moment why he was there. *Oh, yes – to jump.* To jump. He got up and took a step toward the edge, looking down into the clear blue water so far below, so inviting. What was it worth without her? All he had were memories. Then, he had it. Yes! Yes, he would join her. But not today.



Rebecca by Susan Fleming

I Have Been Won

By Amanda Mavichien

The spectacle above my vision far
Of scale beyond my mind it stretched and turned
Like dots of wonderment became the stars
I shrink to find my status undisturbed

Congratulate the Lord of hosts on all
His awesome sights. And I remain below:
The insignificant prey of The Fall.
How am I worthy of all he bestows?

Yet when I looked and saw his glory shine
The Heavens opened. "Do not fear for I
will save you. Always, only you are mine.
I paid the price: on Calvary I died."

All twinkle and surpassing beauty come
together for His love I have been won.

The Battle

By Katie Smith

The battle, the battle
The battle rages on.
On and on from dusk to dawn.

My flesh consumes my spirit;
The Spirit pierces me.
My eyes are filled with tear drops,
And I can barely see.

Aware that I'm surrounded,
My heart is on the brink.
I'm confused and I'm confounded
As my spirit starts to sink.

In this battle I've grown weary
And my heart feels cold today
I've never felt so helpless,
So lost and far away.

And well, my friends, it seems as though
I've dealt myself a fatal blow:
A wound that seems so deep inside
I stare in fear, and scream, and hide.

And I believe that I have died.

But deep within me something stirs.
My heart is filled with soothing Words.
I'm healed by my Redeemer's Sword
Healed by my Redeemer's Sword.



Rustscape by Jordan Mitchell

Rain Came Down

By Allison Caudle

What was it like when the rain came down
And dribbled and pattered and scattered around?
Did you fear as you watched life come from the sky
For the first time, or wide-eyed did you cry
As life was dashed out from within Earth's towns?

Your scent was of cedar and fur. With bound
Beasts near, family nearer, rain started to pound.
Thus sayeth the Lord! Why did no one comply?
Old man, what was it like when the rain poured down?

Did you doubt God's choice that you wore the crown
Of favor? Or ever once were you found
Smug in that schooner? Forty days went by,
And you were alive. You let the dove fly
As you breathed alone when your feet felt ground.
So Noah, what was it like when the rain came down?

A Hand in a Hurry

By Amber McKean

Katrina brought tremendous losses
Families were displaced
Communities were erased
They desperately needed our help

The public was informed at once
Aid instantly began pouring in
Workers unloaded trucks and provisions
And prepared thousands of meals per day

Cash contributions were made
Time and talents were volunteered
Families obtained needed stability
As the country worked to rebuild itself

Though the nation lost the battle with nature
It will win the war with restoration

Sonnet 665

By Dan Aumiller

It seems to me that life is like a mill
Where flesh and frame are ground into nothing
I know that change is for the best, yet still
There's nothing worse than the pain of grinding
In the morning I wake and set myself
Upon the millstone and suck in a breath
The constant, scraping pain seems like a hell
Molars clenched together I long for death
Throughout the day the agonies increase
My flesh exfoliated to the bone
Then suddenly the mechanisms cease
Have I at last for all my sins atoned?
It's only night, it seems that all this strife
Is nothing more than what I must call life



Streetlights by Alyssa Lytle

As Ashes Fall

By Jonathan Swigart

A subtle fire burns in a place I hold dear.
Its light emits a glow throughout the room.
The fire burns away all my fears.

The window at the end of the room leers.
It is a survivor of the age of my gloom.
A subtle fire burns in a place I hold dear.

The smoke leaves the embers quietly, finding the air.
The chimney holds scars from every plume.
The fire burns away all my fears.

I was lost before I found my way here.
A wretch on the inside and slightly torn while in view.
A subtle fire burns in a place I hold dear.

I found the shadow of a hiding cheer.
My tattered skin fell away as I met you.
The fire burns away all my fears.

Epitome of filth, yet still you stood near.
You led me to water and made your arms my home.
A subtle fire burns in a place I hold dear.
The fire burns away all my fears.

Oh, Ye of Little Faith

By Deena Drake

It was a cold day for a Michigan summer. The sky was swollen with heavy, dark gray clouds. The humidity from previous days had left its moisture in the air, and the surprising cooler temperatures had transformed it into a fog winding and curling its way through the tall pines of the Emerald Forest. It was hard to wake up on a day like this. I opened my eyes and looked at the white canvas doing its best to protect me and the other girls from the cold temperature outside. I never imagined I would be sleeping in a covered wagon. As a camp counselor at SpringHill camp, a Christian camp for kids, I was required to stay in one of their unique lodgings. This week, I had been assigned to the Good Intent Stage Line to work with young girls who seemed to know everything there was about riding horses—an activity I knew nothing about. As I climbed down the rotting wooden steps to the leaf-covered ground outside my wagon, I thought about the significance of this day. Today was Wednesday. The day would be filled with fun activities such as the sip line and the waterslide, but most importantly, today was the day most of the girls in my cabin would hear the Gospel for the first time.

The day was filled with many activities the girls loved, but we were all looking forward to one specific event that came during the late afternoon—cabin time. Cabin time meant we all could lie down on our bunks and rest for an entire hour. I was expecting to be able to sleep the entire time, but my girls had other plans for me. All day long, they begged and pleaded with me to either let them talk about boys or have me read to them. I decided on the reading. I was not going to monitor conversation about boys with ten 11-year-old girls.

I let the girls pick a book from a box of books I had brought from home. I had quite a variety of stories including Precious Moments stories, stories about animals, and some children's books written by Max Lucado. But to my surprise, the book they chose out of the entire collection was a book

called Jesus Freaks, a book filled with stories about martyrs for Christ.

My surprised expression must have been obvious. There was no way I was going to read this book to these girls. This book was very violent, graphic and even gruesome at times. If I had trouble getting through some of the stories, how were these young girls going to be able to handle them?

The girls were getting impatient. They really wanted to hear a story. I turned to them and asked if they knew what this book was about. They had no idea. So, I explained to them that it was about martyrs, people who died because they believed in Jesus. I told them it was very violent, and they probably wouldn't want to hear the stories. But just as soon as the words had left my mouth, the girls, as only 10 and 11-year-old girls would, started to chant of "Read it! Read it!" I took a deep breath, closed my eyes and prayed that I was doing the right thing.

I decided to read the first story and see how the girls reacted to it. The story was about two teenage girls who were Christians living in a Muslim country. When the authorities discovered they were Christians, one was sent to jail and tortured while the other was stabbed to death by her own brother.

I was in agony the entire time I was reading it. What had I gotten myself into? I could only imagine the gruesome images these young girls were envisioning in their minds. I knew that somehow, my area director was going to find out I had done this. My first camp counseling experience would be finished and I would be sent home.

When I finished my story, I paused to see their reaction. Complete silence surrounded me. I looked up to see seven pairs of large, rounded eyes staring back at me in astonishment. "Oh, Lord, what have I done?" I prayed. I started wondering how long it would take me to pack my bags.

Then, one of the girls spoke up. "You mean people have actually died because they believe in Jesus?" she asked. "Yes," I replied, "they did it because they loved Him." She paused for a moment and then her entire face lit up. Everything had become clear to her. "And that's exactly what He

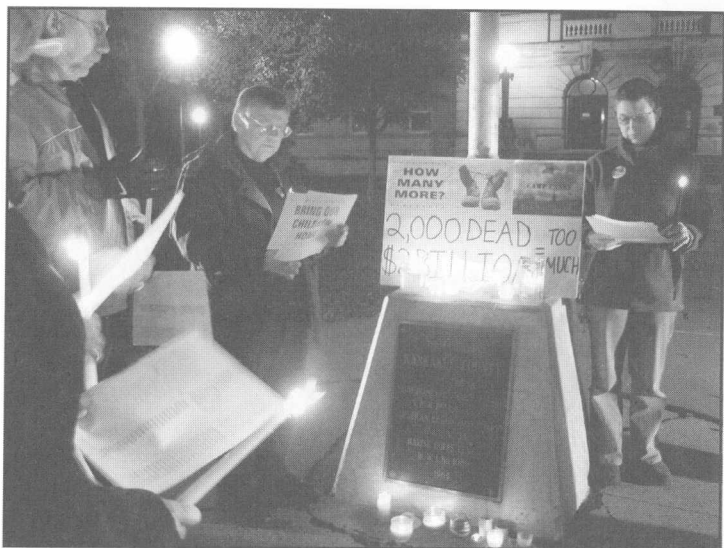
did for us!"

Then, the fog before their eyes lifted, and each girl seemed to have the same understanding. Now I was the one that was astonished. "Keep going," they said.

So, for the rest of the hour, I read story after story from that book, each one telling of another person's love for Jesus. And as the stories went on, the girls were more and more amazed at how much these people loved Jesus.

That night, four of my girls gave their lives to Christ and the remaining three expressed a new understanding of who Jesus was. I came back to the covered wagon that night and was amazed to find all seven of my girls sitting on one bunk reading their Bibles together trying to understand each and every word. They were so intrigued and transfixed by the power of God's Word that I had to tell them to put their Bibles down just so they could go to sleep.

So, it was on that cold summer day in Michigan that I learned that God can work in any situation, no matter how much faith a person has. That Wednesday set the tone for the rest of my camp experience. And whenever my faith isn't what it should be, God reminds me of that cold foggy Wednesday at SpringHill and I remember what a mighty God we serve.



Vigil by Jordan Mitchell

Let me see

By Andrew Biggs

Your design is beyond what we can see.
Control unfathomable is your plan.
Oh God, come enlighten me!

When I wake, give me your eye.
As I draw grounds from my coffee can,
Let me glimpse what you see.

Help me focus up to Thee,
Like when this quest first began.
Oh God, come enlighten me!

My thoughts rush in like a raging sea
Against the island of Japan,
Oh God, come enlighten me!

They stress my wish. No! My need
To taste the beauty of your plan.
But your design I cannot reach.

Your design is beyond what I can see,
For I am just a lowly man.
Comprehending not what you have for me;
Understanding not the power of Thee.



Smells like Spring by Cirena Sifferd

Picture of a 1950's Couple

By Amanda Mavichien

The stillness of the photograph
Is swept along by invitation of a kiss;
Its life and moment stay in the past,
But its memory is always with us.

Fall day flower's fragrance
Whisper of lover's daily romance;
Movement and time are unimportant,
Unaware of its existence.

Strides are forward
Growing onward;
Tomorrow's story
Is for its own.



Russia by Amanda Bosworth

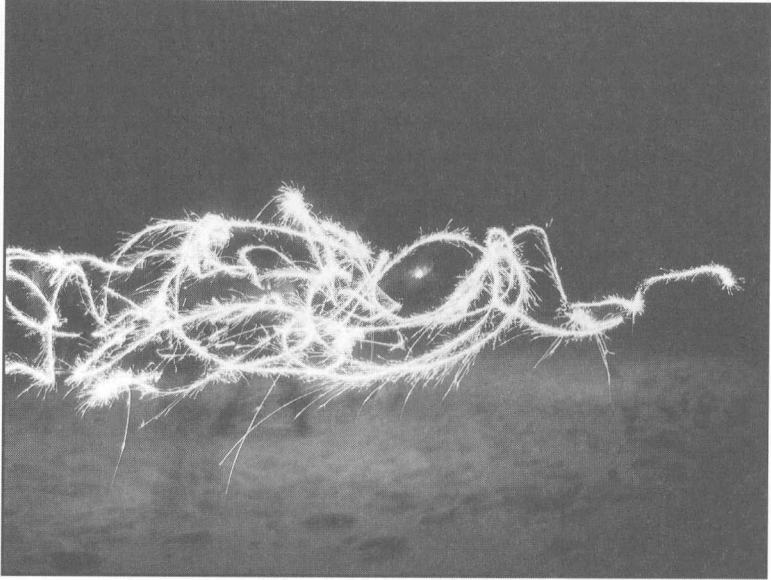
Life in the Blender

By Dan Aumiller

Take a job
Throw in some homework
A squirt of expectations
A quart of self-doubt
Mixed with hope

Now cover
The top and puree
The mixture until it's smooth
The texture is right
It's ready!

Take a glass
Pour yourself a drink
Chug it down until it's gone
Does it taste like you
Thought it would?



Sparklers by Jordan Mitchell

Note of Thanks
From the Editors

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