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TYGR 2000

Jill Forrestal

Olivet Nazarene University, JForrest@olivet.edu

Andy Gibbs

Olivet Nazarene University, agibbs@olivet.edu

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And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

In what distant deeps or skies,
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

the tyger
william blake

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

In what distant deeps or skies,
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

tyger

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Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

When the stars threw down their spearst
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

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olivet nazarene university

tygr

1999 - 2000

editor

andy gibbs

staff

isaac edwards
jodi fischer
shannon hinkle
rochelle potts
stefanie rhodabarger
valerie suiter

readers

jodi fischer
kristy ingram
keely long
rachelle potts
sidra schkerke

proofreaders

rachelle potts
dr. sue williams

advisor

prof. jill forrestal

department chair

dr. judith whitis

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olivet nazarene university
department of english
one university avenue
bourbonnais, illinois 60914

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poetry

tygr

allison bridget

apathetic

have you
ever had a day
where you just
f e e l
s e p a r a t e d
from your body?
when you just don't feel ALIVE today...?
you're just
there
not sad
happy
tired
or elated...just

there.
a p a t h e t i c
to what is going on
in the world.
your stomach GROWLS
but you don't feel
like eating
and your eyes stare into
a
b
s
o
l
u
t
e
l
y
nothing...

strange, yet fascinating
don't you think?

christine caldwell

classy

She's 15, come a long way
from the streets of this hell.

Living in the frontier on Skid Row,
with her cracked-up Mama
or sometimes down the hall with her friend
whose own Mother is selling her soul for
the crack rock, so you best be sleeping in the hall tonight
with the rats and the roaches.

You're moving, beautiful girl, from the days
when you were smoking grass in the 5th grade,
and living in the mission down the street.

You don't know you're poor like I do
because that little church on the corner meets your needs
and shows you Jesus.

So you stopped doing your drugs and you don't cut class
quite as much, but you're still thinking about getting
knocked up so that the government will give you money,

You say to me over our dinner together,

"I don't know though, girl, maybe I'll go to college."
Oh there's still that light in your beautiful eyes as you're
dreaming
of breaking the chains that damn you to these streets.
While I'm still thinking, how do I even speak the word
grace?

tygr

kate ebner

constant motion

You were born, never still
Crawlingwalkingrunning.

You grew up, never silent
Gigglinggabbingshouting.

You settled down, never settled
Goingworkingspeeding.

You fell, hit the earth, and never moved
Laid,

Rested,

Slept,

Time,

Peace,

Forever.

jodi fischer

anxiety

Muddled black ball of string

Lodged somewhere
between my throat and chest,
stuck in confusion and uncertainty.

I work to pull it free,
but sometimes it chokes me.

Most of the time it just sits there,
stuck.

I've gotten so used to it
that I think it's part of me.
too many tangles, too much work.

Not for today, or tonight
Maybe tomorrow.

tygr

jodi fischer

calling grace

Grace,
If I could just feel you
brush across my face
or touch you
with callused hands,
I might smile.
But now
I am in this well
So deep
and the water's moving to my neck
and I must be sinking
towards some kind of bottom.

Grace, do you hear me?!
Or did I forget to open my mouth?

A rope tossed in,
but strength to climb escapes
these arms too weak and legs too tired.

Grace, where are you?
Please pull me up.

shannon garrett

imitation of "harlem"

what happens to a hope lost?

Does it shrivel up
like a sheepish slug?
Or bleed like a picked scab—
And then trickle?
Does it reek like sour milk?
Or mold and harden over—
Like stale bread?

Maybe it just withers
Like a dying daisy.

or is it just lazy?

tygr

trent hanner

holiday: an observation

Untangled lights at last suffocate the spruce
They bought at the corner of Main and Broadway.

The tree is garish.

Boxes of ornaments have been removed from the attic
and

The family begins to distribute the stuff around
their home.

They have four complete nativity sets.

Someone finds the extension cord to light up the huge
Plastic Mary Jesus and Joseph who sit on the front
lawn.

The paint is faded, their heads distorted.

In the back of their minds they all sincerely hope
That they will finally get something good this year.

They don't.

trent hanner

silence

He's never there when you want him
Always appearing when you're alone.
Sometimes you'd rather anyone be with you than him.
Other times you feel like you'll simply crash,
Your patience reserves disappearing
Like the last remaining fumes of fuel
In a jet destined to tumble to the ground.
You want just a taste of him,
Five minutes,
The eye of the hurricane
Before his brother returns to sweep you away.
You enter your one-room flat—
wasn't he here last night,
when I ignored him to watch the news?
Instead you see your roommate
watching the latest raunchy talk show
On the tiny thirteen-inch television.
You despise her for taking advantage of him,
Your only friend,
But to raise your voice would be to contradict
Everything he is.
You walk back down the dim hallway,
That dark place where he once tread.
But today the sounds of TVs and stereos smother.
The awkward elevator offers a hint of his scent—
He was here, you're sure!
Running into the street you hail a cab
Amidst the panhandlers and the honking vehicles.
Collapsing into the seat and into tears
You don't know where to go.
Somehow the driver understands;
No radio, closed windows
You shut your eyes
And know that you've found him,
In this dingy taxi, on 16th Street,
He welcomes you into his arms.

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seth horning

p.o.w.

thoughts flow
and words dam
they stand at war
words are my enemy
they bombard my mind
and retreat my tongue
they execute ideas
hold hostage my pen
I am defeated.
Great poems remain chained
never written
prisoners of words

seth horning

the walk

Rain pours down
from the bleeding sky
walls of icy wind
slam into my skin,
chill my saturated flesh.
Lightning strips the darkness
reveals shadows around me
It doesn't matter.
All is peripheral but my stride.
I walk on
submitting to clouds of mercy
eroding layer after layer.
I yell
He whispers
 I run.
He keeps step.

 I stumble.

He winces.

 I fall.

He weeps.

 Rain pours down
 from the bleeding sky
 we walk on.

tygr

jana messer

grandmother

"I sure am glad no one in this family raises tobacco anymore..."

Grandma!

I'm so proud of you!

You've become aware of a social issue!

You understand that our children are at risk!

You've read the studies on second hand smoke!

You're aware of the risks of lung and mouth and throat cancer!

"...'Cause you know who they're hiring!"

Tell me, Grandma.

"Mexicans!"

jana messer

i will buy fish in the market

I'll step out of my mud-brick house,
And over the open-sewage ditch.
I'll walk down an iron-dirt path,
To a sunlight market.

I'll approach a tree-trunk stand,
With a blanket-skin woman.
On a green-leaf floor
Will be a big-eye fish.

I'll say "Two-thousand."
She'll laugh a good-try laugh.
She'll say "Six-thousand."
I'll laugh a good-try laugh.

I'll pay four-thousand cedi,
And take my big-eye fish.
And say a pleasant good-bye
To the blanket-skin woman.

I'll walk down a rough-rock hill
To a dirty-water stream,
And fill a no-handle bucket
With slow-moving water.

I'll take my cool-weather wrap,
And curl a water-bucket platform,
And use my straight-up posture
To carry head-held stream.

I'll climb a rough-rock hill
To an iron-dirt path.
I'll pass bulging-belly babies
And fufu-pounding mommies.

I'll pass porch-sitting daddies
And sewage-playing children
And lotto-ticket sellers
And fancy-dress makers.

tygr

I'll step over the open-sewage ditch
Into my mud-brick house.
Kiss my busy-reading children,
Pass to the bamboo-roof back.

I'll cook the big-eye fish,
And the children-pounded fufu,
And boil dirty-water stream
Over sky-reaching fire.

I'll feed my copper-skin children
And my loving-father husband
The big-eye fish
And the children-pounded fufu.

And the quiet-rain sounds
will fill the sleepy-evening air,
And my Kwaso-family
will feel the ever-present God.

trisha muttschall

Laughter

Spilling out, over, on
can't contain
the noise inside me
welling up,
wanting freedom.

Out of my mouth,
it comes
stifled at first.

Breaking
 free,
itflowslikeelectricalcurrent

 sides
 shaking,
body
 con
 vul
 sing,
must stop,
it...hurts...to breathe.

laughter's moving to my neck
and I must be sinking
towards some kind of bottom.

tygr

trisha muttschall

specks of yellow

Standing in an open field,
Yellow all around you;
Smile, like a flower opening in the sun
Aware only of beauty, you spin in circles
I wish you could see yourself right now.

Birds singing overhead, your eyes aglow with youthful fire
Wonder carries, calls, continues, beckoning to grow
Oh, for the innocence of days now past,
where once you were a child,
Before the world ended with a screaming silence:
Did you know growing up would feel this way?

No more sweetness of flowers,
Blue of the skies gone.
Everything dies, though once alive.
Fight...fight death..
Find specks of yellow wherever you can
And hold on.

stefanie rhodabarger

one bird gone bezerk

As the crow flies
Al Loon had
Flown the coop

"Straighten up and fly right,"
the authorities have said.
But Al was
Madder than a wet hen.

"Get your ducks in a row,"
said the Lame duck commissioner
but he couldn't quit
Cold turkey.

Being
At the end of the pecking order
Or just one of those
Sitting ducks
Made him squawk
in vulture-like tones.

just try to
Knock me over with a feather!
all of society's good intentions were
Like water off a duck's back
to him.

The Hen-pecked warrior,
A night-owl,
Began waking up the chickens
"See here," he said, "you'd better
Sing like a bird, mockingbird,
Stool pigeon or eat crow
cause
A little bird told me
this is
For the birds."

Reply-
"No one here but us chickens!"

tygr

dan schlorff

the aurora borealis

Mystic northern lights
Spy when calamity nears
Like luminous flames.

dan schlorff

native american song

I

The new world covered
with endless fragrant meadows
Flowered by the spirits
And content to have many bison.
The sun blessed them.

II

Clouds advance by sea
hide the sun
As if night.

Lightening bolts upon the frontier
Impoverished of dew.
Bison taste what light rains
From darkness and fall.
Fat clouds still hungry.

The meadows, once fragrant,
Left only with shadows.
Truth fails to take seed.

III

The sun has not yet set.

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dan schlorff

wax on

Earth slowed in his path to behold
the beauty of the moon.
Longed to touch her,
Her - more beautiful even than the stars which adorn the
darkness -
 countenance misshapen,
 Nature to tempt the Earth.
No one cherished her as he.

Her body disfigured by scorching light
Earth longed to touch her
The sun exhibits Moon's scars
That make the stars scoff
That make the planets stare
Her beauty disguised as shame.

Longed to touch her
Curse the sun for producing such hideousness!
The pain in
 her eyes drop.
What force brought Moon to Earth's sight that he should fall
 in love?
That the same force would vale the face of malicious
 radiance.
Hopelessly, Earth passes before his love.
The two touch.

erin sudduth

computers are for robots

out click the words that spill across my computer screen
this impersonal vehicle for my robotic emotions that
never quite seem to correlate when typed
but always appear romantic when flowing from a pencil or a
bic

quizzical how we jettison our inner monologues
out into electronic space
intended for a single mind but read by millions of
microchips
on their way to one warm, breathing user
of a calculated machine

I sometimes speculate as to how well hard drives keep secrets
if exasperated one day they might
break from their cables in dormitories and air-
conditioned laboratories
and mingle amongst one another, sipping tea,
beeping and whirring out the darkness of a thousand secret
letters

tygr

erin sudduth

Long distance

It's getting harder to leave you now.
The shining optimism of our first departures
has dulled into gray putty
that settles in the pit of my stomach
like so much undigested loneliness.

erin sudduth

red

We have been struggling for three hours.
Your face is purple with anger.
You prowl back and forth like a leopard
deciding exactly where and when to attack.
You smell my weakness,
you listen for my fear.

Hissed accusations slither into my ears
like so many jungle snakes.
I fight them,
but there are too many.
You are the queen
and you will have your way.

You are a carefully painted tower,
smelling of hair and oil and cold, red anger.
If I approach
your lizard tongue lashes out at me,
leaving welts
that will never heal.

fiction

kate ebner

saturday

I was awakened suddenly this morning. My foot was being slapped caught between a thumb and forefinger in the cool air of the June morning. This was not unusual, and, for my Dad, the most popular way to get me up. I was never a morning person and this day was no exception. This routine must have received the greatest number of responses. He strolled into my room on countless mornings and fished for my foot under the sheet. Once found, he held it up like a trophy and slapped it until I wiped the sleep from my eyes. He would then put it down and talk, as if at that point in time I was really listening. This morning, like the many others, he left hoping I would get ready for the day. I continued to lie in bed under the brilliant sunshine that fell right into my window. The soft summer breeze that smelled so sweet gave my room a fresh fragrance and brushed the crocheted curtain across my face, making it tickle.

I heard my Dad holler from the kitchen below my room. This wasn't a good sign; he was quickly losing patience. The longer I lay in bed, the quicker his patience went. As his voice trailed off up the stairwell, I heard him say, "We're gonna be late!" This was a final call cried in desperation.

Then I remembered this wasn't just any old Saturday. This was game day!! I jumped off the bed so fast that I thought for a second that the springs in the mattress had pushed me into a standing position. I threw on my clothes as smoothly and quickly as the foul swoop of a hurricane. This was my gear for an important day at the ballpark: shorts, a baseball T-shirt, a hat, and my dependable glove that I grabbed as I was already passing through the doorway. I bounded down the stairs, creating the sound of a continuous fall, causing me to cascade down the stairs. I was lucky if one toe touched each stair, and the last five became one giant leap as I somersaulted to a rolling stop. I slowly rose to my feet and planted them firmly on the landing, glancing at my Dad. He was sitting quietly at the kitchen table allowing a little smirk to escape his lips.

Dad's eyes shined as he asked the obvious, "Are you ready to go?" With that said, our day together was on its way!

Dad worked during the week, like every other parent.

This obstacle only made the weekends something special. On Saturdays he was exhausted on behalf of my childish energy and me. After dusk on Friday evenings, I had to come in from playing with the other kids in the neighborhood. What made Fridays different is that instead of stalling to do homework, I rushed to get it done. I could then devote all of my energy in to taking up my parents' time. Once done, I hopped off to bed, knowing the next two days were free of school. I didn't have to open another book or learn another thing until Monday. The thing is, I didn't realize I was still learning, just not in the classroom. Here, gum chewing was allowed and the background noise was honking horns or vendors yelling. It wasn't like school. There, the only background noise was that of chalk writing itself across the board, Mark Flanny making paper airplanes, or the occasional pencil rolling down a desk; the ultimate sign of boredom. Today was different. I would learn of things not everyone knew, just Dad and me.

Dad gave me a good morning kiss and we headed out the door. I ran ahead to the truck and leaped what felt like four feet inside. Quickly, I buckled myself to the seat with my ballglove already on, impatiently waiting while Dad opened his door. I guess in some way this was my payback for being so hesitant to start my day. We headed in the direction of the city and talked of the week's events. Dad told me how work was tiring and advised me to get a job that didn't really require me to work. We laughed about society's trials because Dad was a policeman. All the strange people of the world just seemed to flock to him, creating great stories. Dad always seemed to use some sort of an artistic license and usually gave them an accent of some sort and a prevailing feature. I thought Dad had a good job, kind of like a cartoon. That's what I pictured at least. I'm sure it wasn't really funny, but Dad told me the amusing things. He was always making me laugh, and I was in wonderment of this hero who was all mine.

We parked along the street and walked our way to the Mecca of our baseball lives. It always took forever, since my legs were so short. It took three steps of mine to equal one of Dad's, and it never evened out. As we whipped through the city streets, I clenched Dad's hand as a final attempt to keep his pace. In the blur of the passing city streets I caught glimpses of so many people and asked endless numbers of questions. "Dad, what's that building?...what's that man

doing?...why do people do that?" Dad answered every single one, which made him the smartest person in the world. He could probably even win Jeopardy! We passed through the turnstiles and into the ballpark. Now we were part of an elite group of people who would be able to witness the game live. This made me feel so special, like the ball players were out there playing just for me. Every catch, great play, or at bat was like a greeting or wave hello. I would respond every time with ecstatic applause or even a holler to whoever was my favorite player for the day.

All of this action was only secondary to what was really going on. It was just surrounding my universe, and Dad and I were the sun. We were in the center of a circus, full of noise and distraction, but all I could see was the tranquility that I was in the midst of. These days went like the blink of an eye, but moved in slow motion. Dad told me stories of his childhood heroes while critiquing the heroes of today, watching their every move. I was studying as Dad gave me the accompanying lecture, "watch his feet...see how he moves?" I would squint and all of my attention went to that one motion that must have lasted for a second. I would continue to ask question like, "why do they cover the field up with that blanket?" or "why do they throw like that?" Dad answered every question with ease and precision. I not only thought he could win Jeopardy, but also be in the Hall of Fame. If I were visiting Cooperstown, I would find his picture between Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. Why not? He knew everything!

The game came to an end and we made our way back home. The trips home were always shorter, but there was still a lot of the day left to spend together. By the time we got home, dinner was already prepared. Mom had fixed a wonderful summer meal of hamburgers and hot dogs. The barbecue scent filled the air as we all shared the meal together. As I ate, I told Mom all the details of our day. My chair was an emotional elevator and with each floor I rose with even more intensity. I told her things like "Under the bridge this guy was playing the drums on a bucket, and my favorite player hit this ball so far!" Mom smiled and tried to share in my excitement. I was engrossed in sharing our day with Mom and finished by saying, "...and we sang 'Take Me Out to the Ballgame' and everything!"

As the meal came to an end, and the sun began its

tygr

descent down the horizon, Dad and I grabbed our gloves as we headed outside to play catch. The colors that came off the sun splashed their paint on our faces and the trees that encircled us. Dad threw it and my skinny arm reached out in front of me just enough to catch the ball with the tip of my glove, a perfect "snow cone" catch. Then, I would imitate the moves of the players we had seen that day, as if I had them perfected. Dad was the judge. He'd have to try to guess who I was. We played a game that only we understood. Dad would throw me pop-ups, but not like any other. They would go up, brush the heavens and somehow find their way back to our yard, occasionally brushing a tree branch on the way down. I would circle the yard watching the ball in its seemingly endless plunge. Dad and I would throw until our arms were numb and the lack of daylight made us squint to see the white ball. Our day ended playing catch as the sun set, and we could do nothing but follow its lead.

shannon garrett

welcome home

Daphne put her hand behind her back to zip up her dress. She had to suck her stomach in and stand up very straight to get the two sides of the dress to meet. She remembered when she had first been fitted for this dress. It had been too big for her when she first got it. That's the way she liked it. She ran her hands from her breasts to her hips to try to smooth out the wrinkles.

She felt a chill and hugged herself tightly. She felt the meat of her arms and remembered how she used to be able to touch her forefinger and thumb together all the way above her elbow. Now, they were at least two inches apart. She winced as she quickly pulled her hands away. It made her sick to think about it. How could she have grown so large? She was sure she was heavy enough before, no matter what her parents and the doctors said. Wow, she felt absolutely obese.

She ran her left hand through her auburn hair. It felt much thicker. She looked at her fingers. There were only a couple of strands between her middle and ring fingers. She remembered when she could easily pull out a handful at a time. She didn't mind it so much though. It certainly seemed worth it.

Daphne slowly walked over to the full-length mirror and took a good look at herself. Just as she expected, she was fat. Her face looked almost swollen. Her breasts could hardly fit into the tight dress, and you could see her panty lines where the dress pulled snugly across her rounded hips. She could not go out there looking like this, but she had nothing else to change into either. Nothing fit. How could her mother have done this to her? why had she planned a "Welcome Home" party so soon? what would everyone think? People would say things behind her back like, "Oh, poor girl, she sure has gained a lot of weight. That's too bad. She used to be such a pretty little thing." Or, they would come up to her and say, "My, haven't you filled out," when what they really wanted to say was, "Man, you've gotten fat."

She began to cry as she looked at herself. She began to weep so uncontrollably that she could barely see her own reflection anymore. Each time she regained control, she looked again, and it was almost as if she had gotten even

bigger, as if she was becoming larger right before her own eyes.

She looked to the top, left corner of the mirror where a picture was taped. It was a picture of her and Liss. Liss had been so beautiful and so thin. Daphne looked at herself in the picture. She wore a tank top. She envied her collarbones. Oh, how nicely they used to protrude from her chest. She looked to the top, right corner at the other picture. There they were each in her hospital bed holding hands across the room. "My, Liss had gotten thin," Daphne thought. Her yellow smile almost seemed to stand out away from her face in the picture. Daphne remembered how pretty she always thought Liss was even when she was at her weakest. She always envied Liss for being able to make herself throw up. Daphne had always had to resort to starving herself. Of course, Liss always said she envied Daphne because she didn't have the will power to just not eat. Daphne smiled proudly at the thought.

Daphne moved her eyes to the bottom, right corner of the mirror. It was such a good picture. You could really see the dark circles under Liss' eyes in the black and white picture. It made her look kind of gaunt and spooky. She read the first sentence slowly, "Melissa J. Delp died Friday, March 8, 1999, after a long illness."

"Obituaries never say why people really die," Daphne thought as she wiped her eyes.

Why couldn't they have just told it like it was, "Melissa J. Delp died Friday, March 8, 1999, after puking herself to death."

It almost made her laugh to think of a newspaper actually saying that. Liss would have thought it was funny, too.

She looked back at the obituary again. Suddenly, something strange happened. Liss seemed to change the expression on her face. Daphne wiped her eyes again thinking the leftover tears must be blurring her vision. She looked again. Liss had tears in her eyes and wasn't smiling anymore. Daphne knelt down so she could look at the picture at eye level. She thought that maybe she was seeing things differently from higher up. Nope. Liss was definitely looking like she was going to cry. Had she always looked like that and Daphne hadn't noticed? No, It couldn't be. She had looked at that picture over a thousand times during the last seven months.

Something strange was going on and she was afraid. She looked to make sure no one else was around. She was alone. Liss almost looked as if she was trying to say something, but she couldn't. Daphne wanted to know what it was, so she quietly said, "What is it, Liss?"

"I want you to do something for me, Daphne," Liss replied.

Frantically, Daphne said, "Anything, Liss, anything."

"I want you to like yourself," Liss responded. "I want you to love yourself. I don't want you to worry about your weight anymore. I don't want you to be critical of yourself. I just want you to be content with who you are. Please, it's not worth dying over. Trust me."

"I do," said Daphne. "I do."

Daphne closed her eyes trying to fight back the tears. When she reopened them, she looked at the picture again. Liss was smiling. The picture looked just as it always had. Had Daphne imagined the whole thing? Then, she realized that she had not. She licked her forefinger tips and rubbed them under each blue eye to wipe away the mascara that had run during her crying. She smiled to look at her straight, white teeth. She suddenly felt glad she could never make herself puke. If she had, her teeth would have been yellowed like Liss's. She straightened her hair again. None fell out this time. It bounced back up and fell softly upon her shoulders. She looked at her full bosom as she gently cupped one hand around each breast. She ran her hands down her waist noticing how petite it suddenly seemed. She felt her hands spread farther from one another as they rounded her hips. She turned to the side to see how her back curved into her bottom. She looked at her legs, her slim curvaceous legs all the way down to her tiny feet. Then, she looked at her whole self. She saw herself as she truly was for the first time she could remember. She felt pretty.

"Hurry along, Daphne. Everyone's waiting to see you," her mother called.

"Yes, mama," she yelled back with a grin.

She took one last look, spread some more lipstick across her lips and headed for her bedroom door. She stopped about halfway there and turned back again to look at Liss's obituary picture. It seemed as if Liss had winked. Unsurprised, Daphne immediately winked back, flashed a smile, and opened the door.

As she entered the room, Daphne was engulfed in applause and hugs from her family. She spotted her friends across the room and quickly walked to reach them. Just as she was almost there, she stopped at the kitchen table and looked at all the food. At first, she cringed as she quickly added up all the calories, and then she remembered Liss's words. She looked back at her friends again who were anxiously awaiting her presence. Daphne popped one hors d'oeuvre and then another into her mouth chewing as she rushed to greet them.

garrick hardy

jesus, birds, and garbage

George liked when the rain fell so fiercely, especially when he was inside looking out. The house was in a severe state of disrepair and the bills were piling eye level on the table behind him. But the simple things gave him the splendid security of ignorance. Lightning followed thunder and lit the room, bringing a smile to George's wrinkled old face and a brief spark to his sunken eyes. George didn't even turn to see the person who had entered through the back door. The stranger looked around for a second and then shook his umbrella on the curling linoleum floor. Watery footsteps echoed throughout the sparsely furnished room, but he still did not turn away from the glorious show nature was putting on outside of his window. He rested his elbows on the windowsill and placed his chin in his hands and sighed.

Freedom was a prize that could also be won without struggle or war. Achieving it was not hard for him, quite easy in fact, just like dumping the garbage on the front walk for another man to deal with. Teeth of a wide, satisfied, smile came across his face and was made almost menacing by the next flash of lightning.

"George! George! Where is he?"

"George! George! Where is that little scoundrel?"

Sweat dripped from his brow into his eyes and burned them so much that he wanted to scream. The heat this summer was unbearable. Corn wilted in the fields as the farmers looked solemnly on. It was so warm the soil would dry immediately even after the long summer showers would come. Sprinklers seemed to only spray steam onto the fields, but this didn't bother George. He had his own troubles to deal with. Sitting down slowly, he braced himself on the back of the closet trying not to make a sound. In the distance he heard the barking of his dog and the sound of a vehicle coming closer and closer.

"George, get out here now!"

George shook his head and tried to control his heavy breathing. The heavy footsteps came closer and closer, making the floor beneath him shake with every step. He backed as far into the corner as he could and held his breath. The knob turned slowly and the door was torn open releasing a wave of cool air into the musty closet. A pair

of faded size 15 tennis shoes topped by the legs of a pair of six-year-old blue jeans was all he could see.

"I know you're in here boy, come out or you'll get a whipping." If there was anything that George feared most it was a whipping from his father. He stood up and poked his head out of the old coats and sweaters that reeked with the smell of mothballs and summer breezes.

"Ah, there you are son. Why are you hiding from your daddy?"

The boy stepped all the way out this time and hung his head.

"I'm sorry daddy. I was scared."

His father bent down on one knee and picked the small boy up and sat him down. George loved to be picked up by daddy, especially when he spoke to him with his low voice. He sounded like a bear.

"Now, what are you scared of George?"

George wrapped his arms around his father's thick neck and laid his head down on the man's wide shoulder.

"I'm not afraid any more, daddy."

His dad hugged him and set him down again.

"What did I tell you to do when you are scared?"

George smiled, "Pray to Jesus!"

"That's right, son. You have nothing to fear with the Lord by your side."

The sound of the car that had been approaching was now coming from the driveway. It coughed as the engine was cut and there was silence followed by the sound of three doors opening and then closing.

"Daddy, I'm still scared."

George's father took his son's hand in his that dwarfed the small child's.

"Come on. We are going to meet your new friend Carla."

"Carla. What kind of name was that for such a beautiful specimen?"

"Oh, come on, man. You're going to make me lose my lunch."

George turned to his skinny blonde friend. "Aw, c'mon, Tim! You're just jealous I have the heart of a poet and you don't."

His friend turned and met him with a flash of blue eyes and pearly teeth. "Wow. If that's where poetry is going, I'm glad I don't have the heart of a poet!"

with a sarcastic gesture of heartbreak, Tim turned and walked away. The sidewalk was now as empty as always outside the church in mid afternoon. All of the town's people were at home taking naps and watching the most recent football game on their dusty television sets. George just waited with his hands inside the pockets of his newest dress pants. Footsteps crunching in the dry grass behind him made his heart skip and his chest stop heaving. The steps came closer until he could almost feel the presence of another behind him. Warm, silky arms gently wrapped around his neck and squeezed.

"It's like home to me," said a soft female voice from behind him.

George turned to see two large green eyes starring back at him.

"You know, every time I see those eyes of yours I feel like I am committing a sin."

A puzzled expression came over the girl's face. "Why do you say that, George?"

"Because, it's like a poor boy like me stealing the treasure of the world with just a glance."

Carla blushed until the color of her face matched the redness of her curling locks.

"George, I don't know if you are romantic or just plain sappy!"

A smirk came across the young teen's face. He took a step back and reached into his pocket.

"I wrote you another poem, Carla."

Carla's eyes opened wide and a large smile became her face. "Give it to me! I want to read it," she said, grasping for the folded piece of lined paper.

George quickly pulled the piece of paperback before she could catch it.

"Not yet. You have to do something for me."

"What anything? I would do anything for you, George. You know that, right?"

George smiled and took a step toward her.

"Say you love me, Carla."

Carla looked deep into his eyes. George felt the true meaning of happiness then. It was like when he was young and his father would hold him. They would say his prayers and he felt as if the world was his father and his father was the world. He found himself in a new world now. A world ruled

by two green orbs and a strand of perfect pearls laced in red velvet. A world he would not fear, for where there was her, fear would have no place to linger.

"I love you."

George just sat there with his head in his hands. Drops of liquid salt dripped out through the cracks between his fingers. His stomach ached and his eyes burned without mercy.

"George, come to bed now."

He felt the all-to-familiar hands on his bare shoulders. He lifted his head and stared in to Carla's blurry face. She also showed signs of sorrow with her mascara running in streaks down her face. What happened to that girl he used to know? The one with the perfect cream-like complexion and the red hair that shone brightly in the sun, so free that only a white ribbon could keep the locks at bay. Now she was an aging woman with a bloated belly and matted hair. George loved her still. She was his world, all he had left of himself. She knelt down in front of him.

"Don't worry. He's gone to Heaven with the Lord, remember?"

George knew it had to be true. There would have to be something out there after this life. His dad was all he knew of God. It was like the very Lord was thrown from Heaven and all hope following right behind him.

"Honey, come to bed. You need sleep."

George just starred blankly into her face and tried to smile, but all that came was another tear from his blood shot eyes.

"When was the last time I told you that you were beautiful?"

She smiled weakly and ran her hand through George's hair.

"Every day you tell me."

George looked away to the far window, where rain pelted relentlessly on the small apartment.

"When was the last time I wrote you a poem?"

Carla stopped smiling and gave George a blank look.

"It doesn't matter. I know how you feel."

George stood up and walked over to the window and starred into the swirling black of the storm.

"Why don't I write anymore? I used to write. Dad always loved when I wrote. I need to write. Give me some

paper and a pencil! I'll write you the best poem ever!!"

Carla walked over and took George by the wrist and looked into his eyes.

"You don't need to write me anything. I know how you feel about me."

George yanked his arm away violently.

"NO! I need to write you a poem. I told you I would never stop writing about you until I died!"

Tears started to come from Carla's eyes once more.

"George, please, you don't have to."

George walked over to his old desk. He searched through the drawers, throwing papers and letters everywhere. Finally, he sat down with a pencil in hand and with a blank piece of torn paper in front of him.

"What should I call it?"

Carla fainted in the chair in the corner holding her stomach and breathing heavily.

"What should I call it?"

"George, our baby is not an 'it.' A baby is either a him or a her and, in this case, it is a him."

"All right, then. What should we call him," George asked, smirking.

Carla smiled, holding her sleeping baby in her hospital bed. George hated the smell of hospitals; the odors of latex mixed with rubbing alcohol brought back memories of his friend Tim's surgery that wasn't as successful as the doctors thought it would be. It was the smell of death that was in here, not the smell of life. Who would of thought the devil's own playing ground was the hospital, where he works in league with the angel of death and greedy doctors, leaving only the scent of Hell behind, latex and alcohol. His son looked so peaceful in his mother's arms. If it wasn't for the baby's rising chest, George would have sworn it was dead. The door opened and a short, bald man entered the room wearing a long white coat and a stethoscope as a necklace.

"Mr. and Mrs. Smith?"

Carla smiled when she heard her name. "Yes, that's us."

The doctor looked at the two with a solemn expression.

"I am afraid I have some troubling news."

George looked at the doctor with wild eyes.

"What is it, doc?"

"Well, Mr. Smith, we had some complications during the

child's birth. The umbilical cord was wrapped around the child's neck three times and, by the time we removed it, some permanent brain damage could have occurred."

"What are you trying to say?" George asked with his face flushed in terror.

"What I'm trying to say is your son has a good chance of being mentally...mentally retarded." The doctor cleared his throat and pushed his glasses back up on his nose. "A mentally retarded child is a big responsibility and will need special care at all times, especially when they are young. Here is a brochure of a center that is willing to give you information and some help to care for the child. I'm sorry we were not fast enough."

"What do you mean sorry? We are happy with our perfect little angle just the way he is. There's nothing wrong with him. Right, George?"

"George are you listening to me?"

Drool dribbled out of the child's mouth.

"George, Junior, what did I tell you about drooling?"

George Jr. just sat in his small wheel chair, turning a small toy plane over and over in his hands.

"George, put that plane down and listen to me for a minute."

George Jr. looked up into his father's eyes and smiled.

"Someday I' going to fly a plane, daddy."

George sat down on the carpet and took the toy gently from the child's hands.

"Now, why would you want to fly way up there? Daddy wouldn't want to see you fall from that high."

"I want to be a bird," the boy said, flapping his arms up and down.

George Jr. didn't acknowledge his father. He just kept flapping his arms and smiled a wet smile. George stood up and walked over to where Carla was busily typing figures into a calculator with bills piled up high next to her. She picked up a letter and handed it to George without looking at him.

"What is this?"

"Open it and find out."

George pulled the thin sheet of paper out of the envelope and read it. His face turned death white and he set the letter back on the table.

"Is that from George Jr.'s center?"

Carla removed her glasses and rubbed her temples.

"Yes. Where are we going to come up with that much money?"

George looked at George Jr. who was looking blankly out of the window with a trail of slobber dripping off of his chin. George stared at his boy and a tear came from his eye. He was so beautiful, growing up to be such a handsome boy. Of course, he would probably never wed, and George's dreams of father-son football in the back yard were shot, but he was still a stunning young lad. Carla grabbed George's hand and pulled him down.

"That bill is for his medication alone, George. What are we going to do when the school bills come?"

George looked into his wife's pale, wrinkling face. "When was the last time I told you that you were beautiful?" Carla squeezed his hand tighter. "Look, George, this is no time for sappiness. We have no way to pay this off."

"Well, let's just take him off the medication. All it seems to do is put him asleep, anyway."

"Well, at least it keeps him from screaming all night long and banging his head on the floor."

George looked at his wife again and now saw the pale skeleton of life. There was only death in her eyes now. The world he had once known was now just as far as the stars in the night sky.

"I wanna be a bird, daddy!"

"I wanna be a bird, daddy!"

George looked down to his son and smiled.

"You are never going to give that up, are you?"

"Jesus can make me a bird when I go to Heaven."

George looked back up. Waves softly caressed the poles of the boardwalk. The sun beat down relentlessly, just like that summer when the corn didn't seem to grow and his father's new friend moved in. He let us have the basement all to ourselves and sometimes he would let me into the kitchen to say hi to Carla. A drop of sweat rolled from his brow and into his eye. It burned like the fire he once felt in his soul, but that was gone now. Only a void remained. There has to be something beyond this that lasts. George looked down to his son again and mussed his hair.

"Look, son, I'll be right back, ok?"

George Jr. looked up and smiled his toothy, drooling grin. George backed away from the boy and turned around. He

took two steps, both of which made the boards vibrate.

"I love you, daddy."

George stopped and straightened up. A tear fell from his eye and evaporated before it even hit the wooden planks. He stood for a second longer, then continued on, never stopping to look back at the sight of a young child alone in a small wheel chair, watching a bird flying overhead with his two little hands clasped in prayer.

The rain hit the glass relentlessly as if God and his Angels were throwing pebbles at George. Such freedom is security, freedom so easily achieved. Not the kind you have to struggle or war over. It's as easy as taking out your trash to the front lawn and letting another man deal with it.

"George! George! where is he?!"

His worlds were gone, yet the world still remained. What was he, but what the world made him? He was a man, a man without a face, a man without fame, a man with only a name, or was he a man at all? There had to be a world beyond this one. If he prayed for his sin to be forgiven then he would go there, right?

"I want to be a bird, daddy."

So many years has it been. So many years, yet they never stop, the next worse than the last. Bills piled up eye level on the table in front of him, and he has no use for a wallet anymore.

"Jesus can make me a bird."

Carla searches the house wildly, and I'll just stand here and let her. Maybe he's hiding. Maybe he is spending the night at the center tonight. Where is he, you ask. When was the last time I told you that you were beautiful, Carla? Don't worry. I gave him his little world. Don't you see, Carla? I gave him what he always wanted...I made him a bird, Carla.

"I love you, daddy."

kristy ingram

the journey home

A heavy darkness fell upon Starkdale.
It was November 13.
It descended like the shadow of a ghost,
lighter than air,
but thick,
transparent
and large enough to touch.

I remember it all so well now.
Looking back
and then again it was only yesterday I awoke.
How time has slipped my memory,
how it has been torn from my innermost being
as if my body
were the mere skeleton of their transport.
"Oh, I knew they wouldn't get me,"
I told Mrs. Dorby.
"I knew they wouldn't get me."

How crazy I must have seemed to all of them
for age has not been kind to me
and my mind does not fit me well.
I remember the way they looked at me,
they stared,
they tore down my defenses,
and melted the heart of me with their fear.
And to think
it was them that I feared.
Sure, it might seem trivial now,
but then again it was their blood
smeared all over the sidewalk.
It was their blood.
"Oh, I knew they wouldn't get me,"
I told Mrs. Dorby.
"I knew they wouldn't get me."

They came from the house on the hill.
No, not the one that has been abandoned for some time,
the other one.
Yes, that one.

tygr

It was your worst nightmare in the sunlight
and at night
it was all you longed to reside in.
You hated it,
you couldn't stand to look at it,
you couldn't bring yourself to talk about it.
But everyone wondered,
everybody lusted after its presence,
and everybody
including me
gave second thought to going in.
"Oh, I knew they wouldn't get me,"
I told Mrs. Dorby.
"I knew they wouldn't get me."

It was a mystery that first grabbed my attention.
It was the unknown,
unexperienced,
and unexplored regions in the heart
that cried out from a void only in the mind.
And it grabbed hold of you,
it dug into you with claws,
and violently tore you apart
one nail at a time
and the faster you chewed
the faster it overtook you.

You tried to resist,
you tried to avoid
to ignore
to refuse to entertain its presence.
But it was there
and it lingered
in your mind
in your dreams
in your soul.
You couldn't control it.
You became obsessed with it,
it became YOU.

How well do you know yourself,
your strength...
of character

of self-control?

Have you ever looked in the mirror long enough

to lose yourself in the reflection?

Do you know what scares you?

What is it that haunts your existence?

Not the goose bump and chills

that send a quick tremor over your body,

but the nauseating feeling that swells up and chokes you.

The fear that doesn't live inside you

but the fear that lives within you?

Do you know yourself

your strength

of character

of self-control?

Do you really think you are in control?

"Oh, I knew they wouldn't get me,"

I told Mrs. Dorby.

"I knew they wouldn't get me."

You are mistaken.

Do you hear me, are you listening,

have they gotten to you?

Who are you, what is your name,

where are you going.

You run, why?

You run from the house you were born in,

where you took your first step.

Do you remember? Are you walking,

did you really take that first step?

Where has it gotten you?

Has it brought you back

to the beatings

to the rape

to the fear

that pushed out the screams of pain

of horror.

You run, why?

Have they gotten to you?

You can't leave, can you?

Can you?

You are as paralyzed as the rocks of ages

tygr

screaming from the mountains
whispering from the valleys.
And you walk by the house
and you give it second thought
and you can never go back again.

"Oh, I knew they wouldn't get me,"
I told Mrs. Dorby.
"I knew they wouldn't get me."

Oh, how late it is getting,
how heavy the darkness descends.
And across the way the children scream
and the burglar steals
and the lust delivers another cheap orgasm.
And men fall, they take the bait and like it.
And evil resides in the heart of women.
Young women
who are born in houses on hills
and who walk the roads to towns
to dreams
to hell.

And the darkness takes a deep breath
and pulls all of the women in.
And they kick and scream
and they struggle for air as they are tied up
and beaten and raped and beaten and raped
and thrown into house
of child-bearing mothers.
And you cry yourself to sleep
and you pray you don't wake up,
and you look in the mirror
and all you see is the skeleton in their transport.
"Oh, I knew they wouldn't get me,"
I told Mrs. Dorby.
"I knew they wouldn't get me."

I can see you hiding.
I can hear you breathing.
I can taste you slowly dying.
I can feel you staring at me.
I can touch you,

but you can't touch me.
 You can't see me
 you can't hear me
 you can't taste me.

shhh.....don't let them get you.
 "Mrs. Dorby?"
 "Mrs. Dorby?"
 The hooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooouse.
 No!
 The hooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooouse.

Silence.
 Ba-bump
 Ba-bump
 Ba-bump
 Silence.

It is so dark I fumble for words to light up this page.
 All has died down,
 the chaos,
 the clatter of this world.
 You lie perfectly still.
 No one is around
 no one hears or sees or feels
 the sweat that rolls down your face.
 And as you turn your head,
 the darkness pulls you back.

Silence.
 Ba-bump
 Ba-bump
 Ba-bump
 And in the silence you hear a gulp.
 The darkness has swallowed you.
 Welcome home.

tygr

non-fiction

kristy ingram

you must decide

what scares you will always haunt you. It will eat away at you until you finally take a bite out of it, and when you do, it will become the light you are afraid to live without. You must decide; would you rather be scared or afraid?

Everything you want and everything you need will one day collide with each other. Your dreams will eventually come to the edge of the cliff on which we walk back and forth during life. You must decide; would you rather fly for a minute and fall, or soar for a lifetime and never wake up?

The harmony inside your soul will eventually break into a dance. The song love places upon your heart one day extracts from time the courage to burst out into music. You must decide; will you dance to the music inside your head, or will you sing the songs off key?

The hurt you see in every lost child's eyes will one day stare back at you in the mirror. Hopelessness and despair will invade your life through the stings of friendship. You must decide; will you walk away and receive justice, or will you stay and give mercy?

The love of your life will one day walk through the walls you have built around your heart. Everything you have longed for will hang in the balance of trust and fear. To have and to hold; in sickness and in health; through trials and joy; in prayer and in silence; not by emotion but by commitment. You must decide; will you trust love to take care of you, or will you trust yourself to take care of you.

You must decide; will you let me love you.

jana messer

kids run and laugh

Kids run and laugh and don't get much to eat. Blind men beg for food. Rich whites mock poor blacks. WE do not know why we have come. We have come to share the love of God, but we say, "Those who do not work do not eat." We say, "The roads are rough...the men are rude...the kids stare." We say, "They smell," and, "They push," and, "They are dumb." We say, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life."

We chart changed lives. "I changed six lives!"

"I changed ten lives!"

"I changed five!"

"I changed twelve!"

We all say, "Wow..."

We are proud of the one with twelve changed lives. She has done a great deal. She has won. We think *she* did it. We add her twelve to the rest. We call the States. "One girl got twelve!"

Got twelve. Points? I think that's what we think.

Why did we come? Why did we come if we planned to stay who we are? Why did we come if we won't let God change us?

We are not at ease as we pass through the town. Did we think it would be fun? Did we think they would look and sound and smell like us? If we want to see us, we should have stayed in the States. Girls come up to the van with bread and fruit and eggs to sell. We do not look. We do not see. They are not there.

I can't speak to them. I do not know Twi. Gabe tells me "brah," and "Ay yay," and "Mah bray," but I need to know more. A girl cuts in front of us in line, but what do we say? We are from the States and do not know. I think, "In ten years I will say, 'Please do not cut in front of me. I may not look the same...I may not sound the same, but I know where I am.'" I'll say it all in Twi. And they won't cut in front of me. I'll know a deal when I see one, and I won't get ripped off just 'cause I'm white. They won't stare. They will know me. "That's just the white one. She lives here."

I'll buy fish in the square. I'll read to the kids down the street. I'll sew. I'll brush my girls' hair. I will raise my girls and boys in a place where one does not

buy what one does not need. I will raise my girls and boys in a place where life is "rough." I will not raise them in the States. I am sad for those who will not leave these shores. I am sad for those who choose not to. I am sad for those who choose to live with a warped worldview. I am sad for those who think: "Those who do not work do not eat." We choose to stay dumb. We don't care much. We force *our* rules on the rest of the world. We think we know what's right and best. "We are rich and white, and we know best."

tygr

erica patrick

all things are possible

I dream of becoming a writer. Expressing my thoughts by allowing my light to shine brighter. Touching the world and changing lives by words that are written eloquent and wise. I envision myself walking through the streets and catching looks. For they recognize me as the author of best selling books.

I desire to impact someone's life by writing and showing the creative side of Christ. To you my dream may seem huge, oh how I wish you had a clue. For there is one fact that all must know. With God all things are possible.

He dreams of becoming a man that is honored and respected. He has a heart for people poor, lost, and neglected. He wants to go back to his neighborhood and give all that he can give. He envisions himself helping the youth giving them hope and inspiring them to live. He feels his dreams, he lives his dreams, he knows that he can do it. His heart is strong, his mind is set, he's determined not to quit. He knows that God has called him. There are lives that must be changed by the words of his testimony.

To you his dream seems rather extreme. But do not miss the point that you must know. With God all things are possible.

She's been abused, unappreciated, and misused. She has lost her dignity, self-esteem, and pride. Many times she's felt as if she wanted to die. Many gave up. Some believed in her, but the numbers were few. But she overcame her setbacks and was enlightened with a vision of what she was to do. Her dream is to help little girls, young ladies, and women. To give hope and express to them that she too once experienced their torment.

She dreams of owning facilities, centers, and buildings designed to help victims who feel like nothing realize they are everything. She knows that people need God in their lives. And that only he can make all wrong things right.

she desires to educate women and make the one important point understood. With God all things work together for the good. She knows her dream is God-sized, but she is willing to work and watch it grow. Her heart is filled with faith, for there is one thing that she knows. With God all things are possible.

You sit in your room all alone. The day has passed; everyone has gone. You close your eyes and dig deep inside and think about what you long to be. Admit it. You have dreams just like me. The morning approaches. You awake and rise. Immediately, you begin to fantasize. You see yourself standing there. Everyone is quite aware of who you are and what you do. You see yourself accomplishing the goal that resides in you.

Who am I to tell you that your dream will not come true? Who are they to tell you that your dream is too big for you? Believe in yourself. Do not doubt. Accomplish your dream go ahead live out your story. Be alert and make sure God gets all the glory. Do not work all your life and grow old only to realize you have gained the world but lost your soul.

Live by faith. You can do it. One day your destiny will unfold. Hold your head up and believe in him. And remember what you have been told. With God all things are possible.

tygr

pam peters

the tree

The leaf fell, sailed, and spun down to the ground; it lay at the foot of the tree. The fall told of what was to come. It was the turn of the year when the tree will lose her dress and stand bare to the cold, grey, hard sky.

The tree's vein of life will be hard and cold in the months to come. The pace of the warm stream shall soon form a hard, cold ice that will sleep e'er so still next to the bare tree. The sky that looms from up high shall lose the warm soft clouds and the blue sky will give way to the grey, dark end of the year. The sky shall hang o'er the earth like a dank cloak. 'Neath the cloak, the north wind slaps the tree's rough bark as it sends a deep chill to the tree's roots. Though the cold sky will cast a spell of gloom from on high, the tree stands bare with pride and hope.

She stands next to the still pond that pumps life to her through her roots deep in the cold ground. Her trunk holds her arms up high as they ache, grasp, yearn, and reach for the hope she will soon feel. The tree longs for the bright, warm sun that will send the rays of life deep in her bark. The tree has hope for a life e'en through the grey sky.

a note from the editor

Compiling a project of this magnitude is never an easy task. Throughout the process, the staff has attempted to keep the final product in mind because without you the reader these selections would only live in the hearts and minds of those who wrote them. The true power and magnitude of the written word can only be realized when ideas are shared. By reading the words contained within this volume, you help bring them to life.

My hope is that you might possibly find a selection from this volume that speaks to you on a personal level. As you read these selections, consider taking up the pen and sharing a piece of yourself. After all, the purpose of Tygr is to provide an opportunity for work to be shared and foster the growth of writing in our community. We wholeheartedly encourage you to become an active participant in this process.

Tygr would not be possible without the participation of many individuals. I would like to thank not only the authors whose work appears in this edition of Tygr, but also everyone who submitted pieces to be considered for publication. I would also like to express my gratitude to the staff, submission readers, and proofreaders. Additionally, thank you to Rachelle Potts and Dr. Sue Williams for your care as you copy edited this year's edition. Finally, thank you to Dr. Judith Whitis, head of the department of English, and Professor Jill Forrestal, Tygr advisor, for making it possible to produce this volume.

Andy Gibbs

1999-2000 Tygr editor