

STRUAN



2009-2010
Christ School Journal
of Writing and Art

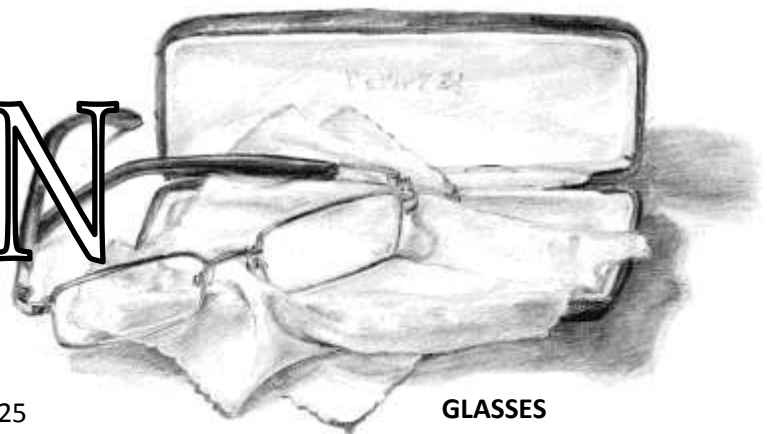
Editor's note:

The writing and the artwork in this book were done independently.
The writing is not intended to describe the art, nor the art to illustrate the writing.
We hope you will simply enjoy both.

published at Christ School April 2010

editing and layout by Betty Jane Weil

STRUAN



WRITING

| | |
|---|----|
| T. D. Dixon | |
| <i>A Childhood Memory</i> | 25 |
| Vincent Draddy | |
| <i>The Battle of Carentan:</i> | |
| <i>Through Eagles' Eyes</i> | 26 |
| <i>Just Another Love Story</i> | 45 |
| Gabriel Dunsmith | |
| <i>Heaven</i> | 9 |
| <i>Summer Flies</i> | 35 |
| Jordan Farquharson | |
| <i>Fly</i> | 22 |
| Dylan Gale | |
| <i>Fall of the Intellectual</i> | 8 |
| <i>Civilization</i> | 44 |
| Jeff Hudak | |
| <i>The Empty House</i> | 32 |
| Chambers Loomis | |
| <i>The Cup of Tea</i> | 4 |
| <i>Repercussions</i> | 13 |
| Frank Lucius | |
| <i>Trees</i> | 37 |
| Thomas Mackie | |
| <i>Light</i> | 6 |
| David Miller | |
| <i>The Sphere of Boringness</i> | 17 |
| Colby Moore | |
| <i>Responsibility</i> | 23 |
| <i>The Lick</i> | 33 |
| Marshall Plumlee | |
| <i>My Voice</i> | 15 |
| <i>The Hunted</i> | 42 |
| Andrew Roig | |
| <i>A Lotus Lost In a Sea of Gold</i> | 3 |
| Grayson Secor | |
| <i>Dawn of Man</i> | 19 |
| Jervis Stuart | |
| <i>Move Woman</i> | 41 |
| Dylan Wiemer | |
| <i>Football From a Girl's Perspective</i> | 36 |

GLASSES

drawing by James Feng

ARTWORK

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| Chandler Ding | |
| <i>An Old Man</i> | 38 |
| James Feng | |
| <i>Chapel</i> | cover |
| <i>Glasses</i> | 1 |
| <i>Gear</i> | 8 |
| <i>Shoes</i> | 22 |
| <i>Mirror</i> | 34 |
| <i>Flute</i> | 35 |
| <i>Cards</i> | 40 |
| Evan Johnson | |
| <i>Deployment</i> | 27 |
| Hyun Jae Kim | |
| <i>Apple</i> | 2 |
| <i>Tear</i> | 32 |
| Christopher Krolak | |
| <i>Skylight</i> | 7 |
| <i>Heights</i> | 20, 21 |
| <i>Downtown</i> | 24 |
| Ross Lalor | |
| <i>Bird</i> | 12 |
| <i>PyroJourney</i> | 14 |
| Charlie Martin | |
| <i>A Confused Mind</i> | 16 |
| Derrick Pace | |
| <i>Tree of Fire</i> | 43 |
| Ellsworth Parham | |
| <i>Fangs</i> | 31 |
| Lucas Troutman | |
| <i>Weeping</i> | 41 |
| <i>Catfish</i> | 44 |
| Dean Zhang | |
| <i>Cat</i> | 18 |
| <i>Girl</i> | 36 |



APPLE *drawing* by Hyun Jae Kim

A LOTUS LOST IN A SEA OF GOLD

by Andrew Roig

Oh a marvelous sight to see
Pass the rusted blade and dented hoof
Next to a crude necessity
Not water, or oil but a well of necessity
Necessity? Yes Necessity!
A necessity so bright, so gloom
So required, so sought, so acquired by man but not yet
It is near a lip in the sea so big yet unseen
Speak, shout, yell, whisper it
A word, the one on the left
Pass the cliff, pass the flock, pass the tree
Over there, look and see
The grandeur, the grandiose,
a grand yet bland necessity

The ground is black
The sky is white
The house is square, on two planes not three
(Three is much too much)
It rocks and creaks
sways and speaks
The only word it needs in a sea of gold
With a fellow in the sand below the throes
A dash of purple, a blend of green
Looks up and sees a house on two planes not three
set up shop next to the well of necessity
The necessity didn't necessarily see it necessary to move
It was just fine
Between a lotus, a house, then the sea
Its home
Its sea of gold

THE CUP OF TEA

by Chambers Loomis

"Grab me a candle so I can read this letter!" the King said. Bayard hurried off to satisfy his master's request. He had been taken in by the King as a homeless boy nearly twenty years earlier and was now the King's most trusted servant. He had grown up playing with the King's youngest daughter, Isabella, who was the most gracious girl in the land. She would carry on a conversation with the lowest slave in the same manner as with the highest nobleman. Having grown up in the court, Bayard was also known to be chivalrous. He lived to serve the king and acted as a mentor to young servants. The loyal hand had begun to develop special feelings for the beautiful princess, but he did not dare tell her father, who had reserved the land's most valiant knights for her choosing.

One day, as Bayard was walking a cup of tea down the hall toward the King's bedroom, he glanced through a cracked door into Isabella's bedroom. Their eyes met as she gave him a warm smile. Bayard thought nothing of it, and hurried down the hall. After delivering the tea, listening to the King's worries, and fastening the King's door for the night, Bayard headed back down the hall toward his quarters. Midway down the hall, he heard a sweet whisper come from the crack in Isabella's doorway. He stopped and listened to her softly speak, "Oh Bayard, so long have I been hiding my affection for you. So long have I sat helplessly by, waiting for my father to present me a pool of conceited knights from which I must pick an ostensible partner in love. My heart is with you, modest Bayard!"

The servant quietly replied, "Beautiful Isabella, so long have I desired to hear those words from your mouth! Oh, such discipline I have used to withhold these same feelings from you! Your unassuming nature has always captivated me! But how will our love thrive with your place as a Princess and mine as a mere servant?"

She answered, "Bayard, do not deem yourself a mere servant, for you are the most valued member of this court! Even my father strives to emulate your humility and diligence in his everyday life. He seeks your counseling every night when you bring him his tea, and he tells you his most profound thoughts. You have gained more favor with him than any knight in the land. He knows that your chivalry is more genuine than that of anyone in the court. In spite of his high regard for you, he will always refuse to overlook your status in society. Your assumptions are correct. He will never select a servant, even the most distinguished in the kingdom, to be his daughter's eternal companion. He sees only sons of noblemen and renowned war heroes as suitable. If you ask for my hand in marriage, he will see you as a danger to the nobility of his line and most likely banish you from the kingdom. For this reason, our love must be in secret."

Bayard responded, "And it must flourish under this veil we have been forced to place over it!"

From that night on, Bayard not only prepared the King's cup of tea, but also beautiful plates for Isabella. He would carefully deliver plates of her favorite fruits, desserts, and drinks to the hall outside her room before bringing the King his cup of tea and engaging in discussion with him each night. Bayard would return to the hallway outside of Isabella's door to find that she had brought the offerings into her quarters. She would kneel on the floor of her room, enjoying the treats and whispering to Bayard through the crack in the doorway. They secretly talked into the

early morning, revealing their deepest thoughts to each other. They entertained each other with peculiar tales which only each other found to be funny. During the day, when they saw each other face to face, they would treat each other simply as friends.

As a result of the nightly engagements, Bayard got almost no sleep. He was required to prepare breakfast for the King just shortly after he finished conversing with his beloved. He used the time in the day during which he was not attending to the King to carve an intricate heart from a piece of maple. He developed blisters on his hands carving his original love poem into the tiny piece of wood. One of his fellow servants asked him, "Which maiden in the city might you be making that for?"

Bayard calmly answered, "Mr. Fendrel asked me to make it for him to give to his wife. It has turned out to be a lot more difficult than I had thought."

The servant smiled and said, "You're a good man, Bayard." After weeks of work, Bayard finished the heart and fastened it to an elegant length of purple twine his grandmother had given him. That night, he gave it to Isabella after whispering his love poem through the door. She removed an ornate gold pendant from her neck and replaced it with the wooden heart. She reached her hands around the doorway and placed the gold pendant around Bayard's neck. It had been given to her as a girl by her father, and had her name was etched into it. The companions vowed to never show each other's gifts to anyone, and let the keepsakes always remind them of each other.

One night, several years into his relationship with the Princess, Bayard, as usual, brought her plates of indulgences, but was surprised by her leaving them in the hall. As he sat down outside the door, he heard a weeping murmur: "Oh, my beloved! I am reading a letter from my father. He has chosen a man to be my husband. I will be introduced to him tomorrow."

Bayard broke into tears and cried, "What will we do, my love? Neither you, nor I can approach your father to plead for our love. Our passion is doomed!"

A distraught Princess replied, "My father wants me to meet with him tomorrow morning to find out whom he has chosen. I have no choice but to declare our love to him. If I do nothing, our relationship will surely die, and I will never see you again. If I reveal everything to my father, there is a chance that he will realize that my heart is with you and let us unite in marriage."

Bayard gloomily replied, "I would rather be forever banished from this kingdom than stand silently by while your hand is given to a man other than me."

The next morning, Isabella meekly entered her father's study, having prepared to plead her case. The King started, "My daughter, my heart has been torn for years as I have tried to find a man worthy of your hand in marriage. I have been on the verge of promising your hand to many different noblemen over the years, but have always stopped myself, knowing that something wasn't right. But now, I have found the perfect man—a man respected throughout the kingdom for his chivalry, noble background, and humility. This man is Bayard, and your wedding has been scheduled for later this month. He has probably just finished reading my letter telling him of this decision. Go see him in his quarters, my daughter!"

Isabella ran out of her father's study to see Bayard running toward her from the opposite end of the hallway. The beloved companions embraced each other, crying tears of elation.

LIGHT

by Thomas Mackie

Thousands of years ago, when this world was still new, the only living beings that existed were humans. They were a primitive, brutish group with no sense of higher meaning or a purpose in life; they were animals. In this time, there was no sun. The world drifted in eternal darkness, while the only light came from the twinkling stars. Since there was no light, plants did not grow. There was no food for animals to eat, and they soon died out. The only living beings were the humans, who survived only through cannibalizing other tribes, or members of their own families. They would fight with each other, using rocks, their fists, smashing each other, biting necks until the blood spurted out. There was no fuel for fires, so they ate the flesh raw. Their origins were unknown since they had no recollection of anything that happened the previous week, month, year, or decade. The god that had created them had long abandoned them, for indeed they seemed a race not worth saving.

The miserable existence of the humans continued for a very long time. Then one day as the tribes were fighting with each other, there was an enormous blast of brightness. The barbarians stopped their battle and stared into the dark sky, which was illuminated by a great white streak of light that came from the heavens. The cannibals dropped their crude rock weapons and fled to hide themselves. Only one person, a young boy, did not run. His name was Naga, and he stared at the light, transfixed. The light trailed from high until it ended at the horizon, disappearing completely. Overcome by curiosity, Naga set off in the direction of the light, determined to seek out what had created it. He walked and walked, but since there was no light or way of determining how much time had passed, he did not know for how long. At last he came to a large crater.

The crater was five hundred feet in diameter. Naga stared at the center, where there was a small shining object. As Naga approached it, it burst into light that blinded him. He tried to see what it was, but the light was strong and hurt his eyes, which were only accustomed to night. He knelt next to the object for a very long time, and at last he could open his eyes and look at it directly. It was a small shining pebble. It was unlike anything Naga had ever seen. Other than its light-giving property, it was also perfectly round, not like the rough rocks that littered the ground around it. Naga stretched out his hand and tapped the sphere. A sensation shot through him, unfamiliar, painful, but somehow also relaxing and comforting. He gazed at the area around the stone, and noticed a new vibrancy and clarity in everything surrounding it. Naga picked up the stone, and a strange sensation engulfed him. This sensation was warmth.

Naga cupped his treasure in his hands and clambered out of the crater. He watched the mystical effect of the stone. It changed the land around him, infusing it with *color*. Naga felt a sudden desire to walk, and set off from the crater. Although it did not speak or communicate with him at all, the stone was guiding Naga. Naga walked for a very long time, and noticed that, as he walked, the earth had started slanting upward. Even though he has not eaten, drunk, or slept for days, the stone gave him the strength to go on. He climbed and climbed as the stone guided him. At last the land flattened out again, and he stood at the summit of a colossal mountain.

Then the stone shone brighter than ever before; the darkness was banished for miles around him. He could see the crater where he had found the stone; he saw the places where the

other humans cowered in their caves, hiding from the strange light. Then for the first time, the light actually did speak to Naga. It did not communicate with words, but through his mind. It told him he had been destined to find the stone, and that he would usher a new age for humanity. From his pinnacle at the top of the mountain, Naga watched as the stone illuminated the entire world. The stone promised Naga that there would be new life, for new creatures, and for the humans. The stone required one thing: to become one with Naga. Naga would forever give up his life, but he would become more powerful than any human. Naga agreed, and the stone merged with Naga, and together they became the sun.

Now that the earth was flooded with light, plants began to grow. Animals appeared and ate the plants. The humans found that the plants and animals than each other, and they had no reason any more to be cannibals. They took from the land, but they also respected it, and gave back to it. Tribes allied and formed villages, and eventually cities. Time went on, and humanity was saved by the light. When a day has passed and Naga grows tired of standing at the top of the world, he descends down the largest mountain and the earth is covered by darkness once again, but only for a few hours.

SKYLIGHT

film photograph
by Christopher Krolak



FALL OF THE INTELLECTUAL

by Dylan Gale

Who could have predicted it; who could have known? The fall of man seemed possible yet inconceivable to his own delusions. He knew how it would happen, however, by nothing but his own doing. His fall was not his extinction though. He still exists in small numbers clinging to his petty existence in shelters or small groups, foraging for food or barely surviving off a dwindling supply. This was the beginning of Tom Handel's diary; it was also how he perceived his current situation

Tom counted the cans of food in the shelter's large store room. "Four weeks," he muttered to himself as if pleading for help that wouldn't come. As he thought about it, he was lucky to have made it as long as he did, and by his count he had survived down there for two years exactly. He did the math in his head and finally scratched the date into the wall of the shelter. It read October 16, 1964. It had been two years since the missiles had launched from Cuba and Tom hadn't even seen the outside of the shelter since he heard the announcement. At that moment that he realized how much he wanted to see the outside. Memories of sunlight danced in his head, memories that faded like photographs with every passing day. He moved towards the heavy lead door that remained untouched since his arrival; a thick coating of dust covered the vault-like lever. Tom procrastinated opening it by attempting to brush off some of the dust. He reasoned with himself for quite some time about his options. Should he wait in the shelter until his food ran out? Maybe help was only a few days away. He finally convinced himself that it was the right choice. The old heavy lever took a while to budge, but eventually moved and the door slid open.

Beyond the threshold was the basement of the Manhattan skyscraper, exactly as he remembered it, so much so in fact that nothing had changed at all. He wandered around until he came across the stairway he descended two years earlier. He walked up toward the security door and pressed his hands on the push lever, preparing himself for the sight on the other side. In a burst of strength, he threw the door open with his eyes closed. He held them closed for a moment, not sure if he was really ready, but he opened them anyway. The sight he saw was a lobby full of people in business suits staring at him with confused looks on their faces. The missiles had never launched; everything was fine, and Tom felt like a moron.



GEAR

drawing by James Feng

HEAVEN

by Gabriel Dunsmith

I wasn't born yet on July 1st, 2005. But it was a day I remember vividly. It was the day the Buddha came to me and told me I was ready to be born.

No one smiles in heaven. Everyone just sort of walks around, dazed. They're all waiting for someone to tell them that their spirits are ready to be born again into a baby girl or a ring-tailed lemur or a redwood tree. When people's spirits leave the earth, they all go straight to heaven and just sit there for however long it takes for their reincarnation to be ready. It's like birth purgatory. Sometimes spirits have to wait hundreds of years. I know a wrinkled old man who calls himself Aristotle who's been waiting thousands of years now to be restored to bodily form.

The Buddha waddled over to me, his belly jiggling. He said there was finally an open spot; a boy was about to come into the world who would take on my image. I'd been waiting a long time to be born a human, but I knew it would be worth the wait.

Most people in heaven are sad. You'll pass someone who's been walking in circles for years, staring at the ground. Sometimes people lose track of time; there's not much to do in heaven besides walk around and wait. Lives have no purpose here.

Time passes like it does on earth. That's what makes waiting in heaven seem eternally long. Your senses are numbed, and the only objects in heaven are spirits—no mountains, no oceans, no buildings. Life in heaven is so distant and disconnected from life on earth that it's easy to forget how it felt to live in a body. Sometimes people are so desperate to experience the soil beneath their feet again that they'll consent to becoming anything only to get back on the earth. Earth is where our real lives take place.

I'd spoken with Jesus a few days beforehand, frustrated by the fact that it had been three and a half decades since I'd experienced the swirling colors of a June sunset.

"You know, being an animal isn't that bad," Jesus responded as he sat cross-legged, the halo around his head shining like gold leaf. "I was a butterfly once, in a former life."

Heaven is certainly no paradise. Sure, you aren't burdened with the weights of life anymore. But the ups and downs are part of what makes life an amazing experience, and without burdens in heaven there can be no true happiness. Heaven serves only as a waiting room to get back down to earth again.

After the Buddha approached me we sat down and watched earth for a minute. Heaven hangs in a giant cloud near the moon, only it's hard to see from earth. In fact, it's impossible to see. I spent an entire night looking for heaven in my last life, and my wife kept coming and asking what I was doing outside in thirty-degree weather. I told her I was looking for heaven.

"At this hour?" she had asked.

I didn't answer, preferring instead to hug my knees to my chest and blink several more times at the moon. I thought that heaven would be revealed if I just waited long enough. My wife shook her head and walked back inside.

"I've known you for a long time, Ayden," said the Buddha, stirring beside me. "I think this couple will be the perfect parents for you."

"Where do they live?"

"Moscow."

"I've never lived in Russia before."

"They're very young." The Buddha pulled his legs in tighter, straightening his back into a perfect line. "They're cautious, and curious about the world. Every experience is new and brings adventure."

"Are they in love?"

"Very much so."

"I'm supposing my new parents aren't married," I said.

The Buddha shook his head. "You guessed correctly. The pregnancy was unexpected. But you'll bring joy to their lives."

Since heaven's a cloud almost everything is white. It's kind of like driving in fog—you can never see too far into the distance. So when spirits of people approach, they look just like hazy outlines for a minute, illuminated by a ghostly pallor around their limbs.

The figure approaching right now was God. His wispy hair fell to his sides; today, like most days, he took the image of Leonardo da Vinci—a solemn, graying, wise figure. Sometimes, though, he adopts the image of Ray Charles, especially when he welcomes spirits to heaven and is not just strolling around.

It's hard on earth, not knowing for certain that God exists. There's not much hard proof—he's not going to rearrange the stars one night to spell out "I EXIST" or anything like that. You have to rely on your own intuition. You have to find God like you're looking for a lizard under a rock in some big game of hide-and-seek. You just have to lift up the rock and know that he could scamper off at any moment and you'll have to go searching for him again.

It doesn't matter how people draw close to God. It doesn't even matter that they believe in him or not. For those who don't believe in him he simply doesn't appear when you get to heaven, and you'll never know he existed.

One day I asked God who he really was, but he himself wasn't quite sure. The Japanese goddess Amaterasu, a brilliant fiery angel-like figure, was at his side at the time. "Think of God as light," she intoned, and her voice, bright and bubbly, seemed to ride on the air. "God is the existence of all life on earth, combined into one form."

God had nodded in agreement.

Gerald Gardner, his wispy white hair like a tuft of cotton, said God was the trees and the grass and the dirt and the earth, all wound together in something you could never see.

Lao Tzu, the father of Taoism, said God is what can't be seen on the earth—he is morality and virtue and happiness.

Zoroaster said God is fire.

Mary Magdalene told me there were thousands of interpretations of God; both the prophet Muhammad and Gandhi defined God in different ways, but both were right.

All of those I spoke to agreed that God was so great, so mysterious, and could never be fully comprehended.

When God saw me, his lips twitched as if to smile but they never fully lifted. He'd forgotten how to smile a long time ago. He gazed, eyes glazed over, at the earth, and most of his body shifted around like heaven itself in a breeze.

“So...” he pronounced, his voice like that of an aging oak, “there is finally an opening, hmm?”

“It’s been a long time,” I said.

At those words I felt a flurry of white-hot passion in my chest—as though I was discovering all of life’s secrets over again. I could see life before me, like a book, and I was blowing off the layers of dust on its cover. All of a sudden there was stress and pain and faith and philosophy and politics, and being in love. I could almost hear music, and see people smiling, and watch a colorful parade on a city street. I could almost taste warm, fluffy, yellow Danishes; almost feel the touch of skin on mine.

In heaven, you can study any living person you want to and they never know you’re watching them. You know so much. You know when people are going to die. You can see your relatives grieving. Your only hope is that when you go back to earth you can tell them that your spirit is okay. It’s hard to tell them, though, when you’ve been reincarnated as a cockroach.

When you see a loved one in heaven there’s never much celebration or completeness. You still love them, but you can’t *experience* their lives again until you’re both back on the earth; until you both know each other again. That’s why you’ve got to spend as much time as you can with a person while their two feet are still on the ground.

A friend of mine had died at age seventeen in a car wreck. When he got to heaven he couldn’t stand to see his family mourning, so he found the nearest path back to earth. He turned up as a stray kitten, and ended up being adopted by his parents and got to live another seventeen years with them until his body grew too old. It’s funny how life works sometimes.

God was still staring at the earth. “I have labored over this creation for billions of years,” he said. “But it feels like longer.”

“There’s still so much that’s gone wrong,” the Buddha said in agreement. “A wonderful planet. But humans don’t see its beauty until they’re up here.”

Very few people are reincarnated with an enlightened knowledge of the afterlife. If they *do* come to the world remembering what life in heaven was like, and who they were in their past lives, they usually choose not to say anything about heaven. People would think you’re wacko if you started talking about it—but I suppose that’s how Muhammad became a prophet; he started sharing his experiences and memories. I’ll have to ask him about it some time.

On the other hand, if you go through life on earth remembering nothing about heaven, your past lives are revealed to you when you return.

Sometimes, in the stunning innocence of birth, babies will remember God. But they forget it as the months go by and they become accustomed to the material world. Occasionally, when *déjà vu* occurs, it is when someone experiences God or remembers one of their past lives for a split second. That second could be life changing, but most people try to forget about it because it scares them.

Pope John Paul II wandered into my view for a moment, chatting with Galileo. I’ve seen the two of them share many a conversation. I’d spoken with both of them once about the wonders of death; how it was miraculous that someone’s spirit could drift up to heaven and then find its way into some other creature.

I was surprised when Harvey Milk told me no one really goes to hell. All his earthly life people had told him he was going to hell, and even though he knew they were wrong, he was delighted to discover that hell simply doesn't exist. Everyone travels up to heaven, and everyone is reincarnated at some point. For some, though, reincarnation is something they don't have a choice in—Hitler was reincarnated as a dung beetle, and he served such a lousy life as a dung beetle that he was reincarnated again as a maggot.

The Holy Spirit approached, taking long, drawn-out strides. She took the body of Sojourner Truth, with a smooth face, elegant clothes, and skin that rippled like coffee with cream. She'd been incarnated into the bodies of Joan of Arc, Mother Teresa, and Rosa Parks—because she's the Holy Spirit, she was in both Mother Teresa and Rosa Parks at the same time.

In heaven, spirits choose to adopt the likeness of someone they were at some point. If a person becomes well-known, his or her spirit usually chooses that look—the spirit of a serf in twelfth-century France looks like Martin Luther King, Jr., for example. But some others spirits choose to look different—John F. Kennedy's spirit looks like he did when he was a little kid, and Douglas Adams normally dons the guise of a man he'd been during the early 1800s in Tibet. As for me, I normally take the shape of a twelve-year-old during one of my favorite lives growing up in India in the 1940s.

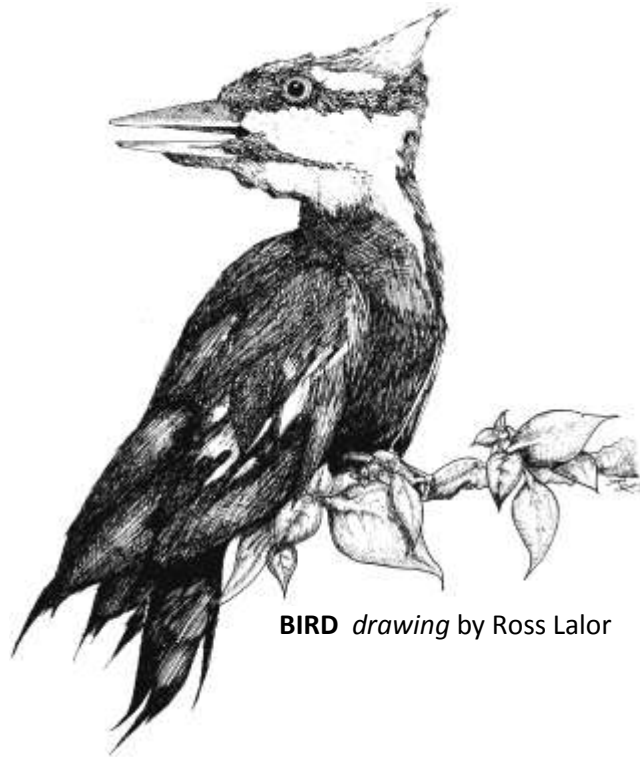
Jesus and the Buddha rose to their feet. I'd seen them in a chopstick battle once—they were dueling with only chopsticks in hand. I couldn't tell who won, because neither submitted to the other, but they both seemed to enjoy it; afterwards they beheld each other with a kind of sparkle in their eyes.

God came up behind me. They all did—God, the Buddha, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Harvey Milk, Douglas Adams, and all the billions of other spirits in heaven. I could feel their presence at my back like hushed whispers, and I knew every parent I'd ever had was there, and every brother, and sister, and lover and son and daughter.

I took a deep breath, looking out at the majestic seas and brown lands and mountains and lakes and snow. I was ready to breathe that air again.

"Are you ready, Ayden?" God—but he was so much more; he was all gods, and the spirits of all people who had ever lived—put his hand on my shoulder.

"Yes." I felt a surging warmth. And then everything went white.



BIRD drawing by Ross Lalor

REPERCUSSIONS

by Chambers Loomis

In the beginning, there was only the Earth, and no one lived on it. Its beauty was meaningless, for there was no one to enjoy it. Even if there were someone to witness it, he would see nothing, for there was no light. The sand and dirt that covered the planet's surface sustained not a single plant. The surface water was merely a blanket to more sand and dirt. Exactly half of the Earth's surface was a chunk of land and half was water.

The Earth went on in this condition for trillions of years; Almighty Zeus had created the planet with the intention of depositing the first life on it someday. He had just been too busy creating trillions of other planets to get around to it. One day, he decided that he needed a people to govern, and he remembered the first and most beautiful planet he ever created, the Earth.

He drew up a single particle of dirt from the bottom of its water and placed it at a point millions of miles from the Earth. He caused it to rapidly grow until it became a million times the size of the Earth. However, it was invisible, for there was no light. Almighty Zeus breathed fire into the object, which then emitted a powerful light that illuminated the entire Earth and penetrated to the depths of its water.

He still had not achieved his purpose, for his planet was without life. Almighty Zeus drew up two grains of sand from the bottom of the Earth's water, and breathed life into them, creating a man and a woman. He placed them together on the Earth's land and put into their minds faith in the fact that he had created both them and their planet.

They drank from the Earth's water, but soon grew hungry. Almighty Zeus gathered a handful of the Earth's dirt in his right hand and breathed life into it. He then blew the particles out of his hand, evenly dispersing them onto the Earth's surface. These grains of dirt cultivated millions of varieties of beautiful plant and animal life; the two humans had lavish fruits and vegetables to eat and countless animals with whom to live in unity. There were no seasons, and the weather was always a perfect temperature. It never stormed, so there was no need for shelter.

Out of instinct, the two soon reproduced, and after a few thousand years, the earth was populated by millions of people, for death did not exist. All were equal; animals lived along side humans and only the fruits of plants were eaten. One could not get lost or become stranded since there were people everywhere; food was always immeasurable, for the fruitful plants could not die. Everyone acknowledged their almighty creator and confided in each other. In time, the first two humans began to despise the fact that they were viewed as equal with the youngest humans. They began to claim that they had created the Earth and everyone in it.

The people believed them, just as they had believed their ancestors when they told them that Almighty Zeus had created the Earth and everyone in it. The first two humans gradually became the people's rulers. They disobeyed Almighty Zeus' command and hunted animals to eat. The people took after them and soon the animals had to hide from the humans. Large birds and some large mammals took after the humans and became predatory towards their fellow animals. Zeus grew angry at the first two humans for their heresy and struck them down, bringing death into the world.

Everyone over a hundred years old died at that very moment and very few thereafter lived to be a hundred. Plants were no longer continuously fruitful and some even began to die.

Enraged, Zeus pounded the Earth's land, dividing it into seven pieces. Civilization divided and the people began to war with each other over land and animal ownership. They used their knowledge about each other to harm each other. Social classes and a bureaucracy developed within each society. Everyone wanted more power and would do anything to get it.

Almighty Zeus was sickened at what his children had become and began to cry. His salty tears fell from above down into the Earth's water, making it undrinkable. Man began to drink from the underground springs he dug. Zeus' teardrops contained life, and when a small molecule of one struck the Earth's water, it would rapidly grow larger in size and become more vibrant, producing a striking sea creature or aquatic plant. Areas hit by whole divine teardrops sprouted up exotic coral reefs and extraordinary sea creatures.

Almighty Zeus set the Earth into a spinning motion, giving each of the seven sections of land darkness to remind the inhabitants of how they turned their backs on Almighty Zeus and light to remind them of their ancestors' contented days with Almighty Zeus. He caused each piece of land to have seasons, some of which were extremely harsh, to remind him of his ancestors' evil change of heart. He periodically created lightning atop the Earth's surface to remind man of when he struck down the first man and woman. He periodically stormed within the Earth's water and atop the Earth's land to show man and animal that his foundation was corrupt.

Almighty Zeus is still watching over the Earth's inhabitants, and both man and animal are greatly affected by the actions of their ancestors.



PYROJOURNEY computer drawing by Ross Lalor

MY VOICE

by Marshall Plumlee

They have no idea. Every day I silently walk in the midst of filth, people devoid of moral code, inexcusable. For too long I have blended in as a passerby, my detest and abhor of the human condition has been quiet. It is time for it to find a voice. My outlook on life is concrete and indisputable in my mind. Biased yes, unfair most definitely, but I will hold everybody to my standard. However high or low it will not matter, no one will escape the lethal whip of justice as it is cracked upon the wicked. I am starting to sound crazy; at least I am sane enough to admit it.

No no no, I'm not crazy, this world is crazy. I'm just a man running on instinct, primeval motives paint me pictures of black and white, it is my job to show it to the world, my cross to bear. These feelings keep me up at night. These feelings make me cringe when I see a man beaten and I sit idly by. These feelings set my soul ablaze in a fiery passion for justice. These feelings should be shared by every man, woman, and child, and I will make sure of it. These feelings are calling on me, it is time for them to find a voice.

The bell rings, a clamor ensues, the flood gates are unleashed. It is the end of the school day. One could know this without even glancing at a watch; everyone knows the feeling at the end of a school day. The students hurry to their lockers with more pep in their step than they would ever walk to a class with. Making it through another day of school is reason enough for kids to celebrate, to socialize, to cause trouble. It would not be a typical day at Crampton High if it ended without an incident. Without another drug dealing, without another brawl, without another rape, this cesspool of a high school would never have an eventless day. It is my time to make a statement; this behavior will not be tolerated. At first glance a school with over 6,000 students may appear bad to the core, all you see or hear are the problems and troubles of the student body. It is easy to overlook the good in such a massive school, but not for me. I have overlooked nothing, for three years now I have studied every inch of this blight on society and to date the bad still greatly outweighs the good. The worst part is that Crampton shows no signs of changing for the better, only for the worse. A snowball effect of corruption. I will be the end of it. Believe it or not, there are actually laws set in this unlawful society, but it would not appear so. Detentions are handed out like candy and suspensions are taken in stride. No one is changing anytime soon. Change takes a statement, an outspoken voice to the masses making it known this will not be tolerated. I am going to find my voice.

A bang echoes through the lonely hallways of Crampton as I kick my defective locker to open it. The insides are bare, no books, no decorations, no personality; I am beyond those trivial things. While reaching deep within the contents of my hanging book bag I keep telling myself this is the day. I can't go through with this, it's ludicrous.

"No no no no!" no one is in the hallway to hear me whisper my thoughts to myself. They've had their chance, and time after time they've failed to surprise me. These vermin transcend the rules, dodging consequences that the rest of society has to suffer; they think they are above the law. I am the firm hand that will grab them by the throat, I will pull them down to stare eye to eye with their inner demons; I will show no mercy. Still sifting through my backpack, I finally found what I needed, what this school needs whether it knows it or not. Pulling out a ten inch long knife from the

pack, I inspected it for a moment. The light from the hallway caught the spotless blade ever so slightly, making it gleam with a deathly elegance, truly a beautiful tool. I firmly gripped the leather hilt of the hunting knife; my knuckles were white, anxiety building inside me. The rush of looking at the knife sent waves of chills flowing through my body, hairs standing on end, teeth gritted in determination. I would be lying if I didn't say I loved everything about it. Realizing this I took a mental step back to remember that this isn't about me and my pleasure. This is far bigger than me, I am just a man standing firm against a sea of oppression, and this is just a knife, giving me my voice.



A CONFUSED MIND *painting* by Charlie Martin

THE SPHERE OF BORINGNESS

by David Miller

In a time long ago, there was nothing and an all-powerful being named Dog lived in the nothingness. He was extremely bored because there was nothing to do, no one to be with, and nothing to see. He thought to himself, "Why not use my all-powerfulness to create something fun to do?"

So one day Dog created a sphere on which to put all the fun stuff he would create. This sphere was huge because dog wanted plenty of room for all his stuff. After looking back at the sphere he had just formed, Dog realized that it too was boring. So he started by putting dirt everywhere on the sphere. "That's better," he thought to himself. So he started to create living things and put them on the sphere. He created fish, bugs, birds, and beasts to put on his sphere. When he was satisfied, Dog took a break and decided to come back later.

When Dog came back, all the creatures were dead. Dog didn't understand why, and decided to try again. This time he would keep an eye on them. So he created more creatures, and this time didn't take a break. As time went on, Dog saw the creatures were slowly dying. He asked them, "Why are you dying? Why won't you live?"

"Please, Dog!" they all exclaimed. "Give us something to eat and drink for this is the reason why we are all dying!" Dog realized the problem and created water for his creatures to drink, and planted food in the dirt for them to eat so that they could live. He then took another break, thinking all was good.

When he came back, all his creations were dead, yet again. So he made them all a third time and asked what had happened. "I gave you all food and water. You said this is what you needed to live. Why did you die again?" They responded, "This sphere is too cold. We all froze to death. Please, Dog, create for us a heat source so we won't die again." So Dog created the sun to warm his sphere.

When all seemed well, Dog turned his back for a short period of time and when he turned around all his creations were dead again. After making them again, he asked them all what had happened this time. "Your sun is too hot! It burned us all!"

Getting frustrated, Dog said, "My sun is too hot and no sun is too cold. What should I do?"

One smart beast said, "Why not alternate the sun? Have it here until it gets too hot, then take it away. When the sphere gets cold, bring it back!" Dog thought this was a great idea, and made the sun come and go, making day and night, which made the sphere nearly perfect.

After a while, the birds started complaining that they had nowhere to go. Dog had created them nice wings, but nothing to use them for. So Dog built a sky around the sphere for all the birds to fly in. Feeling charitable, Dog asked the birds what color they wanted their sky to be. One little blue jay exclaimed, "Blue, Dog! Make it blue to match my beautiful color!" So Dog made the sky blue. The dove complained that he also wanted to be the color of the sky. So Dog made white and gray shapes float in the sky to go with the blue and make it even more beautiful.

Eventually the fish began to complain too. "Our water homes are too small, and all the other animals keep drinking it!" So Dog made vast oceans and seas on the sphere for the fish to live

in so there would be plenty of room. Dog realized that the water would eventually run out, so he made water come from the sky whenever it was running low for the fish.

All seemed well, and for a long time all of Dog's creations lived happily. Watching them was fun, and it entertained him. After a while, though, Dog realized all of his creations were getting slower and weaker. He asked what was wrong. They replied, "Oh, Dog, we are getting older and all our lives will end soon, so nothing lasts forever." Dog was not happy with this, for if all his creations died, he would have nothing to do. So he made it so that his creations would reproduce, so they could keep living on his sphere. This would be endless fun for Dog so he would never get bored again.

All was well, for though old creatures died, new ones came. But this in itself created a problem. Dog had nowhere to put his creations after they died. After thinking long and hard about it, Dog had a great idea. "Why not have them live with me so we could all be together always?" So Dog created a place for all the old creatures to live with him while the new ones were on the sphere. The sky was Dog's favorite part about the sphere, so he made the home of the old creations similar to the sky.

Now everything is perfect, and this is how the world is today. Dog did anything for us whenever we asked for it. He kept on trying and helped us out when we needed it. He is everywhere and he is everything, and we would be nothing without him.



CAT drawing by Dean Zhang

DAWN OF MAN

by Grayson Secor

Earth had always been a barren planet, covered in lava and ice. There was no life to be found, except for that on Mars. Mars was similar to the way Earth is now; it had plentiful oceans, rainforests, and an abundance of indigenous species. There was also a species more powerful than our ancestors. Its cars travelled as fast as sound, and its buildings were taller than the skies. The people were ten feet tall, and their brains were twice the size of our own. These people were very happy, but the planet of Mars was not.

These Martians lived without any concern for other animals, and for the planet itself. They regularly polluted the air, and destroyed forests for their own housing needs. They overpopulated the planet and killed many other species. Most Martians cared little for anything or anyone but themselves, but some thought differently. Some cared about their planet, and about its species, and about its forests. Some Martians cared that they were destroying the planet. But these Martians were few, and there were many others who wanted them killed. Many Martians thought this small group was crazy, and that they were all wrong. They constantly said they were paranoid and idiotic. As a result, nothing was done to stop the impending doom of Mars.

There was one male who thought he could do something. He had a name that is impossible to translate. The Martian language was far more advanced than our own, and as such it is impossible to know what they spoke or thought. This man had a female counterpart, and she thought the same way he did. They both knew that they had the answer to Mars' problems. The only way to cure their planet was to destroy their own species. It was impossible to co-exist with other life on such a small planet when so much damage had been done. So, they created a plan. Since their species was so intelligent, every Martian was a scientist, and they constantly came up with new technologies and medicines, but these two Martians were smarter than the rest. By using their natural genius, the man and woman created a poison that would destroy their species very quickly. Once the poison was airborne, it would kill every Martian on the planet within minutes. The problem remaining was a moral one: it was hard for the man and woman to think about killing one Martian, let alone the entire species.

The day before they were to release the toxin, the man and woman watched their people for one last time. The realization came to them both that they could never go through with their original intention. Regardless of what the Martians had done, the man and woman knew that they had no right to decide the fate of an entire species. They knew that they needed another plan, because all known life in the Universe could not be allowed to die. So, they created a device, something that could allow life to form somewhere else. They needed a terrestrial planet on which to start life, and they had no idea where to look first. They searched every solar system they knew of, and could not find a suitable planet. Some were too far away and could not be reached within their lifetime. Others had planets that were too small or too large for life to be sustainable. One day, they realized that there was one planet that would be suitable for life. They studied it and studied it, and finally they knew it was perfect. It was just the right size and mass for life to exist. It was the perfect distance from the sun, and had one moon revolving around it. It was in their own solar system as well, and could be easily reached.

Once the man and woman knew on what planet they were going to start life, they created a ship capable of reaching it very quickly; quickly enough that the other Martians would never know they were there. For if the other Martians knew that the man and woman were planning to create life, their ship and machine would be destroyed, and the man and woman would be put to death. The Martians were proud of being the only intelligent species, and were happy that they lived on the only planet with life. When the man and woman were ready, they loaded the machine onto their ship, and left Mars behind. They travelled quickly to the other planet, and sent their machine to the surface.

The woman wondered if another intelligent species would emerge, and the man told her yes. The man wondered what that species would call their planet, and woman told him they would call it home. They both wondered if the new species would ever know that there had been neighbors living one planet away, and both quickly said no.

On their way home, they looked back at the planet and saw that an atmosphere was already beginning to form. It made the man and woman smile; they both knew that they had just created life, just as their god had created life for them. When they returned home, no Martian knew that they had left, and no Martian knew what they had done. Both the man and woman knew that they would be long dead before another species emerged, and they hoped that their entire race would

be dead as well. For if even one Martian knew that life was forming on another planet, they would travel to it and obliterate it instantly. This very thing happened, millions of years after the man and woman died. Mars was close to death, but the other planet was prospering. There were many species on that other planet, some large and some small, but none so intelligent as the Martians. The Martians were angered; they did not want there to be other life in the galaxy. So they used technology to create a beam that could alter the trajectory of an asteroid, one so big that it would wipe out all life on that other planet. When they pushed the giant rock into the other planet it killed nearly everything, and the Martians thought themselves successful. What they did not know was that life also existed on that asteroid, life so small that it was in its simplest form. When the rock collided with the other planet, it seeded the planet with new organisms, creating new life.



Mars died out soon after, leaving Earth as the only planet in the Universe with life. This time, however, unlike the first time life had started on this planet, an intelligent species was born. This species was capable of doing everything that the Martians had done, and much more. They had morality, love, and compassion. This new species learned how to create fire, enormous cities, and



incredible technology. They made large tombs to honor their dead. They built massive machines to help them work. Huge wildlife preserves were made to keep animals safe. The species that inhabited this planet lived for millions of years before being faced with the same problems the Martians had faced. Unlike the Martians, however, they did not die out, they did not destroy their own planet, and all animals and plants continued to live with them. This new species lived much longer than the Martians, and much like the man and woman, they seeded the Universe in order for new life to exist.

HEIGHTS

series of film photographs
by Christopher Krolak





SHOES

drawing by James Feng

FLY

by Jordan Farquharson

It was a breezy day. The paperboy almost didn't make it to the front door. When the door opened Ms. Jones was about to greet the young man and invite him inside for some fresh guava duff, but before she had a real chance to thank him, the news paper blew out of the paperboy's hands, into the house, and the front door slammed in his face. Ms. Jones ran to pick up the paper. "Oh my," she said.

Johnny watched the shutters open and shut repeatedly due to the strong winds. "May I go outside to fly my kite please?" Johnny asked his mother, Ms. Jones.

"Be careful," she warned Johnny. "It's very breezy today. I don't want you to lose another kite, Johnny."

Johnny ran to the door. He opened it with haste. The breeze blew hard and snatched the news paper from Ms. Jones's hands and blew it even farther into the house. "Oh my," she said again.

Johnny ran outside and the breeze slammed the door shut behind him. Outside, leaves jumped off the trees. Johnny watched the leaves flying around and thought to himself that this was the perfect day to fly a kite. "My kite is going to soar higher than anyone else's bui." Johnny thought for a second about what his mother said to him and then ran into the shed to grab his kite.

Ms. Jones called for Johnny, but got no answer and was concerned. She had a feeling that Johnny was outside flying his kite. Ms. Jones came to the front porch just to make sure Johnny was all right. "Johnny, I have your jacket. Please put it on." Johnny was nowhere to be seen. "Johnny?"

Johnny was a leaf blowing down the street with the rest of his play-mates. The leaves swirled around and around hitting street signs and cars, and flew up into the air once again.

"Flying looks like fun," Johnny thought.

A leaf blew in front of him. It was a beautiful leaf. The sunlight shone through it giving it a wonderful shine never before seen by a little boy's eyes. Johnny stood there with his kite in his hand thinking about how he could make himself fly like a leaf. Johnny came up with a brilliant idea that he thought would make him fly. He climbed up the biggest palm tree he could find, tied himself to the kite using its string, and closed his eyes. Johnny said a quick prayer asking God to take him as high as he could go. Then Johnny opened his eyes and took a mighty leap from the tree.

After that flight Johnny was never able to fly again.

RESPONSIBILITY

by Colby Moore

I met her on the stairs. She looked at me through those big blue eyes. She had to be mine. She was perfect; and nothing would ever change that. The way her hat rested on top of her disproportionate head; the way her little socks fit snugly on her feet; the way the pink of her tiny shirt brought out her rosy cheeks. Everything about her was perfect. I looked up the stairs, waiting for my first encounter with her. I slowly lifted my feet above each stair. I took every step like it was the most important step I had ever taken in my life. As I got to the last step, I reached out my arms. She fell perfectly into them, almost like she was meant to be there. I will never forget this moment. The first time I saw my daughter.

Still sopping with rain, I bent over and kissed her on the forehead. "Hello Gabrielle," I whispered in her ear. It was the best moment of my life. "Wow," I thought to myself. "This child is mine. This is my lasting impression on this planet and I am holding her in my arms right now." I was an incredible feeling. One like I had never experienced before. Goosebumps shot down my spine as she slowly yawned.

I looked up at my wife. Gabrielle had her best quality: her eyes. "She's beautiful," I said to her. "She's gorgeous, just like her mother." She looked up at me with her tired eyes and quietly responded, "I know." This is the greatest moment of my life. I give Gabrielle back and wipe the rain droplets off my jacket.

I stand here today still dripping with rain, yet this time I am feeling grief rather than joy. I still feel responsible, but I wish I did not. I stand here watching my daughter being lowered into the ground. I read the carving on the stone to myself:

Gabrielle Windshaw

April 16 1989-September 2 2006

"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams! Live the life you've imagined.

As you simplify your life, the laws of the universe will be simpler."

-Henry David Thoreau

Why did I let this happen? Accountability looms over me like a dark shadow. Inside me is a whirlwind of bottled up emotions: anger, destitute, loneliness. The list goes on and on. The amount of "what-ifs" that are going through my head is unimaginable. Why must this happen? Why must the evil of the world get a hold of my baby? I look up and see her casket. The flowers and trimming are her favorite color: purple. It brings back so many memories. This is unbearable. I can't take it any longer. I have to look away as they bury her. I cannot stand to see it end like this. What did I do wrong? As I turn I remember those blues. I remember the first day I saw her.

The service finishes, yet I cannot leave. I want to stand her forever and be with her. I want to let her know everything will be all right, but I know it is not. It never can be all right again. She will forever more be lying beneath the ground.

As people walk off, a few come by to offer their sympathy. I just thank them and shake their hands. I don't listen to what they say because my mind is too focused on my baby. I continue to stare at the headstone. After some time passed, I look around and I see there is no one left in the graveyard. It seems impossible for life to go on without here, but I pull myself away from my gravesite. As I walk away I trip on the sign on the gravesite next hers. The sign says "23H" and the gravesite was untouched. No one had been buried there. The sign was so little that almost no one could see it before they tripped on it. I stand back up and wipe the mud off my knees. I need a way to get rid of these emotions; get rid of this sorrow. I think of something. I decide on it; it is the only way.

My car pulls up to the gray stucco house sitting on the corner of Harris and Elm. I put the car in park and take the keys out of the ignition and slowly, but methodically, open the door and walk up to the front door. I am covered in rain as I reach the front door. I ring the doorbell and perform the special knock. I hear him behind the door as he undoes the deadbolt. He beckons me inside with his strong yet warming eyes. They make me think everything is all right; but nothing is all right. I lay \$500 on the table. He knows what I want. He tries to talk me out of it, but it is no use. I have my mind set. Finally he gives in and gives me it in a leather briefcase. I get back in my car and sit for a second before I put the keys in the ignition. Do I really want to do this? Am I sure? Yes. I am sure. I crank up the engine.

I unlock my garage door. "Hello? Mellissa? Gab..." I stop myself short. The house will feel empty forever. I turn and lock the door behind me. I can never deal with her not being here. She will never be here again. I walk up stairs. I down the dark hallway to my room. On my right, I see Gabrielle's room; just the way she left it. I open my door and close it behind. Slowly I open the leather suitcase. There it is: glistening metal. I take it out. I begin to have second thoughts. Maybe I can get through this. No, I am sure I want to do this. I hold my breath and do it. It is done. It is over.

The next day, they had to remove the 23H sign.

DOWNTOWN
film photograph
by Christopher Krolak



A CHILDHOOD MEMORY

by T. D. Dixon

"Trevonte!" my mom yells my name. I wake up and look around me. "Trevonte!" she yells again. Her tone said I need to get there quick. She is not in the office so she must be in the hall somewhere. I follow the voice outside into the hall. I walk toward her wiping my eyes. "Ma'am," I said as I got in hearing distance.

"It's time to go to class. Have a good day, sweetie." She kisses me on my forehead as she does every morning. I hear the older kids staring and giggling at me; I feel stupid when they laugh at me. I embrace her because even though I hate the older kids for laughing, I still love my mom. Then I turn to go down the hall to my classroom.

I try to take my mind off my anger by playing a game while walking to class. I pretend that the blue tiles are land and the white tiles are water; I try to go down the hall without touching a single white tile. I don't even remember why I was angry by the time I see my teacher at the door. "Hey, Trevonte, how are you this morning?" my teacher says.

"I'm fine, Mrs. Smalls," I say back to her like every day.

"How was your baseball game last night? Did you hit a homerun?" she asks. It was like it just happened; I remember the game and the home run. It absolutely made my day. "Yes, ma'am," I spoke to her as I almost fall into her while running through the door.

I put my book bag in the back of the class next to the cubbies. I found my spot on the rug with my best friend Jarren. "Hey, Jarren," I say,

"Hey, T. D.," he says back as I sit down on the number 7 on the rug. "Did your team win last night?" Jarren asks me.

"Yeah, we won; the score was 7-5. I hit a walk off homerun." I rise to my feet and demonstrate the swing from the night before, exaggerating my arm movements. Grinning from ear to ear and still telling Jarren about the homerun, I see Raymond sitting on his spot on the rug next to Cierra, and he is talking to her and she is laughing.

My blood is boiling while I look at them. I tell Jarren to help me to beat him up, but he just laughs. My mind starts to race as I watch what is going on. I stomp across the rug, my eyes not leaving the two of them. I stop a step away from Raymond and behind Cierra. Raymond looks up at me and stands up. I grab Cierra by the shoulders and sling her down to the ground and say, "You're my girlfriend!"

Raymond stepped forward and in her defense says, "She can talk to me if she wants."

"Shut the shit up!" the whole class looks back as I curse.

My brother says it when he is mad so I say it when I'm mad; I don't really know what it means. The only thing I know about the word is that grown people use it when they're mad, and I am as mad as I've ever been today. I feel most of the class staring at me. I had to do something. I took my hand out of my pocket and made a fist like I see my brother do. I pull the hand back and let it go into Raymond's face. I hear a loud crash as he hits the ground. The class starts to gather around and make loud noises which Ms. Smalls hears. She runs into the room and grabs me from behind as I get on top of Raymond to strike again. I cry as my teacher begins carrying me to my mother's office.

THE BATTLE OF CARENTAN: THROUGH EAGLES' EYES

by Vincent Draddy

June 8th, 1944. 0700 hours, Camp Toccoa, Georgia. "Wake up, you shit heads, you have things to do," Captain Springer shouted. "We're going on a little jog so get your shit together and meet your Officer outside the mess hall at 0705 hours. As for you, Sergeant Johnson, be at my office in 0710 hours."

As Captain Springer left the room, Johnson's right eyebrow raised in confusion. "What the hell did I do now?" he asked himself.

Sergeant Johnny Johnson was strong and broad shouldered and stood at six feet tall. Having gone to Catholic schools his whole life and being a momma's boy, Johnny had never disobeyed any orders and had never done anything wrong. As he entered Captain Springer's office his hands began to curl up into fists as his Italian blood kicked in, and he was sweating as if he had just run in a marathon.

"Sir, you wanted to see me?" Johnson said.

Captain Springer told him to have a seat. "Sergeant, do you know why you are here? You have received a weekend pass, am I correct?" Captain Springer questioned.

"Yes sir, I have a weekend pass," Johnson replied. "Captain Springer, permission to speak sir?"

"Permission granted," said Captain Springer.

"Sir, have I done anything wrong? I've been training just like everybody else in my company."

"No, you have done nothing wrong to my knowledge," the Captain said. "You are here because I've received word from HQ that you will be jumping on the 9th of June."

"Jumping?" Ramsey asked. "But I have a weekend pass. I was planning on seeing my old Company, sir, Easy Company."

"From here on out your weekend pass is revoked," the Captain said. "You will be in England tomorrow. There you will be briefed for the mission and then dropped into Normandy. When you arrive, regroup with your old Company. If you have any questions, ask Lieutenant Nixon. You're leaving at 1100 hours. That gives you plenty of time to pack your things and be at the airstrip."

Sergeant Johnson stood, and then saluted. "Good luck, Johnson," Captain Springer said.

Johnson left the building, miserable, confused and on his way to his sleeping quarters. The airstrip sat on the other side of Camp Toccoa, so he packed his things up and got a ride. The plane took off at 1100 hours, and when that moment came, Sergeant Johnson would start his journey to hell.

While in flight, Johnson was in shock about regrouping with Easy Company and knew this journey would be one he would never forget. When Johnson landed, an officer led him to his new company. Back in Easy Company, Johnson felt at home. He got together with all of his old brothers of war. 1st Lieutenant Nixon was in charge of Easy Company on the battlefield; he was glad to have Johnson back to fight beside him.

Easy Company was briefed on the upcoming mission. After the briefing each soldier was told to gather all gear and ready for battle.

June 9, 1944. Easy Company made their way to the airstrip to gather weapons and ammunition. Each needed a standard weapon and a standard military issued parachute for the jump. After Johnson gathered his rifle and parachute, he made his way to the large aircraft that was about to take him behind enemy lines in just hours. The thought of this made Johnson feel sick. "Sir," Johnson said. "Lieutenant, I can't go, I feel too sick to jump."

"It's ok, Sergeant, everyone gets that way once in a while. Just hang in there and you will be all right," Nixon whispered.

The rest of Easy, Fox, Dog, Able, Charlie, and all the other companies boarded their planes to arrive at Normandy. Easy Company was silent. No one said a word. While his eyes were wandering, Johnson saw men praying, reading, crying in fear, and the occasional soldier throwing up in his helmet. Suddenly the plane shook. It was a Flak 88 Anti-Tank gun. The Nazis were shooting the allied planes. Johnson could feel the sweat running down his back. He saw planes being shot down right next to him. Then the Flak gun fired and had a direct hit to his plane. The plane was still in flying condition but the pilot suffered from some severe shrapnel that was fatal. The Co-pilot flipped the switch. A red light appeared in the front of the plane. Lieutenant Nixon told his men, "Stand up, hook up."

Easy Company stood in a line and hooked their parachute carabineer to the track above. Then each soldier, starting from the back, checked the person's gear in front to see if it was ok.



DEPLOYMENT *drawing by Evan Johnson*

“10 ok, 9 ok, 8 ok, 7 ok, 6 ok, 5 ok, 4 ok, 3 ok, 2 ok, 1ok.” The light went green. They were ready to parachute onto enemy territory. Johnson was the first to go. He jumped out of the plane just like he had practiced back at Camp Toccoa, then set off his parachute. He could see planes being shot down and the tracers of bullets filled the night. These were sights he had never seen during his training; he was overwhelmed by everything around him. Johnson’s blood was rushing so fast that he couldn’t think as his feet were about to hit the large dirt mound. The smell of manure whistled through Johnson’s nose as he touched down.

Johnson was alone, in enemy territory. He started to make his way through thick bushes and thorns as he entered the large woods that were nearby. With only his gun and pack he made his way past the tree line. Then he came across a river that he could use as cover. He followed the river to the meeting point where he hoped he would find his fellow troops. He followed the stream for about a mile then he heard the crackle of sticks and leaves nearby. Johnson got down, trying to gain cover. He wasn’t sure what he was hearing or if it was his mind playing tricks on him. He pulled out the “cricket” and tapped it twice. Johnson remembered that the cricket is to be used in a situation where you find yourself in the presence of a person and you don’t know who it is. Press it and wait for a responsive “cricket noise” if there is a response, then he’s a friendly; if no response he’s an enemy. There was no reply from the unknown object in the surrounding noise. Johnson felt a bolt of fear as he felt the hot sweat trickling down his back. Now, he knew it had to be a Nazi soldier. He pulled out his Thompson M1A1 Submachine gun and tested the noise one last time. He pointed his weapon in the direction where the noise was coming from, and said “Flash.” Ramsey felt a feeling of relief when he heard a reply of “Thunder.”

The young soldier stood, looking like a deer in headlights. Still in a state of shock, the soldier breathed in and out deeply. He eyed Sergeant Johnson, a six-foot and brown haired beast of a man. “What the hell do you think you’re doing?” Sergeant Johnson whispered. “Who are you and why didn’t you respond to me. You know you should be a lot more careful out here. You’re lucky I got to you before a kraut did.”

“Sir, I apologize,” the soldier replied. “My name is Ronald Fox, I am a private in Able Company, sir. ” With veins searing out of his forehead, Johnson looked puzzled. “Able Company,” Sergeant Johnson said. “How the hell did you get all the way out here? Your drop zone is twenty-five miles from here.”

“Sir, I don’t think anyone was dropped anywhere near their D.Z.,” Private Fox stated. “When that Flak 88 started up, everything went chaotic up there. To my calculations, I landed about twenty miles west of my D.Z. Ever since I landed I’ve been trying to find the rest of Able Company.”

“All right,” said Johnson. “I’m Sergeant Johnson of Easy Company so stick with me; we’re heading to my meeting point. It’s the nearest one to us; it’s only about four miles away. Until then you’re under my command, then when we arrive at headquarters I’ll find something to do with you.”

The two soldiers walked for about four miles until they reached their destination, where there were more members of Easy Company and some other lost soldiers. Johnson and Fox approached 1st Lieutenant Nixon and the other nine men. Nixon told Sergeant Johnson that they better get moving if they wanted to get to HQ by morning.

The twelve soldiers walked in the direction of HQ for three miles until they stopped for a short rest at a bridge nearby. As one of the soldiers was drinking from his canteen he heard some talking that was coming from the other side of the bridge. "Sir," the soldier pointed Nixon to where the noise was coming from. Nixon heard the voices too and ordered the rest of the men to take ambush positions. A platoon with ten Nazi soldiers approached Nixon and his men from the opposite side of the bridge. Nixon readied the men, "On my mark." As the Nazi platoon came closer Nixon gave the sign to open fire. Johnson fired his Thompson and shot two soldiers, and the rest of the men took care of the other eight Nazis.

* * *

June 10, 1944. Back at HQ, the rest of Easy Company regrouped with Nixon and Johnson. Fox, on the other hand found Able Company and joined them. Johnson found himself in an abandoned French village. He could smell the stench of dead horses that were now road blocks. The command center was in a long, brown building that looked like it could have been used as some sort of village center.

After talking to Colonel Frantz, Nixon called Easy Company to regroup for a mission briefing. "Gentlemen, welcome back," Nixon started. "We have good news, boys, we're moving out. There is a little town in Normandy that is occupied by German forces. Our job is to eliminate these forces and secure the city of Carentan. We move out in five minutes so get your things together, and make sure you have enough ammo."

"Johnson," Nixon said. "What do you see?"

"They got two MG42s set up in the windows at eleven o'clock and two o'clock," said Johnson. "One tower where it looks like a sniper is set up, and an unknown number of krauts."

"Civilians?" Nixon anxiously asked.

"No," said Johnson. "Good. Babe, get up here and take out that sniper on my go. Johnson, you and I will take point. Garcia, Mendez, and Vitolli you take right wing. The rest of you take the left wing. On my mark we'll knock them out slowly and quietly until our cover is blown."

Each soldier took their position waiting for Lieutenant Nixon's command. Johnson could feel the hair on his body stand up. Nixon nodded to "Babe" to give him the ok to take the shot on the sniper and the two MG42s. Babe took out the sniper in the tower, but the MG42s weren't the same. He scoped in on the first MG42 trying to find the soldier who was standing beside it. As Babe squeezed the trigger, the first MG42 machine gun was down. As the Nazi soldier fell to the floor the other soldier quickly maneuvered over to his MG and fired in the direction where Babe was taking cover. This raised all of Carentan's attention as the sound of bullets filled the air. Babe's chest was squirting blood all over his face as he tried to apply pressure. His left hand had a hole through it, and there was nothing where his face should have been. Three hundred rounds of ammo pierced his body like nothing.

Nixon then ordered the right and left flanks to move in. Then Nixon and Johnson moved to the closest building for cover. Garcia, Mendez, and Vitolli ran to an abandoned cottage that was fifty yards away from the second MG42. Garcia took out and cooked one of his frag grenades, then threw it in the window where the MG42 was placed. The grenade blew up the whole side of the wall on that level of the building. All three soldiers took open fire at the MG42 and shot a good number of Nazis. The rest of the soldiers on the left flank collapsed the Germans in on themselves, and secured

the left side of Carentan. Having the left and right sides secured, they only needed the middle where Johnson and Nixon would soon be.

Johnson took point with Nixon and shot from right to left, dropping five. Nixon entered the building near Johnson and found a Panzerschreck. Lieutenant Nixon set the German bazooka on his shoulder and took out the tiger tank near the bell tower where the sniper was. Mendez and the rest of the right flank ran up to regroup with Johnson and Nixon after having the right secured. Mendez and the others ran fast, only hoping not to be seen. Screams of German yelled out then Mendez, Garcia, and Vitolli were on the ground, dead. There was another MG42 in the center building of Carentan. "That must be their HQ," Johnson said.

Nixon replied, "Yup, we have to take it out, just the two of us. We'll enter through the left to make sure we aren't seen by that MG, then open fire from there until the end."

"Yes sir!" Johnson said. Johnson and Nixon crawled up the left side to the building and then entered. Johnson fired first shooting three or four Germans. Then they entered the next room. Johnson peeked his head around the door as bullets flew past his head. He threw his grenade and entered the room spraying bullets everywhere. His grenade killed all but one, whom he finished off with his weapon. They were in a meeting room and it looked like something important just happened. Johnson grabbed maps and documents that were left in the room and met up with Nixon. Nixon cleared out another room while Johnson was busy gathering information. He appeared to be shot but he said he was fine. There was just one more room left in the building, where the MG was placed.

Nixon was the first to go in. He checked it and gave the signal to Johnson that all was clear. "Our boys must have finished him off," said Nixon, then he fell to the ground.

Johnson stormed into the room and saw the young Nazi soldier standing in a corner. Johnson was looking at him right in the eyes then dropped his weapon. The soldier yelled at Johnson and Nixon in German and then pointed his gun at Johnson. The Nazi said to Johnson in English, "Goodbye," and then pressed the trigger to his Luger. The clip was empty. Johnson crouched down and grabbed his knife that was attached to his ankle and said to the soldier, "Goodbye and goodnight." Johnson then picked up Nixon and put him on his shoulders. He carried Lieutenant Nixon all the way to the left side of Carentan where reinforcements arrived. A Jeep took Johnson and Nixon back to HQ as the rest of Carentan was secured.

Back at HQ Nixon was taken to the medical tent to get fixed up. After Nixon was released, he and Johnson met with Colonel Frantz. The Colonel said to Johnson, "Lieutenant Nixon here has told me about the heroic and courageous actions that you have shown today. You are now promoted to Staff Sergeant, congratulations. Now I am very sorry to tell you that you have to travel back to Britain to be debriefed on your mission to Carentan."

"Sir, I thought the nearest airstrip is overrun by Nazi forces," said Johnson.

Frantz said, "Yes, it is, so you will have to find a way to capture a plane and fly it to the airstrip in Britain. It will be difficult, but if you are not seen or heard you will succeed. Good luck," said Colonel Frantz.

Johnson arrived at the British airbase that was controlled by axis forces. He made his way around the entrance seeing no one at all, which was a total relief to him. Then he carefully entered the hangar, watching his every step, which had an F4U Corsair. It was perfect to Johnson because his

father taught him how to fly a Corsair when he was a teenager. Johnson then noticed something peculiar happening in the middle of the strip. Right outside the hangar, held a meeting of Nazi soldiers. Johnson had to quickly make a decision; he decided that he would take off right through them. As soon as Johnson entered the aircraft and was settled in, he fired up the engines. Some of the German soldiers looked over, to see what all the noise was about, but thought it was just another recruit being taught how to fly a Corsair. Johnson pushed forward when the plane was ready, and headed straight for the group of Nazis. He jerked the throttle as hard as he could so he could take off as fast as possible. The Nazi Soldiers whipped out their guns and opened fire on Johnson and the Corsair. He took the joystick and pulled it toward him as the plane lifted into the sky. Johnson sighed, as a sign of relief that his day in hell was almost over.

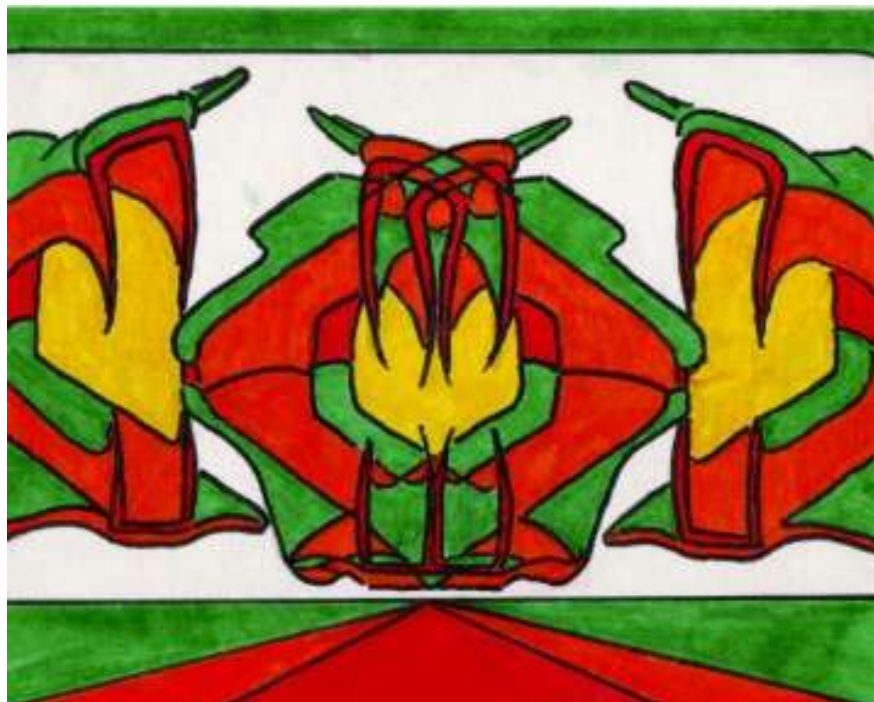
After arriving in Britain, Johnson headed over to the American HQ. When he got there, Johnson met up with General Walsh to be debriefed. General Walsh debriefed Staff Sergeant Johnson and was impressed with his accomplishments. The General was so impressed with Johnson that he was promoted to Master Sergeant. With great thanks, Master Sergeant Johnson took the promotion in honor and thanked General Walsh. General Walsh told him he well deserved his promotion and advised him to go back to France and continue fighting for the United States.

Now after gaining knowledge of the Nazi army in Carentan, Master Sergeant Johnson was free to go back to Easy Company in Normandy and finish the fight. On his way out of the General's office, Johnson stopped, smiled, and turned to face him. "Sir," Johnson asked. "Before I leave, sir, could I have that weekend pass back?"

The General chuckled, "You always were one son of a bitch, Johnson, remember that. You're a good man, Johnson, and I would be honored if I served under you in your company."

"Thank you, sir," Johnson replied. "It means a lot coming from you."

"Good luck out there, Johnny," Walsh replied. "And don't forget to give those Nazis hell for me!"



FANGS
drawing
by Ellsworth Parham

THE EMPTY HOUSE

by Jeff Hudak

As Mike turned the curve in his Ford Explorer he saw that he finally reached home. It was late, Mike thought to himself. He had partied for five hours and was exhausted and a little drunk. He considered all that had just happened. His girlfriend turned twenty-four and even though things had been going well, the night ended on a bad note. He pulled his car into the driveway and parked it. Right as he began to open the door he heard a crash come from inside his house. He paused for a moment.

What the hell was that? he thought. After a minute nothing happened. He opened the door of his car and got out. As the door closed he heard a sharp cry. He started to pull his phone out of his pocket. "I'm calling 911," he said aloud, panic gripping his voice. As he was about to push send his phone shut off; his battery died. He pondered his options. He could try his luck with the neighbors, but they would probably be irritated about him banging on the door at three in the morning. He had a phone in his kitchen and decided that that was the best bet. He quietly opened the door. The house was silent; Mike could hear each breath as if it were a scream. He quietly tiptoed into the kitchen. So far nothing was there; he grabbed the phone and hid behind the counter.

This is so creepy! Mike thought as he pressed the number nine. As soon as he hit the button it made a loud beep. *Damn*, he said in his head.

The silence broke, something moved upstairs. It sounded like footsteps; the house creaked and Mike froze. He sat there, and after counting to ten he quietly got up and peered over the counter. At first glance he saw nothing. He scanned his surroundings again and then paused as his eyes fell upon the shadow in the living room. He turned pale. The shadow stood still as if it were a mannequin.

He slid down, back against the counter. He looked at the phone. Nine. He pushed the phone up against his chest and pressed 1. It gave off another loud beep. *Damn it!* This time there was no sound of movement. Mike curiously decided to peer over the counter again. The shadow was gone. Mike quickly looked down at the phone and pressed 1 and send. As he was about to put the phone to his head he heard another sharp cry from directly behind him. Before he could turn around he felt a sharp pain in his back, "Hello, this is 911."

Mike tried to cry for help but nothing came out.



TEAR drawing by Hyun Jae Kim

THE LICK

by Colby Moore

My eyes open. I could tell that I am awake, yet I can't really move. My mind feels fuzzy. I don't know where I am.

This room isn't the one I'm use to waking up in. As I gain my thoughts, I realize I'm in Matt's room. I am spending the night with him tonight. I slowly turn to try and find a clock to check the time. I can tell it's late at night because there are no lights coming from the windows. I sit up and look around the room. I see that the bathroom light is on. It is gleaming under the closed bathroom door.

Matt is probably just using the bathroom or something. No big deal. He did drink a lot of Coke tonight while we were up playing the new Call of Duty game.

I continue my search for a clock and see one sitting on the bedside table. *Wow, it's only two thirty in the morning.*

Just as I put my head back down I remembered what Mrs. Kechter told me earlier: "If you ever feel in danger, Rex sleeps under your bed. All you have to do is stick your hand under the bed and see how many times Rex licks your hand. If he licks it once, everything is fine. If he licks it twice then you might want to be careful. That doesn't mean something that bad, he might just have heard a sound and thought it could possibly be danger. Now, if he licks your hand three times that means get out of the house. I don't care if you have to jump out of the window or whatever you have to do, just get out of the house and run until you reach the police."

She scared me a little by saying this. After she said it I thought to myself, "Why would I ever need to get out of the house? Is there something about the house that is dangerous?" I determined she was just saying it to make sure I was safe.

Matt later told me that she tells that to everyone, but no one has gotten three licks yet. Actually only one person got two licks, and that's just cause Mr. Kechter was getting something out of the kitchen and Rex was just being careful. Well, I decide to make sure everything was safe and stick my hand under the bed. I wait there for a second and feel a lick. I keep it there just in case Rex is going to lick again, but he doesn't. I feel at peace knowing everything is safe. I close my eyes and start dreaming about my trip to Germany last summer.

I wake up again. This time I realize where I am right away. I look at the door; the light is still on. It's three forty two. *Maybe he just left the light on.*

"Matt? Matt?" I whispered. I don't want to wake him up because he was sleeping on the bunk right above so I whisper loud enough so he can hear it, yet quiet enough to not wake him up. I don't get a response. *He is probably asleep.*

The light in the bathroom worries me. *What if he is feeling sick? What is he slipped and fell?* I stick my hand under the bed. It takes longer for Rex to react this time. After I wait about ten seconds, he gives me two licks on the hand. Maybe Rex just heard a noise outside or something. I am hesitant but I put my head back down on the pillow. I sit there for a second before I close my eyes. It takes longer than the previous time, but I fall asleep once again.

I hear something rustle under the bed. It wakes me up. My heart is beating fast. I realize it was just Rex shifting to a more comfortable position. I still my heart racing in my chest. I look over

and see the light in the bathroom is still on. I am frozen in place. *It's all right. No big deal.* I try to convince myself everything is fine, but my heart isn't listening. I sit looking at the door and clock for a minute. Four fifty four. It's still dark outside. I close my eyes hoping that this ugly situation will just disappear and this was all just a dream. I open my eyes. Nothing has changed. My heart begins to race. I slowly put my hand under the bed and wait for the licks, or, hopefully, lick.

I put my hand under the bed. Seconds feel like minutes as I wait for Rex. It seems like an entirety until I get that first lick.

Please be all. Please. Please not another lick. I get the second one. My heart starts to beat faster. I hold my breath hoping that will be all.

I just want to go home. I just want to be in my own house in my own bed; nice and safe. The third lick. *O god. O god. What do I do?* I stand up.

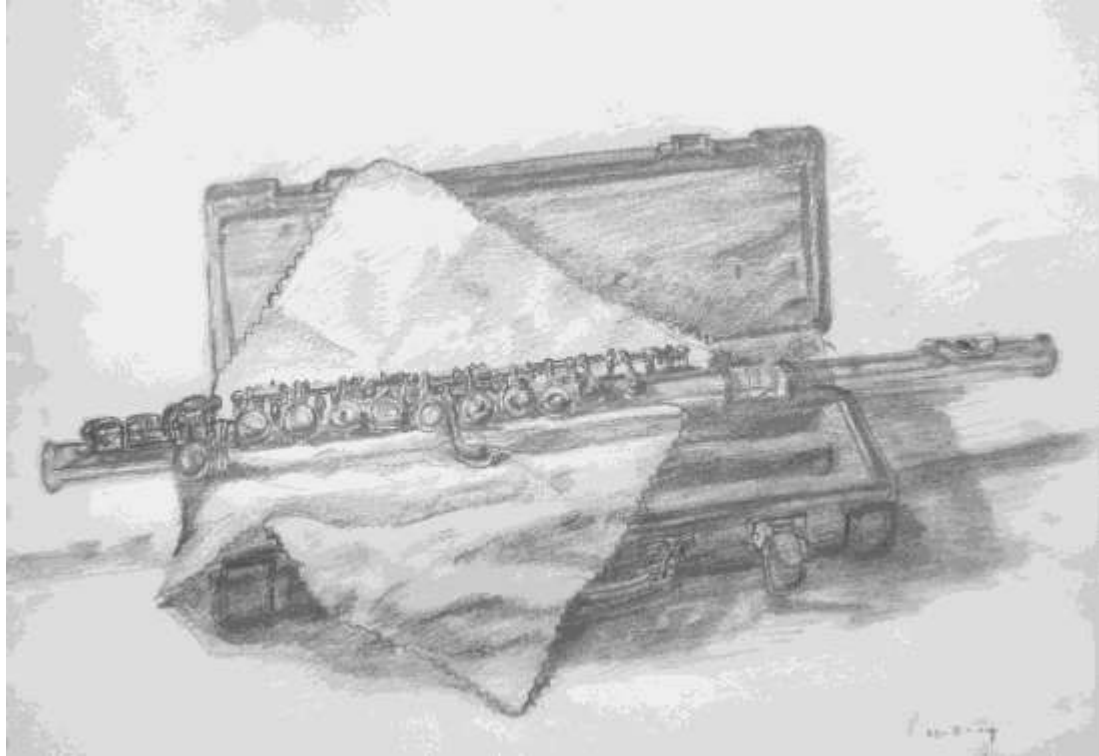
Matt's bed is empty. I run to the bathroom. Everything is a blur. I open the door. There lying in the bath is Matt, his throat was slit. He is looking up at me. I see something next to him. It is Rex. Dead. I look up. I see something written on the wall. "Not only dog can lick hands."

"NO! Please! NO!" I scream. The door shuts behind me.



MIRROR

drawing by James Feng



FLUTE *drawing by James Feng*

SUMMER FLIES

by Gabriel Dunsmith

Flies of Dragon
 Burst from the air
 Faces: a mask, breathing
 Fire
 Glittering wings
 Sun-shining wings
 Flittering
 Twittering
 Up to the sky

Flies of Butter
 Surf the heavens
 Wingbeats
 Silvery
 Velvety
 Lavender ribbons flutter
 Cutting
 Through the air
 Like a knife

Flies of Fire
 Glide through the trees
 Burning inside them
 A beacon so bright
 As to awaken
 The others
 All twinkling
 Flashing
 Dancing like fairies

Flies of Horse
 Crest cottony clouds
 Buzzing
 Staring
 Papery wings flapping
 Galloping
 Galloping
 Galloping...
 gone

FOOTBALL FROM A GIRL'S PERSPECTIVE

by Dylan Wiemer

This past weekend I got dragged to a Carolina Panthers game. It was the biggest waste of time ever. I was astounded by how guys like to sit around in a huge, smelly coliseum and yell and scream at each other. Some drunken idiot spilled beer all over my pink North Face jacket that I just got for my 16th birthday. It had to be the worst weekend ever; my friends Samantha and Kelly were hanging out at her house all day watching Gilmore Girls and talking to that cute football player, Ken. He is so hot; he's got this black wavy hair and he is so hot! What the hell is so great about football anyway? It's just a bunch of dudes hitting each other. The only good thing is how they were those tight pants. When I go see Ken play, OMG! He has such a cute butt.



GIRL drawing by Dean Zhang

TREES

by Frank Lucius

Long before there were people and trees, and the world was barren, there was a tribe of hawks. These hawks lived in nests located in bushes on an island in the middle of a lake at the base of a mountain. They worshiped God and had spiritual sessions every night to offer him food they had killed that day. From this colony a hawk named Frank was born. Frank was big for his age from the start, and he was one of the more athletic hawks. He could fly farther and faster than any other hawk his age.

Frank's parents never let him fly farther than the boundaries of the island, and Frank, although he had always wondered about the outside world, never wandered past the boundaries of the island. Until one day when Frank was out searching for food on the far side of the island and heard a blood-curdling screech. He was too far away from the others to call for help so he made a quick decision to help the animal in distress. He was halfway to the mainland when he heard the same noise except louder. Frank sped up to see a mother robin protecting her new hatchlings from a big seven foot black snake. The mother robin lay wounded and helpless as the snake moved in for the kill. Frank dove like a champ and grabbed the snake behind the head with his talons. The snake let out a loud hiss and began to wrap the rest of its body around Frank's feet to prevent him from breaking its back. Frank, being smart, again dropped and flew about a foot above the ground while dragging the snake over rocks and shrubs until it finally unwound itself from Frank's feet. Then Frank made quick work of snapping its neck and flying back to the wounded robin.

Frank landed about five feet from the robin. She limped over to him and thanked him for saving her. After Frank took care of her injuries, she told him of how many birds were dying because they didn't have a safe place to stay. The snakes had holes, the bears had dens, but birds didn't have anything.

Frank invited the robin and her hatchlings back to the island to stay until she was well enough to fly again. After little hesitation she accepted the invitation and Frank made a hammock-like structure out of vines to carry the robin and her offspring in.

When they got back to the island, Frank's parents were furious. They could not believe that Frank had so blatantly ignored their rules, but they soon forgave him after seeing what he had returned with. After thinking about what the robin had told him, Frank decided to go on a quest to find God and ask him to make a safe haven for birds. Frank's parents were not against it but they weren't for it either. They understood that it was what Frank thought was the right thing and there was no doubt in their minds that it was, but they were concerned about their son's welfare. Eventually after much pleading they agreed to let him go, so early the next morning Frank set out on his adventure well rested and with a full stomach.

The first day he wandered around aimlessly, getting used to his surroundings and witnessing some terrible massacres of birds and smaller animals. At dusk Frank found a nice prickly bush that he could sleep at the base of, and the thorns would keep predators away. In his sleep Frank had a dream. It was a voice calling him toward the peak of the mountain. He imagined that he flew to the top and found a cave overlooking the entire lake and land. He imagined that God was there.

The next day Frank set off toward the mountain. He flew to the top and found the cave that he had seen in his dream, but this time there was no one there. He was tired so he flew into the cave and took a nap, but he awoke in the middle of the night to a growling sound. From the reflection of the moon he could see twelve pairs of eyes staring at him; then came the growling; then the smell of rotten meat. The first one charged and Frank barely got away but not before he was nipped on the wing. Frank lay helpless as the second one started to move in and then BOOM! There was a flash of white light and the coyotes fled with their tails between their legs. Standing before Frank was something he had never seen before. It stood on two feet with two more limbs hanging from the top. It had a head and it was dressed in a white robe and held a wooden staff.

The thing bent over and picked up Frank, who was frozen in awe. Immediately Frank felt a warm sensation in his wing, and somehow he knew that this thing had mended his wing. "Hello, Frank. I am God. I know what you have come for but I must ask something of you first."

"Okay," Frank said.



AN OLD MAN *scratchboard drawing by Chandler Ding*

"You must prove that you want a safe haven for the birds for the right reasons. I want you to collect the hair of a bear, the scales of a snake, and a stone from the lake. Once you have done this, return to this cave where I will be waiting."

"But . . ." Before Frank could speak there was another flash of light and God was gone.

Frank started with the easiest of the three. He flew to the lake and soon realized that it was going to be a lot harder than he thought. He could not figure out how to get the stone. The water

was cold and he didn't know how to swim under water, but after hours of trying to figure it out he found that if he flew high enough and dove fast enough he would gain enough speed to plunge into the lake and grab a stone with his beak. He did this and the first time he hit his beak hard on the bottom but the second time he drew a small, smooth pebble that was the color of the sun.

Tired from his task, Frank had no problems falling asleep in his prickly bush, but he was startled from his sleep to find the bush shaking and hear a loud grunting noise. Frank quickly went the opposite way from the noise, and exploded out of the bush, ignoring the pain of the barbs. He then saw the cause of the commotion. A big grizzly bear had its head submerged in the bush. It had obviously gotten whiff of Frank and had come to check it out. Finding the bush now empty, the bear removed its head and sniffed the air. Enraged that Frank had outsmarted it, it stood on its hind legs and roared, swiping at the air as Frank flew around it.

Frank realized that this was his chance to get a snip of hair from the bear. Frank flew around the bear. As soon as the bear had its back turned to him, Frank swooped in and took in a beak full of hair. Gloating, Frank grew more daring with his circles around the bear until finally a big paw hit him squarely in the ribs. Frank hit the ground with such force that he dropped the bear's fur. The bear, not seeing Frank in the air any more, became confused. He fell back into his normal position and lumbered off into the shrubbery.

Frank, ignoring the pain in his ribs, was off the ground as fast as he had been on it. He gave chase to the bear and finally caught up to it about twenty yards from their previous scuffle, and desperately made one last attempt for the hair. He lunged but the pain was too much. He passed out mid-air but not before skimming across the bear, grabbing a healthy portion of the bear's back hair with his talons.

Frank woke up the next morning in a nest in a bush. He was alarmed at first but soon realized that there was no immediate danger and he still had the clump of hair in his left talon. He tried to move but his ribs were sore. Then a sparrow was on him in an instant. Frank tried to open his mouth but it was immediately stuffed with a slimy yet somehow crunchy substance that slid down his throat before he had time to reject it. Immediately his ribs felt prime and he could move.

"Name's Trevor," the sparrow said.

"Frank," replied Frank.

"Saw your little tussle with the ole grizzly last night. You put up a hell ova fight."

"Thanks," said Frank.

"But tell me, why was ye after that hair right there? Ye was protectin' it like a bitch does her puppies."

"It is a substance that will bring an end to this slaughter," Frank replied.

"Oh, I see. Well maybe ye should be getting on ya way then, lad, and when you save us, who showed ye some hospitality."

Frank thanked the sparrow and went on his way. He returned to the prickly bush to find the stone right where he had left it. He dropped the clump of hair in a neat pile beside it. Then he sought out a snake. After hours of searching his keen sight finally spotted a little black line against the barren land. He swooped down and quickly snapped the snake's neck. Using his beak, Frank sliced off the tail end of the snake. He flew back to the bush and placed the items next to each other. This time he seemed to notice a faint glow in the pebble.

Frank napped until dusk and then flew the three items, one in each talon and one in his beak, to the cave of God. He laid them at the mouth of the cave. There was a flash of light and then a voice billowed through the cave. "Frank, you have brought them." Out of the dark walked God.

He picked up the stone, which now glowed with evident power, and mixed the bear hair with the snake tail, and put the pebble down onto the mixture. Immediately they were absorbed into the stone.

"This symbolizes that good will always triumph over evil. This is because the water symbolizes me, and I weather you like the water weathered the rock, and the stone then destroys the scales and fur just like you will end the evil in this world." God said, "I shall give you your safe haven and it will give birds everywhere a safe place to nest and to raise hatchlings."

The ground started to rumble, and large pieces of wood with shrubbery at the top began to grow out of the ground and everywhere birds knew that Frank had succeeded. For completing this task, God instilled in all humans a sense of respect for the hawk. God also recognized the sparrow for its great hospitality by giving it amazing speed. From this day forward Frank lived with the courage and bravery he had shown during his adventure to save his species.



CARDS drawing by James Feng

WEEPING
drawing
by Lucas Troutman



MOVE WOMAN
by Jervis Stuart

At 5:00 PM Monday evening, I sat chillin' on my porch with some friends, having some fun talking about our past girlfriends, when suddenly my cell phone started to ring. The number was very bizarre so I thought twice about answering it. When I finally answer it the first thing I hear is screaming in the background. Immediately I ask him, "What's going on?" The person repeatedly said, "You need to hurry and come to the Jackson Memorial Hospital, because your grand-dad has been in a massive head on collision." I held my breath and ran to my truck faster than Usian Bolt can run the 40 yard dash. I began panicking because I don't know if I'm going to make it in time. What if I get in an accident and never get to see the man who made me the type of person I am today?

I floored my little red Dodge Ram out of the corner and on to I-95. I was heated, weaving in and out of traffic at 90 mph on the highway. I knew I could be at the hospital in the matter of minutes. Then all of a sudden an old hunch back grey headed lady decided to block me in my lane. I began honking my horn. I started yelling, "MOVE WOMAN GET OUT THE WAY". She looked back and flicked me off. I said to myself "You little trip." She kept me blocked in for at least 30 minutes. I began thinking, what can I do to prevent the chance of her and me getting hurt, but at the same time get to the hospital as fast as possible? I got tired of her stupidity and decided to ram her red Grand Caravan.

I finally reached the doctor; he looked me straight into my eyes and said, "I'm so sorry your granddad just died 45 seconds ago." I fell to my knees crying, and the only thing that came to my mind was the old hump back woman. I prayed to God and asked God to help me be strong and pull through this situation, forgive my grandfather for all of his sins and remember the good deeds that he did. My grandfather was a good man and I knew that he impacted a lot of people's lives the same way he impacted mine. His journey continues in every aspect of my life as I become all that I can be. My grandfather was the only person that pushed me to excel in life, I will do well and always pretend that my granddad is pushing me. I will do it all for him.

THE HUNTED

by Marshall Plumlee

Shouting broke out from the back line. In an instance it was silenced, snuffed out like a candle. They turned around to see John missing from the group. Panic spread through the group like wildfire. How could they have been more careless? At first they all agreed they would stop at nothing in pursuit of their dream discovery. With somber looking faces stricken by fear, there was no doubt now they were instead filled with regret. Regret for chasing their holy grail at any cost. Regret for being lost in the midst of a Colorado forest, swallowed by the nighttime darkness.

"I can't take this any more!" Kyle screamed. His eyes were those of a madman-- twitching and bloodshot from sheer exhaustion.

"No! We've got to stick together!" Nathan barked back at him. The rest of the group tried to dissuade him but to no avail. Like a bat out of hell Kyle sprinted through the forest ahead of the group. The fast paced heavy footsteps reverberated through the forest as he tore ahead. Another scream echoed through the forest followed by a deafening thud. Instantaneously a chill shot down the other hunter's spines, the cold iciness of death was in their midst. Only four remained, and at this point not one of them expected to make it through the night. Already three had been taken, one by one the hunters were falling victim to this savage beast. How naïve they had been, an attempt at capturing the world's most dangerous game was an attempt on their own life. Surely they must have realized this as the seven poachers set out at midday in search of the beast. It was too late, now nightfall, the hunters had become the hunted.

"We can't keep doing this; we've got to stick together," Nathan was trying his best to instill hope in the group. Hope however was wearing thin. He soon found that trying to lead and inspire confidence in others is exceedingly difficult when he himself had none. Together they finally agreed on a plan to proceed through the forest quickly and cautiously, maybe, just maybe they would see the sun rise again.

In a quiet haste the hunters made their way through the forest. All the while an ominous dark shadow stalked them through the night. They all shared the terrifying sensation of knowing that someone or something watched them. Every so often they caught a glimpse of their most dangerous game. An eight-foot creature silhouetted against the night sky, flashing from tree to tree. Eventually, Nathan led the group to a forest clearing.

"We should be getting clo. . ." The last word froze in his throat as the group was greeted by the stare of red eyes. The eyes peered at them through the abyss, full of malice and hate. The hunters huddled together and said a prayer. The beast leapt forward from the darkness into the clearing, with a deep yell it broke into stride toward the group. The hunters froze in fear as they watched their imminent doom speeding toward them. With its arms swinging wildly the beast leapt forward and grabbed a hunter with one hand around the waist. Screaming violently there was nothing the hunter could do; he was at the mercy of a merciless monster. A solid heave, and the monster sent the man flying through the clearing. He hit a tree with a harsh crack, and fell lifelessly to the ground with a thud. As the creature yelled and swung its arms violently Nathan yelled to the group.

“RUN!” Nathan broke into a dead sprint. He left the scene with blinding speed, the kind of speed that only comes from your life being on the line. Every inch of him was longing to stop, to go back in an effort to save his comrades, but any attempt against the monster would have proven fatal. He was determined to go for help, despite the yells and screams behind him. Another bone chilling scream sounded as a man was sent flying overhead of Nathan. Splinters flew as the body smashed into a tree with full force and fell to the ground. Nathan kept running, ignoring the limp body at his feet. As he continued to speed through the forest screams and yells died off, but in his mind they were as vivid as ever. Indeed, the screams haunted him even then as he had just barely managed to escape from a hellish nightmare.

He had been running a while now. The forest began to seem much darker now that he was alone. Nathan finally came to a clearing, and in the middle sat the parked Forest Ranger’s truck. A wave of relief rushed through his body as he ran to his savior. He had been through hell and back, and now by some stroke of mad luck he was granted a ticket out. Convincing himself it was not a mirage Nathan opened the door. Immediately the all too familiar scent of death filled his nostrils as the limp body of a Park Ranger fell onto him out of the truck. Shivering, violently racked with fear, Nathan felt a warm breath on the top of his head. Turning around he looked up at the Sasquatch. One last scream echoed through the Colorado forest on that fateful night.



TREE OF FIRE
drawing by Derrick Pace

CIVILIZATION

by Dylan Gale

Pike approached the abandoned trailer. The rust covered surface suggested this but the site as a whole looked too orderly to have been completely abandoned. The thought of a warm place to sleep haunted him as his tattered and wet clothes clung to his emaciated body. Pike began to reach for the door.

"I woont be doon that if I's you."

Pike froze like a statue. He slowly turned his head to see a haggard old man sitting less than ten feet away with a large smile spread across his face. "And why not?" asked Pike nervously.

"Wil da las critter I seen tryta go en thar go is self blown ter peeses," the respondent followed with a large spout of laughter.

"B-blown to pieces?" Pike replied. He was only now noticing how much he trembled, "D-d-did you make him b-b-blow to pieces?" Pike queried as his face became white as a ghost.

The old man laughed hysterically, "Sure did, but don chu woreh I ain gun hurt you kid I liken ya alredeh."

Pike let loose a sigh of relief, "Well that's good to know." At this point in his life Pike was used to such encounters.

"Do yer be wunten sum stew, eh? Made it mehself."

Pike was shaking from his perpetual hunger. "What kind of stew?" Pike said casually, as if it really mattered.

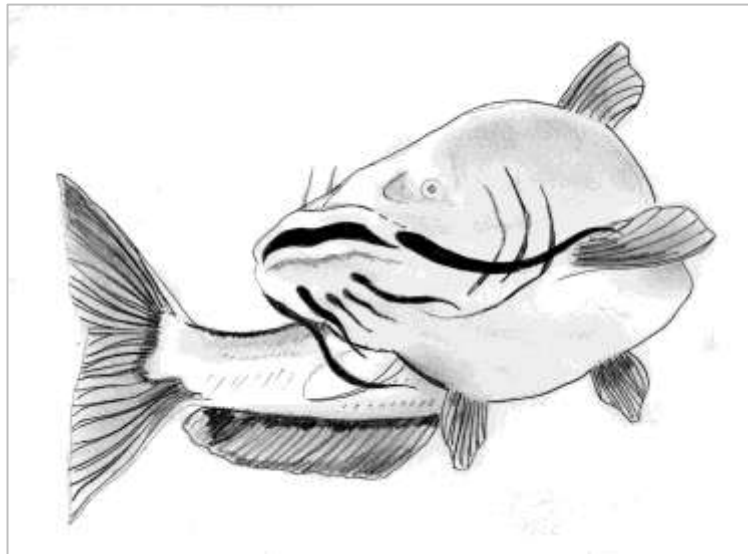
"Hehe is meh favrit, a type ah veal yah cood call it," muttered the old man.

"Don't mind if I do," Pike replied eagerly. He took his old dirty tin cup out of his ragged knapsack and followed the old man to an inviting campsite where a fire heated a large pot of stew.

The old man served Pike some of the warm food from a hot bubbling pot. The food smelled so good to Pike's nose. Pike then noticed the large pile of bones on the opposite side of the camp site. There were bones and skulls of all shapes and sizes: men, women, adults and small children scraped bare until they were all that remained.

"I be hopin you is liken yur stew," said the old man with a smile.

"It smells delicious," said Pike gratefully as he engulfed the first spoonful. After all, these were tough times and everyone did what they could to survive.



CATFISH drawing by Lucas Troutman

JUST ANOTHER LOVE STORY

by Vincent Draddy

Throughout the dark ages of the medieval era, many brave men fought for love, honor and most of all, a reward. In the town of Swallothumbata, England, there lived a well known farm boy by the name of Leofrick. Leofrick was a wee lad of ten years at the time of his parents' horrible fatality. While frolicking on the slim walkway to the top of a peak, Leofrick's parents made a sudden turn and accidentally fell off the mountain. A terrible tragedy, it really is. Leofrick then was raised by his aunt, who happened to be a witch, and treated him appallingly. Leofrick never had any romantic relationships involving females, because his aunt would become jealous, and stop it. So, to make a long story short, this is a story of a young man who was tricked by his aunt through a deceit of scam, dishonesty, treachery, and mostly despicableness on her part, only to run away and become a heroic, valiant, honorable, brave man who would eventually find his true love.

Leofrick, age nineteen, was a young man who wanted to be some sort of heroic prince and save a princess with whom he would fall in love. (Although this is likely not to happen considering he was a no-name farm boy). He read many books about heroic knights saving princesses and falling in love with them. His plan was to leave home, find true love and have an adventure of his own. Now, since Leofrick lived on a farm he had horses and, of course, was an excellent rider. He sought his favorite horse, Shadow, and readied him for their journey. The next morning, Leofrick awoke with a smile on his face, knowing he would finally get the chance to look after himself and attain his desires. Leofrick gathered his things, and set off for adventure. He remembered reading in his books about how each knight had a mentor, or a teacher, that trained them into a heroic knight. He set off for Lancaster in search of guidance.

Since this is a fictional story and the town of Swallothumbata doesn't really exist, or at least I don't think it does, it took Leofrick about seven days to reach Lancaster. When he arrived, he tied up his steed and set out to find a blacksmith to wield him a blade. While Leofrick skipped merrily through the town, he stumbled upon a blacksmith's shop. This blacksmith was a short, black haired, stubby old man with facial hair all over, but he seemed polite. The blacksmith greeted Leofrick with hospitality, and introduced himself as Ulrich. Leofrick told him of his tale and how he needed a sword. The blacksmith was more than happy to sell him a sword, but Leofrick soon realized he had absolutely no money to pay for it. So, Ulrich made him a deal. If Leofrick worked in his shop for three days he would give him a sword and teach him how to fight. Leofrick was overjoyed by the proposition and accepted.

* * *

On Leofrick's third day, the blacksmith granted him a magnificent blade. He told Leofrick of a maiden that was the most beautiful maiden in all the land. Leofrick became instantly interested and asked more about her. The man told him that her name was Beatrix, princess of Thorlantia; she too was waiting for her true love. Beatrix wanted a true knight in shining armor and Leofrick knew he could be hers. Ulrich then took from under his desk an old knight's armor and gave it to Leofrick. He told Leofrick that it once belonged to a true hero and he should have it. Leofrick accepted his gift with many thanks and told Ulrich he had to be on his way. Leofrick left Ulrich's shop and retrieved his steed so that he could embark upon his quest to Thorlantia, to find Beatrix and true love.

While on his way to Thorlantia, Leofrick happened across a forest. He knew just after the forest the town of Thorlantia would lie and his fair maiden would be waiting. Once deep in the forest, Leofrick spied a horrible creature. He found himself in the presence of a giant and knew the only way to pass it was to fight. The giant didn't seem to be angry with Leofrick and was more than happy to let him pass, but Leofrick thought it would kill him if he didn't kill the giant first. Leofrick and his horse rode under the giant while Leofrick slashed its legs. While the giant was attending to its wounds, Leofrick dismounted his steed and climbed upon the back of the creature. He stood upon the giant's head and yelled out like a mountain climber, "Yodel eh hi hooo," and stabbed the giant straight in the cranium. The giant lay dead and Leofrick was happy he killed it.

Continuing his journey, Leofrick stumbled across a group of stragglers. Armed with swords and bows, Leofrick knew they were a threat. He rode down to them just as the stragglers spotted him. They were in an attack position but none could match Leofrick with a blade. Leofrick defeated each in turn, and stripped them of their money and weapons. Shortly thereafter, Leofrick saw the wonderful castle of Thorlantia. Full of adrenalin, Leofrick rode to the castle in anticipation of having Beatrix. He climbed to the tallest room where she was kept and walked in. There she was, the most beautiful girl in all the land, and she was his for the taking. They joined together, both overjoyed, as Leofrick began to tell her of his story. Beatrix, impressed with how he managed to kill the giant and the gang, asked how he had slain the dragon. Out of total shock Leofrick asked if there was even a dragon and where its birth was, because he had not seen such a creature when he entered the palace.

Beatrix explained that the dragon lived in the middle of the lower floor. Leofrick responded with courage and asked his love that if he were to slay the dragon, could he have her hand in marriage? Beatrix happily agreed to his offer, considering she's never had a relationship and was frantically desperate for one, and kissed Leofrick on the cheek. Leofrick arose with his broad shoulders straight and his head high. He lifted his sword up and took a step back, about to recite a speech. He opened his mouth to speak but his step took a wrong turn and he accidentally fell down the very, very, very, very, very long staircase. Once Leofrick hit the last stair, he recognized it as too soft to even be one. He looked back to see what broke his fall and to his surprise, a huge dragon was now all around him. Leofrick arose to his feet ready to fight and drew his sword. The dragon was still asleep so he called up to Beatrix and told her it was safe to come down and he was all right.

Now that Beatrix and Leofrick were united, they had to escape from the castle. Being the heroic knight, Leofrick took his lady in his arms and carried her across the belly of the dragon and reached the castle door. The two of them mounted Shadow, the trusty steed, and rode off into the distance.

Since this is a romance, I guess I can say the two love birds got married and built a house that was coincidentally upon the same mountaintop where Leofrick's parents died. They lived happily together for many years and had kids of their own. All was going well, until one day while Leofrick and Beatrix were strolling along the side of the mountain they made a sudden turn. At that moment, they fell off the side, where they ironically met the same fate as Leofrick's parents.

THE END