

**THE  
GALLEON**

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*The Galleon* is the literary and art magazine of McMurry University, and was founded by student John H. Knox in 1924. *The Galleon* celebrates the creative and literary talents of the student body, as one of the longest lasting of all cherished traditions at McMurry University.



**DESKTOP A AND B**

Acrylic on Canvas  
Tracy Gand

will ever change. I like to think of it as **voluptuous** and curvy instead of the other cruel words society might imply. But, I was brought up to appreciate and accept every part of your body. My mom always tells me, “You can only change so much, but you’ll always be you.”

W My mom and grandmother, for lack of a better phrase, knew how to party. In their younger years they were **wild**. They lived like rockstars!

X **Xenodochy**: It’s just our southern hospitality! We’ll help anyone whenever we can!

Y It seems the women in my family remain **youthful** beyond their years. None will reveal their real age, even if they don’t look it. But, they happen to throw a number out, it’s often at least 5 years off.

Z A touch of **zest**, with a little spice, you’re going to need some Tums before it’s all over with!

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# DEDICATION

my mouth shut! You're **quiet** when you gotta be: I'm talking, a Mafia style secrecy.

R Even though we're rooted in faith and religion, there will always be a **rebellious** streak waiting for an opportunity to escape. We want to go against the crowd, and not conform to society. If you say yes, I'll support no.

S Once I've made up my mind, that's it, there's no use in arguing. I win. I'm right, just accept it. I know that one of my biggest faults is that I'm too **stubborn**. It can work in my advantage, as long as I can keep it under control. I've learned, from my both my mother and grandmother, to always stand my ground.

T Every now and then you have to be **thrifty**. There is no shame in purchasing an item that was used. Several of my favorite memories of my grandmother are from Friday and Saturday mornings...when we'd get up early and go to garage sales. We'd usually return home with knick-knacks, curtains, and sheets because you could never have too many!

U Sometimes we're **unpredictable**. You never know what's next. It's part of living life and taking risks. In fact everything is unpredictable. You can prepare yourself, but ultimately God calls the shots. It's how you react to the situation that builds your reputation.

V Let's face it; I'm a big girl and I doubt it

complete female population. Cars, clothes, significant other, or even your job: If it's better than ours, we secretly want it, or wished yours would break down, shrink, leave you, or fire you.

K Call it woman's intuition, or maybe it's our **killer instinct**. We're all known to act on our natural impulse, sometimes without thinking first.

L It was in my mothers DNA to be **loveable**, and a heart breaker. She remembers attending a dance, where a 5-man fistfight broke out over her. She also recalls leaving the dance just as she had arrived, with my grandmother at her side.

M We know what we want, and we'll do what it takes to get it. Call it **manipulative** or whatever else you'd like, but it's an art form that only some can master.

N It seems curiosity just wasn't enough. We're **nosy**. *See C on page 1.*

O Women are **opinionated**. We're all just a little more blunt when it comes to our views. Maybe it ties into S? Maybe it leans to headstrong instead? Either way, we're not afraid to voice what's on our minds!

P We're **passionate** people: When we support something, we give it our all, 110% or nothing!

Q Both of them have taught me when to keep

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## ART

**Untitled** 13  
Saybra Giles

**Wings** 22  
Leighanne Meador

**Oasis** 35  
Tracy Gand

**Untitled** 49  
Saybra Giles

**Spring Cleaning** 52  
Ash Almonte

**Ascent** 59  
Tracy Gand

**Untitled** 67  
Saybra Giles

**Elephant** 69  
Leighanne Meador

**Desktop A and B** 75  
Tracy Gand

# PROSE

<b>A Day in the Life of a Gardener</b>	9
Abigail French	
<b>The Effects of Chinese Food</b>	14
Rainie Cook	
<b>A Day in the Life of a Leaf</b>	19
Jacqueline Risley	
<b>What a Light I Knew</b>	24
Neil Corbett	
<b>Aisles of Opportunity</b>	36
Dean Webber	
<b>Missing Man Mission</b>	41
Sandy Lane	
<b>Day After Day</b>	50
Raquel Rios	
<b>One Piece of Chalk and a Bowl</b>	55
Erica Peters	
<b>I'll Love You ... Forever</b>	60
Rainie Cook	

She did anything and everything within her boundaries to help people. She was that **dependable** type. I like to think it's an inheritable gene.

E I was the school mascot during my senior year of high school. The three of us cheered **enthusiastically** for a football team that went 1-9.

F Under the listed definition of **feisty** was this example sentence: *The champion is faced with a feisty challenger.* You know, looking back, I don't think I've ever seen my mother or grandmother go quietly. No matter what the odds, they were the "feisty challengers".

G Each person should be **generous** with one another. I was taught to always give when you had extra and to be ready to lend a hand wherever you could. *Refer back to D*

H **Hispanic:** It runs throughout our veins. The culture, language and lifestyle is something you never let go of.

I My mother told the best stories, next to my grandmothers of course. I think it was partly because she couldn't read or write. She described everything so vividly and taught me that you had to use your **imagination**, because if you didn't, life and her stories would be downright dull!

J We'd never admit it, or at least I know that I wouldn't, but we're **jealous**. I don't think this trait is shared just between us, but more like the

## THREE GENERATIONS

Raquel Ríos

A I listen **attentively** because I'm interested in what you have to say, but mostly because I have to; we've always been known to get sidetracked. I don't know how many times I have to repeat a telephone number to my mother. I can tell her once slowly, but it doesn't matter. She'll get the numbers mixed up or backwards, sometimes she doesn't even get the right numbers. She's dividing her attention, listening to at least three things at once: The television, the radio, *and* me.

B We're **beautiful**, both inside and out, because...that's just how God made us. There's no need for any other explanation. There is another "B word" some would use to describe us, but I'm not going there. My brother tells my boyfriend how lucky he is, because he believes you can tell what a woman will look like based on her mother and grandmother.

C **Curiosity** killed the cat, but satisfaction brought him back. We are curious, I'd even say...borderline nosy. We want to know everything!! Who. What. When. Where, and why. People called my grandmother the human newspaper. She knew what was happening ALL THE TIME!

D I remember my grandmother, in her 90's model Plymouth Horizon, driving manyamiles for friends and family members.

## POETRY

<b>Painter's Song</b> T. M. Gand	8
<b>Watches</b> Kayla Brooks	12
<b>Late Night Archives</b> Philip Jones	18
<b>Slit</b> Kayla Brooks	23
<b>By Any Means Necessary</b> Norman Griffin	38
<b>Creamer</b> Kayla Brooks	40
<b>TV Land</b> T.M. Gand	51
<b>Back in the Day</b> Norman Griffin	53
<b>Glacier Sonnet</b> Philip Jones	68

## **PAINTER'S SONG**

*T.M. Gand*

Color is the measure,  
symbols are my word  
the song is played on canvas  
where life's dissonance's heard.

Paint courses through my veins  
in mixtures yellow, red, and blue.  
my laughter, my joy, my sorrow,  
this I bare to you.



## **ELEPHANT**

*Acrylic on Canvas  
Leighanne Meador*

## **GLACIER SONNET**

*Philip Jones*

Born of misty vapor spirit  
from ancient sky when air was pure.  
Set down to sleep as gentle snow  
snug into a granite cradle  
holding elemental secrets  
silent through millennias.  
Now this ancient soul awakens  
nearing light with blue translucence.  
In the sun the ice transfigures  
liquid dripping, trickling, splashing  
as a child an old soul running  
out into a troubled ocean.  
Gives up itself in diluting  
before rising back to vapor.

## **A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A GARDENER**

*Abigail French*

A day in the life of a gardener begins full of anticipation for a day that will be perfect for gardening. This essentially means it should not be pouring rain - a little drizzle is ok - or so hot that the devil himself would flee indoors for the air conditioning. Getting out of bed might prove difficult if the previous day was spent hauling and digging and pruning, but the call from the garden is too loud to lounge in bed to nurse sore muscles too long. She peeks out the window and sticks a leg out the back door - to check the temperature – which reveals it is, in fact, a good day for gardening.

First, a tour of the garden is in order. Maybe with morning coffee in hand and gardening gloves tucked in her back pocket, she strolls around making sure the night did not steal any plants, or deposit anything that might need disposing of. After making sure everything is as it should be, a critical eye casts about in search of imperfections. Things that might require a future project get filed away to contemplate at a later time. Weeds and grass are then scouted out to be pulled and plucked from the garden's seemingly delicate environment. Some weeds in the past have been allowed to flourish strictly for looks and under constant supervision, but not many. Out come the tools and her work begins.

Weeding has a way of getting the gardening juices flowing, not just externally, but

internally. The rhythm of pulling and digging, pulling and digging lulls her into an almost trance-like state. Gardening is more than just taking care of rambling weeds among flowers; it's a mental state. She likes to call it "Gardening Therapy". The amount invested is worth more than she could pay anyone to sit and listen to her complain about all of her woes. While gardening, she can think any way she desires and be alone in her own head. As she pulls up weeds, she is also uprooting worries from her mind. As the weeds are pulled up others magically appear just as fast as ideas and memories pop in and out of her head. As she is planting, new plans, ideas, and solutions are being created. Is it for the garden or for her? Who knows. Maybe it's a little of both. It is a release like no other. As she tills the dirt, she's psychologically cultivating and reworking established ideas along with the soil. The two feed on each other until she can't remember which started which. This continues throughout the day while in the garden. There are breaks and pauses in the work and in the thinking, but never for too long unless absolutely necessary.

In the life of a gardener, the plants may change and the thoughts may be amended, but the process will essentially stay the same. As long as she can still garden there will always be this place for her to work out frustrations and ideas and to think about things that she may not dare think about at any other time; kids, step-kids, loved ones long since gone, school work, what will be made for dinner, what was made last night, what happens if I am suddenly left alone...



## **UNTITLED**

*Photography*  
*Saybra Giles*

Alissa could barely detect it, and that was only because she'd known him for so long. "I...I'm not what you think I am."

"Wh-what do you mean?"

There was a slight glow emanating from him, and Alissa could see his shadow on the wall... only there were wings on his back.

"I'm an angel." He closed his eyes and turned his face so that it was turning towards the ground. "The gods sent me to keep watch over you, and I thought it would be easiest if I was your friend...so I came up with a persona, and went to your school. Over time...I started becoming more and more human...and I started falling in love with you. You're just—no words can describe how I feel for you!"

Alissa leaned forward, taking Mark's hands in her own and causing him to look up at her. She had tears in her eyes again, but this time there was a smile on her face.

"Mom was right...she did send me an angel... She promised to send me an angel that would watch over me and love me..." She pulled him close to him, hugging him. "Just because you're not human, my feelings haven't changed. I still love you for you."

His eyes slid shut and he wrapped his arms around her. "Thank you..." His voice sounded a bit wavery now, and it was obvious he was trying not to cry, but that didn't matter to either of them. They had each other, and the main obstacle in their life was now gone. All that was left now was the two of them. So long as they were together, nothing could touch them...not even the fact that Alissa was now

As the day ends, the light grows weaker in the sky and there is the constant hum of the street light and mosquitoes buzzing in her ears. The gloves will reluctantly come off but she will sit back and look proudly - internally and externally - at her work. The more she can see physically done, the more she knows has been done on the inside. She can feel the bodily aches and pains, the soreness and stiffness entering every joint and limb, but it is a consolation for her. It lets her feel a sense of accomplishment and she knows she is alive and well. Although a day in the life of this gardener may only transpire once or twice a week, every morning she wakes with the hope that even one hour of that day might be allowed to be spent getting dirt under her fingernails and grass stains on her knees. Who knows, the next day she sticks her leg out the door, it might be getting rained on. So, she must enjoy the days that she does get to spend entrenched in the garden and her spirit.

## WATCHES

Kayla Brooks

little clocks on little wrists attached to little  
arms  
winding, warning, wrecking the rhythm of nature's alarms  
ticking tocking climbing clocking  
the sands of time slip and slide through the  
fingers of fools  
seconds sail  
minutes melt into hours  
hours to days weeks months  
years still measured by fears of losing track  
time is the prison warden, not the cell key  
the watch wears US.

left. I mean, you can't read much out of, 'I'm sorry, I have to leave. Good-bye.' I'd almost thought you meant you..." He looked away, and Alissa gently put a hand on his face, turning him so that he was facing her.

"I'll never stop loving you, Mark. You know that. That's why I left." She took her hand back, looking down at her lap. "I couldn't stand the idea of you getting hurt to protect me...that's what happened to my mother. And do you know what he did to her? He killed her! Right in front of me! He wanted to prove that I was worthless, and he's right! All I do is cause pain to those I care for..." Silently, tears began to fall again.

"Alissa...that's not true. You're not worthless—"

"Yes I am!" She clenched the blankets in her fists. "All I do is cause endless suffering! My mother died, you could have died—"

"That proves that you're far from worthless! Listen, Lis. That only shows how much we care for you! I would gladly die for you, if I knew you would be safe and happy! You know that!"

"But that's suffering needlessly!"

"I would rather suffer that than what I did when I woke up three days ago to find you gone."

Alissa stared up at him. "Three days? That's how long I've been asleep?"

Mark nodded, looking away from Alissa.

"Mark...Why don't I have any bruises? I remember being kicked several times in the stomach...I should be sore from that, but instead I feel fine..."

"Lis...I've got something I need to tell you..." There was a slight tremble in his voice, but

yelled, glaring at the man who'd dared intrude his house.

Mark glared right back at him. "I'm her husband, you piece of shit."

"No one calls Dominic Fidler a piece of shit!"

The young man's eyes narrowed. "Oh, really? I just did. And now, I'm leaving. Lis's coming with me whether you like it or not."

"You can't take my daughter! She's mine!"

"Not anymore." As calmly as he could, Mark went over to Dominic and stared him right in the eye. "She's an adult, she doesn't have to stay with you." Swiftly, he punched the older man in the gut, causing Dominic to double over, eyes bulging.

"You...bastard!"

"Don't refer to yourself like that. You're not that good of a person." With that said, Mark bent down and picked Alissa up, cradling her gently in his arms as he walked back out in the pouring rain.

\* \* \*

When Alissa awoke, she groaned.

"Are you alright?"

Blinking and trying not to scream out in fear, she opened her eyes to see that she was warm and dry in one of Mark's t-shirts...in his bed. Mark was looking down at her, worry evident on his face.

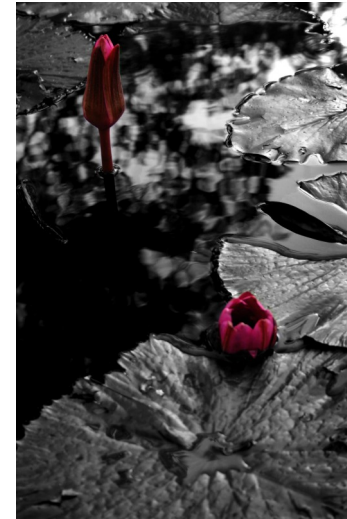
"I...I think so? What are you doing? Why am I here? What happened to my father?!"

"Shh, shh...calm down. I took care of him. He's in the city jail right now, awaiting trial for murder. I didn't leave him much of a choice."

Slowly, Alissa sat up. "But how...?"

"I knew you'd gone to confront your father...even if you didn't say so in your note you

64



## **UNTITLED**

*Photography  
Saybra Giles*

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## THE EFFECTS OF CHINESE FOOD

Rainie Cook

Sighing softly, I walked out to the vocational building to wait for my friends to get out of class. Hope, Malcolm, and John all had classes in that building; Hope had study hall, while Malcolm and John both had computer programming. The four of us would often eat lunch together, even though I could easily eat an hour before because, like Hope, I had study hall. However, I was a senior with a mode of transportation off of campus (A.K.A. my own two feet), whereas Hope was a junior, so she had to sit there for an hour while I got to hang out in the computer lab or library. So, I was sitting there, that cold day at the end of January, waiting for my friends to come out.

Less than five minutes after I arrived, Malcolm and John came out, talking about where they were going to go for lunch. They were arguing between Pam's Café, a little restaurant just a couple minutes walking distance from the school that was pretty popular with the underclassmen, and the Chinese place. I followed close behind them, knowing I'd have to stay on campus because I didn't have enough money to eat Chinese since they would inevitably choose that. So, naturally, when they made the expected decision, I pouted

*down...and hurt Mark. I can't do that. He promised to protect me...but I'm not going to let him get hurt because of me.'*

Closing her eyes to prevent the escape of any more tears, she slipped her ring off of her left ring finger, placing it on a piece of paper. Quickly, she wrote him a note, telling him not to worry about her...and farewell.

*'Is this really our farewell?'* She thought somberly as she left the apartment, never looking back.

\* \* \*

Mark cursed under his breath, reading the note he'd been left. "Damn it, Lis, how can you do this?!" Ignoring the pouring rain, he stormed out the door, racing over to Alissa's house, hoping to get there before it was too late.

\* \* \*

"I'll show you what happened to your mother, you damn whore!"

Alissa had already begun to lose consciousness, and she somehow knew that if she were to fully lose consciousness...she would be forever lost. Her father would kill her, and that was that. *'Mark...I'll love you, no matter what happens. Maybe we'll meet again in another life...'* She closed her eyes, ready to give up, knowing that she'd at least had the feeling of being loved by one person in her life, and content with that. She didn't want to be turned into a puppet like her mother had and would rather die than become that.

As her sight finally dimmed to nothing, she heard one last sound – a booming thunder and the crashing of glass.

"Who the fucking hell are you?!" Dominic

“Please...stay with me,” Alissa whispered softly.

“Are—“

“I don’t want to be alone. Somehow, just by having you around, I can rest easier.”

Nodding, Mark climbed in the bed next to her, pulling the covers over them both. He lay awake for some time, thinking on the day’s big event.

*‘If he’d be angry with her just by her bring with me, then what will he do when he discovers we eloped?’*

That sobering thought followed him as he went to sleep. Before sleep overcame him, however, he whispered into Alissa’s ear, “I’ll love you...forever.”

\* \* \*

“You stupid, lazy bitch! I told you that you weren’t allowed to date anyone, let alone get married to some boy I’ve never met!” Dominic kicked her again, causing her to cough weakly, a small trail of blood coming out of her mouth.

*‘At least Mark’s safe...’*

\* \* \*

The next day, Alissa awoke to find herself on Mark’s chest. He was sleeping soundly, something she envied him for. The young woman had been waking up about every hour or so, an effect of living in her house with only her father. As a result, she rarely got enough sleep, but she dealt with it. Right at that moment, she was content to watch him sleep...listen to his heartbeat. For some odd reason, listening to his heart beat could calm her down like nothing else could.

*‘I can’t stay...’* She thought sadly. *‘Dad’s still got friends on the force, and they’ll track me*

62

playfully, saying I wished I could go.

Malcolm got a weird glint in his eyes, and he looked speculatively down at me, rubbing his chin. “Well...I suppose you *could* come with us...”

“But I don’t have any money!” My eyes went wide as I stared at him. He was known for having crazy ideas, usually something to do with vampires or zombies, and I wasn’t sure if I’d want to go along with whatever he came up with.

He waved his hand at me, ignoring the startled look on my face. “You don’t have to. Tell you what. One of us will pay for your food if you,” he pointed at the other teen, “agree to go on a date with John.”

I don’t know what John’s reaction to that was, but mine was shock mixed with joy. There had been a strange triangle thing going on between the three of us for the past six months, and I’d wanted to go out with John for a while. Of course, me being me, I was *way* too shy to even think of asking him. So, in a way, I had a chance to kill two birds with one stone, pardon the cliché. I’d get to be with the guy I’d wanted to be with for months, and I’d get free food, a very important thing to high school and college students alike. So, blushing furiously, I agreed and we all piled into John’s car, poor Hope forgotten in all the excitement.

We got to the Chinese place, I don’t

really know the name of it but it's not that hard to miss in Breckenridge, what with how small it is. There's only the one place in the entire town. We all had the buffet, which was great, and we had a generally good time, though I was blushing nearly the entire time. About halfway through our meal, Malcolm got up and left us alone at the table for a few minutes, and just from looking at John's face, I knew I'd made the right decision. He was a good friend, even before I liked him, and I knew he was lonely...just as I was. When we got back to school that day, both of us were extremely happy, though it was *much* more obvious with me than him. I was practically bouncing off the walls for the rest of the week, and that's just not natural for me. Poor Hope, who was forgotten earlier in all the excitement, was the first person to find out about us, and she was... well, she was shocked, to put it mildly. However, she was happy for us, because this meant she had Malcolm all to herself. That really didn't work out, but that's a completely different story altogether.

Three days later, John and I went on our first 'official' date to – you guessed it! – the Chinese place. We had a blast, even if we *were* a bit late getting back to school. It really wasn't a problem, because we both had very lenient teachers who wouldn't get on to us for tardies.

He chuckled as he began to tickle her, causing her to squeal loudly on the street. The two were so focused on each other that they didn't notice the motorcycle until it was too late.

Alissa began to panic, "Oh no, he saw us!"

"Shh, shh... it'll be okay. C'mon." Mark took her hand and they made their way to his apartment. Shutting the door behind them, he led her to the couch and sat her down, trying to keep her calm, though that was nearly impossible. Tears were pouring down her face, causing his heart to clench. "Lis, it'll be okay, I promise."

"You-you don't understand! He'll kill me for sure!"

"He wouldn't kill you for just hanging out with me—"

"You don't know him the way I do! He would! He's completely ruthless, and he's very possessive of me!"

Mark tucked a strand of his dark brown hair behind his ear, sitting next to her and taking her into his arms. "He's not the only one, Lis. I promise, I'll never let anything happen to you. Never..."

The young woman sniffed, looking up at him. "Do you really mean that?"

He nodded, a faint smile on his face. "Yes, I do."

Alissa's eyes watered again, and she buried herself in his chest, crying once again. After about half an hour, she was asleep, so, very gently, Mark picked her up and took her to his bedroom, laying her on the bed. Just as he went to shut the door, he heard a faint mumbling from the direction of his bed.

## **I'LL LOVE YOU...**

Rainie Cook

## **FOREVER**

*I'll love you...forever...*

"Famous first words," Dominic spat as he glared at the pathetic excuse for a human being laying before him...his own daughter Alissa. Or rather, his former daughter.

"I told you not to go to that—that Mark! I told you to stay at home, do what I told you. But did you listen? No!" He kicked her in the side, but there was no response from the body on the floor. Her eyes were glazed over, and her mind was elsewhere. These beatings had been happening for the past few hours, and she'd quickly found that she could send her mind away from the torture...the pain... So, she immersed herself in memories...memories of him...

\* \* \*

Sighing contentedly, Alissa looked up at Mark, seeing a big grin on his face. They'd been secretly together for almost a year now, and they couldn't have been any happier. The only shadow on their relationship was Alissa's father, but neither of them wanted to think on that, as he'd done enough to Alissa to make anyone's thoughts turn sour. So, they were walking around, simply enjoying each other's company. It was almost time for school to start again, which meant Alissa would be going off to college a few hours away from home. That was another thing the two weren't looking forward to, but they would deal with it, as they always did.

Leaning up against Mark, Alissa smiled.

Naturally, the tale doesn't end there. If it did, what would be the point? One date with a guy and Chinese food. Hah! That's not a story. No, there's a little bit more to it than that. For the next few months, almost every time we went to eat off campus, we went and ate Chinese. I learned so much about him in those meals, because we were away from all the idiots at school, loveable though they might be. I was able to see through to the John beneath the mask, and we became very close.

Of course, we really didn't see much of each other over the summer, though I went to his house as often as I could. We remained close, and became even closer. As a matter of fact...we are now happily engaged! Just this past Friday I saw him; he came into town to visit, and we talked about this. While talking about this, and various other things, I realized something that made us both laugh. With the exception of four times (two times with my ex-boyfriend, two times with friends), every time I've eaten Chinese food, it's been with him. Apparently, John plus me plus Chinese food is a very good combination. And to think, we wouldn't be as close as we are now if it hadn't been for Malcolm and his offer of Chinese food.

## **LATE NIGHT ARCHIVES**

*Philip Jones*

Late at night up in the archives  
Under bright rows of fluorescent bulbs  
Illuminate stories by a neighborhood author  
Once fluid thoughts, now dried ink on paper  
Written by flickering candle a century ago.  
The flame lit up a ghostly perimeter.  
Shadows dancing on the wall.  
The mind which wrote from that luminous center  
Has long since decayed. An essence absorbed  
By an elm tree sprout that appeared undetected  
Near by, though many years ago  
in back of the library, across the alley.  
Branching tendrils now brush at the window.

The late night archivist sets down her reading  
Re-hydrated thoughts flow once again  
In the eddies and currents of a still living brain  
While she listens to elm branches  
scraping the glass



## **ASCENT**

*Acrylic on Canvas*  
*Tracy Gand*

not get caught or forgiving people, it was and is an inspiration to me know. When I mess up, I look up. I can't change the past, but I can control my future. So in the long run I guess that was one valuable piece of chalk and one great bowl of fruit!

## **A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A LEAF** *Jacqueline Risley*

A bright orange leaf hangs above the ground. It dances with the gentle breeze and watches the tops of people's heads as they walk by below. Then suddenly a gust of wind assaults the leaf and it is separated from its branch, its tree, its home. The leaf floats slowly to the ground and lands at the foot of the tree. Looking up it sees the large round trunk towering above it. It sees all of the other leaves on the tree still waving in the wind. The little leaf looks at its friends who have also fallen to the ground. None knew what would happen to them now that they were no longer part of the tree.

A couple of young people rush by, eager to get wherever they were going. One steps right next to the leaf, creating a puff of wind that flips the leaf over. Now the wind catches the leaf again and blows it across the grass. It sees a bird and the clouds moving through the sky above. The leaf can remember what it felt like to be up high in the air looking down. Suddenly, the leaf is tickled by something, an ant crawling over it. The leaf looks around it now and sees many small bugs covering the ground. Some crawl under, some over, and some go around the leaf. The leaf did not know that there were so many bugs. From high up on a branch it could never see such tiny things so far down hidden by the grass. It is a new world down on the ground.

The leaf moves across the ground a little more with the help of the wind. From its new spot the leaf can see a building looming up above it. Memories of this building from its former place at the top of the tree do not match with this new perspective, it looks so much larger from on the ground. Crowds of people blow in and out of the building. Many of the people nearly step on the little orange leaf. The leaf hears the crunching sound of other leaves as they become trapped under someone's shoe. The leaf hopes the wind will blow it away from all these people and their stomping shoes. They had never bothered it when it was up in the tree. A lady walks towards the leaf and the leaf watches as the lady's high heel comes down on it and *Crunch!* When the lady has passed on, the leaf has a small hole in it. It was so much safer in the tree when a few bugs were the only things to worry about. But now all the busy people with their large feet threaten to trample it.

The wind continues to blow the fallen leaf along. The leaf watches people running and people sitting and talking. It sees a man playing with his dog, petting and praising the dog whose tail wags vigorously. The leaf stops again near a little wooden bench. On it there is an old couple sitting close and holding hands, watching children play nearby. The leaf cartwheels and lands near the playground. The children's laughter is loud and clear. As the children run by, the leaf can see the smiles on their faces instead of just their hair. A shadow falls over the leaf and it sees a curious facing hovering over it. It feels the child's small hands pick it up by the stem. The orange leaf be-

made sure I sat away from her because I was certain that in her eyes I was now a "bad student." Well, my punishment passed rather quickly and at the end of the 5 minutes Mrs. Fine called me to her. I expected her to just allow me to go out and play, but she asked me a question that obviously still rings clear in my mind. She said "Erica, what are you guilty of?" I stammered out my answer and sincerely apologized. I wanted her to know that I was so completely sorry! Her displeased look turned soft as she smiled and told me to go play. So I ran as hard as I could to find my friends, making sure I stayed clear of Ashley.

As you can see, I survived that experience and am a better person today because of it. Mrs. Fine's forgiveness helped me to understand that we all mess up, but it is how we act and what we learn from that mistake that defines who we are-not the error. It may be questionable to say that as a third grader I learned such a valuable lesson, but I believe fully in what I am telling you. The quote "Hindsight is 20/20" is as true today as it ever was. I saw then as I see now that I am going to make mistakes, and I am not going to be the perfect student. The thing that balances us out is what we do after that bad decision. My parents have always loved and supported me through the good and the bad. They have always forgiven me, and I expected that because they are my parents. But to have Mrs. Fine forgive me like that and go on like nothing had happened was an amazing thing in a third grader's eyes. I loved her because of it, and it showed me that I must do the same thing. The lesson I learned from Mrs. Fine was more than how to

of chalk from the chalkboard. Immediately I knew this could be trouble, but as soon as she showed it to me I had the irrepressible urge to draw on the carpet. I don't know what came over me, but I grabbed that piece of chalk and started to draw.

The first thing that came to mind to draw was a bowl of fruit. Now why I chose to draw that particular item I will never know, but I went to work on it. Since Mrs. Fine was reading out of her book, I got a pretty good way into my artwork before she noticed me. By the time she saw what I was doing, it was too late for me to try to cover up what I had done. There on the carpet for Mrs. Fine, myself and the whole class to see was a white bowl of fruit. I was mortified. What had I done? Well my urge to express my inner artist signaled the end of story time, and boy did I want to crawl under my desk. When I look back on it now it seems like such a small thing compared with some of the pranks I have pulled since then, but the spotless record I had before was now muddied beyond belief in my young eyes. Thoughts raced through my head. How could I have done that? I should I have listed to my mom! Mrs. Fine is going to hate me! I'm going to the office! They are going to call my parents! Oh no! I was in for it; I could feel it. In the middle of my desperate prayer for God to save me, Mrs. Fine called my name. She asked me to show her what I had been doing when I was supposed to be listening. I reluctantly showed her my shameful masterpiece and as the tears began to flow she told me that my punishment was sitting out 5 minutes at recess. Man! What a relief, just 5 minutes! God had heard my prayer! I followed Mrs. Fine outside and

gins to twirl as its stem rubs between the child's fingers and it sees the child smile as it dances. The leaf is carried over to a nearby tree where the child looks up at the other colored leaves on the branches. It is set down beneath the tree among some other fallen leaves. The leaf watches as the child walks away. The new tree blocks the wind and the leaf lays still. The leaf listens to the children laugh and observes its new surroundings, waiting for when the wind would start to blow again and take it on another journey.



## **WINGS**

*Acrylic on Canvas*  
*Leighanne Meador*

## **ONE PIECE OF CHALK AND A BOWL OF FRUIT**

*Erica Peters*

For the most part, I somehow managed to stay out of trouble in school. That was not an easy task, but teachers always seemed to like me. I got the occasional reprimand but nothing very serious at all. As far as my parents knew, I was a perfect student, so when I got caught drawing on the floor with chalk I made sure they never found out.

Mrs. Fine was an older lady who did not have any grandchildren of her own, so she sort of adopted me as a stand in. I loved Mrs. Fine. She smelled like peaches and always had a hug for me when I walked into class. I was in third grade and I thought the world of her. I could not imagine a better teacher to have and I enjoyed class like a true nerd. Every day before recess we had a story time that was based on doing good deeds and being kind to one another. Mrs. Fine would read a story out of her book and then would ask for our input. Well, as much as I enjoyed her class, I did not particularly like this time. I was itching to go play outside on the playground, and story time seemed to drag on an eternity. Now we all have been friends with the kid who your parents didn't really like you to hang around, and who you knew was probably going to get you into trouble, but you were stubborn and thought you knew best. Well I had such a friend and her name was Ashley. It turned out that before story time Ashley had managed to grab a piece

Thinking back on how those beans, pork,  
And collard greens smelled. "Soul food"

What I wouldn't pay to go back in that way  
Yep yep yep.....That was back in the day.

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## **SLIT**

*Kayla Brooks*

most beautiful bastard feature my body pos-  
sesses by far. the healed hole is a radical  
result, a cowardice cry of sweet sleeping to  
cover a reckless weeping to die.  
self-inflicted, heart-conflicted, hate-restricted  
slit. being lost in tragic thought as I gaze  
upon you, a habit I have yet and never will  
quit.

## **WHAT A LIGHT I**

Neil Corbett

## **KNEW**

Last night I dreamt I ran. I woke up feeling like I really had. It's hard to believe I ever got any rest.

I was running because I didn't think I had a choice. You don't choose to run when something is behind you. I ran through dark alley ways between skyscrapers; there were no streets, only alleys. The kind you see in cop movies where the hero chases down a drug dealer and tackles him as he tries to scale a chain-link fence.

I focused on making lots of turns. Each alley at first looked like it was a dead end, and that I was done. But there was always a turn right at the end. I'd run, run, run, turn left, knock over trash can, turn left again, turn right, run, run, run. My feet pounded out the rhythm to every escaping song I'd ever heard. "Come on baby, we were born to run..."

The thing I was running from I never saw. It was probably nothing more than a little cat. That's usually how these dreams work. All that running away for nothing.

My brain told me it was something sinister. It had to be. Why else would I be running? I was sure it was jet black but blindingly bright. Enormous, but without a body. Sharp claws, big teeth. Every time I slowed down it grabbed my ankles and bit my calves.

Every time I saw a door I tried to open it; they were all locked, but I still tried every one. When I finally found a door that opened I went in and everything changed. I was in my

## **BACK IN THE DAY**

Norman Griffin

Remember waking up in the morning going  
Off to the fields to pick those peas?  
Working till sun down, and by that  
Time you picking peas on your knees

Remember going to bed at night  
With your screen door open wide?  
Never having to worry if someone evil  
Would trespass or come inside

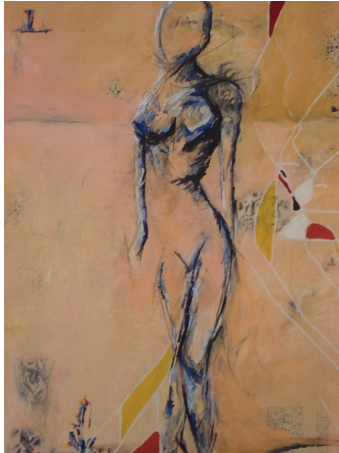
Yep yep yep.....That was back in the day

Remember red light green light, mother may I  
And jump rope?  
Not having to worry while playing those games  
Someone offering you dope

How about that old wood heater  
Where the real cornbread was made  
And ridding our stick horses in the  
Hot day without any shade

Yes, times have changed, its crazy to say  
Yep yep yep.....That was back in the day

Remember running bare foot on solid ground?  
Getting right back up after just falling down  
And how about getting water from the old  
Spring well



## **SPRING CLEANING**

*Acrylic on Canvas*  
Ash Almonte

room. It was morning. I closed my closet door that led back out to the alleys, unaware whether or not anything had followed me in.

I live in a motel. Not a nice Motel 6 where the rooms get cleaned every morning by friendly immigrants. It's one of those pay-by-the-hour ones where you're lucky if your room has been cleaned since the place opened in 1956. I didn't choose the place. Jeff owns it. Jeff would be my stepfather if my mom didn't think that some more interesting man who owned a Comfort Inn might someday come for her.

I walked to the lobby. My mom was behind the counter. She was reading one of those Cosmopolitan magazines girls at my school huddle over and giggle when they read about tongue tricks and how men get off. I've never been sure if my mom is aware that she is nearing fifty, and that the make-up tips won't help. I got nauseous considering the idea that she and Jeff had probably tried most of the 101 amazing new sex positions.

That's when I woke up. I was amazed I hadn't woken up earlier. Some "lucky" guy was getting a disease next door from a willing donor. The headboard knocked rhythmically against the wall, and the cheaply framed landscape above my head rattled. Luckily they were just finishing, and I was out again and back in the lobby with my mom telling me, in her thin raspy voice, to go clean out one of the rooms.

"Mom, I told you, don't give the room next to mine to fucking hookers."

"Are you listening to me? Go clean room 117. And do it quick, you have to leave for school



## DAY AFTER DAY

Raquel Ríos

From the moment I'm manufactured I'm destined to crumble and wither down to a mere shred. I'm nothing more than a molded object, made to accommodate you. Liquid, foam, or bar, it doesn't matter. Scent, shape, size are just details that will be washed away later. My fate is inevitably sealed. I live in a world of daily abuse; I'm used once, twice, maybe even four times a day. My daily service leaves me smaller, and smaller. Sometimes, you clumsily hold me, which leads to a disastrous fall. It's not your fault, I know, I'm slippery. I can be dented or broken and I'm still put to work. No matter what, I continue to stick around, maybe not by choice, but the knowing that I'm needed always calms my particles. One of our "meetings" can be meaningless, just another morning or evening routine. While another, say after a long stressful day, the connection can be magical. It can ease your soul, release the stress and while still cleansing the body. The worst part is when you decide we're through. We're finished. I am returned to "my spot," because you have the power. You're the one who pulls the plug. But, day after day, I lose a part of myself as I, unwillingly, follow the long, dark drain ride home.

the cleaning carts into the room to give him more work to do.

It's a love/hate thing every time they leave. I don't have to put up with their crap, but I have to do all the work. And every time they're gone I daydream about a candle in some hooker's room spilling over and catching the pink frilly—whatever. The fire spreads to the never vacuumed shag carpet, to the tan and forest green floral pattern wall paper, and up and up, 'til the whole place is gone. All the three-piece suit wearing, shifty-eyed business men forking over their sweaty cash, and the whores leaning proudly against them in their clown make up, and the drug dealers who stand around in front of their rooms waiting for customers—all of them gone. And I could run, run, run, turn left, hop a chain link fence, knock over a trash can, turn right, jump over a rotting burnt orange couch, run, run, run.

I guess I dazed all the way to the bus, through the ride across town, and the entire four block stroll to Sunny's house. I was at the door to her apartment. And now she was too; leaning against the door frame with crossed arms and a look on her face like she was the only thing that ever mattered. I believed it. She was wearing a black tank top with cargo pants and a pair of combat boots. She looked like she was ready for battle. She had a match tucked behind her ear poking out from under her shoulder-length, fiery red hair.

"Good morning, *Sunshine*," I said.

"Shut up, *Larry*," she shot back.

Sunny hated it when I called her *Sunshine*, even though, and mostly because, it was her real

name. She went by Sunny to cover up the fact that her parents were a couple of washed up hippies who had joined a commune a decade after it stopped being fashionable. After about a year there her mom got pregnant and decided they should go “somewhere better for the baby.” So they moved away from shared drugs and free sex in teepees to the apartments with their prostitutes and \$20 dime bags of substances mixed in a gang banger’s sink.

“I hope we never give this up,” she said. We started walking in the direction of the school.

“What’s that?”

“This whole back-and-fourth thing that we’ve managed to keep up with so long.”

“I mean,” she continued, “I think, if we’re still together a year after graduation, and having fun, then we’re unstoppable.”

“Yeah, you’re probably right.”

We had this conversation at least once a month. It would get us excited about graduation and having adventures: us in a rusted out sedan traveling the country. So I listened while we walked, and I nodded to assure her I was still there.

“What’s the match for?” I asked, and pointed at the little red sphere just barely visible under the torch of her hair.

“It’s for later, *Larry*. I’ve got a surprise for you after school.”

It was cold and cloudy, and all that was visible between the crowded downtown buildings was gray. But as long as I was with Sunny everything was bright. Her name really did fit; spending a day with her was like spending a day out in the sun; by the end of the day you were exhausted, but happy.



## **UNTITLED**

*Photography*  
*Saybra Giles*

slipped off into some wild, momentary vision? They stood near the bright blue and yellow BT and gazed across the quad toward the Homeplace hangar. The other pilots were walking toward the hangar to gather for the debriefing.

Al and Buddy turned to congratulate each other on the successful performance, and then turned to look back at the plane. Buddy slowly reached up and touched a small, round hole in the skin near the tail of the aircraft. He looked at Al, who clapped a hand on Buddy's shoulder and grinned. Both shook their heads and began to laugh as they walked back toward the applauding crowd. It had been a great, historic tribute to those who had lived through "The Day Which will live in Infamy" so many, long years ago.

Dec 7, 2001

Author's note: The air battle depicted in this story is from an actual accounting of the flight and fight of Pilots George Welch and Ken Taylor from Haleiwa Airfield, December 7, 1941.

<http://www.aviation-history.com/airmen/pearl.htm>  
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And sometimes burnt.

In passing I mentioned my mom and Jeff's plans.

"Lawrence, this is your chance! Trash the fucking place. We'll take all the money and make it look like someone stuck the place up."

"I've told you, it won't work."

"Look, I'll come in with a ski mask and a gun—"

"Where the hell are you going to get a gun?"

"We'll pour gasoline everywhere, and boom!"

She stopped and looked at me with a big grin.

"Do you really think I'm serious? Honestly."

I laughed, and we kept walking.

"I'm just thinking," she said, "that maybe you could actually do something to try to get out of this place."

"Well, what the hell am I supposed to do?"

"You could at least move out of that goddamned motel now."

"We've got three months till graduation, then I'll go off on my own, and do...whatever. Besides, I get my own room, it's free, and I'm pretty good at avoiding all the shit that goes on there."

I wondered if Sunny was like my mom, hanging on to me until she finds someone else—someone willing to go through with one of her crazy plans. I wondered if she'd drag me along, just in case she ran out of other men to fuck. I wanted to get away from here as much as she did, but I could never handle any extreme measures. But if she led me, I know I'd do whatever she wanted me to.

We stopped behind the school gym. She started kissing me; she pulled me in and held my

neck. I could taste the blueberry pop tart she had had for breakfast, but I didn't care. And then she jerked her knee into my crotch and started laughing. I tasted metal as I collapsed into a fetal position. She told me she'd meet me here after school. I coughed out an Okay; she leaned down and kissed my forehead before starting toward class.

I limped off toward my first class. I survived the day: the idiot kids who asked stupid questions; the punk kids, with their superiority complexes because they're so original; the smart kids who wouldn't let me borrow their homework; the jocks, who stared at themselves in the locker room mirrors, the coaches who made sure they never failed.

Each class felt rushed, like the teachers just wanted to get all the information out and leave. They were as tired as anyone else, and I didn't blame them. They were tired of putting up with the pathetic micro-drama as much as I was.

Afterward I met up with Sunny. She apologized for this morning and she started leading the way. The clouds started to press down on us, and I told her we needed to hurry, the sun was going down. So Sunny started running. She pulled me along behind her. She helped me through the garbage of the alleys and over the chain-link fences. But for some reason I kept falling behind; she just tugged my arm harder.

Suddenly we stopped at a gas station. It was on the north side of town near the motel. Gray clouds still covered the sky, and it was getting darker. Sunny smiled and said "Hey, wait here, I'm going to go get your surprise," and ran toward the gas station. An old Buick backfired in the parking lot

other Tomahawk, saw it take a hit, then dive into a cloudbank. Al sped full-throttle toward the place where the plane had disappeared into the clouds, not sure of what he could do to assist. Before he could reach the cloudbank, however, he saw the P-40 rush back out, hot on the trail of another bomber. The P-40 pilot managed an all out stream of fire with his only working gun, and sent the bomber flaming into the deep waters below.

Al continued toward the protective cover of the cloudbank, if only for a moment, to think and then return to create more diversion and confusion for the enemy bombers. However, as the BT flew into the thick, white cloud mass, the quiet and pressure they had experienced before seized them once again. The two men sensed themselves speeding upward, this time, and accelerating G forces shoved them deeper into their seats. Through the canopy they watched as the swirling rotation of the clouds turned from brilliant white back to the silver-green mist they had seen before. Patches of blue sky could be seen as the mist began to separate and, just as suddenly as before, they broke out into the clear, blue skies over their flight path toward the Elmdale Airpark. Ahead they could see their own flight group, turning and spacing apart, preparing to land one by one on the airstrip below.

Neither pilot spoke a word as Al circled in and got into position to land behind the others. Each man, still wide-eyed, was trying to collect his thoughts and slow his breathing as they touched down, taxied in behind the others, and rolled to a stop. Each wondered to himself whether he had shared this experience with the other or had he

an airplane speeding past so closely that he could see the face of a pilot and feel the pressure of air-flow. The sound of rapid gun fire filled the air. Reflexes took over as he instantly pulled hard left and down on the stick while trying to digest the image that had just flashed before his eyes: the blazing emblem of the Rising Sun, the almond-shaped eyes of the pilot framed by yellow-toned skin; the leather, wool-lined flight helmet.

Buddy turned, frantically looking behind first left, then right and warning of a dozen Japanese bombers closing in fast. Al maneuvered back up and to the right, to dodge fire coming from the onslaught. There was no time to think or rationalize what was happening as he and Buddy watched the bomber fleet speed past, ignoring them to continue on toward their intended target.

In the time it took to draw breath and blink their eyes, both pilots took in a horrendous sight: huge, billowing clouds of thick, black smoke rising from an inlet off to the northeast. The flight of bombers continued directly toward the Marine Air base at over the BT into a curving dive to attract the attention of one of the bomber pilots. Buddy announced that the pilot had gone for it and was turning to give chase as Al led him out to sea. One of the Tomahawks came roaring after the bomber with heavy fire. His aim was good and the bomber broke apart before their eyes as they swept the BT up and around to avoid the gunfire. The pilot in the P-40 zoomed past them, grinning and proudly shaking a thumbs-up at the pilots in the clearly American-marked BT-13 trainer.

In the same instant, they turned to look for the

and I woke up.

Everything was quiet. I could see the gray of the approaching dawn through the curtains, as well as the Buick pulling away from the motel. And I could see my breath. I got up, shivering, took a few awkward bouncy steps to the heating unit and clicked it on, and then danced back to my bed. And fell back asleep.

We were on a bus. It was empty except for an old woman in a pale pink dress suit at the front of the bus and a junkie, shaking and talking to himself right in the middle. The woman looked back frequently and shot us accusing looks as if to say, "I know you two are doing unholy things in your spare time, you should be ashamed."

The scent of gasoline and smoke pervaded us. It took over and forced us together. And Sunny kissed me with enough force to throw me to the front of the bus. I grabbed her and pulled her closer; she pushed her hips into mine. She smelled like gasoline and it sent me into a frenzy. I tugged at the back of her tank top and she clawed my face.

The bus became a world apart and complete; it was ours. I was the king, Sunny the queen, and the bus was our dominion. The old woman: a nun; the junkie: our jester; the driver: a peasant worker. We passed Sunny's stop and knew that it wouldn't be long before the end of the line. She tore at the zipper of my jeans while our nun exited, saying, "Kids today need to learn their place. They think they just run the world."

All I knew was that I wanted to become a part of her. My arms crushed her against me as if trying to find the catalyst to force the bond between

us. She pushed away to undo her pants, and I pulled her back. The fumes and motion made me nauseous. I prayed I wouldn't ruin this by vomiting.

I finally found my way inside and spread the gasoline. Sunny struck her match and we burned for a full minute before the bus came to a complete and sudden stop. We were launched into the back of the seat in front of us and collapsed to the floor.

Our jester was hopping up and down, and laughing and pointing at us.

"This is that last stop. And you're in luck, there's a motel down around the next corner, so you can get off my fucking bus, and get yourselves a goddamned room."

I got up and zipped up my pants. Sunny held her hands out for me to help her up, still breathing heavily. I stood in front of her while she readjusted.

We bowed to our subjects before getting off the bus, laughing hysterically. When we recovered we walked around the corner to stare across the street at the charcoal of Jeff's motel. And I realized that what I had done was for nothing. I had hoped for this for so long, citing that it would rid me of this shit-hole, but even if I left I didn't have anywhere to go.

As we stood there holding hands, staring, I saw myself in the few remaining embers: I had become the motel; I had become the whores and the drug dealers, selling myself short for an easy way out, because I had no qualities to move me further in life; I had become the Shifty-eyed businessmen, mindlessly going along with whatever I was told; I

As they entered the clouds, the mist thickened quickly around the BT. Through the clear canopy, the pilots could see swirling rotations in the cloud around them. It became strangely quiet. The growling old engine, muffled as if powered back, ran noticeably smoother at a low hum. Going into alert mode, Al and Buddy began to compare observations back and forth, checking the instrumentation. Al told Buddy he was going to drop altitude and begin the turn back while his hand grasped the stick and pressed toward the right. At that instant, both men were squeezed by intense pressure as if in an incredible vacuum, yet the instruments did not reflect what they were feeling. Buddy shouted that altitude must be dropping fast as Al realized he had no control over the plane.

The falling sensation grew stronger; the clouds burst into a brilliant white then began to break apart around them. Just as quickly as it began, their descent rapidly began to slow. The pilots caught glimpses of blue sky, and broke free of the clouds. The sounds and cockpit environment felt as normal as they had the moment before they entered the clouds. Both men stared down, unspeaking; not believing what they saw below them. This was not the dry, winter-browned, grassy acreage surrounding the West Texas airfield. Blue ocean? Green islands and beaches? What was going on?

Al realized he was looking down upon a sight he'd seen many times while stationed to fly missions out of Hickam A.F.B. on Oahu in 1956. It had been only sixteen years prior to his own tour of duty here that the attack on Pearl Harbor, had occurred... his thoughts were shattered by the blast of

As Al and Buddy walked across the wide, grassy quad to the BT, they reflected on an earlier conversation with one of their honored guests. The Pearl Harbor survivor had spoken of things he'd witnessed during the attack. They could only imagine how it was to have been one of the few pilots who managed to take to the air and strike back at the attacking Japanese. Al fired up the BT and slowly taxied out to join 5 other planes rolling out, single file, toward the runway to take off one right after the other.

The group maintained perfect formation during the high-speed pass. They regrouped for the second pass, slowed airspeed, and tightened formation. The command for "Lights on!" was given. Directly over the crowd, the old BT's engine rumbled even louder as Al banked the plane right, up, and toward the west. The rest of the formation slowly continued straight ahead. The sounds of the flight group's engines faded as the mournful sound of Taps filled the air and stirred the hearts of those watching below.

Al leveled off to fly out a bit further before turning back to join the landing group as Buddy called his name through the cockpit intercom. Buddy pointed beyond Al's right shoulder to the silver-green cloud formation that was moving into the path they would take through the turn. They wondered aloud what could cause the odd coloring, but agreed to continue on their flight path and descend through the clouds to turn back to the airfield. Flying through a few clouds was something both had experienced more times than they could count.

had become the ugly shag carpet and tan and forest green wall paper, faded and disgusting; I had become a burnt out shell.

My mom was standing outside with Jeff. She was crying on his shoulder. I felt bad for her. All she had left now was the man she married because she finally realized no one else was coming. She would never forgive me.

My mom raised her head to look at the remains. Her make-up was smeared and made her face look like a painter's palette. She pulled her eyes away from the wreckage and saw us standing across the street.

"It's them!" she said, pointing at us. "They're right there!"

Four police officers turned and charged us. Sunny tugged my arm as she turned to run. I squeezed her hand and didn't move.

"What are you doing?" She asked. "It's time for us to run again."

"I'm sorry, I can't anymore," I said, and let her hand drop. I watched her for a moment, she stared blankly; something had collapsed in her. All she could do was run.

The cops reached me and forced me to my knees. They hit me with their night clubs and handcuffed me. I watched Sunny run, her bright red hair glowed against her dark clothes. She looked back as if to say she'd return, but not until she was ready. Then she faded into a narrow alley and turned a corner.

I awoke and sat up in my bed. The sun was all the way up and lit my room. I got up and walked

outside. I stared at the sun and let its rays wash away the grime of the alleys.

before his thoughts quickly turned to the pre-flight Ewa, southwest of Pearl Harbor. Buddy kept watchful vigil on all sides, encouraging Al as he sped the BT along behind the bombers.

Activity on the airfield below caught their attention. They watched as two American P-40 Tomahawks sped upward from Haleiwa Field, machine guns blazing. Climbing high and fast, each P-40 hit its target. Spiraling pillars of black smoke trailed two bombers as they plummeted into the ocean.

Al and Buddy quickly agreed that there was little they could do in their unarmed aircraft to assist the two pilots who were bravely attacking the Japanese. They could, however, damn well try to create some kind of diversion to give the P-40 pilots a chance against the enemy. The two had to be George Welch and Ken Taylor, the most famous of maybe only twenty pilots who were able to get airborne and strike back during the surprise attack launched by the Japanese.

Al quickly manebriefing. He drove under the interstate overpass and took the road toward the airpark.

The briefing was serious business; professional, quick, and to the point. The experienced flight team would make one high-speed pass over the crowd, circle around to the north, then regroup. During a second, slower pass, Al would break high and right to the west as Taps was played behind the crowd below. The flight commander ended the briefing with the obligatory "Don't do nuthin' dumb," and the men headed out to their planes.

private pilot, and Colonel in the Commemorative Air Force Ghost Squadron. Over the years, he and Mona had enjoyed the close friendship of their C.A.F. family.

Above all else, he valued performing the Missing Man Flyover with his fellow C.A.F. pilots. Each was a seasoned veteran to whom precision formation flight was second nature. Together, they had performed the mission many times over the years to honor those who had passed beyond the sunset. The flight group had grown smaller as cherished, fellow pilots had passed away, yet they performed a reverent, well-executed salute with each mission. Today's annual tribute to Pearl Harbor Survivors should go off without a hitch and this promised to be a most special flight.

Al was designated as Missing man, the pilot who would break formation to represent those who have passed on or "gone west." This, an honor in itself, would be exceptional today, as he would pilot the squadron's prize; the fully restored, WWII vintage, BT-13 trainer, so carefully and meticulously maintained by the squadron. This particular aircraft rolled out of the factory one month prior to the day Pearl Harbor was attacked. Honorary guest, Buddy Clark, would occupy the front seat of the tandem cockpit. Buddy was Al's good friend, a local WWII hero, and former prisoner of war who participated in the destruction of the bridge over the River Kwai.

As his truck rolled to a stop at the end of the loop, Al once again noticed the clouds off to the west. They appeared more defined and an unnatural silver-green. He considered them only a moment



## **OASIS**

*Acrylic on Canvas*  
*Tracy Gand*

## **AISLES OF OPPOR- TUNITY**

Dean Webber

There's a place I can go where everything I need is at my fingertips. Where I can get an oil change, some groceries, and a flat screen TV all in one trip. Where there are always low prices, always. Where the big yellow happy face lives. Yes, my happy place is the power, the glory, and the kingdom of Wal-Mart forever. Amen.

I have discovered that I am a material person. I think my materialism is largely attributed to me being a percussionist. Myself, as well as virtually all other professional percussionists have what is known as a chronic case of GAS. Indeed, we suffer from *gear acquisition syndrome*. Whenever percussionists find something they need, they most certainly will get it and then take pride in it. I think that this feeling of pride in possession is what is at the heart of materialism and therefore is the root cause of all GAS. Just earlier this week I picked out curtains with my wife, bought a flat screen TV, for which I will be paying Bank of America over the next year or so, bought a hardware clip, and several groceries. I take pride in having things that I want and need. However, the best part of this trip was Wal-Mart's low low prices, always. Wal-Mart will never have anything on the shelf that has a price ending in 99. They always end their prices with 88, or some other odd number that gives them the whole twelve cent advantage or more over the competition. With price endings like 88, you know you're getting a better deal. I

## **MISSING MAN MISSION**

Sandy Lane

Where else but in West Texas could you expect to see deep blue skies and nearly 65 degrees on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December? It would be perfect weather for flying a mission in the Pearl Harbor Day Commemoration. Lt. Colonel Allen Bennett, long since retired from a distinguished 21-year career as an Air Force pilot, could see only a few wisps of odd-looking clouds low and off to the west. They would probably dissipate by the time he drove out to the airpark. Al turned away from the glass patio door and set down an empty coffee mug, still warm from the rich brew he had sipped while watching the sunrise. Anticipation, briefings, and practice flights would culminate in today's special events to honor the attending Pearl Harbor survivors, and it was time to get rolling.

He gathered his leather flight jacket, logbooks and itinerary, and said goodbye to Mona, his wife of 53 years. In a couple of hours she, too, would make the 15-minute drive east of their home in south Abilene to Elmdale Airpark. There, she would join other members of the Colonels' Ladies in the Homeplace Hangar Canteen, to greet and serve refreshments to the public and honored guests.

As Al steered his pickup around the sweeping curve of Loop 322, he reflected on the good fortune that had allowed him to spend the last 20 years of retirement as a flight instructor,

## **CREAMER**

*Kayla Brooks*

Cream-colored plastic cups of Coffee Mate creamer stacked on top of each other, still, nearly perfect, as if waiting to be transformed into a piece of modern art at the hands of some want-to-be Picasso art student from New Canyon, Idaho pretending to know depth and pain. Creamer---waiting to be consumed, calling out with the promise of a sweeter sip--- a more enjoyable quench of the day's never-ending thirst.

know that this sounds ridiculous, but I am certainly not the only one who likes a lower price. If two gas stations next to each other have a price difference of 1 cent per gallon, everyone would almost certainly gas up at the cheaper station even though they may only be saving 20 cents or less for a full tank. That, my friends, is the power of low low prices, always.

As I grab my sacks from the cashier, I reflect on the time I spent in the kingdom of Wal-Mart. I reminisce of the wonderful aisles full of wonderful things. I pay my tab and proceed to the exit. I say goodbye to the yellow happy face that reassures me that I've received low low prices, always. I head to my car and think of the next time that I can return to the happy face in the kingdom, the power, and the glory of Wal-Mart forever. Amen.

## **BY ANY MEANS**

Norman Griffin **NECESSARY**

I'm gone still beat my African drum  
And do my African dance  
I'm gone still sing my Negro spirituals  
At every moment of chance  
No matter what happened in that time  
That varies  
This was done  
By any means necessary!

Progression was made in his time  
Even unknown of the what will  
Happen next?  
By any means necessary  
Said Malcolm X

Trying to stay away from the violent  
Way out, putting a plan to format  
To put it in a bag and carry  
It's time to make a stand my people  
No more being startled and scary  
We will back down no further  
By any means necessary!

They call us coon, nigger, gorilla, and boy  
We still sit humble, in silent joy  
Hoping and praying we won't be next to bury  
Because we won't be ran over any longer  
By any means necessary!

And still today in our present time  
We will and must do what is to be done  
By any means, meaning whatever the case

May be, until the battle is won  
Things once dreamed about are now  
Coming into the visionary  
All because we took the stand and attitude  
Of By any means necessary!