Conjurings

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To call or
  bring to mind.
To evoke.
  To imagine.
To picture

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Johnny... Show Her What She’s Won!
By Patrick Harper

I never pictured myself in this position. It was always given to me as an example. I say given. Usually it was screamed out in a fit of rage. They said I never explained anything. They wanted me to “do my job” and “answer their questions.” I was just trying to make them better people. Why doesn’t anyone ever understand that? People always learn best when they are forced to make a decision and then evaluate the consequences. That has always been my theory.

I’m not so sure about it now though. This room is horrid. It’s dark, dank. It smells of something that I can’t quite put my finger on although I’m not sure I really want to. I don’t know. Maybe it’s not as bad as I’m making it out to be. I’m still a little groggy from the chloroform. It knocked me right out. Ha! Well, at least they’re using some of their knowledge. What I am laughing about? This is not funny. I’ve got to get out of here.

But how? I don’t even know where I am, or how I got here. All I have is this stupid note. “Three doors. One right. One choice. No answers. Be prepared.” Signed, “The Lost.” What the hell is that supposed to mean? This is ridiculous. All I want to do is go home. I know how to leave. I can open a damn door. But which one do I choose? They all could be correct, but which one really is the way out? It’s a simple question. Why won’t anyone answer my damn question?!

It’s easy for them to sit there and do this to me. Their life doesn’t depend on this. What do they care if I make a mistake? I DON’T GET A SECOND CHANCE AT THIS YOU IDIOTS!!! There’s no “redo” on a test like this. If I fail I’m done! That’s the end! Don’t you understand that!!!

Oh my God, you do understand that. That’s what this is all about. All I want is answers. That’s all they wanted too. It wasn’t laziness. They were asking so that they could make the right choice. They were just asking me for help. And that’s what I need now. Oh God, why? Why now? Why couldn’t I have seen this before?

So what now? I just choose and hope? Is that it? All I want is some answers!!! What are you trying to do to me?! You want me to choose now? I’m too uneducated to choose. I don’t know what to do. Should I just make a blind choice and think about it later?! That’s it isn’t it. You’re showing me what it’s like. Choose and learn. Decide now and evaluate later... if there is a later. But there isn’t always. Oh God, but if there is, I’ll definitely come out a better person. Christ. Ok, here we go. Uh... door number two.

Haiku
By Matt Clifton

My inspiration
The red, blue and yellow pills
Doctor Mario
No Regrets

By Kyle Amelung

It was Spring Break 2007 and Adam was going to make the most of it. He had been to Florida before, but trips to theme parks with his family wouldn’t even compare to bar-hopping with the guys and picking up girls on the beach. The next six days were going to be nothing less than amazing. Adam planned on partying until the sun started to rise.

During the first night of the trip, Adam and his friends had already been to three bars. As they were walking back to their hotel room, Adam looked up and saw a billboard that read, “Disneyworld: $39.99, all day pass.” Excited and drunk, he pointed at the sign and shouted out, “Let’s go!”

His friends looked at him. “40 bucks?” “That’s a whole night at the bars.” “No way.”

Adam wasn’t going to lose this battle. “Let’s jump the fence then.” His friends looked at him with disbelief. But then again, it was Spring Break. No regrets, right?

Twenty minutes later, the group of five was standing outside of Disneyland, determined to get inside. It was 3AM in the morning though, and all of the rides were shut down, no shows were going on - the park was empty. Of course, they didn’t realize this.

One by one, the guys helped each other jump the fence until four of them were over. The last person left was Adam. As he climbed the fence, he got more and more excited. Just as he got to the top, a bright light suddenly fell upon him. “Hey, get down from there!” he heard.

Adam hopped over, took a quick glance at his friends, and they all started to run. After a few minutes, the tired group stopped and realized they had lost the security guard.

“What now?” one of Adam’s friends asked.

It was about that time that Adam had realized the park was closed. He thought for a second. The whole Disneyworld security staff was probably looking for them. He looked to his left and saw a door that read ‘Costumes and Make-up: Employees Only.’ “We need some disguises,” Adam remarked in his not-so-sober state, and with that, he pushed open the door and walked in.

He quickly threw on a Mickey Mouse costume as his four friends did the same with other Disney characters. The rest of the night was going to be fun – a great start to their Spring Break.

Ohh!

By Andrea Basso

Reigning over earth
All life flows from this great King
He’ll drown in his pride

(Explanation of Ohh:
Ohh=H2O)
Lava Lamps
By Matt Hopkins

It Goes
Up And
Down And
Up a Gain
In Tiny Blips
Blobs Clumps
And Other Things
You Can Stare
For Minutes
And Hours
Maybe A Day
No Wonder
These Things
Caught on
Look There!
It’s happening again!

One Day
By Christine Grogan

I dream
Of the day
That I will
Walk across
That stage
And break
Out of this cage. Working at my desk
I sit, knowing it is worth it. Never thinking
I could achieve so much, I now am starting
To believe. Only three years left until all
My dreams come true, learning things I
Never knew. Now back to work I go
Learning about things I don’t know
And impatiently waiting for the
Next three years to come
So I can be done!
Love at Applebee’s  
By Justin Boudeman

My heart is dancing
to cupid’s song.
To be in her arms,
I so do long.

I pay her a visit,
but only in my dreams.
She would never want me,
so it seems.

At Applebee’s is where
I first saw her.
Ordering a cheeseburger,
and a glass of water.

She looks so beautiful,
dipping her fries in ketchup.
Who am I kidding?
I should just give up.

As I continue to eat,
I spill coke on my pants.
I am so embarrassed,
my heart begins to dance.

But then she comes over,
my heart takes off like a sparrow.
Is that all I had to do,
to hit her with cupid’s arrow?

She helps me clean up,
we’re finally together.
Little did I know,
we would be forever.

Haiku  
By Josh Boudeman

I have but nine toes
The other I left in ‘Nam
Those guys can keep it
Mistake
By Priyanka Patel

Sifting through the different phases of reality was way too creepy for Catherine to digest. Recalling the ambiguous prophecy declared by the Gypsy lady made Catherine’s entire soul shiver. She could picture the tarot card with a hooded black cloaked figure with a scythe pointing at her. According to the Gypsy, this tarot card forecast Catherine’s approaching death, blocked only, more likely delayed, by wearing a deep blue glistening stone amulet, which hung merely by a thin silken black thread. However, Catherine’s unfortunate fate made her reject the offer of buying the amulet because she was thinking of it as a fib to increase the Gypsy’s sales. She and her friends got a good laugh, joking that Catherine was about to drop dead any moment. But Catherine didn’t realize that she would later regret having taken the situation so lightly. The friends ended their night at the school fair by making a new promise to watch the horror play that was in town. Catherine quickly waived her goodbyes in fear of being late for her curfew.

She approached her midnight black, second-hand Corvette, and inserted her cold silvery key into the ignition. She drove absent-mindedly, ignoring the newly featured songs on the radio, thinking about her blind date with Martin the week before, and how romantically it had ended. How soft the dark chocolate ringlets of Martin’s curls felt when they kissed under the mistletoe, but something about his eyes bothered Catherine. They had a look of darkness which envelopes the entire ocean covertly covering its deepened mystery and the plainness of its evil to the sailors at night. But his good nature was all that mattered to Catherine. On her way home, she passed a group of several teenagers, who were raiding the cemetery, presumably playing whose-the-brave-one. Catherine remembered playing the same game except it was stealing the freshly baked bun from Mrs. Brown’s bakery. So much scolding and grounding had resulted when she was caught red-handed.

The hours had somehow moved to midnight, and she was now an hour late for her curfew. She slowed on her loose gravel driveway to hush her rumbling engine, which might wake up her parents. Finding none of the bright halogenated lights twinkling in the three-floored Victorian house, Catherine thanked God that her parents were late from their business party. She hastily locked her precious baby and scurried towards the house. She flung open heavily guarding pine doors, entered the tricky home security code, and dashed up the stairs two at a time. She flipped on her bedroom lights and rushed in the bathroom to change into her blue and yellow polka dotted pajamas. She heard her parents’ Caravan approaching on the loose gravel, and at that moment Catherine leaped onto her fluffy red bedspread and situated herself comfortably between her blood red velvet pillows, and pretended to sleep deeply.

Catherine awoke with someone screaming, only to realize that it was her own scream. Catherine suddenly acknowledged the piercing pain that was radiating from her heel towards her calf. Looking at her heel, she saw a pointed rusty looking thorn in her right heel. Pulling with mighty effort, the thorn broke free from her flesh only to expose warm deep purplish red ooze from her heel. She looked up to scream for her parents, and unexpectedly discovered that she was no longer in her bedroom. Catherine tried to absorb her surrounding and noticed tall rusty, ancient looking shrines. Reading the fading description on one of the shrines, Catherine suddenly realized that these were no shrines but mausoleums. Heavy green moss and wild vines were encircling the mausoleums, which shone brightly under the newly born full moon. Catherine realized that she was in a cemetery as she looked past the mausoleums and saw miles of tombstones with swinging trees in the gentle Atlantic breeze. Delicate magnolia scent was
flowing towards her, and keen curiosity made her wonder how she entered this cemetery. She vaguely remembered having some kind of medical problem. She deeply scanned her brain and produced the answer as sleepwalking; it seemed right to her or how else she would have entered this frightening place in the middle of the night.

She started walking but realized she would have to limp, due the throbbing pain as she placed her heel on the ground. She started limping faster after thinking that the dead might come alive, which caused a burning pain in her neck due to shortness in breath. She suddenly realized that she wasn’t alone. Someone was laughing harshly behind the Sassafras trees. This made Catherine run for her life. It was scary just being alone in the cemetery, but some unknown person in the middle of the night seemed way too eerie for Catherine to investigate. She ran as fast as her injured foot would carry her. As she was running, she realized that she was no longer alone in her life chase. The manly laugh had stopped, and now all she heard was footsteps crunching the decaying leaves and pursuing her. Catherine stopped in her tracks and turned to see her pursuer. It couldn’t be ..................................................

Martin!

His eyes were reflecting a pool of deep darkness that would blow out even the brightest candle. The shiny blue moonlight outlined a beautiful silvery dagger in Martin’s working hands. Catherine started walking backwards at full speed, getting accustomed to the throbbing pain; she didn’t notice the tombstone that had ancient engraving to Father Thomas Gravehall, and tripped backwards and lost control of her balance and went tumbling down the pointy slope, occasionally bending some weeds or memorial flowers. At last, she stopped but was splashed with cold, nerve-shaking water. She sprang up quickly and started sprinting in the ankle deep vein of silvery stream. She seemed to have seen a road towards the moon, and she hurried towards it jumping many tombstones, feeling the cool grass hot under her feet due to the heavy friction. At last, she reached the rough, lonely road, occasionally turning back to see if Martin was still following. She raced in hopes of seeing a car in sight around the curve. Her prayers were fulfilled; there was a Caravan approaching her way. She stood in the centre of the wavy road and started waving her hands at the approaching lights. But the driver of those lights apparently didn’t register her and ran her over with the mighty tires. Something warm was washing over Catherine’s eyes. It was her blood, drooling from her head. Darkness was filling her as she saw two figures approaching her. It seemed like parental figures-----it was indeed her parents. The last she saw were the teary eyes of her parents.

The next morning, Mr. and Mrs. Gravehall found their daughter, Catherine Gravehall, motionless in her bedroom, and she was later pronounced dead by the medical examiner, called in by shaky Mrs. Gravehall. The cause of death was determined to be death caused by shock in her nightmare.

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**Haiku**

*By Maulik Patel*

This haiku will melt
probably thinking of what???
M & M’s by now.

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6
School Days
By Danielle Ebert

After the last class was over, Tiffany hurried to her apartment where she finished packing her bags. She met all her friends down in the lobby of the apartment complex and all three of them headed off to the airport for their spring break trip. Cancun, Mexico was their destination. Once they got there they met tons of new people. At their hotel there was a group of guys, one of which Tiffany was particularly attracted to. Nick was his name, and the two hit it right off. They enjoyed each other’s company throughout the rest of the trip. They exchanged phone numbers, but they both knew that they would probably never see each other again since they lived in different states.

Once Tiffany returned home, her father got word that they he was being transferred to a new base, which meant that they were going to be moving. Tiffany hated that part of being a military family. It always made her so nervous to be the new girl in school again. But the only thing that eased her nerves was the fact that she was always a straight A student and never struggled in school. As she walked the halls of her new school, she spotted a familiar face. “Nick?” she said quietly enough so if it wasn’t him no one would know she even said anything. He glanced over.

“Tiffany? What are you doing here?” he replied.

She explained the move her family had to make and then realized the time. “Well, I have to get going to AP Calc; otherwise I’ll be late and get a bad seat! So, see ya around!” she said as she walked off.

As Nick returned to his group of pals, they asked who she was. “Oh, just some girl who couldn’t find her way to Calculus,” Nick said.

“Man is she a nerd or what,” his friend asked. “Calculus!” They all laughed.

“Yeah!” Nick muttered as he laughed along.

Tiffany tried to get Nick’s attention multiple times after that, but he just ignored her. Finally she gave up on him and started to date other guys. Day after day, Nick became more and more jealous as he saw Tiffany with other guys. Tiffany didn’t feel right either. All she could think about was Nick. So one day she decided to attempt one last time and ask Nick out to the movies or something non school related so they could be together by themselves without his friends around. Nick gladly said he would take her out that Friday and apologized for ignoring her all those times. He had to get past what his friends thought of him for going out with the smart girl.

Limerick
By Tanya Draucker

There once was a girl named Sue.
She had nothing to do.
Outside there was rain.
She could not refrain.
She then ended up with the flu.
A World of Lively-Glowing Dots
By Jessica Seals

The trees were blowing in the wind as the rain grabbed to hold on to the leaves. The sun had just disappeared as the darkest black took over the sky. It had rained earlier that day making the ground very soft. The moon was no where to be found because the dark and gloomy clouds ruled the sky. There were lots of children out on such a night. There were witches, ghosts, scary creatures, super heroes, and many more out roaming the earth.

It was Halloween and Jeremy was filled with excitement to go trick-or-treating. He knew he could beat his annual recorded of filling two and a half pillowcases with treats. This was the first year that he might have a chance of winning the argument to go trick-or-treating by himself. He had thought about this for almost three months. He would tell his parents he was going into the fifth grade and no other kid’s parent was going to baby sit them. He was tired of being treated like a child. He was almost eleven years old. It was finally time for him to get some responsibility.

Jeremy’s parents thought long and hard about him being alone at night. He was only walking around his subdivision and there were other parents out. The street lights would be on and Jeremy’s dad could give Jeremy his cell phone to keep with him in case of an emergency. Jeremy’s mom was worried that he would get scared and there would be no one with him.

Jeremy sat there like any other fifth grader. He sat in the blue chair with his arms folded, rolling his eyes and shaking his head. He couldn’t believe his mom even said that. He was almost eleven and was not a baby. He finally convinced his mom to let him go and that he was not going to get scared. Plus it would give her the extra time she had been nagging for. All she has wanted to do was to finish painting the new room for the newest addition to the family. This would work out for the both of them.

Jeremy ran to his room to get his pillowcases and was off to beat his record. He walked along the glistening roads to dozens of houses. He was so ecstatic to see the Hayes’s house. Every year kids lined up three houses down just to see this house. It is filled with scary creatures and a different maze each year. In years past his mother would only let him look at the house as they walked by. According to her he was too young and would get scared. This year was different. He was going to prove to her that he would not get scared. It was only a house. How scary could it be?

He had been out for almost two hours and had filled two whole pillow cases. He knew he could fill the third pillow case easily and beat his annual Halloween record. Three blocks were still ahead of him and the Hayes’s house was on the next street. He could not wait to see what the house looked like. Each year there is always the tunnel of lights filled with spiders, the graveyard, the ghost tree, and the rest is always new and scary. He thought about skipping the street he was on to get to the scariest house faster but remembered he wanted to beat his record.

He hurried along to each house on that street.

It was finally time. He could see the line of all the children smiling with delight waiting to approach the house. He stood there anxiously watching children running from the house screaming and crying. He thought those kids were a bunch of babies and he could not believe that they were his own age. He knew he was not a baby and would show it to everyone by acting tough. He stood in line for ten minutes imagining what he was about to see. He thought it was going to be overrated but couldn’t wait to talk about it tomorrow at school with all of his
friends. The line was moving pretty fast. He was almost able to see the house. It was so close. He couldn’t wait any longer. It was finally time.

The dark and cold night made the house even scarier. There was a six-foot blood-sucking spider on top of the house with big red eyes beaming down at any sole that passed. The tunnel leading to the house was just as scary as Jeremy remembered. There were spiders everywhere of all different sizes. Black lights showed the way to the witch’s room. Here is where the children got the treats. This year glow bracelets and sticks were given out along with the best candy. Jeremy was happy with what he got and couldn’t believe any one got scared. He did not realize that he had not seen the entire house. This was just the beginning.

Next was the ghost tree just liked he had always remembered it. The branches were filled with lots of ghosts that glided through the air. He got goose-bumps as a ghost flew right over his head. He moved on to the pumpkin patch. It was filled with all different sizes of pumpkins. Some were craved and some were as orange as the leaves on the tree in his front yard. There was a ten foot pumpkin with flashing blue and black lights inside of it. This was not scary at all so he went to the grave yard. Here were the tombstones of the people who lived there. He could hear the voice of a little girl crying for help. He began to walk closer to the tombstone as he saw a girl’s face covered in blood. He quickly turned away to see the jail. It was next to the skull fence lined with human skulls. The fence was leading the way to the final part of the yard which was supposed to be the scariest part.

A line of children waited to see what was in this secluded part. Only one child was allowed in at a time. Jeremy waited patiently for his turn. Jeremy entered and saw all different colored dots. The room was completely black and he began to walk very slowly. He took one step at a time as he began to breathe faster and faster. For some reason his heart began to beat faster and faster. The bright lively colors began to move all around. He started running in circles not knowing where to go next. The dots were coming closer and closer as he tried to escape. Then the dots stopped. He stood there frozen like a deer in head lights. He didn’t know what to do. He wished he had let his mother take him so she wouldn’t have allowed him to come close to this house. He was terrified and wanted to call his dad for help but didn’t want to let them know they were right. All he wanted was to be out of this room.

He started to walk to his right and stopped dead in his tracks when he heard a chainsaw. His eyes grew bigger and bigger as a man dressed in old torn clothes approach him with a chainsaw. The man had blood dripping off him and was beginning to laugh. Jeremy was so scared he was beginning to shake. He did not know where to turn. He wanted his parents. The lively-glowing colored dots were beginning to surround him as he tried to escape the man with the chainsaw. He almost began to cry when he saw a little slither of light. He ran straight toward it and saw the non-scary pumpkin patch. He was free and made it out of the dot room alive.

He saw the line of children waiting in excitement to see the house. He knew no one could imagine the horror he or she was about to face. He knew for once his parents were right and that he should have paid attention to them. He didn’t reach his goal of collecting enough treats to fill three pillowcases. He did not finish the rest of the houses. He ran straight home to his parents. He began to think of ways to convince his parents that he didn’t get scared and was old enough to do this on his own.

He reached his little brown house that had the pumpkin on the front porch that he had craved earlier that week. He walked in the big wooden door after he finally caught his breath and heart rate was back to normal. His parents were sitting in the dark-blue leather couch waiting for him to arrive. They were a little surprised to see him home so early. His dad had noticed that he
had barely filled his third pillowcase and told him there was always next year. Jeremy gave his mom and dad a hug and started heading toward his room.

His mother stopped him and told him to look at the new room which she had finished painting. He stopped and went back to look at the room that was for his new baby sister. As he opened the door he saw a nice little room perfect for a baby girl. There was a changing area with a dresser on the right side of the room and the baby carriage on the left. The walls were freshly painted with a pink rose color. There were polka-dots of every color all around the room. It was a very nice and warm room. He began to walk out as his mom yelled, telling him to turn off the lights to see what little special touch she left. He walked toward the light switch with a weird look on his face. As he shut the light off the room was filled with a dark cloud and glowing dots appeared everywhere. He had an overwhelming sense of deja vu. He ran out of the room right into his mom. His face was as white as a cotton ball as he turned away and headed straight to his room. He was never going to escape the lively-glowing dots.

Monologue

By Brian Scholfield

“I am gone, gone from the pain and suffering
No longer the lie that was is
And she is hers while he is his.
The fruit gone rotten
Reeks no more of the stench
Of broken heartedness

Left for superior in her eyes
But I say No!!
I will not lay lifeless on the ground
While this pony gallops across my field

No, I say I will have my revenge
Be it peaceful wishing
Or malicious vengeance
Time will tell

But I tell he, I pray he
Heed my warning as veracious
For he knows not where the arrow
That rips through the heart finally lands.”
In My Dreams

By Keri Henry

I had him pictured in my dreams
He was tall and handsome
He was kind and loving
He was fun and giving

Searching for my dream come true
I found some who fell way short
I began to think my dream was unreal
When relationships would fail

When that phone call came
I was undoubtedly unsure
When my friend said
Come meet your future husband

I sought advice and thought it through
I went to the event, it wouldn’t hurt
I walked in to meet him
I got butterflies when our eyes met

He asked if he could call me
I wondered what would come of it
Two days later my phone rang
We made a date

Days and months went by
We became inseparable
Eleven months later
He popped the question

Five months later we were wed
Life since has been pure bliss
Each day I love him more
Sometimes I can’t believe he is mine

So believe it or not
The Lord arranged our meeting
Through prayer and trust
My dream came true
Caffeine is Always the Answer

By Tracey Hysong

I was okay at the beginning of class. Sure, I didn’t want to listen to Dr. Frazier, but I had no option. My grade was suffering because I had already skipped class several times. The few times that I had attended class, I had fallen asleep, so I decided to go into class with a plan this time. Caffeine is always the answer, so I downed two 24 ounce Mountain Dews thirty minutes before class. When I took a seat in the lecture hall and got out my paper to take notes, I was feeling great. I actually had energy and was somewhat ready to learn. For the first twenty minutes I listened attentively to Dr. Frazier. I was right; caffeine is the answer.

Then it hit me. I started feeling pressure on my bladder, and discomfort came over me. Caffeine might be the answer, but I realized that it probably would have produced the best results had I ingested it in moderation. After about another ten minutes I was sweating, and side splitting cramps would occasionally pound me in the side. I could not comprehend what Dr. Frazier was saying at all at this point. I could hear him speaking, but he was definitely not making sense. I knew that we wouldn’t be getting a break for another thirty minutes, and that made me really uneasy. No way was I going to be able to hold it in that long.

Trying to listen to Dr. Frazier only made the situation worse, as I was not interested whatsoever in what he was saying. I tried to get my mind off of the painstaking pressure on my bladder by thinking about my plans for the weekend. I thought about how I was going whitewater rafting; that really didn’t help matters. It only made me have to pee more, made me wish that I was anywhere but there so I could relieve myself. Running these thoughts through my head helped me get through another five minutes of class, but I still had twenty-five minutes of pain to suffer through. I had solved my problem in that I wasn’t about to fall asleep, but I had created quite a dilemma by downing those sodas.

I kept glancing at the clock, and it was like its hands weren’t moving. The sweating, cramps, and pain were nearly unbearable now, and then Dr. Frazier started talking about diuretics. Great. I didn’t need a water pill, and I really didn’t need to hear about one, either. I could go pee any time now. I just couldn’t take the pain anymore. I had to do something. After weighing my consequences and realizing that missing a few minutes or even ten (because at this point I thought my bathroom break could take that long) would serve me better since I couldn’t concentrate anyway. I jumped out of my seat and sprinted to the nearest bathroom. There were three urinals, and only the middle one was open, but I didn’t care. I dropped my pants and did what had to be done. I was finally relieved.

I returned to class and everybody stared when I entered. I couldn’t have cared less. I took a seat and started to listen, but I knew that wouldn’t last long. I was sure I would fall asleep now that I was comfortable again. Sure enough, in a few minutes I was dozing. After class was dismissed I thought over what happened. I now understood that caffeine could be the answer, but only in moderation.
Fire in the Tree

By Amanda Tallarito

Long day! That is how we refer to that adventurous day back in 1996. Windy, but still heated by the gracious sun. It was a torturous day of second grade, filled with timetables and cursive practice. Oh, how I thought the day would never end. Soon, though, it did.

My mom was home with rice crispies and warm soup for an after-school snack. She told me to start on my homework so that she could surprise me after soccer practice. So, I took out my cursive book and got to it. Soon, it was time to leave for soccer.

Practice went by fast, but this time faster because I was occupied with what the surprise could be. My mom picked me up, and I was so excited about the surprise. My sister was in the front seat, and I jumped in the back.

"Where are we going?" I asked.
"We'll soon see," my mom replied.
This was so exciting I did not know what to expect.

We traveled down Arlington Heights Road, while anticipation lingered over all of us. I was like a child at Christmas, waiting to open my “presents.” This anticipation was soon interrupted when I saw something that looked like it would be in a movie.

“Look over there,” I exclaimed.
My mom and sister turned their heads side to side to see what I was talking about.

“Where?” my mom finally asked.

“Over there, turn right!” I answered.

There were enormous fireballs falling from a tree. Electrical wires intersected the tree. Under the wires was someone’s house, and the fireballs were dropping closer and closer to the car that rested in the driveway.

With the sights we had just witnessed, the thought of the surprise slipped to the back of our minds. My mom stopped the car so that I could jump out.

“Amanda, hurry and go tell the owner;” my mom said as I was already at her front door.

Once I got to the front door, I was met with a middle-aged woman on her phone. All I had to do was point to the tree and she hung up the phone. I believe she was in shock because she didn’t say thank you or show any sort of gratitude. She simply replied with “okay.”

It hurt my feelings a bit. I was a second grader ready to get a surprise, but instead I thought about someone else. I knew that the fire could have caught on to her house and she could have been injured. I knew in my heart I had done a good deed and it didn’t matter how she reacted to my help.

I jumped back in the car and we continued down Arlington Heights Road. We pulled into a parking lot, and we finally uncovered our surprise. It was a dinner at Garibaldi’s. This was one of my sister’s and my favorite restaurants. What an extremely good surprise, especially after our little adventure on the way.

Our dinner conversation was full of excitement. We wondered if the woman called for help. Also, we thought about how many people saw what I did and didn’t stop to help. After dinner we drove home the same way. My mom slowed down as we approached the street with the fire. There were several fire trucks parked up and down the street. The fire was out! All of our questions were answered.
How the Beaver Became the Daddy of the Duck Billed Platypus
By Matthew Clifton

Berry was a big brown bucktooth beaver.
His lady didn't like him so he decided to leave her.
Lonely he left looking for love, oh what luck!
In only a day he discovered Daisy the duck.
She told him that she thought he had terrific teeth.
He wasn't rejected, but respected, to his relief.
Berry said back that she had a big beautiful bill.
When asked to wear his wedding ring, she will.
The couple was curious if they could have a kid,
until one day Daisy's egg hatched and they did.
With his fuzzy frame and her funny face and feet,
the duckbilled platypus is the strangest animal you'll meet.
You
By Kathleen Haight

You are cold, but not ice.
You are a rock, but not stone.
You are alive, but just barely,
A creature better off alone.
You are brave, but not courageous.
You’re a face without a name.
You are a dream, but not an action,
A fire with no flame.
You’re a body without a soul.
You are water, but not blood.
You are a rose not yet in bloom,
A light, but not the sun.
You are gray, but not silver.
You are strong, but not rough.
You are good, but not perfect,
And you are close enough.

Life
By Adam So

Do not live on the sidelines as a spectator through life
Rather live for every moment as if it was the last you were given
For too much time is wasted addressing the “what ifs” and “buts”
Because what is done has already occurred, so don’t look back but ahead
If you ponder every mistake inside of your head
All the wrong words, answers, or actions
Will not change no matter how many times you relive them
So instead focus on what’s coming ahead
Because nothing in the life is easy to obtain
Frankly if it was, then it wasn’t worth having
Be ready to stumble and receive a licking
Just make sure you pick yourself up after receiving
The obstacles thrown at you in every direction
Don’t ever take no for an answer
Or give up your ambitions for that matter
If you believe, then that’s enough to get started
Persistence and dedications should throw you in the right direction
You set the pace in the life that you’re in
So make the right decisions in this world you exist
The Crash

By Matt Hopkins

It was morning, or so it seemed. I awoke from what I thought at first was a peaceful nap to the scene of an Airplane Crash. The ground around me seemed to be stained with a dried reddish black pool of blood. I was near a tree and reached towards the trunk to lift myself off the ground—A mistake, I learned, as my arm seemed to have learned how to make a new angle with itself. Luckily, my other arm was good, but I still didn’t know about my legs.

With my mobile arm, I reached into my front pocket and pulled out what I could—An airline ticket and a few of those old silver dollars that I always seemed to get when I flew. That seemed to explain some of this blood and broken limbs.

Within a few minutes, my vision began to come more and more into focus and I noticed some movement around the airplane—I wasn’t the only survivor. I tried to wave my able arm around and attract someone’s attention, but it seemed to move more like a swaying branch than a flailing arm. I tried to shout—all that came out was a whispered “help…”

Another idea came to me: I could roll over to the people I saw in the distance. I made sure to lay flat on my back and began to roll. After a few seconds, I began to feel some horrible pains in my arms and legs, but I kept rolling until I got close to the people I saw.

Upon closer inspection, the people I saw were all wearing the same uniform—Something Airlines. As soon as they saw me, they made gestures to the people wearing the white coats. In an instant, it seemed, I was whisked away to a hospital.

After a few days, some people brought a package into the hospital room—it was my luggage from the flight. A mass of documents and letters suddenly reminded me of why I was flying in the first place. There was something I was supposed to do!

A week later, when I was able to at least get around somewhat, I went to the central offices of the airport I flew into. I rang the bell at the front counter and introduced myself. “Hello, I am The Airline Safety Inspector assigned to this airport; you must pardon me for being a week late…”

A Burst of Inspiration

By Pam Kaenkumchorn

Alive and unveiling
A thrust of warmth into the sunlight,
Thriving and full-grown.
A completeness of concept,
Beyond all conception.
The abstraction of knowledge,
Before us born alive.
Cardinals Fan  
*By Jessica Laidlaw*

On Opening Day of 2006,  
It was time for a Cardinal fix.

We had waited all winter for the beginner,  
And with Carpenter on the mound, we heard “That’s a Winner!”

The stadium stood tall, shiny, and new,  
The temperature was perfect and the sky was blue.

We all knew it would be a season to remember,  
But we didn’t know our Cards would still be playing strong in September.

Central Division Champs, National League too,  
Playing hard because they had something to prove.

Straight to the World Series, raring to go,  
Bring it on Detroit, you can’t stop our flow!

Detroit tried cheating and had errors to boot,  
The stands were full of Cards fans there to root!

The Cards played their hearts out and took it all,  
Ending it with a World Series parade in the fall.

Now it’s April and the rings of rubies and diamonds shine bright,  
Will the Cards have the stuff for another World Series flight?

Mc Donald’s  
*By Jeremy Hunt*

Mountain Dew or Mellow Yellow?  
Asked a kind and gentle fellow  
Do I in fact want fries with that?  
Who knows, the sky’s the limit  
It’s a dollar extra value meal  
No matter what you do it’s still a deal.
Sixty or Twenty?
*By John Miller*

Wake up early
Waste a day
Walk in circles
Claim you pay

One day,
One week,
One year,
One Life...

Freedom is not cheap
No matter,
Time is money

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The Decision
*By Chase Pickering*

Hoy! Let us leave this Time and Place,
Travel from your father, who would erase
Our love with the flat tip of a pencil.

Though, through Joshua’s grace,
We have all day to waste,
Should still we make haste
Before the hounds are let loose to race.

The love we share
Is a double edged sword.
Should we stay or should we go?
Either way, will we be brought closer
Together, as we are torn apart?

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Haiku
*By Courtney Strodtman*

Freezing to the bone
Winter is never ending
I hate cold weather.
“Sophia Michelle”  
_by_ Kaitlen R. Wilcoxen

You are so little  
But such a big part  
Such a big part  
Of my now broken heart

I see you in your bed  
Just as little as can be  
But wondering “Oh Lord, why oh why  
It had to be me”

I kiss you good morning  
And pray you good night  
And I wish you shall sleep  
Without a fright

I just got news  
That you’ll soon be with Jesus  
But please, oh please  
I don’t want you to leave us

I love you so much  
With all of my heart  
I love you so much  
We will never part

You are so little  
But such a big part  
Such of big part  
Of my now broken heart

*In memory of Sophia Michelle Stark

War  
_by_ Heidi Wang

The water flowing  
Bodies are floating downstream  
War has just begun.
Clean Up on Aisle Six
By Nicholas Goulden

One fateful Thursday night, just as the clock struck 11, Rebekkah burst through the door of her local Shop & Save grocery store. She was in a hurry to get home, coming from a social gathering with her close friends at Steak n’ Shake. She had one mission on her mind: pick up a fresh set of Huggies diapers for her toddler son William. Her usual gentle and kind eyes were now smoldering flames of urgency and her thin lips were pressed tight, making angry little dimples stand out in her plump cheeks.

Yes, Rebekkah was angry. No, not angry, she was infuriated. Her loafing ape of a husband had called while she was giggling over cheese fries with her friends, to inform her that her son William had ‘pooped himself’ and that they were fresh out of diapers. He was too busy playing World of Warcraft on the computer to go out and fetch them himself. Too busy even to clean up William, who was forced to sit in his squishy mess until she arrived home with the Huggies.

“Okay, Diapers—Aisle 5—let’s go!” she thought to herself and then hurled herself towards the aisle. She was about ready to storm down the aisle when she heard a quiet whimpering sound coming from the next aisle. Curiosity got the better of her and she stepped over to look down Aisle 6. It was there that she spotted a little girl of about 8 years old quietly sobbing. Tears streamed down from her big blue eyes, trickling over her sweet and innocent face. Even her lush brown ponytail seemed to be in distress, twisted in disarray by the girl’s anxious tugging at it. The pitiful sight of the weeping girl overpowered Rebekkah, filling her kind heart to the brim with compassion; she suddenly had the maternal urge to help this poor little girl.

“Hey there, don’t cry, what’s your name?” Rebekkah asked as she approached.
“I-La-Lucy,” the girl quietly stuttered out between sobs.
“Where are your parents?” Rebekkah inquired.
After a long pause, Lucy finally whimpered out, “I-I-I don’t know. Mommy was right in front of me and now she’s gone!”

“There, there. Everything will be alright—let’s go find your mother,” Rebekkah cooed. Lucy nodded, wiped away the tears from her eyes, and took hold of Rebekkah’s outstretched hand. Rebekkah helped Lucy to her feet and then they started making their way to the front of the store. As they emerged from the aisle, a frantic woman popped around aisle 15. She desperately looked around, surveying everything with frenzied scrutiny; her eyes came to rest on Rebekkah leading Lucy by the hand. The bewildered lady cried out in relief and animatedly rushed towards them, abandoning her cart full of groceries.

“Lucy! There you are! You had me worried sick!” The woman exclaimed to her daughter; then turning to Rebekkah she added, “Thank you so much! I thought that she was right behind me and the next thing I know she was gone! I was so worried! Thank you for helping me find her!”

Rebekkah, knowing herself what it is like to have a child, empathetically responded, “I have a little one myself, though he’s not quiet yet old enough to wander off on me, I can only imagine the distress it must have caused you.”

They then spoke a few minutes more, after which Rebekkah found herself filled with an enormous sense of well being. In fact, she was so happy that she absentmindedly left the store, completely forgetting to pick up young William’s Huggies. Poor William.
Tomorrow
By Dhara Patel

Maybe tomorrow I'll work up courage.
Maybe tomorrow I won't be afraid.
Maybe tomorrow I'll tell the truth.
Then will this sick feeling go away?

Maybe tomorrow he'll see my love
and all the feelings that I hide.
Maybe tomorrow I won't have to pretend
that his words don't hurt deep inside.

Maybe tomorrow he'll look at me
lovingly and with care.
And maybe tomorrow I can tell him
How much I miss him when he's not there.

Maybe tomorrow I'll stop trying to fool myself
into thinking that this will happen.
Because every time I do that
my heart is a little more sad.

A Walk in Her Shoes
By Anica Bailey

Shoes,
those heels
of envy. Flip-
flops and platforms
that honest dollar spent.
I'm that ache in your foot.
I'm the reason you work more.
I'm the product of shopping therapy.
I'm the Manolo, the one excuse for walking.
On the court
By Chris LaFleur

Hey pass me the ball… (cheers)
   Nice shot
Defense
Pick him up
   I got him
Help
Help
He is driving
Block
Same team,
   same team
Slow it down, you got time
Look for the open man
   Dump it low
Pass it
   Jake is open
Whistle
Nice play
   Hit those free throws
There is only 40 seconds left
   We need these points… (cheers X2)
Box out
   Nice job
Nice shot
I got ball…

Ripples
By Kristine Kang

Walking alone along a cool, calm stream,
Soothed by the gentle waters as they flow.
Everything so peaceful, just like a dream,
   Gazing at the sun and its morning glow.
   Quietly a brisk breeze rustles a leaf,
   Causing a single small raindrop to fall.
Making a sound for a moment so brief,
   And making a disturbance, very small.
I notice the ripples one drop has made,
Starting small but each circle around grows.
   Slowly vanishing as it starts to fade,
The surface calms and my reflection shows.
   Whether big or small, good or bad to me,
   All choices affect others like I see.
I Can’t Seem to Let You Go
By Valerie Alstat

I found a love, fresh and new.
So many years I’ve known.
I never meant to hurt you.

When we first met, my shirt was blue.
You were nervous in your tone.
I found a love, fresh and new

A year and the breakup was overdue.
I felt mature and grown.
I never meant to hurt you.

I forgave, and you forgave too.
We talk all the time on the phone.
I found a love fresh and new.

I can’t commit to anyone soon.
Again you are alone.
I never meant to hurt you.

I want to be together. Do you want me too?
Perhaps we can be on our own.
I found a love fresh and new.
I never meant to hurt you.

A Dog
By Tanya Draucker

There once was a dog that died.
He was different because of what he would hide.
He chewed on a diary.
His devoted owner was fiery.
A large diamond he swallowed.
The vet the owner dialed.
The doctor did diagnose
A developing diet that must draw close.
Unfortunately it was too late.
He lived to the age of eight.
Fear
_By Derek Ray_

I see a world full of hatred and doubt,
Of death and worry and anger and strife.
The world hides in complete darkness throughout,
Like a child under bedcovers at night.

People hissing, children missing, and he
Comes at night, you’re gone, your wife he does rape.
She’s crying alone, the kids don’t know. She
Makes two T’s, her final wish, the ending shape.

And the fear starts to creep, a million creeps,
Small and insidious beneath the skin,
Insects scurrying so you cannot sleep,
It gets in under your eyelids, grows within.

We need to change; we need to find a way,
If not, please be swift O Death, don’t delay.

Photographing War
_By Patrick Boland_

We walked away from evil
While photographing war
To imprint the minds of widows
And break down the prison door
We won’t succumb, until they perish
    Rise again
    For war
    For fearing
When darkness controls the faith
For freedom replenished
Why have we given up?
    Heaven is hypnotized
On the backs of angels that will fail
But we won’t remember
    The way they died
As we prepare to die
When the sky turns red
We’re all victims of lies
    As we prepare to die
Life
By Manish Patel

Morning sun and the birds chirping I realize
As I laid in this neatly made bed,
This is the life I fantasize.

Prompt breakfast at nine to my surprise.
It’s continental with a side of cake.
Morning sun and the birds chirping I realize.

Mom walks in and looks at her prize,
Number one daughter turned thirteen,
This is the life I fantasize.

Slow to get up, I came to a rise,
We embraced with hands and smiles.
Morning sun and birds chirping I realize.

I know I was forgiven for all my lies,
Matured into a teen at last.
This is the life I fantasize.

Pulling away, tears roll down her face
I already knew the cancer would metastasize
Morning sun with birds chirping I realize,
This is not the life I fantasize.

Murphy’s Law
By Matt Hopkins

So here we are
Technology has advanced
And hopefully other things as well
Now, what happens when we make
An Enemy with more than just guns
Surely, there would be no
M Haste to use such W
U Things of A
RPHY L
Possible
Apocalyptic
Power from the Sky
Surely Things could be resolved
Seriously, What’s the worst that could happen?
I Think I’ll Start Running
By Ashley Launhardt

If you can’t look back
And you can’t move ahead,
It’s a stalemate, we’ve nowhere to go.
But move an inch over
You are bound to notice
All the doorways you once couldn’t see.
The past seems a closed door,
The future, wide-open spaces
That paralyze you with fear and uncertainty
And below you?
   Down,
   Down,
   Down...

            So far below you is that cold gravel road
            You’ll get caught in the flow
            Lost up ahead
            You once asked me to save you
            So I think I’ll start running.

Do you ever wonder who else will follow?
Have you seen what you’ve done to yourself?
It all seems a dream,

            A big backward scene.
            Now tell me, what is it you are so afraid of?
            We’ve all done the dance where there were no planned moves
            Perhaps you missed the stanza
            Where the world doesn’t end with one step out of line-

Or haven’t you noticed?
There is no such thing as a line.
We all move our own ways, make our own choices
Life’s a wandering path, dear, you must have noticed
That if life’s a stalemate, we’re not glued to this place- the only way to escape is to fly

            Are you ready?

Haiku
By Anna Johnson

Sociology
The class that makes my head hurt
I hope I do well.
Notice
By Kathleen Haight

Her eyes are simply barren,
Abandoned by all feeling.
They are left dry, cracked, and withered,
After all of her weeping.
The darkness and shadows beneath them,
Indicate that on sleep, she does not depend.
The long, lonely nights,
In which insomnia is her only friend.
As I watch, her lips begin to tremble,
A sign of weakness at last shines through.
A tear streams down her face,
A marvel, long overdue.
The wrinkles along her forehead,
Are far too defined.
This look upon this face,
Like a soldier left behind.
And as I sit here and notice,
All these imperfections,
I slowly begin to realize,
I'm studying my own reflection.

Fiendish Nature
By Chase Pickering

They say, “The black daunting
Face of the Night Rider
 Strikes fear across all the land.
His cold wring’d hands
Are only tender to pyres.
And as the flesh melts away,
The thick stench doth sway,
And seems to ensnare itself.”

As I sit idly by, watching all this transpire,
My only comfort is the stale bitter fire;
Crackling, sputtering and leaving naught but the wire.
Sally's Dilemma
By Tanya Draucker

There was a knock at the front door. Sally, who just got home from work, went to find out who was there. When she opened the door, a short woman who was around fifty years old was standing there tapping her foot while holding a gun. Startled, Sally asked her if she wanted money.

“No,” the lady answered in a high pitched voice, “you stole my life and I want it back.” Confused, Sally stated that she had no idea what the lady was talking about. The lady looked nothing like Sally. The lady was wearing huge black shoes that were three sizes too big and square glasses that made her eyes look like an owl’s eyes. She had bright red hair and a long crooked nose. Sally was completely opposite from the lady. Sally was tall and did not even wear glasses. She had blond hair and a paler complexion than the old lady.

The lady stood there for a while before stating, “You know exactly what I am talking about. You should be ashamed of yourself missy.”

“How did I steal your life?” Sally asked.

“You know exactly how you stole my life, Brenda,” the lady stated in a screeching manner.

Suddenly Sally realized something. Her neighbor’s name was Brenda, and she had bright red hair and wore huge square glasses.

“I think you have the wrong house,” Sally told the lady, “My name is Sally.”

The old lady pulled out a matted up piece of paper. She squinted and read “1924 Wildhorse Road” as she looked at Sally’s house, which stated “1923 Wildhorse Road.” Thoroughly embarrassed, the lady spattered, “oh, well, have a nice night,” as she slowly turned around and walked off towards the house where Brenda lived.

Impatience
By LR

I wait impatiently, fidgeting for what seems like decades.
I anticipate the defining moment in which I may just stumble upon serenity.
If I could but free myself from these constraints that confine this heavy heart,
And let this fall from my hands.

A Discouraging Sport
By Tracey Hysong

Golf: a mystery
That can’t be solved, yet it's a
Part of history.
Recess
By Kaitlin McCosh

I watch the school-ground, full of children at play. A group of girls sing a little song while two jump rope together. Some smaller children run-by, in a frenzied game of tag. The monitors walk the grounds. They scold a group of boys who laugh and tease an underclassman, warning that they will later talk.

Two boys sit atop the jungle-gym and talk of their favorite athletes. Beneath them play smaller children, too scared to climb, so they laugh and pretend that they would rather jump through the bars. Older girls slowly walk by boys, wanting attention. The oblivious boys begin to run.

A race begins and several children run. By-standers lazily watch the race and talk of who will win. The monitors walk up to a crying girl, who has fallen while at play. Nearby, more daring children jump from swings, landing on grass with an excited laugh.

A group of children giggle and laugh as a monitor chases away a dog. She runs to shoo him away. The children jump up and down in excitement as they talk of the dog who quickly returns, wanting to play. The unknowing monitor simply continues to walk.

I smile at children’s excited laughter as I stand and begin my walk. Through my mind old memories run. I see myself at that age, out on the playground. My favorite was to jump rope. Then sit with my friends and talk.

The bell rings and the children talk of how they wish to stay out. They laugh at what all occurred, they jump up, and ever so slowly begin to walk toward the building. No more play time today. All wish to turn and run.
Coming “Home”  
*By Valerie Alstat*

He leaves his wife at home today.  
The Newlyweds so pure.  
And off he goes so far away,  
To fight a stupid war.

Hold me dear, we can work through this.  
You’re safe now and at home.”  
“I’m in the states and here with you,  
Why do I feel alone?”

For months he’s gone, ‘till he comes home.  
Vacation of two weeks.  
It’s better than none, for his bride.  
“Bye,” a kiss on the cheek.

He grows lonely and misses her.  
“I’m lonely too” she writes.  
“Distance is slowly killing me.  
I want you here tonight.”

A bomb explodes, he’s lost a leg.  
Home he can finally go.  
Things are different when he returns.  
It’s been a year or so.

Baby things cover the carpet.  
His wife looks up with tears.  
“I’m sorry it happened,  
You have been gone over a year.”  
“You look at me with tear streaked face  
How was it hard for you?  
I know it’s been such a long time.  
But I was lonely too.

And here you sit and tell me that  
This child isn’t mine.  
I thought of you day in, day out.  
With other men you dine.

I was faithful the entire time,  
You couldn’t wait that long.  
Did you forget our wedding vows?  
And dancing to our song?”

“I remember our song and vows,  
I love you just the same.  
One foolish night of missing you,  
I know that I’m to blame.
Summer
By Danielle Ebert

Summer is almost here
And I just can’t wait,
Bringing out the flip flops,
Shorts, and roller skates.

Once school is out,
I’ll get to leave this desk,
Throw out all the books,
And take my last test.

My professor is excited
About being done,
He counts down days
And even the time for fun.

Once summer hits,
The real fun begins,
I can practice my kicks
And count up my wins.

I can also play catch,
At my favorite park,
And run around the track
Until it gets dark.

But the #1 activity
I love most of all
Is jumping into the sand
To play beach volleyball.

BBQ’s are also great
Delicious burgers on the grill.
Washed all down
With cold lemonade chilled.

The lemonade is NOT too sour,
It just makes the hot weather disappear.
I’m just NOT satisfied with summer,
Why can’t it last the whole year.
Drunk
By Brandon Eldridge

I’ve made mistakes in my life and no one cares
I walk down the street catching nothing but stares
It’s like I’m an abscess on the tooth of the society
Festering and growing but I’m fighting sobriety
I squeeze on the bottle and cling to its side
Spinning and twirling along for the ride
Perhaps it’s a problem or merely a desire
I feel it down inside it’s like a burning fire
Some do it for the drugs some do it for the thrill
I do it for the hopes that the world stands still
Drinking is my love and drinking is my call
It’s all I’ve ever known it’s all I do recall
It’s my bond and my creed it’s all I ever need
Booze is my friend it will never mislead
So I tip the bottle back and raise up my hand
I’m getting a good buzz now... just like I planned
So to all the young drunks, kick back a bottle and pull on the trigger
Come one come all the party’s getting bigger.

Another Lab
By Christine Grogan

Today I have another lab,
Weighing, counting, checking,
Hoping not to increase my tab
As glass breaks, all wrecking.

Why is dropping things just my luck?
The prescription is gone.
Wish I could fly away like a duck
And go tan on the lawn!

Back to lab I start to focus,
Redoing the whole thing.
I do my magic like hocus-pocus.
Now I start to get in the swing!

Finally the lab is now done.
Just get me out of here,
That was absolutely no fun!
Good thing the end is near!
I am.... (Version 2)
By Amanda Tallarito

I am small but strong.
I wonder when we will fly.
I hear the clock ticking.
I see pigs flying.
I want to live in paradise.
I am small but strong.

I pretend to be tall.
I feel the angels flying around.
I touch the stars in outer space.
I worry how I am going to die.
I cry when I get in trouble.
I am small but strong.

I understand you need to stay in school.
I say it will be worth it if you can just get through it.
I dream to be successful.
I try to always try my hardest.
I hope to live a happy life.
I am small but strong.

Colors
By Derek Palisch

Red thoughts run through my head
But I turn them to blue.
(I wish more people would do.)
Those black at heart
Need a touch of white
A shade of gray will do.
My blue turns to yellow
And then goes to orange.
Then darker and darker to red.
And back to blue the color that’s cool;
To keep my level head.

Haiku
By Maulik Patel

Bogus commercials.
Who are they targeted to?
I am so confused.


Life Without Me
By Dan Roth

Verse 1
Hey there,
My sweet serenity
How are you holding, in this life without me?
You wanted your freedoms,
I sent you astray.
You said you never loved me,
So I walked away
Could you ever see that?
I was gold in you life,
Never will you find someone,
That for you would die.

Chorus
But Why------,
Is it so hard------
For you to see -in me,
My heart has been scarred
Just look at your life---
Without my soft touch—
Could you ever imagine?
Without me you’re crushed
You’re life without me,
Can’t even go on,
You sit there in tears,
I sing you this song

Verse 2
You finally notice
The love that I had,
But it’s a big shame,
Cause I can’t come back.
I see you won’t change,
Like you said no one could.
The depth of my feelings
So misunderstood.
I see you crying
Don’t get me wrong.
You should feel sorry,
You played me so long
Chorus
But Why------,
Is it so hard------
For you to see -in me,
My heart has been scarred
Just look at your life---
Without my soft touch—
Could you ever imagine?
Without me you’re crushed
You’re life without me,
Can’t even go on,
You sit there in tears,
I sing you this song

Verse 3
I see all your tears,
Drowning your heart.
Without me you’re nothing,
You knew from the start.
You say, “Could you ever,
give me that chance,
To be back in your arms,
Taken by your glance.”
I look deep in your eyes,
Can I ever refuse?
That heart-broken sadness,
It shows me the truth.

Chorus (Final)
But Why------
Couldn’t you see?
The pain and the sadness,
In a life without me,
I forgive all the times,
And heartbreak you made.
Our love drawn together,
By this sweet serenade------,
Oh yea, oh oh yea, oh yea

The Show
By Keith Doehring

I went to the show
To see Stallone play Rambo
Blood, Guts what a treat!
World
By Adam So

To accept the world as it exists and unfolds
To understand the concept of religion and its Creators
But I do not accept this nor do I understand
Why do I turn on the television and watch innocent lives are lost
Newspapers filled with headlines of tragedies and misfortunes
Is this really the world that we live in
Am I bound to the fact that I cannot change and therefore must accept this
Wars that are being waged overseas in the Middle East that even reach our own doorsteps
Everyone is caught up in the moment, the act of violence and hate
That people forget that we are all trying to reach the same destination
We have become confused and placed in opposite directions
The abandoned and hopeless we are the dying nation
Till the day we can live in peace when we learn to resolve all our differences
There will always be homicide of our own family and neighbors
A starving child with no home or any form of a shelter
And before the world can destroy itself from the inside out
May the heavens finally respond to all the unanswered prayers

Animals
By Dhara Patel

I saw a lion in his cage
but he looked big for his age,
he seemed nice
and like he cared
but when I got closer
I felt really scared.
    I saw a giraffe
she seemed quite small
but when I got nearer it looked really tall
    I saw a monkey
swinging from tree to tree
eating bananas
    that's all I could see
And then I saw a dolphin
in a swimming pool
it jumped through a hoop
and it looked very cool
    I then saw hippo
looking tired
but the funny thing was
it didn't go to sleep though!
Mood Indigo
By Joe DeMattei

Vincenzo sat alone in his one-bedroom apartment in New York City listening to Frank Sinatra’s In the Wee Small Hours record. As he sat, he puffed on a cigarette and stared blankly at the wall. The smoke from the cigarette crawled towards the ceiling, and to Vincenzo, it seemed to make a stairway for him to climb out of this lonely, isolated hell. The TV was on, but nothing about his manner made you think he was even aware he owned a TV. His cigarette occasionally burned his hand, but he didn’t pay any attention to it. As Sinatra once said when musing over the same phenomenon, “The cigarette burns, I awake with a start, my hand doesn’t hurt but there’s pain in my heart.” Sitting there in this lonely state, Vincenzo could help but think about the events that lead up to him being in this position.

In Sicily, his father was a peasant farmer, who had never been involved with the mafia, or the “friends of the friends,” as they were often called in Sicily. His father, Antonio, was a grower of oranges, lemons, and olives. The best piece of advice Vincenzo had ever been given came from his father. One day, Antonio called him in, sat Vincenzo down, and said, “Son, no matter what odds you come up against in life, no matter what problems you face, you must remember this one thing: to always do what you believe to be right. If you can’t stick by your own beliefs, son, if you lose your integrity, you’ve got nothing left.”

Since Vincenzo was only nine at the time, the purpose of this father-son talk puzzled him greatly. However, when his father showed up dead, Vincenzo knew what he had meant by it. His father had been killed by a friend of the friends— a term which now took on a sinister irony for Vincenzo. Antonio had been killed for refusing to give a portion of his fruit crop to the mafia chieftain; he felt the poor people of Sicily had more use for them than a fat, arrogant mob boss. For this crime, Antonio was murdered. Vincenzo now knew that he must leave Sicily, because the don would be out to kill him to prevent any future retaliation that Vincenzo might attempt.

Vincenzo was going to flee to America with his older brother, but before they could leave, Vincenzo’s brother was murdered. Now Vincenzo was a nine year old boy without any family, being forced to flee to America. He implored the help of his next door neighbors who had always been very good friends with his father. They hid Vincenzo among the fruit in their cart and smuggled him onto a ship headed for America.

Vincenzo’s thoughts then faded back to present day; his stomach was empty and he decided ordering delivery was in order. He picked up the phone and ordered, lit another cigarette, and poured another glass of brandy. The record had finished, and Vincenzo decided to flip it and begin the A side again. After watching a brief news update on the TV, the delivery boy arrived, Vincenzo tipped him, and as the delivery boy started to step away from the door he said, “Thank you Don Clemenza.” This caught Vincenzo off guard, but then he remembered he ordered the pizza using Don as his first name and a fictitious last name; it still felt good to be called “Don” every once in a while. Vincenzo smiled at the kid, and asked him if he had a minute and if he wanted to hear the story of a lifetime. The kid said he had some extra time to kill, and came in. He couldn’t say why, but Vincenzo felt he could trust this kid enough, and for some reason he needed to tell someone the story of his life. Maybe that way, if someone remembered anything good about him, it wouldn’t all have been for nothing. The delivery boy walked into the living room, and Vincenzo cleared some trash off of a chair for him. The delivery boy asked Vincenzo why his apartment didn’t even have a couch; there was no way a person without money could afford an apartment in this building. Vincenzo’s reply was short
and to the point; “When your life expectancy is as short as mine, kid, you don’t see much reason to bother with any furniture.”

This had peaked the delivery boy’s interest, so he had to ask, “What are you sick or something?”

The kid’s naïveté made Vincenzo smile. Vincenzo answered him with much more humor than he would have shown to anyone in the old days, “No kid, I guess you could say I’m just in great danger of lead poisoning. A man in my position never knows when he will end up full of lead.”

The kid understood now, and looked a little mortified. Vincenzo laughed, and told him not to worry- he wasn’t going to off him, he just wanted someone to tell his story to. When he saw the kid had lightened up some, Vincenzo started in on his story.

Vincenzo told the kid about his voyage to America, and being placed in an orphanage for immigrant children once he was here. It was a dirty, lice-ridden, festering place, run by the most frightful nuns Vincenzo had ever seen. The delivery boy asked Vincenzo about why it was so bad, and how he got out.

Vincenzo took a drag off his cigarette, and said, “Well, kid, the nuns would beat you anytime you did anything wrong; I saw them beat four year-old kids senselessly for wetting the bed. It wasn’t all bad though, that orphanage was where I really started to ‘get my feet wet,’ where I really learned the ropes. But by the time my fourteenth birthday came around, I decided it was time to catch the midnight train out of there.”

Vincenzo then detailed how he hitchhiked his way south to Georgia, and then caught a Greyhound down to the Florida panhandle. He worked for a while as a waiter in an Italian restaurant, learning the ins and outs of the restaurant business. One day, he heard some fellow coworkers, Tessio and Paulie, talking about Miami and its potential as a drug import capital. Vincenzo asked if they wanted to move down there and start operations; they emphatically agreed.

In Miami, Vincenzo, Tessio, and Paulie used Vincenzo’s knowledge of the restaurant business to start their own restaurant specializing in Italian food and seafood. The restaurant would serve as an excellent front for the illegal operations they planned to set up.

The delivery boy interrupted, “How did you get your feet off the ground with the restaurant? How did you know your business wouldn’t crash and burn?”

“When it comes to business, kid, you’ve got to gain the upper hand. Most businesses try to accomplish this through marketing, etc. However, Tessio, Paulie, and I do this differently than most businessmen. We did everything we could to undermine competing businesses-bombing competing delivery trucks, seizing warehouses, and burning buildings. Our plan worked brilliantly; before long, we were the only restaurant in the area that mattered.”

Tessio and Paulie also started to get into some jobs on the side; mainly robbing clothing delivery trucks and running illegal gambling rings. The person claiming to be the don of the area had approached Vincenzo about the disservice he and his friends had done by stealing without letting the don take his cut, or protection tax as it was often called. The don demanded $200 from each of them in a week’s time, or there would be serious consequences to pay. Paulie and Tessio were going to hand over the money for fear of retaliation from the don, but Vincenzo felt the don was bluffing. Vincenzo said that Paulie and Tessio should each give him $150, and he would take care of it. He demanded the don reconsider his last request and grant them his good favor for merely $75. The don laughed off his refusal, but a chill went down his spine when he saw the look on Vincenzo’s face, and saw that he wasn’t joking. Vincenzo quickly leapt out of
his seat and stabbed the don in the heart. As he walked out, Vincenzo laughed and said to himself, “He was right- that was kind of funny; I knew I wasn’t going to give him any money all along.”

“So how did things work out after that,” the delivery boy inquired.

“Well, after that coup, I became the de facto don of the region. I made every effort to gain the respect of my friends and neighbors; I never turned down a friend who requested a favor. I helped widows get their sons into college, I helped poor men feed their family, and anyone that needed a job was hired into my organization with more than adequate pay. Action such as these, and several other ventures, made me able to gain a vast amount of power. It was at the apex of my power that I decided it was time to expand operations into Havana, Cuba.”

Vincenzo had hoped that his trips would help him experience the Havana nightlife, to gain a better understanding of the city, and to scope out prospects for business ventures there. For years, he had heard rumors of the Cuban government’s willingness to work with the Mafia.

Vincenzo’s trips to Havana went exceedingly well. Not only was the Cuban government willing to work with the Mafia, they also offered to charge very minimal taxes on any hotel being built there, and furthermore, they were also willing to allow gambling at the Mafia’s hotels. Vincenzo knew this was something he couldn’t undertake alone, so he contacted the four other major Mafia dons of the country that he was on relatively friendly terms with.

First to arrive in Havana for the arranged meeting was Don Luciano, who hailed from New Jersey. He was a very heavyset man; the people in Don Luciano’s neighborhood always joked that as his power grew, so did his waistline. He had the appearance of a very jolly person, with rosy cheeks and a famous, heartwarming smile. However, any who knew Don Luciano at all knew that despite his jovial appearance, crossing him would be the last mistake one would ever make. In the early 40’s, the don had sent a proposal to a mafia family based in Detroit. The Detroit family saw this as a sign of weakness, and decided to move in on Don Luciano’s territory. They sent two soldiers by train to gun down the don. He had spies in Detroit ever since the proposal, however, and knew what train the two gunmen would be arriving on. He had a trusted associate meet these men, keeping up their guise of wanting to meet the don to personally give him their acceptance of his proposal. The don’s associate brought these men to a warehouse, where the don was waiting. He had them tied down, and personally hacked them limb from limb with an axe. He sent their bodies back to Detroit piece by piece, starting with their fingers, then their toes, and eventually finishing with their heads. This was the last time anyone with any sense ever tried to cross Don Luciano.

The next to arrive was Don Rigazzi from Los Angeles. Don Rigazzi was the black sheep of the meeting; he was viewed as too “Hollywood” for the rest of the dons to value him much. He was overly tanned, wore an excessive amount of jewelry, and constantly wore sunglasses, even when indoors. Don Rigazzi’s power came mostly from running the Hollywood labor unions.

Don Palermo, hailing from New York, was the third to arrive at the meeting. He never let his emotions show at all, leading to the nickname of Pokerfaced Palermo. Don Palermo’s family was one of the famous Five Families of New York, and to outsiders, this fact would make it seem like he should command more respect than the others. However, in this meeting, all were viewed as equals, with the exception of Don Rigazzi, because all were powerful in their own right, and each was equally susceptible to being assassinated. They also knew that being one of the Five Families just drew more attention to Don Palermo, meaning his empire was in more constant danger than theirs.
Don Andolini, from Chicago was the last to arrive. He was the least trusted out of all the men present. He had a look similar to a weasel; he was tall and skinny, with slicked back hair, and a narrow, pointed face. Don Andolini also had a crooked smile that could send chills down most men’s spines; it was the result of a broken jaw from a fistfight in his teenage years. He also had eyes that seemed colorless—just pure black.

The meetings had gone well. The only major concern was that Castro’s rebels, and their chance of overthrowing the government that was so kind to the Mafiosi, had become an ever-increasing presence in Cuba. This was almost a deal-breaker for some of the dons; however, representatives from the Cuban government put their minds to rest.

At this point in the story, Vincenzo’s mannerisms noticeably changed. He became slightly agitated and uneasy. However, he pressed on with the story, telling the kid, “It was at about the third or fourth of these meetings that Don Andolini made his proposal to me. The dons all rode in their own personal limos to the meetings, which were in the same location. Each don took his own route to the meeting place, but they all were very consistent with the route they took every time. A simple roadblock of mine and Don Andolini’s soldiers disguised as Castro’s rebels could easily eliminate all of the other dons, leaving all of the seemingly infinite profits to Don Andolini and myself. The plan would be simple, and if flawlessly executed, would not pose the treat of a retaliatory mob war with the families of the assassinated dons, because they would not be suspected.”

“I went home, and thought about the proposal for weeks; it was an extremely lucrative idea. If I went along, his power would multiply greatly, making myself and all those with me unbelievably rich. I knew that the threat of the other families finding out who was behind the assassinations was greater than Don Andolini acted, but it was still very minimal risk. I also knew that if I didn’t conspire with Don Andolini, I would risk an assassination attempt or a retaliatory mob war.”

Vincenzo decided to talk it over with his two most trusted associates, Tessio and Paulie. They both felt that he should go along with the plan because, in their minds, the benefits far outweighed the risks. They also concluded that should Vincenzo go against Don Andolini, the don would have to be murdered. His associates were also concerned with missing out on enormous profits to engage in a mob war over the lives of people they didn’t even really know.

Vincenzo paused in telling his story, and refilled his brandy. He took a drag off his cigarette, and started into the story again, “Their synopsis was too simple for me; it was me, not they, who had always been viewed as a man of respect. I was the one who was viewed as more just than even the judicial system. It was me, not they, who had held myself to higher standards than public officials, and although I had murdered many people in my day, I never murdered anyone without being provoked. Going along with this plan would mean going against everything I had always stood for.”

The words of advice his father gave him before he was murdered came to mind, “If you can’t stick by your own beliefs, son, if you lose your integrity, you’ve got nothing left.”

At this time, Vincenzo became noticeably shaken in the telling of his story. The memory of his father’s murder still obviously bothered him. After collecting himself, he started back in with, “My father’s parting words convinced me of what I had to do, and I knew that since my associates didn’t agree with the plan, I would have to do it myself. I split up the family’s territory evenly between Tessio and Paulie, each now becoming head of his own family, and headed to Chicago. When Don Andolini’s plane arrived from Las Vegas, I was there, waiting at the airport, disguised as a reporter. I had my fedora pulled low over my face so no one would
recognize me, and amid the frenzy of all the reporters trying to get questions from Don Andolini, I fired three shots into the don. The ensuing panic made it unbelievably easy to escape unnoticed. I just kept my head down, nonchalantly dropped the gun, and ran out in a panic like everyone else in the airport.”

“What happened then? Did you ever get caught?”

Vincenzo deeply inhaled his cigarette, and reflected for a moment. “No, I don’t think anyone ever suspected me. I moved to New York immediately after leaving the airport. I had already had a fake ID printed, so should I be pulled over, the cops wouldn’t know who I really was.”

The delivery boy was intrigued by Vincenzo’s choice of location. “Why didn’t you choose some where more rural... like Kansas?”

“I moved to New York because I knew that I could trust Don Palermo more than anyone else. I don’t know why I knew this, partially because I knew that with how tenacious Don Palermo’s reputation was, that no one would suspect that I’d try to live in his territory. He couldn’t offer me full protection, but he did say that I would not be sought out by anyone in his family as long as I didn’t cross him. This may not sound ideal, but I knew it was the best promise I could hope for. So that’s how I ended up here in New York City, living under the guise of a retired banker.”

Right then the delivery boy’s pager went off. “I’ve got to get back to work,” he said. “Thanks for the story though. I can’t believe I’m in the presence of someone as famous as you. My parents would never believe this.”

“That’s why you’re not going to tell them,” Vincenzo instructed. “Please understand that if anyone finds out about who I am and where I live, I’m dead.”

The delivery boy nodded knowingly, “I understand sir. Your secret’s safe with me.” He then dashed off in an attempt to get back soon enough to not get fired.

Vincenzo walked over to his record player, and started the B-side of the Sinatra record again. He then poured another glass of brandy, and went in the bedroom to get his gun. He sat on the floor cleaning his gun, but for reasons unbeknownst to him, when he was done cleaning the gun, he just held onto it. He then went back to his seat. He sat in his chair, cigarette in one hand, pistol in the other, and his glass of brandy still within reach. As he sat there, he began to once again to stare at the wall.

Anyone more alert would have noticed the scratching sound signifying the needle hitting the end of the record, but Vincenzo didn’t even notice the sound. He just glanced at it, and went back to staring. The record was finished, the cigarette long burned out, but Vincenzo still sat there, staring blankly, holding the gun in his hand; wondering whether or not he will be looking in the mirror when he sees the next person that he’ll have to use it on.

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**Haiku**

*By Nicholas Goulden*

There in the forest
A porcupine slaps a dog
Free acupuncture
To The Memory...
By Patrick Boland

Your past turns to silence
And as the waves wash away my sins
I fall into convulsions
The moonlights rushing in
I’m corrupted by the helpless thoughts of dawn
Those feelings are left invisible inside me but I know they’re there
I know that when I close my eyes, the pieces come together
When hate suffocates my will to breath
Fear followed by destiny
Everyday suffocation, but I’ll hold true
Everything that has been done
We must undo
I have to see it, in order to believe it
The consequences of our actions
Break our pride
Until our brothers
Don’t have to pretend
The reasons for looking back
And moving on

Lunar Eclipse
By Chase Pickering

O’ Moon, luminescent moon,
Tonight your pocked face
Resonates with the same sorrow
As a freshly made widow.
The heavens cannot match your beauty.
Cheer Up! For you are a God!

Limerick
By Brian Scholfield

There was a couple who lived in a shoe
Who did not know what to do
Their sole was falling a part
But the wife was smart
Marriage counseling was their only glue
Memories
By Priyanka Patel

Icy
Snowy
Evergreen
Santa Claus
The Reindeers
Elves North Pole
The Grinch Stocking
Diamonds Cookies Eggnog
Ornaments Garlands Games
Nutmeg Chocolate Cinnamon
Gingerbread Fireplace Mantel
Stockings Family Wreath Angels
Carols Stars Laughter Cheers Bible
Green
Red
Tea

Haiku
By Danielle Ebert

Time seems like it's paused
This class is forever long
Why did I choose this

Haiku
Matt Clifton

First five syllables
Seven makes the middle fun
Then five once again
Transformer Ballad
By Matt Clifton

They came from far away in space
The peace they had is now gone
A living planet of machine and metal
This home of theirs was Cybertron

Battling for energy they crashed on earth
In the wreck they changed but did not die
Changing shape to blend in our world
The transformers are more than meets the eye

The robots fought from two sides
Noble Autobots favored turning into cars
The others were evil Decepticons
With alternate modes better for wars

Optimus Prime was the Autobot leader
A courageous truck who almost always won
When fighting the treacherous Megatron
Who went from 40 feet to a handheld gun

It was a most awesome cartoon
In my heart it will never die
And I just can’t wait for the day
It comes to the big screen, the 4th of July

Haiku
By Nicholas Goulden

The electric car
Was murdered by big oil
To choke mother earth

Children
By Jeremy Hunt

The wind is a blowin’
And the fire is a glowin
The kids are asleep all nestled in beds
No worries of life dancing inside their heads
So innocent looking, but don’t be surprised
To see wonder and amazement dance in their eyes.
Out
By Derek Ray

Today is the day, the time has come,
I'll try not to be uncouth.
Today is the day, the time has come,
It's time to tell the truth.

When we get home, it's not too far,
Just a half hour longer.
A little time to think some more,
Some time to make me stronger.

We get home and we all sit down,
I know just what to say.
But the time is here, it comes out
Wrong, just, "Mom, Dad, I'm gay."

I didn't know what to expect,
I'd imagined it all,
But nothing could have prepared me
For the blow that did fall.

I had expected the worst, but
I still hoped for the best.
Can't they love me for who I am,
And just forget the rest?

Didn't expect understanding,
But dared hope for some love.
Dealt me a huge slap in the face
When I wanted a hug.

I stood there forsaken, alone,
Shot down well in advance.
They'd never attend my wedding,
No, not even a chance.

The happiest day of my life,
They'll be far, far away.
All because they cannot accept,
Their only son is gay.
Could I Ever Be The One For You?

By Dan Roth

Verse 1
How are you doing?
I am big fan
I like when you smile,
Could I be your man?
If I were a hot guy,
And rich and famous
Would I have a chance?
To ask what your name is?

Chorus
Could I ever, be the one for you?
You say never, but I think that's untrue.
What can I—do to see more of you?
Am I clever enough to make it 12 rounds with truth?
And I do it, do it all for you.

Verse 2
So yes, I like you.
I think you're pretty
Now you know the truth
That you make me giddy.
Who couldn't like you?
They would be stupid,
For they would lie too.
And they are just kids.
You deserve a man,
A man with the whole plan

Chorus
Could I ever, be the one for you?
You say never, but I think that's untrue.
What can I—do to see more of you?
Am I clever enough to make it 12 rounds with truth?
And I do it, do it all for you

Verse 3
I really like you,
You speak so sweetly,
Your eyes really shine through,
You wear your pink tee.
I think I that could,
Show you the city,
Then maybe you would,
Want to be with me.
Yes you should see now
That you should feel happy.

Chorus
Could I ever, be the one for you?
You say never, but I think that’s untrue.
What can I—to see more of you?
Am I clever enough to make it 12 rounds with truth?
And I do it, do it all for you

King James
By Tracey Hysong

Lebron is the man.
He is the greatest baller
Since Michael Jordan.

Haiku
By Brian Scholfield

Early in the day
Fog-wrapped September mornings
School’s begun again

Snowfall
By Jessica Laidlaw

Silent snow falls down
Covering the hills and trees
Hiding everything

Haiku
By Samantha Swatek

You do not come here
I do not know why I wait
Is it what I fear?
Cut the Lights
By Patrick Boland

Thanks for stepping back and letting us take your place
In a footing desperately used, don't you feel betrayed?
The break will cause the boards to shift
And fall out of place
In a footing desperately used, don't you feel betrayed?
Be one with fate
The fire in our eyes is so bright
Be there for destiny
Rip it out, rest in pieces
The weeds grown thick and melt
The cross was put there for you
In all its perfection we could be perfect
But the fire fades away
Cut the lights and hide behind your empty voice
Cause all I see is a shattered room
Blanketed with a dusty mist of memories
You can't control their fate
As I said to you smiling, goodbye
I can so clearly imagine myself
Turning the hate into blood
And hanging you body to the pole of my flag
There's a pressure in your thoughts
That's pushing the tears
Its making you think of existence
You can call me the giver of life
When I hold the pistol to your temple
And tell you everything
You lived for will be forgotten
Well I believed you
Where the hell are your tears?
You've lost your innocence
Where the f**k are your tears?
Turn Hate Into Blood

Haiku
By Danielle Ebert

I love the trill of
The roller coaster ride, upside-down
60 second ride
**Silly Continuation Below**
*By Brandon Eldridge*

I love you. You want to know why?
Because you are my air, without you I’d die.
I love you. You want to know when?
Now and forever until the end of men.
I love you. You want to know where?
Here and there and everywhere.
I love you. You want to know who?
That’s a stupid question girl. It’s you. It’s YOU! It’s YOU!!!
I love you. You want to know what?
Your eyes, your hair, your nose, your butt.
I love you. Wanna know something more?
Now that I’ve written this poem I love you more than before.

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**Lost Forever**
*By Kyle Amelung*

She’s asleep in the passenger seat
so I turn the music down
The lights are off as I drive her home
but the stars light up the town

She has trusted me to keep her safe
as I sit behind the wheel
She doesn’t know how much I care
she’ll never know how I feel

What happened next unfolded so fast
I didn’t know what to do
Our light was green, his was red
but he just kept driving through

I heard metal crush as he slammed the car
but was it the left or right?
A drunken driver killing somebody
but which one of us died that night?
Where Do Storms Come From?
By Alexis Diveney

Once upon a time there was a little boy who was afraid of thunder and lightning. Every time it stormed he would grab his blanket and run to his momma’s arms. One day it got very dark and started to storm. The boy did what he always did. But, this time his momma asked him why he was so afraid of the thunder and lightning.

“Momma, I’m scared because I don’t know where the thunder and lightning come from,” he said.

“You don’t need to be scared—I know where they come from,” his mom answered.

“You do?” asked the boy.

“Yes, I do, and I will tell you.”

The boy peeked out from behind his blanket to listen to his mom.

“The thunder and lightning are just from God and the angels bowling. The loud thunder is the big bowling balls rolling down the lanes and crashing into the pins.”

“What about the lightning?” asked the boy.

“Well, anytime God or one of the angels gets a strike, that’s when the lightning strikes,” said the boy’s mom.

“Wow, God and the angels must be really good at bowling!” said the boy.

Just then the sky got lighter and the clouds moved on. The boy saw a pretty rainbow in the sky.

“God and the angels must be done bowling,” said the boy’s mom.

“Momma, do God and the angels play baseball?”

“That’s a question for another day,” his mother told him, “another day.”

Kirby
By Heidi Wang

To one so tall
I can only flee
I’m sitting on this tee
This isn’t a fair brawl
Stop hitting me against the wall
Leave me be!
Don’t you see?
I’m the one you treat like a ball

Which one is me?
The one who flees
And hides from your eye
I’m Kirby
The one in the corner of the sky
Yep – that’s me
Cindyella
By Christine Grogan

Cindy, a cute girl from the country, seemed to have it all. Her family was not poor or rich and they lived in a small cottage in the woods. Cindy had two older stepsisters who loved themselves more than anyone else did, except their mother. Cindy longed for the days when her father and she lived alone, without the other three. She couldn’t understand how he had died so young, since she was only 13. Now, with no one to help her, she was stuck in the house with her stepmother and two stepsisters. Cindy was about to graduate college and knew that this was her ticket out of this nightmare. Not only did her stepmother and stepsisters belittle her daily, but she was forced to do all the house work, such as sweeping, mopping, and dusting in order to be “paid” her allowance, although she realized this was already her inheritance.

Tonight was different. Tonight was the night of the ball. Cindy longed to go to the annual ball, especially because it reminded her of the happier years she was able to spend with her dad. Unfortunately, her stepmother prohibited her from attending, instead only taking her own two daughters. Cindy had had enough. A couple of months before, she had entered a drawing at school for a beautiful ball gown for this very event. To her surprise, she actually won the dress and decided she was going to go to the ball anyway. After her stepmother and stepsisters left, she hurriedly got dressed and raced to the ball. Feeling a little uncomfortable, since she didn’t know many people, Cindy met a very handsome man named Jack and was shocked to realize that she had known him from her childhood after they started talking. Since her stepmother kept her in the house or at school, Cindy lost touch with her old friends many years ago. She couldn’t believe how attractive her friend was and little did she know, he was thinking the same about her. After they talked and danced for a short while, Cindy was in disbelief when she heard her name called to come to the stage to announce to everyone that she had won the beautiful designer dress. Cindy was mortified. Being pushed up to the stage, she knew she was going to get punished severely when she got home. After the awkward announcement, Cindy ran off the stage as quickly as she could, accidentally dropping the small handbag she was carrying behind the stairs. She hesitated to pick it up, but saw her stepmother walking towards her, so she decided to run for it. She got home as quickly as she could, pretending nothing had happened when her stepmother and stepsisters arrived home. However, they had not forgotten about the incident and her stepmother was quick to tell Cindy that she would no longer be included in her late father’s will and would get no possessions or money from his estate. In fact, right before her father died, her stepmother had arranged for herself to be the only benefactor. Cindy was outraged that her stepmother would do such a thing during her father’s final days. She ran up to her room and didn’t come out for days. However, Jack had been thinking of Cindy this whole time and knew that she was the one for him. He didn’t know how to get a hold of her, but quickly remembered that she dropped her purse and hurried to see if it was still at the dance hall. Surprisingly, it was hidden in the shadow under the stairs still and he found Cindy’s address. He went over to her house and before he could even talk to Cindy, the two stepsisters were flirting with him and doing everything they could to attract his attention. However, Jack knew he loved Cindy and wanted to see her. Reluctantly they allowed him in and he went up to her room. She explained her situation to him, and before long, they were riding in his car on their way to happily ever after!
The Love of my Life
By David Marcum

My heart pounds as I touch her body so hard
She sits so beautifully in the yard
My hand shivers as I touch her top
I know she doesn’t want me to stop

I gently caress her with my manly hands
Exploring every inch of her where she stands
I rub the lotion all down her sides
I know she hasn’t anything to hide

My heart pounds as I see her body shine
I’m so happy she is all mine
I promise her I’ll never leave
Then with my hands I proceed

I want her now I can’t wait any more
My hands quiver as I open the door
I whisper “I love you” where only she can hear
As our first time is almost here

My legs are shaking as it’s almost time
To show the world she’s all mine
I can’t believe I’ve made it this far
As I get ready to drive my first car!!

Supercross
By Alexis Diveney

The anxiousness, the fear, the guts
The smell of nachos, hot dogs, and exhaust
The gasps, the yells, the cheers
Who will be defeated?

A crash, a turn, a wreck
A breath, a thought, a pain
A surprise, a question, a shock
Who will get the victory?
The Gingerbread Man – The Fox’s Story
By Heidi Wang

Growl. There went my stomach again. I was sniffing around for something to eat. Normally I wouldn’t be out during the day but I woke up to the wonderful aroma of food. I had to be careful though. There were humans outside – ones that would kill me if they saw me. They say I am a sneaky fox. They say I steal from them. But seriously, who told them to taunt me with the sweet aroma of food?

I couldn’t help it. I snuck around trying to find the source of that wonderful smell. I followed it all the way into the town. I had to be careful then. I could not be caught. I wondered what the humans were making. I knew it was dangerous to be there but who could resist that wonderful smell? My mouth was watering already.

Then I saw two humans running towards my direction. Quickly, I hid behind a barrel. Soon after, I saw something brown pass by with two humans running after it. It was shouting, “Run, run as fast as you can! You can’t catch me, I’m the gingerbread man!”

Hm. That so-called brown thing was a gingerbread man, and if two humans were trying to catch it, it must be tasty. My eyes lit up. I found my breakfast. Quietly following behind the two humans, I thought of a plan to catch the gingerbread man. It was going to be hard. I couldn’t be seen but that gingerbread man ran a lot faster than I imagined. And it caught a lot of attention. Quickly running past the humans, I found that a pig and a horse were also chasing after the gingerbread man. Mm if only I could have beef and pork on a gingerbread man. How wonderful would that be?

Not long after, I saw a horse join the chase as the gingerbread man approached the river. He stopped and lamented, “Oh NO! They will catch me. How can I cross the river?”

Running quietly up to him, I thought of my plan. “I can swim across the river with you on my back.”

“You won’t eat me, will you?” the gingerbread man looked at me suspiciously.

“No no. I’m just trying to help. Now hurry before they come,” I was eyeing the group of hungry animals trying to get their hands on my breakfast. He jumped on my back and I slowly crossed the river. I thought of a way I could get him. He’s mine already. All I had to do was convince him to come closer, and I had the most brilliant idea ever. “Hey uh .. Could you do me a favor? You’re kinda sitting on my legs there and I can’t swim with you on my legs. You mind scooting towards my head so I can swim? Preferably the nose so I can see better?”

And stupidly he agreed and climbed on top of my head and sat on my nose. Perfect. He fell for the trap.

“Can you see?” the gingerbread man asked. “I wouldn’t want to block your sight.”

“Oh no. It’s perfect. Just perfect,” why would it be? I had perfect sight of my breakfast. Climbing on the shore, I threw him in the air. He was screaming for help but there was no one around to help him. I caught him in my mouth and I devoured him.

Hm … that gingerbread man wasn’t all that good. Don’t know why everyone was chasing after it. Oh well. I spotted my lunch. Pork or beef anyone?
St. Louis Driver
By Derek Palisch

“Ah, you just gotta love traffic,” I heard myself mutter as I sat in my car on I-40 during the morning rush of traffic. As I inched forward, I began to look for the next exit ramp. Once there, I did what I do every morning, I passed about a dozen cars on the right side of the road and dashed back into traffic. The trick here is not using your blinker so people don’t know what’s coming. I continued to snake in and out of traffic using the fast lane, slow lane, and even the shoulder of the road. Finally, I reached my exit, but I was traveling too fast and the cars to my right were too packed to get over. Not to worry though. I took the next exit and easily made up for the lost time. How, you ask? I avoided all of the stop lights by cutting through parking lots. Finally, I arrived at work and headed for the parking garage. My spot, on the very first floor next to the entrance, was the best one in the building. While backing up into the roomy space, my foot slipped off the brake and somehow hammered the gas. My bumper slammed into the concrete wall and dented.

I spent the whole day at work wondering how much it would cost. Before I knew it, it was 4:30 P.M. and time to race home. I was back at the game again, getting the usual honks and hand gestures. Then I pulled behind a maroon Pontiac Grand Prix. The college student driving looked pretty pissed. This could be from the three cars I just witnessed pass on the shoulder of the road. Without hesitation I began to make my move. When we were side by side, the deranged student swerved right at me. I instinctively also swerved. Everything happened so fast. As I swerved back behind the Pontiac, a semi clipped me from behind and I began to skid. The sound of screeching brakes was deafening.

Suddenly I saw brake lights ahead and realized I was about to be sandwiched; and the two pieces of bread were a semi and a dump truck. No one could hear me scream. Glass broke, steel buckled, and bones shattered. Then, everything went black. I woke up 35 years later with all body parts in working order. The only problem is that now I’m old, broke, and extremely lonely. My fear of driving has made me a recluse. I am sorry for all the driving sins I’ve committed and vow never to hit the road again.

Trust Me, It Hurts
By Tracey Hysong

I had a brain freeze.
In my head it felt like an
Alaskan night breeze.

Haiku
By Josh Boudeman

I sure love this class
It makes me smile and laugh
Poetry is neat
I am the Pineapple

By Patrick Harper

Oh, why did I get myself into this? I’ve been pacing this floor for three hours now. The thing about walking back and forth so much is that you never really get anywhere. That’s the story of my life. No matter how much effort I put forth I never really get anywhere. Well, maybe I better start from the beginning. I’m a pretty reclusive fruit, being a pineapple and all. I mean, what more would you expect. I am tropical after all. That’s the life for me; endless groves of trees and bushes all being sung to sleep at night by the lullabies of the ocean breeze. I’m not cut out to be a city fruit. But hey, at least I’m not cut up, like some other fruits I know, God rest their souls. So why did I let them drag me into this. You see, my friends are forcing me to go to a big party tonight. It’s the annual Melon Ball and they’re all revved up for a juicy evening. But they don’t realize how hard it is for me. They’re all so cool. I mean Kiwi has got the dough to do whatever he wants and he makes sure everyone knows it; always strutting around in his fur coat. And banana is a whole other story. What guy isn’t going to go “ga-ga” over a girl with that kind of curve? Then there’s me. I’m pretty sure pineapple is Hawaiian for “freak.” I mean look at me. I’m not exactly the slimmest fruit in the drawer. There’s not a moisturizer on earth that can get rid of this horrid, bumpy, scaly skin. And would you look at this hair! What am I expected to do with this thing? Sticking out in a crowd is supposed to be a figure of speech, not a styling problem! But, here I am. I’m going out tonight. It’s not really that I want to. It’s something that Kiwi said that really stuck. If I just lay around all of my life, people are going to start thinking I’m a vegetable.

Caesar and the Pineapple

I came. I saw. I ate. It was delicious.

A Good Day

By Dhara Patel

I’m walking on the clouds
It’s a new morning in a new place.
I’ve got a new technique,
And just the right amount of spring in my step.

What I have here is all I need,
I’m living in the moment.
It’s all going to be new tomorrow,
So I’m living it up right now.

I’ve been waiting for today,
It’s been a long time.
I’ve never been so happy,
This day is the start of a new life in a new city!
No Win Situation
By Keith Doehring, Brent Kassel, Kim Ly, Derek Palisch, and Maulik Patel

I sat in the cool, dark woods all alone. The sky was pitch black with the moon being hidden by thick black clouds. The air was thick with fog and perfect for concealment. I couldn’t believe what I was about to do. I never meant to put myself in this type of situation, but I was desperate and broke. My heart began to race and suddenly thoughts of the last few weeks started flashing in my head.

Only a mere 14 days ago, I found myself like many other college students do. I was living the easy life and having tons of fun on the weekends, but then things changed. Money became rare for me and all local jobs had already been filled by other students. Debt became a huge burden for me. One night, about a week ago, I was wasted in a bar and let everyone know about my money situation whether they wanted to hear it or not. I continued my drunken haze until about 3:00 A.M. As I was leaving the bar, a clean looking, young businessman grabbed me by the shoulder and whispered into my ear, “Hey kid, I heart you were hunting’ for some money.”

I replied, “You bet your ass I am!”

The look on his face now became very serious. “Meet me in 15 minutes under the big oak in the quad,” he said slily. With those words he disappeared.

Fifteen minutes later I sat face to face with the stranger. I had never seen the man before and he didn’t seem like he was a local. He spoke first.

“Let’s get down to business.”

“Alright.”

“I got a job for you and it pays pretty good…..let’s say $1 million.”

“Oh my God,” I heart myself mutter.

“Here’s the deal,” he continued.

“I am the head of a secret society that has been around since the great country started. We have done several things over the years that have changed the make up of this country. When the Union had made its mind to free the slaves, we shot Lincoln. When the Great Depression was killing the country, we threatened to kill FDR if he did not join in World War II. And when the blacks were starting to win some rights in this country, we put a bullet in JFK.”

I could not believe what this man was telling me. I thought he must be insane. The only thing that kept me from walking away was my desperation for money. The man was well dressed, and the Mercedes Benz key he was holding told me the man had money.

The man asked me if I was still interested in a million dollars.

I said, “Show me the money.” To my surprise he did. He said to give him a minute and he vanished into the dark. Forty five seconds later, the man returned with a briefcase. Upon opening the briefcase, my jaw dropped to the floor. Ten stacks of one hundred thousand dollars each sat in the briefcase.

I didn’t even make a sound when the man said, “I think this got your interest.”

The man gave me one thousand dollars and told me to meet him in Austin, Texas in ten days. He told me to check into the Ritz Carlton under the name Ron Mexico. At that point the man vanished.

A thousand dollars is a lot of money, and now as I am sitting in this tree about to commit murder, I wish I would have kept the thousand dollars and never left for Texas.
Over the next week I tried to keep my life very low key. I didn’t leave my apartment until day eight. The only reason I left my apartment was to buy a plane ticket. As I was walking back from the travel agency, I picked up the Sunday Post-Dispatch. Reading the cover caused my stomach to turn knots. The front page article was on President Bush and the week long vacation he had started today at his ranch just outside of Austin, Texas.

I thought I was going to have to kill President Bush. I arrived in Austin the day before I was supposed to meet the stranger. I checked into my room and went to sleep for the night. At exactly 3:00 A.M. I awoke and had a gun pointed at my head. It was the stranger. “You’re early,” he said. “I wasn’t expecting you until later today.” He lowered his gun. I got out of bed and asked him what I had to do to get the money. “Well, I guess I can tell you now,” he said. “I need to kill Terry Bradshaw!”

“Terry Bradshaw?” I questioned. “What did he ever do?”

“He is the leader of a group that is going to try and blow up the Stadium in Detroit during half-time of the Super Bowl.”

“So Terry Bradshaw is a terrorist?”

“Yes, he is secretly tied to Al Qaeda.”

“So, why am I in Austin? Shouldn’t I be in Detroit?”

“Yeah, the trip to Austin was just to throw you off. Now we are going to Detroit.”

The next day we got on a plane to Detroit. I was really nervous about shooting the president, but now that it was Terry Bradshaw that I had to kill I was not as worried as before. I was still taking a human life though, which bothered me the most. So now here I sat, in this tree outside of Terry Bradshaw’s hotel just waiting for a clear shot at him. Then it happened; he opened the door and I saw his shiny bald head. As soon as I saw that shiny head in my crosshair, I pulled the trigger. I just wanted to be done with this job and get my money as soon as possible.

I hopped down from the tree and got away without anyone noticing me. I got back to the guy and told him what happened. I was still very jittery, and he asked me why. I tried to reply calmly but instead I just screamed, “Because I just shot a man.” At that point he told me that I should never bring this up again with anybody, and if I did, he’ll kill me. At that point he told me that the money was wired to my bank account and that I was free to go now.

As I walked out of the hotel, I was still a little jittery. I was wondering if he actually put that money in my account, so I decided to stop off at the ATM and check it out. As I went for my ATM card in my wallet, I was stunned. I didn’t have my wallet on me. After taking a second to check all my pockets I realized that I must have dropped it off the tree. I rushed back to the tree and it was gone. Where could it have been? At this point, however, I didn’t care and just wanted to get out of the city.

Back at the airport, breaking news came on the TV and it said that the CIA had captured the terrorist that was going to blow up the stadium at the Ritz. What?! At the Ritz? Terry didn’t stay at the Ritz, I thought to myself. A few seconds later they showed the picture of the guy that hired me for the job.

But he was not described as the Terrorist, nor was Terry Bradshaw. The man who hired me was described as Paul Johnson, a good citizen who helped the local authorities learn of the plot. So they, with the CIA and FBI and who knows who else were able to capture the terrorists before they could perpetrate their deed. The terrorists themselves were not shown. Bradshaw was not mentioned.

Frightened, I nervously approached the airline counter. My tickets were in my pocket, but my driver’s license and every other possible ID was in my lost wallet. I told the airline
official my flight. They would definitely not let me enter the plane without an ID or ticket. They told me to report the missing billfold to the police and get help recovering duplicate IDs.

What a dilemma. I had just killed a man. My wallet was probably near the scene of the murder. But on the other hand my mentor was being hailed as a good citizen. I knew no one in town, had no money, and the city was stuffed with football fans. Then my cell phone rang.

“I know everything…” he said. Who was this stranger? It didn’t sound like Paul Johnson. I was nervous. “How the hell did I get into this mess?” I thought to myself. No amount of money is worth jail time or even getting killed.

“Meet me by Joe’s pub in 20 minutes,” he said and hung up.

I rushed there quickly. A guy in a blue suit sat in a booth by the phone booth. He signaled me over by taking off his sunglasses. I sat down.

“What do you want?” I said.

“Don’t worry!” he said, “I’m with Paul Johnson. We are aborting the whole mission. Terry Bradshaw is not the enemy after all.”

“What?!” I exclaimed.

“Shhh…lower your voice. We can’t draw attention like that,” he whispered.

“I just killed Terry Bradshaw!” I whispered in frustration.

“Actually, you missed. He is fine and still living. However, we will be confiscating any evidence that involved you in this case, including all the money we transferred into your account this morning. You will never bring this up again, understand? If this mistake leaked out, we would have to ‘resolve’ the situation,” he said firmly. “We are, however, returning your wallet which we kept for security reasons. You may now return home and forget this ever happened.”

I knew what he meant by “resolve.” Relieved that my nightmare was soon ending, the thought of being poor and living under the bridge didn’t seem so bad after all. Once I got back home, I followed the story intensely, watching the news and reading the paper daily. The shooting with Terry Bradshaw never surfaced. Paul Johnson and his agency must have “taken care” of it somehow. Nevertheless, I was relieved! Things got better for me financially. I never told anyone about what happened, but everyday, the guilt of what happened just kept digging deeper inside of me. But, no matter what, I knew better that to tell anyone. It was better for the guilt to eat me away than to face what Paul Johnson would do to me.

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Limerick
By Priyanka Patel

There once was a very rich girl
With a beautiful face and some pearls
She never had chores
But once scrubbed the floor
I guess she isn’t the richest girl.
Hospital?
By Valerie Alstat, Nicholas Goulden, Christine Grogan, and Heidi Wang

“We live in a what?!” My friend seemed to be astonished about something he had just heard. Curious, Janet and I decided to walk over and find out why he was so perplexed. He was talking to the owner of the house, Hunt. Hunt was a tall lanky guy that was the spitting image of flesh and bones. He also had a long neck and big ears. In fact, we called him the giraffe/elephant-man hybrid.

You see, three months ago, three of us decided to go to boarding school in some distant country. Why would we do that? I have no clue but we’re here.

“So Tony, what’s wrong? You seem troubled.”

“Well, we seem to be living in an old hospital,” Hunt was smiling from ear to ear as Tony informed us of the previous function of the building we now call home.

“I shall be back in a few,” Hunt ran off quickly like he had some urgent business to do. We all looked at him suspiciously but decided it was nothing important.

“So … we live in an old creepy hospital .. funny. I was wondering why there was a room in the center of the house that is just abnormally large compared to the other rooms.”

“Do you think that was the surgery room?”

And so we began our long discussion about all the different possibilities each room was for.

“Hey. What do you think those metal bars on the window were for? It’s kind of creepy.” Janet pointed to the window behind me. In fact, there were many windows like that. Windows with metal bars on the outside. Doors that we never opened. Ominous staircases that were dimly lit if at all.

“You know guys, there is no need to be upset. Three medical students living in an old hospital. What could be more appropriate?”

Janet wasn’t won over that easily. “How many hospitals do you know with metal bars on the windows?”

“Yes. The way you put it sounds fine,” Tony responded “but Hunt acted as if he had put one over us. There is something more to it than that. Let’s search it more carefully and cover the whole building.”

“Each of us took one of the three floors and started searching. I got the second floor, Janet first and Tony basement. As I climbed the stairs, I noticed some loose boards, but generally they were at least safe. Then I started going room to room. Most of the rooms were smaller and for the most part empty although a couple had old metal bedsteads. The windows up here were barred too but at least intact. Inch thick dust, but no bird or animal droppings. However three of the doors were locked. I tried to push them open but to no avail. Finally I gave up and went downstairs. I joined Janet downstairs and we waited for Tony. Neither of us had made any major discoveries, although both of us had encountered locked doors that we thus far hadn’t been able to open. “Tony has a Swiss Knife.” Janet told me. We waited for him and We waited ..

We decided we were tired of waiting so we went to look for Tony downstairs. We found him, kicking a door. “What are you doing!” Janet and I asked at the same time. He pointed to the door which read “incinerator” in dark bold letters.

“And I thought you were creeped out by this place,” I said.

“Of course I am; it’s still interesting I guess,” Tony said. Janet and I convinced Tony to leave that door alone. At least we knew what was on the other side of it. We made our way to the
first floor to the locked door at the end of the hall. Tony began picking at it with his knife, which wasn’t working as well as planned.

“You can have the keys if you want them.” The three of us jumped. Hunt was standing behind us with a large ring of keys.

“We were wondering what was back there. We thought we could get in,” I said.

“Not without the keys,” he said. Hunt then explained that the section of the hospital that was locked was because of weird stuff that had happened years back. “The guy I bought this place from told me not to go in there, but I figured it’s just stories.”

“Then why are the doors still locked?” asked Janet.

“Well, he could never rent out all the rooms anyway, so he never felt the need to fix them up, he said. We might as well have a look see.”

Janet asked,” Did the previous owner tell you what kind of accident? Or at least what ‘weird stuff’ went on?”

“Well,” Hunt thought a moment, “I asked around a bit and all I hear are stories.”

“So what did you hear?” I asked.

“Well, the story goes that a woman gave birth to a baby but it was a still birth. She couldn’t afford a funeral, so back in those days, there weren’t laws, but the doctor took the baby down to the incinerator. The woman went mad or something and ran down to the incinerator and opened it. She caught fire with the rest of this room and it went up both floors. That’s why all the doors on this end are locked.’

“Click” and with that he opened the door.

“Yuck ... what the heck is that smell?” Janet asked. Hunt said he didn’t know but all of us agreed there was a foul odor. It was as if the door had stayed locked the whole time.

“C’mon let’s go in and look around,” said Tony. Against their better judgment they all entered the abandoned room. As they looked around exploring, they found bones and enough wood to build a house.

There was so much soot and dust that they could barely breath. The room was pitch black, except for the light provided from the hallway. Tony decided to go look for a flash light and left the others in the room As they rummaged through the few items in the room, they felt a sense of fear each time they picked something up.

Janet was terrified that the stories Hunt had described could actually be true. Suddenly Janet screamed. She knew she saw something move in the shadows. As Janet looked around, Tony jumped out at her.

“What are you thinking?” she yelled at him.

“Haha .. did I scare you?” Tony asked.

“Of course you did .. did you ever find the flashlight?” she questioned. Tony described how he looked all over but found nothing. Tony and Janet decided they would stick together as they wandered throughout the room.

“Boom!” they heard. Janet and Tony looked at each other realizing neither one of them had done anything. Suddenly the room went black, and as they ran to get out, they discovered they were locked in the black room.

Furiously pounding on the locked door, screaming until their lungs were raw and bleeding, Tony and Janet heard Hunt on other side laughing. His laughter was taunting and the already dense blackness condensed ever more to a suffocating darkness. The darkness seeped into their living flesh and infected their very bones.
On the other side of the door, Hunt heard the blood-curdling screaming suddenly stop and there was no more pounding. He then opened the door to release them from his cruel practical joke, but when the door swung open and light fought back against the darkness of the room, Hunt jumped backwards in shock. Tony and Janet’s bodies were nothing but charred skeletons. Now it was Hunt’s turn to scream, and he screamed.

When I heard Hunt screaming, I rushed to the scene. Upon seeing Janet and Tony’s remains, I vomited or rather dry heaved. I had almost been locked in that room with Janet and Tony. Almost, fortunately I had to use the restroom – saved by the bladder.

I ran out of the hospital, trying to get as far away as possible. In the distance, the Hospital loomed and the sun set behind it.

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**Hope and Grace**

*By Alexis Diveney, Tracey Hysong, Jordan Lippmann, Kaitlin McCosh, and Cortney Strodtman*

Hope was just your everyday, average girl. She led a normal life. She was a very active high school senior. Hope played basketball, softball, and volleyball. She was in band, chorus, Science Olympiad, a service club, and 4-H. Hope had a steady boyfriend of three years. Hope’s younger sister, Grace, wanted to be just like Hope. Grace thought Hope was beautiful, smart, athletic, and nice. She could not help envying her older sister. Grace’s mom told her to be patient, because she would become a lot like Hope. Grace did not want to wait. She was tired of being clumsy and awkward—she wanted to be beautiful and poised like Hope. She was tired of Hope getting all the attention. Grace wanted the spotlight.

Recently, Hope had gotten sick. She had not been sick in a long time, but colds were going around. At first, Hope still went to school, because she hated getting behind. After about a week, Hope was not getting any better, and it was starting to take its toll on her. So she and her mother decided it would be best if she stayed home for a couple days to try and get better. Hope didn’t want to miss softball practice, but she realized she needed to get better soon. Prom was a little less than two months away.

When Hope kept getting worse, her parents decided she should go to the doctor. They ran several tests, the common ones for mono, even one for a tick bite. They all came back negative though. That is when Hope’s doctor tested for what everybody feared most. Hope’s blood test came back positive for leukemia.

Hope saw her future crashing down around her. She was supposed to be starting school at Florida State in the fall. They offered her a full ride to play volleyball for them, so, of course, she jumped at the opportunity right away. Her boyfriend, Colten, had even decided to go to FSU with her, so they could stay together.

Now, as the doctors were talking Hope through the steps that were going to be taken to treat her, she knew none of those things were going to happen. Hope would be in the height of her chemotherapy and radiation treatment around the end of July to at least November depending on how successful they were. All her plans were ruined.

Hope was only eighteen years old, and she was well aware of the fact that she was dying. The next few months seemed to drag on forever. Hope was tired all the time and sick from the
treatments she was receiving once a week. She managed to go to school one or two times each week. The rest of the time her teachers came to the house to tutor her and keep her caught up. Hope did manage to graduate with the rest of her class, and she went to her senior prom for a little while.

Through all of this Hope’s family just became closer, and Grace just admired her even more. Grace wanted nothing more than for her big sister to get better.

Although Hope was responding to her chemotherapy treatments, the medical bills were becoming a problem. The family could barely afford their bills, and it was only getting worse. That’s when Grace had an idea. She would try to raise money for her big sister. After some thinking, Grace decided she would ask local businesses if she could put up collection jars. Every business she asked allowed her to put a Jar in their store.

Two weeks passed. Grace checked all the jars, finding just over 1,300 dollars. It would sure help, but it was not enough. Grace decided to contact the local radio station to ask if they could help her. The radio station owner agreed and had the radio host tell its listeners about Hope’s situation. The family received hundreds of phone call about donations and helping out. After two weeks and three more radio spots, Grace had raised 70,000 dollars. It was amazing. Hope and her family were overwhelmed by the charity and generosity they had received.

Although Hope’s time had been filled with doctors and treatments, she began to notice a change in her little sister. Grace had been working so hard to help Hope that she had not realized the changes that she was undergoing. She was nearly Hope’s height and her hair had gotten long and thick. She was finally living up to her name—Grace.

So one day, while Grace was doing homework, Hope decided it was time for her to talk to Grace. She sat down behind her sister and began to braid her hair.

“What are you doing?” Grace asked.

“Just wait, I want to show you something.”

When the braid was finished, Hope began to dust some makeup onto Grace’s cheeks. She then glossed her sister’s lips and smiled at the transformation.

Pulling Grace to her feet, Hope pointed at the mirror. Still unsure, Grace peered into it. As she did, Hope held up her junior class photo. The girl in the photo and the girl in the mirror could be twins.

“It seems we look more alike than you thought,” said Hope.

Tears began to fill Grace’s eyes.

“And that’s not all that we have in common. Over the past year, you have grown up, becoming more brave and caring than I have ever been. It is time that you stop wanting to be like me, Grace. You’re far exceeding me by being you.”

For the first time in her life Grace felt really good about herself. For the rest of the summer, Grace continued her efforts to raise money. She figured Hope was well enough to go to Florida since she was responding well to treatments. Hope’s cancer was almost completely in remission. Grace realized no one had thought any more about Hope going to Florida. It seemed like the rest of her family had given up on that, but she hadn’t. She thought Florida would take back Hope’s scholarship since she would be unable to play volleyball. Grace could not let her sister’s dream of going to FSU crumble after everything she had battled through. Grace decided to make rings out of braided string as a fundraiser. They were all baby blue and came with a card attached that read: “Never give up Hope.” She asked Colten to secretly help her sell them online. He agreed and made a wonderful website all about Hope and Grace. Soon after, orders came pouring in. The rings were a hit. They soon became a symbol for all families who had had
a member battle childhood leukemia. About a month later, a leukemia foundation contacted Grace. They wanted to start making the rings in bulk for Grace with 70% of the profit going to Grace’s family and 30% going to profit leukemia research. Grace agreed and before long Hope had more than enough money to go to FSU.

Before they knew it, July was ending. Hope got a phone call from FSU’s volleyball coach, “We know everything you’ve been through because of your younger sister, Grace. We still want you to have the scholarship and be an honorary member of our team, and who knows, once you get better maybe you can play again.”

Hope was thrilled. She told her whole family. She told Grace she could use the money she raised from the rings for anything she wanted.

Even though Grace should have been ecstatic, she barely smiled. Later that night, Hope asked Grace what was wrong. Grace had explained that she had fought so hard to keep her alive, and now she felt like she was still losing her. What if something happened to Hope while she was at school? Hope assured Grace not to worry. She told Grace that through everything, Grace had grown up so much. She was truly graceful, and she had become everything she had hoped she would and so much more.

The Extinction of Goats (Ballad)

By Nicholas Goulden

One day at the petting zoo
A goat was eating hay
A little boy approached
And the goat was in dismay

Hand out to pet him
The boy stroked the air
The goat had dodged his hand
And rammed him through the air

Instead of whining and crying
The boy was hella pissed
He ran at the goat
Whose face his boot kissed

The goat was appalled
And started to charge
The boy ran away
For he wasn’t very large

From that moment on
The boy hated goats
And when the biblical rains came
The boy didn’t let them on his boats
Dance Over Russia

By Brandon Eldridge, Patrick Harper, Chris LaFleur, Steven Mattli, and Brian Scholfield

The all too familiar drone went off and immediately there was pandemonium within the room. People yelling and screaming while getting dressed only added to the din of confusion spreading throughout the room. The blood red pathway lights beaconed everyone to the doors as the loud speakers blared orders. It had happened before; it was always a false alarm but this one seemed different. The voices on the intercom were shaken and stressed more so than if this was a drill. In less than two minutes time the only sound within the room was that of the alarm. Sheets, clothes and personal belongings were strewn about the barracks floor and the cast iron bunks.

Sweaty and in a state of high alert, the men and women of the 101st Airborne were at their stations ready for another day of the deadly cat and mouse game they played. Colonel James “Dance” Smith was in his plane and rolling down the runway three minutes after the alarms went off. God he loved that plane. They just got a platoon of F-22 Raptors; the baddest, most deadly plane in the US arsenal. Colonel Smith could do the most amazing things behind the throttle of that plane. That’s how he got his nickname.

One nasty day with thunderstorms and zero visibility, he and four others were in the sky on a training mission. Smith was the bad guy this round and the other four were out for blood. It was only a training unit and no one expected the newest member of the team to live past 5 minutes. They couldn’t have been more wrong. Not only did Smith obliterate the four plane opposition, but the things he did with the plane had never been seen before. The plane was not just a machine which he flew. It seemed to follow his every command as if it were an extension of his real self. That was in a time far, far away from where he was now.

Overtaking Siberia in an attempt to cut off a supply line running to Russia for military weapons had been the easy part of the mission. Keeping the ground had been a lesson taught only by the number of body bags that had been accumulating outside the medical building. Colonel Smith was in the air though, and not on the ground veiled by black plastic. This is his home, where he belongs. Now came the wait for the advancing Russian fighters. The real games were about to begin.

Dance was not about to be killed by any Soviet Sons-a-Bitches. So he made his way to the front line of pilots where he offered his immediate services, along with his team of four other pilots. Hunting like a wild pack of wolves, the team sniffed out three Russian MIG planes. These planes, although faster, did not pack as much heat and could not defend themselves against Dance’s aggressive and graceful flying. Dance’s team took down all three of them without receiving any damage. Out for more Soviet blood, Dance led his team into enemy territory where he knew they would find trouble.

The rest of his team consisted of Snake, Crabs, Shaker, and Mallard. They had flown together for four and a half years without any of them loosing a plane. This was the Air Force’s finest team. While in Soviet airspace, Dance saw something startling. It was a giant shuttle. This shuttle looked like nothing that Dance had personally seen before. However, he remembered seeing someone’s New York Times in which there was a picture of the U.S. space shuttle and how they were trying to be the first to reach the moon. The article said that they were still 4 months away and that the soviets were supposedly 7 months out. Dance thought to himself and radioed his team. “Team, we need to blow that shuttle up. Those damn Soviets can’t beat us to the Moon.”
His team quickly disagreed. “Colonel, it’s just damn wrong to shoot down a defenseless shuttle with innocent people inside,” Snake said with clear annoyance in his voice.

“Yeah, Dance. What’re you gonna do next, blow up an orphanage?” Mallard uttered, being his usual smartass self.

“Fine, I’ll go the course alone. I refuse to lose the space race to the commies,” replied Dance.

The four buddies of the team fell back but continued to follow Dance on his kamikaze mission. Mallard, who commonly took charge, during either Dance’s absence or absent mindedness, radioed back to their superior officer alerting him of the situation and requesting further orders.

Although time was of the essence, their superior officer was way out of his league and put in an emergency call to the Commander-in-Chief, President Richard Nixon. Nixon was about as anti-red as someone could be. The orders quickly came back to destroy our own plane and pilot if he failed to comply with his return to base order. It wasn’t that Nixon wanted to be beaten by the Russians; he simply did not want to start a nuclear war, which had been brewing for many years.

Mallard radioed Dance one last time, “Dance, you have about 30 seconds to intercept. You must return to base immediately. I repeat. Return to base immediately. Failure to comply will result in deadly friendly fire. Over.”

“Oh, Mallard, you know damn well it’d take more than the four of you to take me down. Better call in another fleet. Fat chance they’ll get here before I save our country’s pride and dignity, but you could try.”

“Last warning, Dance,” Mallard echoed to the AWOL pilot. “Come get me,” Dance yelled, and he was off with a flash. With one quick whoosh and an insane barrel roll, Dance was behind the foursome and began to unload his 10mm assault rifle on the plane at the right flank. The four other planes heard the bullets flying, broke formation and went into attack and survival mode. Three seconds after opening fire, one plane went down. Crabs was unable to eject before his plane was blown into a fiery rage.

“Damn it, Dance. Crabs was a good kid. Why are you doing this?” yelled Mallard.

“For my country,” was Dance’s only reply. These words shook the minds of the three remaining pilots. Little did they know these would be the last words they would ever hear uttered from Colonel Dance.

The remaining planes all attacked as if they were each a side on an equilateral triangle. Dance turned his plane around as if he were literally turning on a dime. Two of the three planes collided and blew into a million pieces 10 miles above the earth. Mallard was the lone fighter pilot left to take care of the situation since the three others were dead.

“Status update,” rang Mallard’s earphones. “I’m flying solo now, Sir. I’ll have to take him out alone.”

The planes flew by at an astonishing Mach 3 with Mallard a good 7.8 seconds behind Dance. Mallard new he’d never catch him before he reached the shuttle which had already launched and was headed for the troposphere.

In a vain attempt to reconcile the situation, Mallard shot his final missile at Dance. It would have to be complete luck to land his target, but he had to try. With a roar of an engine so loud it would defile a man’s eardrum, the missile was off and headed for Dance’s tail end.
Dance trained Mallard. He knew his every thought before it was conjured up. He knew what he was going to do before he did it. Dance knew that missile was coming. He knew it had a date for his ass, but he had a plan.

Just a mere mile from the shuttle Dance could see the missile tailing him fast. It followed this turns, his ups and his downs. Dance continued on his intersect course for the shuttle. Mere seconds before the missile struck Dance, he ejected with perfect timing and precision. This left the plane hurdling for the shuttle and the missile inches behind. With a slam, the plane went into, through, and out of the shuttle as the missile exploded on contact somewhere in between the three.

The plane would have done the job alone, but the renegade missile finished off everything including the crew of seven that had a date with destiny and the moon.

Dance was slowly drifting towards Earth as Mallard arrived seconds too late to do anything. He waved as Mallard made his pass. All Mallard could do was shake his head in disgust and disappointment with this own failure.

“Status update,” Mallard said in a melancholy voice. “Shuttle is down, repeat shuttle is down. Dance down but alive.” A long silence followed his last word before a voice on the radio replied.

“Good work soldier. Return to base. Make sure only you return to base, over.”
This was a radio call Mallard did not want to hear. The soviets would assume Dance was dead, but unless a body was produced, the U.S. would have a mess to clean up. Mallard turned his plane around, and set a new crash course with Dance.

Being in the open with a parachute and his sidearm, Dance was waiting for Mallard to turn and finish him off. By this point Dance felt damned near invincible and prepared to shoot his sidearm and the F-22’s engine intake. Dance didn’t even hear the voice inside his head yell “idiot” before the 10mm rounds from the fighter riddled his canopy at over a mile off. Dance’s parachute failed and the last thing he saw before hitting the ground was his former friend Mallard streaking home to his wife and kids.

A True Friend
By Dhara Patel

Just in a second,
Line up you eyelashes with mine.
Take all of your tears,
And put them all upon my eyelashes.

Bundle up all of your pain,
Give them my directions.
I can’t take looking at sadness on your face,
My wish is for all of your pain to melt away.

When a friend is in need,
Count on me.
I’ll be there,
Just in a second.
Best Friends Forever
By Amy Basler, Lann Choi, Krista Fiedler, Kailye Hsia, and Jen Sestek

Kara was a short girl. She was the type that everyone called cute, but never hot. She was painfully modest and so shy that she was often overlooked or ignored when she tried to speak her mind. At 17, she had never had a boyfriend. A boy from her calculus class called her once to get help with his homework, and that was the closest thing to a boy-girl interaction she had ever had. Her best friend, Dana, was a lot like Kara except she wasn’t nearly as cute. The two girls spent nearly every weekend together. They talked mostly about school, but sometimes the conversation would turn to the opposite sex. Dana was desperately in love with Aaron, a boy she met from math team. He wasn’t all that good looking but Dana wasn’t one to care about looks. She found intelligence to be the most important quality in any person. One Saturday afternoon the two girls were sitting on the steps in front of Kara’s house.

“I found out where Aaron lives,” said Dana. Kara was confused for she had always thought of Dana’s obsession with Aaron to be like any crush she had ever had – short lived and never acted upon.

“Are you going to go see him?” Kara asked. Dana didn’t answer, but had a strange look on her face that suggested to Kara that her friend had bigger plans for that address than she let on.

“Girls, time for dinner!” Kara’s mom yelled from the kitchen. The conversation about Aaron was left on the porch and wouldn’t arise again until later. Kara knew it would come back up. Dana wouldn’t let Aaron go. She had been thinking of him constantly for three months. Kara and Dana sat down at the table.

“So how was your day, girls?” Mr. Crosner asked.
“Same old, same old” the girls replied together. From that point on, dinner was silent. Everyone was busy eating the homemade fried chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, and rolls Mrs. Crosner had prepared.

“You’re such a wonderful cook, Mrs. Crosner. Thank you for having me.” Dana politely stated.

“Yeah, thanks mom.” Kara chimed in.
“You girls run along. Your mother and I will do the dishes tonight.” said Mr. Crosner.
“Thanks,” said the girls as they pushed in their chairs. Dana then followed Kara up the stairs and into her room.

“Ah, the smell of spring! Kind of makes me think about Aaron.” Dana began.
“Everything makes you think of Aaron, Dana. So I want to know your plans with his address,” demanded Kara.
“Welcome, he lives off of Taylor lane, which is about two blocks from the swimming pool. As you know, Saturday is opening day!” Dana excitedly told Kara. “So on Saturday, I’ll have my mom leave us the car to take to the pool. Then we can go to Aaron’s house. Before you begin, we’re just going to drive by it.”
“I don’t know about all this.” Kara said as she took her Chemistry book out of her back pack.

“Will you just relax? Nothing’s going to happen. I won’t stop or anything. I pinky promise.” Dana convincingly said to Kara as she held her pinky up in the air.

“OK, but only if there’s no trouble and we don’t stay long.” Kara said with a sigh. She reached out and pinky shook with Dana.
“Awesome! I’m so excited! Come on Saturday!” Dana shrialed with excitement.
Kara looked up from her Chemistry book. “Ok, freak be quiet or something because I
have a quiz to study for,” She said with a smile.
“Alright, I’m off! I’ll see you in pre-calc tomorrow,” Dana yelled back as she closed
Kara’s door.
Saturday came by more quickly than Kara would have liked. Kara had never really
enjoyed hearing about Aaron for hours on end, especially for three months. Not only could she
not hear Aaron’s name without shuttering, she couldn’t look at him either. Lately Aaron had
been saying Hi to her in the hall, and Kara wondered if he knew Dana liked him. Maybe he
figured she would put in a good word for him, like he needed that. Aaron had lately been Dana’s
focus and Kara missed her friend’s talk about differential equations. Kara started to get ready to
go to the pool and she looked at herself on the way out.
“I guess I look cute enough,” she laughed as she went to meet Dana at the door.
When they arrived at the pool, Aaron was there. He was staring right at them. Dana
got to the lockers after blushing furiously, while Kara waited. She soon felt a tap on her
shoulder.
“Hi, Kara,” Aaron said smiling. Kara looked at him quickly and noticed the intensity in
his eyes. This freaked her out. She was not used to boys looking at her like that.
“Hey Aaron,” she responded, looking up, then quickly looking down at the ground again.
“Later I was wondering if maybe you and I could go to a movie or something.” said
Aaron.
“What?!” Kara exclaimed, not believing her ears. This could not be happening.
“To be honest, I kind of like you, Kara. I have for a while now. I just figured that you
maybe would consider…” explained Aaron.
Dana returned.
“Hi Aaron,” she said in a voice deeper than her normal one. “What brings you over
here?”
“I was just talking to Kara,” looking directly at Kara as he said it.
“I got to go, I’ll be back,” he announced as he slowly walked away.
“I think he likes me!” Dana said happily. “Why else would he come over here?”
Kara looked at her friend and felt a tug at her conscience. What was she going to do?
Should she ruin her friend’s happiness and be honest with her? She wanted, naturally, to tell her
friend she’d been asked out, but she also didn’t want to crush her dreams of being with Aaron.
This is probably one of the worst situations a best friend could be in. Either way, she felt
like her friendship would be in jeopardy. “Only if boys didn’t exist! We wouldn’t be having this
problem!” she thought to herself. Kara contemplated long and hard about what to do. She
figured that the easiest thing to do was talk to Aaron about the situation. Kara started looking
around for him, hoping to find him at a good time and not get distracted or interrupted. At last,
she spotted him talking with a group of his friends. She tapped him lightly on his shoulder and
he turned around and his face filled up with a surprised smile.
“Does this mean yes, you will go out with me?” Aaron asked.
“Aaron, about that, I have to tell you something that I think you should know.” Kara’s
voice trembled. He gave Kara a concerned look. “Dana…” Kara paused. Did she really think it
was the right thing to do?
“What about Dana?” Aaron questioned patiently.
“Dana... she has a real big crush on you Aaron. No, it’s not a crush anymore, she really likes you. She thinks that you like her too. It’s not just Dana, I can’t do this because I don’t have the same kind of feelings that you have for me. It would be wrong of me to let you think that I do.”

A minute passed, but it felt like an hour to Kara. She finally had the courage to look up into his eyes. His face was filled with mixed emotions. Pain, shock, sadness.

“Wow, I’m just speechless. I had no idea Dana had feelings for me. Kara, I understand. You did the right thing and that actually gives me more of a reason to like you. Now I know though, and I won’t always wonder and regret,” said Aaron. Kara let out a big sigh of relief. It went much better than she expected.

“I still hope that we can be friends,” said Kara. Aaron smiled and they said goodbye. She went out back to the pool to look for her best friend. However she was surprised to see Dana standing by the pool with her hands on her hips. She didn’t look happy.

“I looked all over for you and finally saw you with Aaron. What were you doing over there? What were you guys talking about? I didn’t know you guys were such good friends,” Dana said. For the first time, Kara felt somewhat speechless. She didn’t know what to tell her friend. If she told her the truth, Dana would be hurt. If she didn’t, Dana would know she was lying. She could always tell. Kara decided that best friends don’t lie to each other and went on to tell her the truth.

“Well, we’re not that great of friends, but he would always say Hi to me at school. When you went to the lockers, he came up to me and told me that he liked me and asked me out on a date,” Kara said hesitantly. Before she could finish, Dana interrupted her, “I can’t believe this. I feel like such a fool. All along I told you that I liked him, but you secretly liked him too. Did you go over there and tell him that you would absolutely LOVE to go on a date with him? Huh? Huh??” Dana prodded.

Surprised at how hurt her best friend was, Kara couldn’t help but feel like she had some how betrayed Dana. “No! Of course not! You and I are best friends always and forever. I went over there to tell him that I didn’t have feelings for him like that and just wanted to be friends and nothing more,” Kara replied.

It seemed Dana didn’t know what else to say. She burst out into tears and gave Kara a hug. “I didn’t think you would do that to me, but it’s just that I like him so much. I thought he liked me, but I was wrong. I guess some things just weren’t meant to be. I’m sorry I said all those awful things to you” Dana said as her lips trembled. The girls hugged as they made up.

“Best friends forever!” they both screamed.

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**Getting the Grade**
*By Tracey Hysong*

Shoot for A’s, earn B’s
Shoot for B’s, and I earn C’s
Now I need some ZZZ’s!
You Are Cordially Invited

By Anica Bailey, Josh Boudeman, Anna Johnson, Priyanka Patel, Alisa Zevleva

Encouraging the flower girl down the aisle, keeping a watchful eye over the cake, coordinating music and lights...it’s all apart of my job as a wedding planner, or more eloquently, a wedding specialist. It is up to me to become the bride’s right-hand woman, best friend, psychic, and at times therapist, all while overseeing the most important day of her life. I’ve dealt with every personality in the business, from controlling mothers to obsessively compulsive perfectionists. I pride myself on always being prepared and hold true to the motto that “Every problem has a solution,” whether it be the flowers missing in action or smudged icing on the wedding cake.

There we were, right on schedule, inside the bride’s suite, preparing for the commencement of the Gilbert-Haynes wedding. My bride had just pointed out a stain on the bodice of her gown, so I expertly pulled out my “everything for any situation kit” which contained tried and true Shout-It-Out wipes. As I was down on my knees furiously scrubbing the stain, the bride was focused on herself in the mirror. Suddenly, I heard a few sniffles, and at once the bride hysterically broke into tears proclaiming that the stain on her wedding dress symbolized the stain on her relationship with the groom and on this train wreck of a marriage.

“Now what’s all this?” I said, trying not to lose this expensive contract. “You told me just the other day that this man was the best thing that ever happened to you.”

“I don’t know anymore,” sobbed the bride, “I don’t want to be hurt when Thomas finds out about me. I know he won’t want me anymore!”

“Wait a minute, wait a minute. What could be so bad that would make the man who is about to pledge his eternal love to you suddenly turn his back on you?”

“I...I,” sputtered the bride, “I never told him who I really am!”

“You are Cindy Haynes, daughter of Deborah and Michael, a successful interior decorator and fiancée of Thomas Gilbert! What’s so bad about that?” I rationalized.

“That’s not who I am!” Cindy shrieked.

“Then who are you?”

“I don’t know. I washed up on the beach one day while my parents were walking. I had shells braided into my hair and I never cried. I’m a freak with no parents and no past!”

Stunned, I tried to figure a way to make Cindy feel less like a freak. “I don’t think that’s necessarily a bad thing,” I said, “This should make you seem more exotic to Thomas and it will give you something to work on in your relationship. You can work together to find your parents!”

“You don’t understand,” whined Cindy, “Thomas doesn’t like people without a background. He loves history and bragging about his pure-blooded Irish roots. He thinks that I am full-blooded Irish like my parents, and he won’t marry me if I’m not!”

Thinking that Thomas was more of a freak than Cindy, I told her that I would help her to tell Thomas, and that we could postpone the wedding until we found out where she was from.

On the way to Thomas’s changing room, Cindy started to draw back. “Maybe I should just keep up the charade,” she said, “I don’t want to lose Thomas, I love him!”

“You can’t really love someone if you are pretending to be something you aren’t. If Thomas really loves you, then he won’t care that you might not be full-Irish. He won’t be able to
live another day without you as his wife, and the two of you will be off to Ireland on your honeymoon.”

“Alright, I’ll do it. Thomas loves me. He won’t cast me away just because of my birth circumstances!”

We entered Thomas’s room to find him dressed and ready in his green tuxedo. His hair flamed against the contrasting color and to me he looked like a green torch.

“Hello Thomas,” murmured Cindy as we entered the room. “I see you’re ready!”

“Well, Cindy!” Thomas said surprised, “I’m not really supposed to see you in you wedding gown until the ceremony, right?”

“This was kind of urgent,” I said when Cindy remained silent. “You see, Cindy needs to tell you something.”

Cindy, now at the verge of a hysterical breakdown, looked longingly into Thomas’s eyes.

“Thomas, I don’t know how to tell you this, but I have to tell you because I love you.”

“What do you mean,” uttered Thomas as he fidgeted with the buttons of his tuxedo.

With a deep breath, Cindy abruptly spilled the beans. “I am not Irish. Do you understand? NOT IRISH! I don’t have any parents. I will understand if you don’t want to marry me.”

“Oh, of course, I don’t want to marry you now!” Thomas jokingly stated at Cindy’s ridiculous assumption. “What? Did you think I loved you because of your background? No, Cindy. I love you because you cry at the sight of inspirational color schemes. I love you because you spend an hour making up the bed, just to crawl back in. I love your devotion to the stray cats in the neighborhood and the way Law and Order depresses you. I love your laugh lines, and the way you get the cutest look on your face while lecturing me about leaving the toilet seat up. It takes courage to tell the person you love your innermost secrets, which only makes me love you more. Nothing could stop me from marrying you.”

“Oh, Thomas!” exclaimed Cindy. “I love you too.” As she leaned in to kiss her future husband, I pulled her away. I didn’t want to delay the wedding any further. “Two freaks make a lovely couple,” I thought as we exited the room.

We quickly rushed back into the bride’s dressing room and I continued trying to remove the stain. Being already 14 minutes and 36 seconds behind schedule I tried to remain calm. If we were going to get this show on the road, this stain needed to come out now, pictures were in half an hour. So, I called in back up, “The number for Launder’s Dry Cleaning, please,” I chimed on the cordless. Within 6 minutes the cleaning crew had arrived and I was off to the kitchen.

“The wedding cake is missing,” yelled the bakery manager.

“The lamb is burnt and we have run out of phyllo dough for the bureki,” yelled the chef, and then I heard, “The family and staff drank all of the Guinness!” Oh no! I was prepared, yes for many things, but this was out of my league. We had special ordered three trucks over two months ago! I had to sit down. “Think,” I said to myself. There was only one way out of this. I gave the chef a thousand dollars out of the emergency fund for the new lamb and spinach. Then I gave the baker my keys for the “special cooler” and said, “Extra cake on the second shelf, left corner.” Now, for the challenge.

I picked 59 staff members and decided that the only way to get enough beer would be to raid the city. Everyone on their own. Everyone was sent to a different store in the area and ordered to buy all the Guinness. 29 minutes and 3, 4, 5 seconds behind schedule, my crew was attempting mission impossible, going where few men have gone before, from the gas station on the corner to the home away from home of winos. Approaching the bridal suite, I disguised my
ongoing nervous breakdown with a positive smile and entered the room. I inspected the cleaning crew’s performance and every aspect of the bridesmaids’ attire, while reviewing a mental checklist. With a quick reassurance to the bride of her beauty and love, I eyed the clock on the mantle. Five minutes ‘til I do, and it was steadily becoming a realization that this might be my first sober reception. As I ushered the party down various stairwells, meant to conceal their appearance from late-arriving guests, ten men quickly darted past us carrying cases of Guinness. Following the train was my assistant, who winked at me as he passed. I breathed a sigh of relief, as I maneuvered the bride to her designated spot. With one last adjustment to the bride’s train, the doors opened, the familiar tune began, and I sent the bride down the aisle to her awaiting groom.

Bedtime Story
By Heidi Wang

“Once upon a time, there was a bunny named Spencer. He had the shiniest fur and the whitest coat. And most of all, he loved to hop around and play with his friends. Often times he would be chasing after butterflies, trying to catch them.

One day, it began to rain. It was sprinkling just the way Spencer liked it and how he wanted to play outside. But Mother said he would catch a fever and Spencer didn’t like being sick. So he waited patiently by the window watching all his friends playing outside in the rain, and oh how he wanted to join them.

Finally it stopped raining and Spencer hopped to his friends. They began playing in the mud and rolling around in the wet grass, feeling the coolness of the wet grass against their furs. The sun was beginning to set and all their mothers had started to call them back. It wasn’t safe to be outside at dark. The Big Bad Wolf came out at night. Spencer and his friends were taught to stay away from the Big Bad Wolf. Sometimes, when they were out too late, their mothers would tell them the Big Bad Wolf was going to get them for staying out too long.

But they were older now and they didn’t fear the Big Bad Wolf. No one had ever seen it before. It was just a way for their mothers to scare them. Spencer decided to stay outside a little longer and watch the sun set. As he was sitting there, he saw a beautiful white bunny with spotted fur. He decided to talk to her and hopped right up to her.

“Hi, I’m Spencer,” she was startled. Without giving him another glance, she continued to hop away. “Wait, where are you going?”

“I don’t know you and you’re dirty. Look at me, my fur is nice and clean. But you’re all muddy.” Spencer just stood there and watched her hop away.

The next day, Spencer decided to take a bath in the lake. When he returned last night, his mother had scolded him for playing in the mud and told him to wash off all that dirt the next morning.

All of a sudden, Spencer saw all his friends hopping away frantically. They were going everywhere.

“Hey, Richard, what’s going on? Why’s everyone running away?” He caught one his friends and hopped beside him.
“It’s the Big Bad Wolf! He came out of nowhere and was trying to catch us. So we all ran away.” Richard quickly hopped away and returned home to hide.

Being curious, Spencer wanted to see what the Big Bad Wolf looked like. He wasn’t scared of him. Spencer quietly hopped around looking for the Big Bad Wolf. He spotted the Wolf on the other side of the lake. With that beautiful white bunny with the spotted fur. She was trapped.

Feeling heroic, Spencer decided to save her. He didn’t know what he could do against that big creature across the lake, but he had to try. And though Spencer came up with a million ideas, none of them would work. The Big Bad Wolf was just too big. Spencer couldn’t win against the Wolf no matter how hard he tried.

And then it hit him. He hopped towards the white bunny, picked her up, and ran as hard as he could. The Wolf was surprised, but soon after, he began to run after them.”

“What happens next Daddy? What happens next? Did they escape?” Jack and Jill looked at their dad expectantly, wanting for him to finish the story.

“That’s for another day kids. Time for bed!” Spencer tucked his children in and closed the lights. His wife, Lala, was watching from the doorway. And to Spencer, even after many years, Lala still looked beautiful with her white spotted fur.

If Pigs Could Fly
By Patrick Harper

I kind of wish that pigs could fly
‘cause then I’d have my way.
If pigs could fly I’d finally have
that game I want to play.

My mother says when pigs can fly
I can stay home from school.
And teacher says when pigs grow wings
I can ignore the rules.

That girl will finally kiss me
when pigs can roam the skies.
And Bro will let me have his bike,
he said, when pigs can fly.

When pigs can fly I’ll have it all,
That’s what everybody said.
Although, I’m kind of scared to get
pig droppings on my head.
Music
By Heidi Wang

Melodic
Lively viv-
acious and
appeal -ing.
Every-
loves to tap
their feet
to it. Try
listening
to the music
and hear the
sweet sweet
sound. The
melody draws
you in. Lose
yourself in a
separate world
No war, conflict,

Or strife. Just peace,
quiet. Everyone happy,
enjoying what they hear.
Release your anger or
Share your happiness.
Play it loud, play it
Soft. Transcribe
Your feeling
into song.

Haiku
By Samantha Swatek

I want to start life
I’ve been waiting everyday
You will come to me.

Groundhog
By Heidi Wang

The groundhog awakes
It’s time to check the weather
Where is my shadow?
Not Quite Enough
By Kyle Amelung

So much for going slow
I had no idea what to do
It’s as if I didn’t even know

Together, I thought we would grow
Like so many do
So much for going slow

Freezing outside in the Winter snow
I couldn’t follow you
It’s as if I didn’t even know

The whole world turned into my foe
and it’s like you did too
So much for going slow

Was this all just a show
and you were waiting for a queue?
It’s as if I didn’t even know

I think it’s time for me to go
Maybe everything really is dark blue
So much for going slow
It’s as if I didn’t even know

The Call!
By Christine Grogan

Walking through the mall today,
I saw a sign that made me stay!

The neon letters jumped out at me,
And I walked into the store, as big as the sea.

I saw a pink shirt, calling my name,
Even though I had one that looked the same!

The watermelon color was so bright,
And it fit, to my delight.
Life Doesn’t Seem the Same
By Priyanka Patel

Life doesn’t seem same
With those daring red roses
And those savory dark chocolates
But I still have found a way to move on

Life doesn’t seem same
With every haunting moment
And the shallow laughter
But I still have found a way to move on

Life doesn’t seem same
With the careless mistake I have made
Which resulted in the loss of you
But you still found a way to forgive me

Life seems unfair
When you were good to me
But I never got the chance to repay
But still I will manage to find a way

Cut Up Poem
Valerie Alstat

Lost as a candle lit at noon,
Not lost in you.
Lost as a snowflake in the sea,
And I find you still.
Lost as a light is lost in light,
A spirit—put out.
Not lost, although I long to be.
Oh plunge me deep in love, beautiful and bright.
Swept by the tempest of your love,
A taper in a rushing wind.
My senses, leave me deaf and blind,
Yet I am I,
Who long to be
You love me
I am not yours.
Puppy’s Playhouse
By Danielle Ebert

What a mess you made!
As I look down at two sets of puppy eyes,
Which one was it?

They both look so innocent,
But everything is tore up, come one guys
What a mess you made!

I look around and the table leg is bent
And my tennis shoes have been chewed, what a surprise.
Which one was it?

The ground is wet and it smells of mint
Listerine covers the floor, I hope that dries.
What a mess you made!

There is food in the crack of the vent
It looks like cereal, and old French fries.
Which one was it?

Look at the wall, now there’s a dent
I will have to clean up until sunrise
What a mess you made!
Which one was it?

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Haiku
By Brian Scholfield

The sun beats harshly
Down upon my reddened face
Tree shade, my comfort

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Work
By Matt Clifton

I do not like work
Waking up and doing stuff
I could be a bum
Wonder
By Anica Bailey, Josh Boudeman, Anna Johnson, Priyanka Patel, Alisa Zevlever

Once there was a man named Jameison. His house stood on the edge of a cliff overlooking the sea. He lived alone and seemed content, but he secretly dreamed of love and starting a family. His only companion on the gloomy cliff house was a beautiful canary named Asper.

Asper had lived with Jameison as long as she could remember. She loved the man dearly, and it pained her to see him lonely. On cold winter nights she would sing to him with all of her heart, but yet he still seemed depressed.

When it was warm and sunny outside, Jameison would let Asper fly in the wilderness. She always came back to him, even when the calls of nature tempted her to adventure and to leave the man forever.

One day on her wilderness flight, she saw a wolf puppy cornered by a bear, with her mother nowhere in sight. Asper flew to the baby’s rescue. With her bright yellow colors and quick maneuvering, Asper distracted the bear so that the puppy could run to her mother.

Exhausted, Asper flew slowly beside the puppy until she reached her mother. The adult wolf was very grateful. In return for saving her child, the wolf told Asper of a special spring that could grant everyone their greatest wish. The wolf also warned of a terrible sorcerer that guarded the spring and demanded payment for use of its magic.

Intrigued by the thought of the spring, Asper flew to it, passing many dangerous parts of the forest on her way. Back at the cliff top house, Jameison grew worried that Asper had not returned and began to despair that she had been eaten by a hawk or other predator.

When Asper began to hear the spring, she saw a trail of animals going the same way as she was. She knew that she was not the only one that knew about the spring.

A crowd stood around a man a little way up. This must be the sorcerer, thought Asper. The man was tall and angular, with a bald head that shone in the distant sun. He wore a dark robe that flowed around him as if it were a living organism. In his right hand he carried a staff made of imposing ironwood.

“He sure knows how to present himself,” thought Asper as she neared the man. “I wonder what he wants in return for one wish?”

The man addressed each creature kindly, asking for its purpose there. But at each reply, the man cast the animal away with a cry of disgust. He shouted, “Is there no being that is not selfish in this wood?”

Asper wondered what the sorcerer meant. How can a wish be unselfish? All she wanted was happiness for Jameison. She couldn’t imagine the sorcerer turning down this request. Asper swooped down and got her place in line. There was a deer, a beaver, and a family of woodchucks in line in front of her. When it came to be her turn, the giant man looked upon her with impatient eyes. “Well?” he mused. Asper was frozen in terror. As she looked at the movement of the sorcerors’s robe, she noticed a pair of eyes. Then another. And another. The robe truly was alive! It must’ve been made of 20-30 snakes with their tails all connected at the neck of the sorcerer.

Asper flew away in fear of the sorcerer and his robe. Jameison was thrilled to see her back home. He wished desperately that he could know what adventures Asper had been on. She was so lucky to be able to fly. Jameison felt almost imprisoned, stuck to the cold floor of his house on the cliff.
The next day Asper decided she would return to the magical spring and try her luck again. When she arrived, there was a mouse bathing in the spring. He was surrounded by six or seven female mice in bright-colored bikinis. “How selfish is that?” thought Asper. She flew to the front of the line and confronted the guardian sorcerer. “What did HE wish for?” she demanded.

The man replied, “He wished that his sisters could bathe in the spring for they have gone their entire lives without a bath. I told him that he could join them, as he was quite rancid himself.”

“Oh.” Feeling humiliated, Asper once again returned home empty-handed. As usual Asper was received with joy from Jameison, but on this evening, there was something else gleaming in Jameison’s eyes. Not simply sadness for his position, but a type of envy and longing for Asper’s spirit. Throughout the night Asper continued to steal glimpses at her dear Jameison and the yearning which lay beneath the surface. It was at these instances that Asper gained insight into what would truly bring happiness to Jameison’s desolate existence. Before night’s end Asper was resolved upon returning to the spring.

She decided she would try her luck again the very next morning, and if her wish were to come true, Jameison would be so happy he would let her find a boyfriendfriend for herself Next morning she flew to the forest, and once again the sorcerer asked her for her wish. She built up her courage and said, “I want my master, Jameison, to have a beautiful wife and kids.”

The most ironic thing happened. The sorcerer smiled at Asper and said, “I am giving you this pouch. Don’t open it. Just throw it into the spring.”

It was a velvety-purple pouch, kind of heavy for Asper and smelled like sweet jasmine fragrance. Asper flew over the spring, and threw the pouch into the spring. The moment the pouch hit the surface, that same instant, there was a great lightening in the sky without any clouds. Asper glanced at the sorcerer. He clapped his hand and smiled to himself. “Your wish has been granted.”

Asper was really happy and flew back home to see if Jameison had a wife and children. Upon reaching home, she saw Jameison alone but happy.

Asper wondered why there was no wife and child with Jameison. She flew toward him and landed on his shoulder. Suddenly, everything around her went dark, and she lost all awareness.

When Asper awoke, she was lying on Jameison’s bed. She started to flutter to her feet when she realized she was no longer a bird. She stared in disbelief at her new human body and wondered if she was still dreaming.

She walked outside and saw Jameison waiting for her with a baby in his arms. “Hello, Asper,” he whispered, “This is our child, Angela.” Asper knew then that the sorcerer had made her Jameison’s desired wife and had given them a baby to care for. Asper glowed with happiness and joined her beloved Jameison to gaze in wonder at their dear baby.
The Super Bowl
By Keith Doehring, Brent Kassel, Kim Ly, Derek Palisch, Maulik Patel

The Super Bowl was just one week away, and I knew I would not be satisfied with watching this game on T.V. This year’s game featured my favorite team, the undefeated St. Louis Rams, facing a team that I hate, the undefeated Oakland Raiders. For the first time in the history of football two undefeated teams were to be playing in the Super Bowl. At that precise moment I made the decision that I was going to do whatever it took to get to Detroit and see the game.

I determined I needed three items for me and my best bud, T.J., to see the game. These items included tickets to the game, transportation to Detroit, and a place to stay in Detroit. I know what you are thinking. “Didn’t I need a way to get home?” I really was not worried about getting home at that point. I knew if I saw the game, I would be so grateful that I would walk back to St. Louis from Detroit.

Tickets to the game seemed to be my number one priority. So I logged into eBay to try and find some tickets. T.J. and I had two thousand dollars in the bank, and we were willing to spend every penny. It was at this point that I came across the first of several problems. The cheapest tickets on eBay were selling for two thousand dollars a piece. I thought for a minute about buying one ticket with our money, then playing T.J. some billiards to see which one of us got to go to the game. I was ashamed the thought had entered my mind. I couldn’t cheat my friend out of the opportunity to see the Super Bowl.

After becoming slightly depressed about my lack of luck on eBay, I turned on the radio. After a few songs had played, a DJ came on and made the announcement that would change my life. That’s right. At South County Mall the Point was holding a contest and giving away a free trip for two to the Super Bowl.

I was so excited I didn’t even listen to what I had to do to win the contest. I called up T.J. and told him to be ready in 5 minutes ‘cause I was picking him up, and we were going to South County Mall. On the drive there I was so excited I couldn’t even think straight. I almost got in three wrecks because I was driving like a mad man. Once we got there, T.J. and I ran up to the booth where they were holding the contest and asked, “where do we register for the Super Bowl tickets?”

“Well, right here,” said the attendant. “There is just one problem. To register you have to be a woman.”

“What?” I shouted. “How the hell can you have a contest for just women?”

“It’s a bikini contest, dude,” he said.

We started to walk away when all of a sudden I had a brilliant idea. T.J. is pretty skinny. I could dress him up as a woman and he could enter the contest.

At first he said no way, but after I reminded him it was for Super Bowl tickets, he reluctantly agreed. He still didn’t think it would work though. We went to J C Penny’s to find a bikini that would “cover” T.J. I ended up buying him a yellow polka dot bikini because he hated it the most, and I thought it was funny. We also bought a wig and some toilet paper and a razor. It was the funniest thing I had ever seen watching him shave his legs and chest.

When it was all said and done, T.J. was the ugliest woman I had ever seen. But I thought, “What the hell, let’s try it.”

T.J. entered the contest, and to everyone’s surprise, actually won. Apparently the judge was a cross dresser himself.
We were so thrilled to win those tickets. T.J. was so thrilled that he kept the bikini on the whole day. As we were going home, we were talking about all the things we needed to get together and figure out how to get to Detroit from St. Louis. When we got home, I hoped on the computer to get the directions because we had to leave the very next day early in the morning. The computer told us the quickest way to get to Detroit is to take 55 N to Chicago and then get on 270 E. 270 E would turn into 70 E and that would lead us straight to Detroit and to Canada if we wanted to go. The whole trip would take about 10 – 11 hours. So because of that, T.J. and I decided to go to sleep early and leave at 4 AM. T.J. was so excited he couldn’t even sleep. The whole time he double checked, no, triple checked, all the things he was going to bring. I too was really excited and couldn’t really sleep, but I forced myself because I knew that I was going to be driving until Chicago.

At about 3:55 T.J. came into my room and woke me up because it was time to hit the road. I quickly washed my face and brushed my teeth and went downstairs. To my amazement all our stuff was gone. I asked T.J. where it went and he coolly replied, “It’s all in the car, man.” I should have known. So both T.J. and I hopped into the car, strapped ourselves in, and we were off to Detroit, birthplace of the kiss army yeah …..Baby. Alright. I had to work at calming myself down, but within 20 miles from St. Louis, T.J. was already asleep. Oh, well, I thought to myself, it was probably for the best since he would have to drive the rest of the way. About 100 miles further down the road, I decided it was probably a good time to stop and get some gas. We were making great time and I had to urinate. I found a gas station and screamed, “Wake up T.J.” and made sure that he didn’t want to go to the bathroom.

He just rolled over, head hanging out the window. I returned and was going to start up again, but I didn’t think we should be going down the highway with T.J.’s head flopping out the window. I pushed it in, but by the time I got around to my side, he’d rolled back. So I knelt on my seat, pulled his head in with one hand, while rolling up the window with the other. This apparently looked strange to the State Patrolman parked next to me. He came over to investigate. “Your friend there drunk? Doped up? What?”

His tone of voice scared me, so I slapped T.J. awake. Groggily he told me to shove it. Frantic, I yelled and insisted he wake up and see what was happening. Finally, he saw the uniform next to me and started to come to. He sat up, yawned, and asked if it was his turn to drive. I relaxed, but it didn’t help. The cop apparently had a quota to make. He asked us to follow him to town while he checked us out—but the town he suggested was going in the wrong direction.

I asked what on earth we had done wrong. T.J. was awake, alert and asking too. We explained about the game, the time, the miles we had yet to travel, everything. He was unmoved. Who ever heard of a patrolman uninterested in football? We must have found the only one in the U.S. We begged. He said, “Ah, you can watch it on TV. See it lots better with close-ups and replays. Anyway you don’t want to be in Detroit this weekend. I have it on good authority the next terrorist attack will be there this Sunday. Let’s go, boys. You can follow me in your car, or we can lock your car and you can ride in mine. Which will it be?”

We chose to follow him 30 miles out of our way to lose even more time. The whole way there, T.J. and I were extremely frustrated. How could this cop not understand our situation? Our chance in a lifetime now looked bleak with this jerk of a cop on our case. About 25 minutes later, we arrived in some town called Irksville. What kind of town name is Irksville, anyway? Anyway we got out of our car and stepped into the old police station. There wasn’t anyone there
but the cop that brought us there and the sheriff. “Well, well, what do we have here, Petey?” the sheriff said, “Another bunch of hooligans? Where were you guys off to?”

“The Super Bowl, sir,” I said. T.J. explained our situation to him. To my surprise, he empathized with our situation. He was going to let us go.

“Now how are you going to keep these boys from watching the game of a lifetime, Petey?” the sheriff said. “Go on ahead and go! Have a good time!”

Without any hesitation we left. Driving fast but as carefully as possible since we didn’t want to get pulled over again, we were hoping to make up for the hour we lost from being at the police station. I was getting tired. “Hey, T.J., you wanna’ take over the wheel? I could use a little rest.”

“How about in an hour at the next rest stop,” he said.

My eyelids were getting kind of heavy. I was really excited about the Super Bowl, but I didn’t get any sleep the night before so it was kicking in. All of a sudden, “Thump!” the car bounced. It felt like I hit a huge pot hole. I stopped right away. I wanted to see if my tires were okay. Now wide awake, I stepped out of my car. My tires seemed fine. Well, what was this? Blood stains by my headlight? Oh no! What if I hit something? After all, I was really tired. I heard something whimpering. I looked back on the road and saw some kind of animal. Maybe a dog? Still being too far for me to identify the creature, I walked towards it.

“Oh, my God,” I said to myself as I stared at the creature in disbelief.

T.J. asked, “What is it?”

“I have no idea,” I replied. “It’s not a person though. I think we should run it over again and end its suffering.”

T.J. agreed, so we hoped back in the car and ran it over again and headed off on our way to Detroit.

The rest of the trip went smoothly, and 6 hours later I woke up in Detroit, T.J. still behind the wheel. In a matter of minutes we were at Ford Field. I couldn’t believe we were actually here. Everything even seemed strange to me, especially how we got here in the first place. Oh well, I was now at Ford Field in Detroit and cared little about anything else.

Then something strange happened. I caught a glimpse of someone who looked very familiar. I thought about it for a minute and suddenly I began to panic. It was the judge at the bikini contest, and he was acting nervous. It suddenly dawned on me, we had to win for some reason, and the reason had something to do with the strange cop talking about terrorism and the thing we hit.

Oh, my God, the judge and strange officer were the same person, and whatever we hit meant something. Suddenly I thought about how long we stopped, and wondered if someone could have tampered with the car. I ran to the car and noticed an extra bag. “What have I done? My carelessness has ruined everything.”

Seconds later a loud roar and a cloud of smoke filled the paralyzed city of Detroit.