

Spring 2005

New Tricks (2005)

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New Tricks



Dakota State University

2005

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New Tricks

Introduction

John Nelson

The response to the call for submissions this year to *New Tricks* was outstanding. We had to refuse many good works from excellent students, a good problem to have. The editorial board read several dozen essays and stories, and even more poems. We were even able to accept some visual art, and we hope to expand that offering next year.

This edition features a wide variety of works, from poems by traditional young students to an essay by an international student, Daniel Mwai, who tells a harrowing story about his experiences as a young man in Africa. We have works from students and faculty alike, and for the first time we include a short essay by a DSU president, Dr. Douglas Knowlton, who describes the lingering effects of acts of kindness.

The works show the impact living in the upper Midwest has on people, from Lisa Huff's description of her father's preoccupation with the weather, to Elizabeth Rave's vivid portrayal of her brother's efforts to make her visualize anacondas in the trees.

The poetry here shows that students and faculty alike have the impulse to shape language into its most artistic form. It's worth noting that the work here comes from all colleges, not students in the liberal arts, where writers and artists are thought to dwell. Everyone has something to say.

It's also important to note that creative writing is alive and well at DSU. And why? Few of these works are meant to accomplish anything; they won't make computers or soft-

ware run faster, won't make dogs roll over, won't make jobs more efficient, won't make teachers more efficient, won't make students sit up and take notes. The won't, and shouldn't, try to get us to change our minds, though they should help us see things differently.

But its very impracticality is what makes art is so important. It doesn't have work to do. It reminds us of why we're alive, that we're human beings, not digitized 3-D images of ourselves. Consider the difference between walking and dancing. Walking is good for getting somewhere, unlike dancing, which is good in an entirely different way. Having skills that get the job done is important, but art--poetry, prose, visual arts and music, as well as the performing arts--provides an outlet for the soul to speak, and the works displayed here says it has plenty to say.

Editorial Board

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Sigma Tau Delta

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Dawn

April Denholm

Golden light drips
through the leaves
caresses the bark
gliding, seeping down,
crawling down then
puddles slowly spreading,
pushes back the shadows,
sparkles the ground.



Cleo Sleeping

Daniel Weinstein

Thunder Rolls

Lisa Huff

Our farm, considered big by local standards, sits on the county line between Lake and Moody County. We do not own all of it, but most people think that we do. I do not think my dad bothers to correct people's assumptions overmuch. He likes that people think he has more than he really does. We own large sections of land and rent the rest from other people. We farm my uncle's land, and some guy with a funny name who lives somewhere down by Crooks. He came to see Dad last Tuesday; I know it was Tuesday because it was fried chicken night. He usually brings candy, and we hoped he had the good stuff. My older sister and I spent all afternoon sneaking around, hiding behind trees and in bushes waiting for him to notice us. He always acts so surprised to see us and looks downright dumbfounded when candy just happens to be in his pocket. This visit was just like that, and it made me laugh while my sister just stood there staring at him. I wanted the chocolate but did not have the nerve to just grab it out of his hand. My sister, who does not like chocolate all that much, showed no shyness about grabbing for the chocolate first. I ended up with the hard butterscotch discs that are OK but not worth hiding in bushes for. I like the gold paper that they come in more than the candy. I have a whole collection of gold butterscotch disc wrappers and only a small collection of Twin Bing wrappers. My sister has hay fever so sometimes she is not outside when the landlord comes.

My dad loves the land. He has to I suppose, as much time as he spends with it. I like the cattle best. I try to name them but Dad says, "Don't bother; they won't be around long enough". I do not understand why he says that, where are they going to go? It is not as if they grow up and move away like my cousin David did. The cattle are so cute in a stupid kind of way. They give me their undivided attention, which is more than most adults I know ever do.

It is really nice having friends who listen that well and never talk back or disagree with me. I tell them all my secrets and know the whole town will not know by night-fall, like when I told my friend Kathy that I wet the bed sometimes when I am scared.

Dad watches the news like Mom watches the potatoes boiling for supper. I swear she thinks one drop of water boiling over the side of the pot will ruin the whole thing. The weather report is the bible verse and the farm report is the homily in our house. Dad came in the house for supper early last night, right when Sylvester was about to grab Tweety Bird for the millionth time, and turned off Captain 11 and turned on the weather report. "Dad" I said, but he just glared at me. I knew then that I would never get to find out if Tweety Bird was finally dust.

Mom runs the house like Captain Kirk runs the bridge on Star Trek. The only time I did not have a bunch of chores to do was one Tuesday last January, because Mom was not home and I avoided my chores whenever Mom was not home, which sadly did not happen very much. When I got home from school, the house was a mess. The noon dishes were the only thing different in the whole house that I could see, and that difference was that they were still on the table and not in the cupboard. When I opened the Frigidaire, the chicken was still sitting there looking naked and dead and not golden and crispy. I do not think I have ever been so scared in my whole life. I knew something bad was wrong. Nothing, but nothing, ever came between Mom and Tuesday's fried chicken. I have these 'feelings' sometimes. Mom says I am always, "Miss Gloomy." I am hardly ever wrong though. I knew my favorite kitten had died long before I saw her. I know when Mom is mad at Dad, even though I do not think I have ever heard them fight, and I always know when someone is talking about me at school. That one is easy though; someone is always talking about me at school.

That was the day Uncle Orlo, who I barely knew even though they lived right across the road from us, died. It was the first time in my life that I knew a dead person. He kind of looked like the chicken except for the naked part. The very next day, was meatloaf and mashed potatoes night. I am not sure which was scarier, the death of my uncle or no fried chicken for supper.

The unwritten, unspoken rules that our house flows under is comforting. I spend a lot of time trying to disrupt the flow just to see if I can, but secretly, I never want it to change. I can count on laundry day, baking day, cleaning day, and the ever present 'you didn't do that right' like I can count on my shoes fitting. Mom is not flustered by changes in the weather or the farm report like my dad is. She just lifts up his ashtray and coffee cup and dusts under him. I keep thinking she is going to just dust him, but he might actually notice that and get mad.

Dad watches the sky a lot. I tried it and all I did was trip over a rock in the yard and skinned my knees up. I watch my dad watching the sky to see how I should behave when I am around him. If it is dry, hot, and sunny, and the dust is blowing around my face, I stay clear of Dad. If it is a clear day, but a cool breeze is blowing, I know I can walk up to him and take his hand. My sister never watches Mom or Dad for signs of anything. She is either brave or just has a death wish, I never know. My sister is what my third grade teacher calls 'short tempered'. Like the volcano we studied in science, you just never know. Like a sudden summer storm, clear skies overhead, and then crash, bang, the thunder rolls in from the southwest.

Last Sunday night, my sister got mad at my mom while we were drying dishes. Mom was trying to watch Lawrence Welk on TV and she yelled at us. I guess we were not doing the dishes quietly enough or something. I almost dropped a glass when I saw my sister lift that frying pan over her head and shake it at the wall in the direction of Mom. All I could think was good thing Mom was in the

living room and did not see her doing that. Then she turns to me and giggles as if I was in on this big joke. I finished the dishes and fled outside where the hay fever was.

Dad has taught me things that only I know. He does not even know that I know. I know that a northwest wind means snow and time to get the ropes connected from the house to the barns. I know that a southwest wind means a storm is a brewing. Time to get the equipment inside before the hail comes. Nothing hurts like being hit in the head by hailstones. I know that Mom slamming cupboard doors means that she is mad at him. Dad goes stone deaf when the cupboard doors are slamming.

I sleep with one eye open all the time. Mostly because I do not like surprises, but sometimes to see if my dad gets up in the middle of the night for any reason. When Dad gets up in the middle of the night, it is time to watch the night sky. Dad got up tonight about 3 a.m. I know it was 3 a.m. because the big hand was between Mickey's ears on my Mickey Mouse alarm clock and the little hand was on the three. I followed him downstairs and sat quietly in the corner while he paced from one window to another. When the sky lights up like the Fourth of July fireworks over to Flaudreau, I know the curses will rain down around the house. Mom put on the coffee, mumbled something about it not being too bad out yet, and I just sat there and stared at her. The sky was on fire, the sound of the wind reminded me of Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz when the house goes round and round. I cannot watch that movie past the house going up in the air because I am too scared to see where it comes down. The thunder was rattling the windowpanes and shaking the dishes right out of the cupboards and Mom said, "God is just bowling, dear". I crawled up in "daddy's" arms. The only time my dad is "daddy" is during the bad storms. He puts his arms around me and says not to be scared, as he jumps every time God throws a strike.

I cannot figure out why my sister did not come downstairs with the rest of us, watching Dad watch the sky. I know

that when I ask her why she did not come down she will say, "Why, I didn't hear anything". I know that is impossible because our house is really, really old and rattles all the time on calm days, and during storms the whole place shakes and groans like that house on The Adams Family that Mom won't let us watch, but we do anyway when Mom and Dad aren't home and we can talk the babysitter into it.

Soon Dad put on his coat, boots, and grabbed the big flashlight off the hook on the wall by the back door and looking grim, set off for outside into the big dark. Mom started cooking. No matter what time of night, during storms, mom cooks breakfast. I try to remember how many strikes God has thrown, so that I know what kind of mood Dad will be in when he comes back in the house. If the ping, ping of hail that sounds like rocks hitting the house comes, I know that Mom will throw away the breakfast she just cooked, Dad will not come home until daylight, and I can crawl into bed with my mom and think about the crops, Dad, and the landlord because she will pretend to be asleep. Mom always pretends to be asleep when Dad is not in the house. She thinks I will not worry then but all I can wonder about is when God will get bored with bowling and take up knitting when the rains come.

Puppy

Maureen Murphy

So now you have a dog. All day she is yours, draping her chin over your foot while you wash breakfast dishes, licking your knees when you talk on the telephone, or nuzzing her wet nose into your neck, sometimes still as a rug

except for the flap, flap of her tail. Always close, so a stranger, not knowing dogs, might think she is guarding you. But you have had a dog before, and you know the fears--low rumbling sounds like thunder, a combine on an August night, a 747 invisible in the winter sky, and once Uncle Albert's hungry

stomach send her clawing through any closed door, chewing through any rope or chain or cord that keeps her from you. Not because she is afraid for you. You know the routine, so you keep her close. You know she is yours

until the children come home, throwing frisbees and balls and chewed sticks deep into grass, and she runs and runs and runs.

Anacondas and Flying Gold

Elizabeth Rave

It was hot those first few months of summer when the days would go on forever like the horizon that never seemed to end. As usual we were out at Grandpa and Grandma's for the day, but mostly we were with Grandpa because Grandma always had to work. I don't even remember Grandpa working. He would take us into town every once in a while and make us pick up garbage around the school with him, and then we'd get to go get burgers at the "old drive in," but those are they only times we went into town.

Grandpa and me, we were "outdoorsmen!" Of course, Jeremy, my brother, was there with us too, but he was just a pest who picked on me all day anyway. Grandpa would tell us that he didn't believe in wasting daylight, so we had to be outside when the sun was up unless we were eating fried green tomatoes or watching Westerns. If you watch a Western, it's like you're outside anyway with the all wilderness in the scenes, and of course everyone has to eat. But when we weren't watching Westerns or eating fried green tomatoes, we were outside sweating like pigs and keeping busy so that we didn't get bored.

Together, Grandpa and I would feed the sheep, go fishing, or, my favorite, break old porcelain plates and put them in the grinder to get the ring of gold to come off of the edge. I never really knew what we were going to do when we did get the gold, but I still loved to do it because it was the only time I was allowed to break plates without getting into trouble; Grandma didn't even care! One day, after we'd been breaking plates for a while, Grandpa stopped me and said that he thought we had enough. Looking at him and wrinkling my nose in confusion, I said, "Enough for what, Grandpa?" He proudly replied, "Enough to make a nugget!" I was real excited when I heard the news and eagerly followed him inside to make all the powder turn into a

gold nugget, secretly hoping that I would get to keep it and show all of my friends in school next year. I would be the only second grader with a real gold nugget! When we got inside, Grandpa poured the powder into a pan and put some other stuff he had--looked like water to me--into the pan and started heating her up. I was impatiently looking into the pan waiting to see what would happen and how this powder would all of the sudden just become gold, when gradually the pan started to shake on the burner. I looked up at Grandpa as the gold mass was bubbling and he looked right back at me. I could see the excitement in his eyes and could tell that he was just as thrilled as I was. Everything seemed to be going fine, but then out of nowhere, Grandpa grabbed me and dove under the kitchen table just as the pan exploded. Maybe the sound was us hitting the floor, but man was it loud! I don't know how Grandpa knew that the stuff in the pan, which I wasn't sure it was still gold, was going to explode all over the kitchen onto the ceiling and cupboards; but I was glad he did because otherwise I would have gotten hit with all the hot flying gold. It was pretty close! Later Grandpa told me that he knew that it was going to happen because he'd tried it once before, and the same thing happened. When I asked him why he did it a second time, he just simply smiled at me and shrugged his shoulders. Grandma always said that he was a little crazy!

One of those days when Grandpa was too busy with his sheep, I decided that I would see what Jeremy was up to. When I wandered out into the little grove that surrounded Grandpa and Grandma's, I found him by the old flatbed trailer. He was just sitting there. I sat down beside him to look at all the junk that had accumulated there over the years. Amongst the three cars and two flatbeds that sat out, there were all kinds of things, some of them which I knew, and others which I had no clue about. There was a lot of junk, and we had to be careful walking around, especially in sandals, so that we wouldn't stub our toes or trip on something that was underneath all of the tall grass that hadn't been mowed for years. As we sat there, I started

admiring the old fort that Mom and her brothers and sisters had created in the old broken corn crib when they were little. It was so cool how they took all of that stuff that was just lying out there and made it into something they could call their own. I believe that's when the idea came to me that Jeremy and I should make a fort too! Although there were no buildings to make it in, we could use the flatbed and make a safari cruiser! When I told Jeremy, who was still sitting next to me, now throwing rocks at the chickens whenever they got close, he immediately jumped up and was ready to get started.

For once, we would have a place of our own where we could go, and we could decide who could come with us. We hurriedly filtered through all of the junk and started finding things that we could use for the safari cruiser. We were going to need a place for the Captain of the cruiser and something for the Captain to steer with. We were going to need all kinds of stuff for seats and levers and speed controls. I guess when we both wanted something bad enough, we could work together to build it without pestering each other.

It must have taken us five weeks before we got everything together. The rusty toolbox with all sorts of deformed things in it was our box of weapons. We used them as knives and swords, flares and fireworks, and as other sorts of defensive types of weapons. We even had a "pirate flag" hanging up, which was actually one of Grandpa's old t-shirts; I later found out that he was looking for because it was one of his favorites. We should have dug deeper in the dresser drawer.

After completing the safari cruiser, Jeremy and I were so proud of it that we spent all day in it making sure that no one tried to invade our territory, for they were at risk of getting poked with a sword or eaten by our pet alligators. We had the alligators trained to smell the enemies or intruders coming so that they could come tell us if someone was coming to our cruiser. Of course we spoke "alliga-

tor" language and communicated excellently with them and other animals of the safari world. Although I put all my effort into helping build that fort, Jeremy said that I couldn't come out to the fort because unfortunately there were anacondas that had recently taken residence in the trees and grass that surrounded our fort, and he didn't want me to get my ankles eaten off by them by going out there. Of course, he had a special power to make the snakes think he was not a predator, so he was able to go out there. Only certain people were able to get this power, and I, unluckily, was not blessed with it. Naturally, I believed the whole story and was terrified to go out to the fort.

The nonsense of believing the story couldn't go on forever, but it did go on for the rest of the summer all the way into the fall. Then one day, my mom finally discovered why I would never go out with my brother to the grove. When we were on our way to Grandma's, my brother was being his typical self, tormenting me with tales of anacondas and evil crocodiles that were waiting to eat me if I so much as tried to get out of the car. So, logically, I wouldn't get out of the car. My mom just thought I was being a big baby, so she went inside thinking that I would follow. I, being the smart kid I was, stayed in the car, which was quickly becoming a sauna, and waited for Jeremy to come back and tell me I was in the clear. He didn't, but my mom came out and finally got my reason for staying in the car out of me. After much deliberation on my part, I convinced my mom to get into the car and told her about the anacondas and crocodiles. I didn't want to tell her because I was told that the anacondas and crocodiles wouldn't try to get you if you didn't know they were there, which is why I don't understand why Jeremy even told me about them. Boy did mom get mad, and she didn't even listen to me tell her that she'd better stay in the car if she didn't want her ankles eaten off! She just stormed out of the car and headed straight toward the snake infested grove! I couldn't believe it! I later came to find out that there really weren't anacondas in the grove, or crocodiles! They don't

even live in South Dakota! I had nothing to worry about after all, but Jeremy sure did. He was summoned to pick up all the sticks at Grandpa and Grandpa's house for the next three summers as a punishment for lying to me; and when mom assigned a punishment, she meant it! Served him right!

Even though I never got my gold nugget out of the whole breaking plates thing, and I never got to spend time in the fort that Jeremy and I built, I always had the most fun out at Grandpa and Grandma's house hanging out on those long summer days when it seemed as if the sun would never go down, and the sweat would form pools around our feet if we stood still too long.

Lonely Hall

Philip Engleberg

Though my vision is directed at the wall
My eyes see only a lonely hall
Filled with faces of present and past
That I seem to be losing as they pass
My heart is heavy and hands are cold
As I await this nightmare to unfold
But is not the collage of portraits I fear
Nor the shadows dancing so bold and clear
Nor does it feel like I fear for myself
To the point of crying out for help
But I still wonder and yearn for the meaning
Of the voices and faces I am seeing
And I await with heavy heart and hands still cold



Charcoal Man

Tyler Ahlers

Girl in a Tree

Maureen Murphy

A girl is in a tree, her mother below,
gesturing wildly into the wind, beckoning.
But the girl continues to climb, her eyes

on branches and leaves, rising above her,
her mother a string of vowels lost in chill air.

Symmetry and rough bark take her, hold
by hold, higher into new growth. Mother
leaves, finally, wrapping her arms about herself

for warmth, hurries back to the house,
an orange glow in the growing dusk.

The child settles in branches partway
between fading sky and roots darkening
to earth. Wind rocks her nest gently,
green in its arms.

The Shed

Zach Van Wyck

The air was cold on this particular fall day; the leaves had just begun to fall off of the trees backyard. There was one tree that I used to climb that was next to my father's tool shed. I could always easily jump onto the top of the shed from one of the branches that hung over the roof. I spent a lot of time out in our back yard and today was not going to be much different. I had just gotten home from my morning kindergarten class and had decided to venture out to my back yard and play. I grabbed my bow and arrow and sprinted out the back door.

I had seen the movie Robin Hood with Kevin Costner, minus the parts I had to leave the room, and thought that Robin was possibly one of the best heroes that I had heard of. I made a bow and arrow out of sticks and rubber bands and would play in my backyard pretending to save the lovely Maid Marion. My parents had seen how poorly my bow and arrows were made so they bought me a real set. I remember it being a little too big for my hands but I seemed to manage. The bow was made to look like it was made out of wood, but was easily distinguished as plastic. It came with three arrows that had rubber arrowheads on the ends; I was disappointed at this fact because I realized that I could not pick off any type of small animal.

I soon grew tired of seeing my rubber tipped arrows bounce off my targets and was trying to imagine new things that I could do with my recently acquired archery set. I remembered that in the movie their arrows were ignited so that even if it did not hit a person, they would start a fire and possibly torch the surrounding area. This sounded like a fun way to pass the time.

I took a sock and tied it firmly to the end of my arrow, ventured out to my father's shed and searched for the gas can. The can was on the very top self of the cabinets my dad

had fastened to the wall. I took the stool and a few boxes and stacked them together so that I could reach the gas. I still do not know how I made it out of my poorly constructed "ladder" alive. I remember it shaking violently under my feet.

After I soaked my sock in gas I went into our kitchen and found the matches my mother kept in the junk drawer, that drawer in your kitchen where you have everything from batteries to paperclips. I was ready and had all my ingredients to my makeshift piece of weaponry.

I ventured into the ever familiar back yard and scoped out my potential targets. Seeing none I just decided to shoot my arrow straight into the air in hopes of hitting a passing bird or something. I took a match, sparked it on the side of the box, lit the arrow, pulled back, and released!

I watched slack-jawed as I saw the arrow soar through the air hearing the flames ripple in the wind. Then a feeling of dread swept over me as I realized it was heading straight for a pile of dead leaves on the roof of the shed. It landed directly in the middle of the leaves and they shot up in a burst of flames in no time.

I stood there looking at the fire, which soon spread to the crown of the shed, and gazed in wonder at this surreal beauty. I could not move; it was as if my feet had grown roots and attached themselves to the ground below. Then I heard it, my mother screaming for my father. My dad rushed out and grabbed both garden hoses, holding them one in each hand and extinguishing the flames. My mother and father lectured me on how dangerous fire can be, and they took my bow and arrow set away from me.

I decided I better be Batman instead.

He Loves Me Not

Rebecca Moore

Depression sweeping over me,
Prying at my thoughts,
Seeking all control of me,
Because he loves me not.

I picked the petals of every flower,
I got the same result,
I wish I could do more than cower,
But I think it's all my fault.

Every flower that I pick,
Every garden I destroy,
It makes my heart all more the sick,
I've lost all sense of joy.

He loves me; he loves me not,
Will the answer ever change?
My heart feels like a twisted knot,
My sense of love, deranged.

Sometimes

Nicole Hedrick

Most of the time,
I know
That the feeling
Is not the same
For you,
As it is
For me.

But sometimes,
I think
That if I pretend long enough,
My fantasy world with you
May become my reality.

But,
It is
That one time,
In which
You seem different,
That keeps pulling me
Towards you.

No Names, No Faces, Never Forgotten

Douglas Knowlton

Dale was a 22 year old male dressed in an army uniform that felt so foreign and so surreal in many ways. He now had short hair where six months earlier there had been shoulder length wavy hair. Staring out the window of a large airliner on his way to Washington National Airport, much later to become Reagan International Airport, he experienced a major wave of anxiety. He didn't really know where he was going or what lay ahead. In his pocket were orders to report to Fort Lee for training in the quartermaster school. He didn't know exactly where Fort Lee was - southern Virginia - outside Richmond he had been told and he certainly didn't know what quartermaster meant.

Once he had landed in Washington DC he stumbled across a military personnel information desk and the older gentleman staffing the desk told him that his best means for getting to Fort Lee was, first to catch a bus here at the airport to the main bus terminal in downtown D.C. and there he should catch a bus to Petersburg, Virginia. The gentleman pointed the way to the spot outside the terminal where the bus could be boarded. As he walked to the bus stop his anxiety mounted, as the thought of finding his way around Washington, D.C. seemed daunting. He reminded himself that he had lived in big cities, heck he had negotiated New York City. This felt different, scarier somehow.

The bus pulled up and the door opened with a very quick statement from the bus driver "you must have correct change!" He stepped back realizing that this was the first barrier to his safe arrival at Fort Lee. No sooner had he stepped back when he realized that another "soldier" was standing next to him. A vague memory indicates he was

younger and yet confident and secure. The younger soldier grabbed his arm and with one gesture placed in his hand the "correct" change. The only words exchanged were "do it for someone else sometime". With that statement he was gone and this first barrier had been overcome.

Years later, the much older man was standing on a corner just off Broadway in New York City. He had been in New York to study for a week at the New School and had felt confident and urban enough to venture deep into the city for a night at a Broadway show. The show had been an amazing experience and now it was time to find his way back to the warehouse apartment that was home during this week. It was now dark and late and all the stories of violence in NYC were flooding him with anxiety.

After several minutes of trying to signal a taxi he made the decision that the only way he was going to get back to his room in the SoHo district was to catch a bus.

He found a bus stop and stood there for some time hoping not only that a bus would come but that it would be a bus that would get him close to his eventual destination. A bus arrived and after a brief conversation with the bus driver it was determined that it would get him to within two blocks of where he was staying.

As he walked up the steps of the bus, the driver stated very firmly, "ya got correct change, right?" He hadn't thought about it and all the sense of safety that had accompanied the relief that he had found the right bus evaporated. Within seconds an older woman sitting beside an older gentleman just behind the driver responded, "I have it for him". She smiled and put the money in the meter at the right of the driver. He said thank you at least ten times before the couple got off at the next stop.

I never got their names and I have forgotten their faces but both of these people will be in my heart and in my mind forever!

Two Haiku

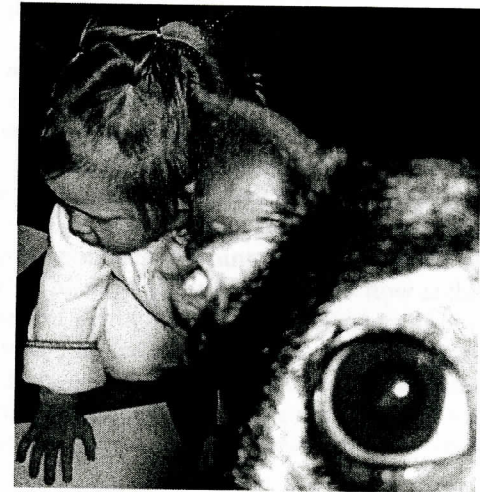
Justin Blessinger

Haiku, Vermillion, South Dakota

twenty seagulls swung
below the bellylow cloud
one cried their coming

Haiku, Valentine, Nebraska

white cloth, wind snapping,
two trees' erroneous scrawl
crow buried head down



Walter Watching

Deana Hueners-Nelson

City Life

Jeff McNeeley

Big buildings, small skies, sometimes tiny fire flies,
Huge streets, lots of traffic, bottlers of Coca-Cola classic,
Mickey D's and Burger Kings, Dairy Queens and other
things

Many people, lots of colors, some of them are called "broth-
ers"

Lots of business, multiple jobs, people who form angry
mobs

Hookers, 'hos and pimps, too.

Some even have a local zoo

Computers and technology are things you'll see

Listening to things called MP3's

Sweet cars, big trucks, and of course fast trains

Death, drive-bys and other pains.

From all of this, no one gains.

Son of Fate

Daniel Mwai

After I read a book by the name *Son of Fate* written by a famous African writer, John Kiriamiti, I longed for a day when I would encounter the true meaning of the word "fate." Morning passed and evening came but I could not find the physical definition of the word fate! I used to wonder, "Is fate real or just a word that somebody somewhere in the planet placed mistakenly in the dictionary?"

One day, the sun was rising at the horizon with its golden blaze as usual. My mum woke me very early so that we could go to fetch firewood in the nearby forest. I took my "salivating" breakfast hurriedly and we headed one by one to the middle of the forest. The job of my mum was to look for firewood and mine was just to carry the firewood that she had gathered. So I had ample time to walk around and explore the forest.

We had hardly stayed for more than thirty minutes when I decided to go to look for wild fruits at the furthest end of the forest, although my mum had warned me not to go. I had not gone there before, but I used to hear tales that the sweetest wild fruits were found at the furthest end of the forest. So I wanted to prove it! I went deep inside the forest until I could not hear anything except the sweet melodic songs of the birds. Good gracious! I was now at the edge of the forest and I could see all the types of fruits that I desired to eat, and surely, it was like 'manna' from heaven. I ate the fruits greedily as I filled my pockets with some. The fruits were of different colors and taste but most of them were purple or orange in color and they were very sweet indeed!

No sooner had I finished filling my pockets with fruits than I heard a thundering voice, "You son of a bitch! What are you doing here? Are you a spy?" The ruthless square-faced son of a woman asked me a lot of questions but he

did not give me even a fraction of a second to answer them. Surely, I was now sure like hell that I was in a hot soup if not hot water. More than that, I was now in the hands of the famous kidnapers who practiced children-trafficking. I was about fifteen years of age and that definitely ruled me in the category of children.

Instantly, the man took me into a dungeon where it was very dark. I was helpless and I could not see anything that was an inch from where I was. Many questions criss-crossed my bankrupt mind but they were all in vain. I stayed there for many hours until I started feeling hungry. So I started fishing out the fruits that I had stored in my pocket one by one. Just before I finished the fruits that were in the pocket, I touched something extraordinary! I was definitely sure that it was not a fruit but something else. As fast as lightning, I fished it out of my pocket, and to my surprise, it was my mum's cell phone! She had given me to keep it for her so that she wouldn't lose it in the forest.

Without wasting even a fraction of a second, I dialed my dad's number. "Dad, it is Danny! I have been kidnapped by some ruthless people and am enclosed in a room at the furthest end of the Karura forest! Please come and ...!" I had hardly finished talking with my Dad than I received a heavy blow that made me to sprawl down helplessly. I had been caught red-handed talking with my Dad by the kidnapper! I started bleeding profusely like a leaping frog and I was also shaking as if I was operating pneumatic drills or like a chameleon on a feeble twig.

He took the cell phone and went away with it. All the same, I thanked God because I had accomplished my mission of informing my Dad where I was. At that time, I wondered what would be next because I definitely knew that the worse was yet to come and I will be in a hot soup! After about one hour, I heard some sounds which were like gun-shots. Then the sounds seized for about twenty minutes. Surely, I could not comprehend what was hap-

pening and I saw as if I was in a dreamland. The next thing that I could recall is seeing some police officers, the guy who had kidnapped me and my Dad.

I was rescued from the teeth of a roaring lion and I was taken back home after escaping death by a whisker. My mum was as happy as sand boys to see me alive again! Surely, I confirmed that fate is actually a word that exists in life and also obedience is better than sacrifice! That day left memories as memories is like heavenly bodies which no one can remove!



Exam

Daniel Weinstein

Rolling

Micah Tolzin

The mountains keep stretching so high and so high,
and I know that I must pursue, I know I must try.
To conquer the fear that lies deep inside,
yearning to escape to break away and hide.
My heart is so fragile, but yet still so strong.
The course of my life drives on a path built so long.
Courage and bravery is the best way to go,
building up triumph and stealing the show.
Is it my mind or my heart that pushes through?
Or maybe it's a balancing act of the two.
It is in my mind, my body, my soul
that creates the fury and forces me whole.
The task of attempting something so simple and pure
is beauty beyond the attainable cure.
To love is to live and to live is to gain
even against the most unimaginable pain.
The world is still spinning and stop it will not,
burning embers of fallen tear drops so hot.
It is your destiny, your fate cupped in hand,
that allows you to win, that allows you to stand.

Silence

Maureen Murphy

Silence is what she knows, feels it first in her arms,
in her chest. She no longer hears his voice; sees him
sometimes at a distance, a glimpse, the memory of shadow,
touches him sometimes, her hand remembering
the texture of his shaved head. Sometimes

he is walking toward her, his head swaying
over thin shoulders, though it is never him, not anymore,
only resemblances, visual associations and a rush
of memory. But she never hears his voice. Cannot

hear his voice. It happened in the time before
she understood how important it was, even
in the midst of living, to keep putting things away,

like linens into a cedar trunk, folding sounds as well as
images
a voice as well as a touch, firmly into mind, for later.

Rightness

Phil Block

Something changed,
the dreams dead and gone,
lying to yourself
saying you never had any dreams
and here you go
right down that lonely road again
unable to speak the truth
unable to speak at all.
All she wants is to hold onto something real
feel beautiful
feel passionate.
All he wants is to go back
to the way things were before
when kisses felt real
and he did not feel dirty for wanting to touch her
feel her skin next to his.
Falling through madness
into the abyss
so poignant now
so real, this cut bleeds again,
like stigmata
bleeding guilt,
bleeding truth
a shroud of oppressive weight
and no matter what they say
they are not alright.

Creating Beats

Justin Blessinger

Except you 'enthrall mee, never shall be free

the attitude of cantor's pure note
inclining in pale air
of hollow church,
sharp against the soft, pliable
second tone so near it
plying the red soil of a quarter-step earthward

the warbling dischord starts somewhere in the plate-gold
chalice
on the lectern's proscenium-front
skims across the blasphemy of wine-residue,
interrupts rings of an erstwhile frozen image twisted
across the still liquid and bent upon the wrought metal
--smiles on Christmas ornaments--the trembling
twines up the backlit cross
above the baptismal pool, contorts,
breaks that knot again;
it rushes to the ceiling, feels no weight,
whirls in eddies against the roof
the warbling grows ever wider as fresh disparate notes collide
along older waves crashing back from vaulting oaken timbers
and onto shores of padded pews, arrayed
with scarlet hymnals dealt as cards awaiting gamblers

the widening gyre of holy song anchored in steady tones
falls back in pealing torrents upon four meager ears,
angels and the fallen rear back and rage again
again
and miracles fall about like fruit from shaken trees:
beauty's tolling still in every piercing counterpoint;
love and not-love
knell
and batter my heart.

Shaking the Hand of God

Sarah DeHaan

I was almost out of the hell I willingly sent myself to. Before, I had been an average teenager trying to get through high school without too much reprimand from my parents. Homework and chores were not high on my "to do list"-my discipline was almost nonexistent until August 31, 2002.

"Get off my cattle truck!" The notorious voice of drill sergeant Lindsey still echoes in my mind. Drill Sergeant Lindsey was a god among privates. Immense muscles bulged from his charcoal black skin which hid the iniquity that dwelled within. With a six foot, two hundred pound frame, Drill Sergeant Lindsey towered over me like I was an insignificant piece of spit. He commanded my every move: my stature, breathing, eating, and even when I went to the latrine-bathroom. I could not escape now.

My arms ached like I was carrying a 70 pound army green duffle bag of clothes, boots, and gear packed so full, its seams were tearing apart from the tension; oh, I was carrying it. I held the monstrous bag out in front of me for what seemed like a life time; my back screamed bloody murder at me. Of course, my legs started to shake. I felt his breath behind me. "Drill Sergeant Reznickchek, looky here," shouted Drill Sergeant Lindsey, "We gotta nother blonde one!" My eyes went blurry. All I could think about was getting a drink of water.

"Up...down. Up...down." Only six more weeks of his damn voice: drill sergeant Lindsey had to be enjoying himself as he watched us push the gravel. He hovered around us like a hawk and we-50 other measly privates-were his dinner worms. I glanced up. He looked straight at me with those big, bulging eyes.

Imagine a green, brown, Canadian mountee hat. I hated drill sergeants' hats. Those hats flocked to me. Drill Sergeant Lindsey wore his like a crown. "Not hard enough, DeHaan?" Sweat spewed from my body like a waterfall. My BDU's-battle dress uniform-might as well been drenched in water. Pieces of rock punctured my palms and my arms started to give. "If I let my arms give out, he'll only make me do more," I thought. "Just a little bit longer." Thump, thump, thump. Two black, freshly shined, drill sergeant boots stood centimeters away from my finger tips.

My head pounded. The green caviar felt like a hundred pound block. I tried resting it on my foxhole ridge: relief. Water filled a good eighth of the hole, but at least it cooled me off. The Missouri humidity added ten pounds. Being squad leader meant I had to check, check, and recheck all of my troops which left little time for myself. Now our company was at FTX-field training exercise-I felt grateful to have thirty seconds to sit. The benefit to being a person of authority meant I got to cover my foxhole with logs, branches, grass, and other forest plant life. I-and other squad leaders and platoon guides-disrupted the forest critters homes by creating foxholes.

"DeHaan!" After racing over to my battle buddy, I lost my breath. I zeroed in on a two-foot, fanged slithering creature. My battle buddy screamed in pain as she held her leg with the death grip of a body builder. Her hands turned red from the pressure. Suddenly I felt quite alone in the woods. I needed help.

"What the hell do you want, DeHaan?" Drill Sergeant Lindsey looked disgusted for I interrupted his lunch break. I screamed what just happened. An epidemic of drill sergeants erupted. In less than five minutes she was on her way to the emergency room. Only one week left before graduation and my battle buddy got bitten by a bloodcurdling, yellow-brown snake.

Now, I stood at the position of attention. Sweat droplets lined my hairline as if to tease me for I could not move. If I would, drill Sergeant Lindsey could find it quite enjoyable to remind me of my military bearing by forcing me to do some forty flutter kicks. The sun radiated on my freshly pressed Class A's. Several ants crawled around on the rocky asphalt as if they were going to find food. "Unlucky little fellows," I thought, "they don't get to leave." One hour left; I endured nine grueling weeks of basic training in Fort Leonardwood, Missouri, and I was not about to get another butt chewing from any of my drill sergeants because of a few messily sweat droplets.

"Alpha Company...Fall out!" A heat surge shot up my body. My surroundings looked brighter, richer, and taller. The heat emitting from the asphalt embraced my soul; the grass seemed to brag about how green it was; I felt a slight breeze for the first time that summer. I looked over to my battle buddy-a big, fat smile gleamed by at me.

There he was...walking like a giant, hungry bear. I still stood in awe at my drill sergeant's presence. "DeHaan! Where the hell are you at, DeHaan?" The voice guaranteed pain now called for me...again.

He extended his hand; I stood there dumbfounded. Was I to shake his hand? I looked up slowly and noticed a smirk plastered on his face. Drill Sergeant Lindsey was looking at me in approval. "You're a damn, good soldier, DeHaan. Damn good." Shivers raced up my body. Again, I found my breath hiding from me like it did when I first met him. He was proud of me: proud.

Perfect

Phil Block

Channeling these demons
trying just to stifle the anger
knowing that this acid eats away
bitter taste left in the mouth
these explosions chip away
at what is left.
Corner of 5th and Washington
yellow street lights shine down
draining the color from the world,
a black and white dream.
Watch as the cars speed past
full of empty faces
blank stares
and voiceless jeers,
watching the world pass by.
There is nothing here to love anymore
using duct tape
to repair a broken house
keeping up appearances
for the sake of ease.
When the fear grows so large
it is impossible to move forward
and death to stay put.
Souls are crushed in this way,
the will to live drained away
and this is what you want,
for everyone to be perfect just like you
perfect
just like you.

Walking Away

Phil Block

That idiot moon stares down tonight
bright and full
ringed in haze
resounding only silence.
The grating of wet, dirty boots on the concrete walk.
The sound of a heart beat
sick and frail,
so loud in this calm.
Nothing can keep these thoughts at bay,
everything so wrong
a world in flames
the lighter burning the hand that holds it.
Stars break the scud of clouds
blank eyes gleaming in the darkness,
on the horizon there is the hint of new tears
there is the scent of a new world being born,
a world of pain and despair
a world bought and paid for with anger
hate and fear.
That idiot moon stares down tonight
the silence that engulfs is deafening.
The only sound
two wet, dirty boots
walking away,
scratching an idiot tempo on the concrete walks,
always walking away.

Contributors

Tyler Ahlers grew up in Aurora, CO, and then moved to South Dakota. He enjoys reading and hanging out with friends. He has come to love drawing and painting and is looking at doing a painting for the Pizza Ranch in Brandon, where he works during the summer.

Justin Blessinger, raised on a ranch in rural NE Montana, is an Assistant Professor of English at DSU. He once worked on a large ranch in MT, applied herbicide, did landscaping, maintained engines for a gas pipeline, flipped burgers, bagged groceries, cared for honeybees, and taught high school. His Ph.D. came at USD in 2004.

Phil Block is a junior, non-traditional student studying EIS with a specialization in programming. He has been writing poetry since he was 14. He resides in Sioux Falls, SD, with his wife and three children.

Sarah DeHaan grew up with her two brothers and parents in a small farming town, Platte, SD. Being a bit of a tom-boy brought her to the attention of the Army National Guard. She is working on her bachelor's degree in Exercise Science.

April Denholm is an English for Information Systems major at DSU. She has been married for almost seven years to Ross Denholm and they have five wonderful cats.

Nikki Gilman lives by Lake Herman with her parents Brian and Joan and sister Sara. She is currently attending DSU and working towards earning a degree in Respiratory Therapy. Hobbies include hanging out with friends, drawing, bowling, and going to the races.

Nichole Hedrick is from Lakefield, Minnesota. This is her fourth year attending DSU where she has been studying secondary English Education and playing fastpitch softball.

Deana Hueners-Nelson has taught writing at DSU since 1998. A native of Winfred, SD, Deana graduated from DSU and enjoys photography, reading, and saving small animals from imminent death. She is married and loves getting together and cooking for friends.

Lisa Huff is a non-traditional student who returned to college after raising her family. Lisa, an English for Information Systems Major, grew up on a farm in Lake County. She is married with two children and a stepdaughter. She enjoys reading and cooking for relaxation.

Douglas Knowlton became president of DSU in 2004, leaving Crookston, MN, and returning to his native South Dakota. He obtained his MA and Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of North Dakota and has worked in private practice. He is married and has two sons.

Jeffrey Steven McNeely was born in Merryvillie, IN, in 1986 and grew up in Murdo, SD. His parents are Jim and Michele McNeely, and he has one half brother who also attended DSU, James. He is finishing his freshman year at DSU and is currently majoring in CIS.

Rebecca Moore is 20 and finishing up her sophomore year with a health information administration major. She commutes from Howard and takes online courses, and she has a two year old son who keeps her very busy. She enjoys all forms of literature and especially writing poetry, and she is happy to share it.

Maureen Murphy teaches writing at DSU. She grew up in Minnesota, where she raised two daughters, an assortment of chickens and guinea fowl, and for a time co-edited a regional poetry journal, *Lake Region Review*. Maureen has had several poems and short stories published in small regional presses.

Daniel Mwai, a Kenyan international student at DSU, graduated from high school in 2003. His experience with

snow in Madison was a great shock, though the phrase "white as snow" was familiar. He enjoys his academic work and looks forward to his success in a first world education.

John Nelson teaches writing and literature at DSU and writes and publishes stories, poetry, and non-fiction. He reads contemporary fiction and poetry, he runs, he plays with Walter, and he does woodworking. He is married, and he has three children.

Elizabeth Rave is from Brookings, SD. She is currently a sophomore at DSU and is studying elementary and special education.

Noah Sanderson is the 19 year old son of Jan and Liz Sanderson of Aurora. A graduate of Brookings High School, Noah is interested in athletics, music, and business.

Micah Sue Tolzin was born in Cherokee, Iowa, and attended Washington High School in Sioux Falls, SD. She writes poems and short stories and participates in sports and athletics, particularly volleyball, competing at DSU for the past three years. She is majoring in Elementary Education and Special Education and minoring in reading.

Zach Van Wyck is a student at DSU. He wrote this essay in his Contemporary American Literature class.

Dan Weinstein is an Assistant Professor of English at Dakota State University. He teaches writing, rhetoric and web design. Recently, he has taken up drawing and is researching how drawing may improve students' memory and understanding. He documents his journey into drawing on his weblog: <http://sio.midco.net/frodo/www/blog>.

