

Retro **1996** *spect*



**NON
FILMS**

1996 No Limits



cover art by jed waits

1996 No Limits

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retrospect

1996 No Limits

Retrospect is an anthology of the finest art, photography, poetry, short stories, and personal essays produced by the students of Ellensburg High School

A very special thanks is given to Joy Lessard, Ginger Harmon, and the Alutant staff.

Retrospect

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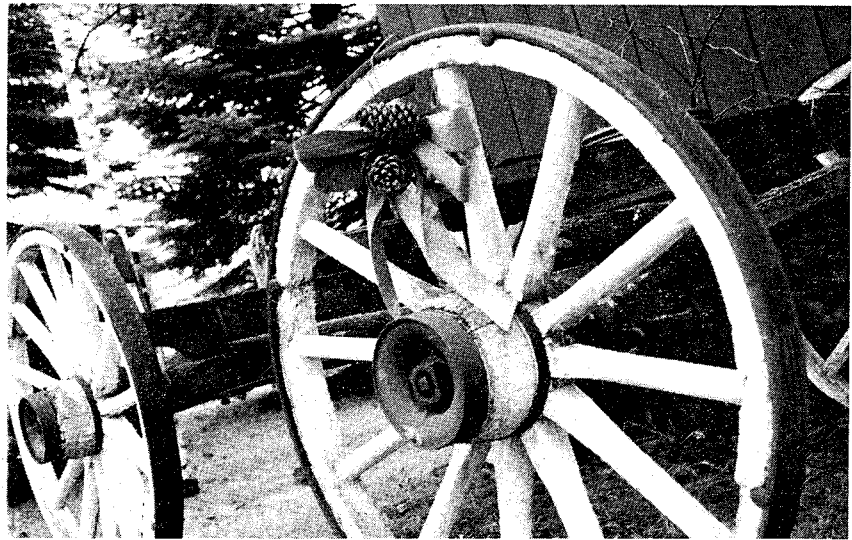
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My Lover's Kitchen

The narrow path I had walked down so many times seemed to be in conspiracy with the moon and the tides. The dirty red bricks that had been carefully placed in the ground had a gravitational pull, and somehow my feet found their way forward and I was at his front door. My eyes bore through the peeling white paint on the wood, and the lump in my throat was too great to swallow. My body and mind were numb as I wrapped my fingers around the cool metal handle and easily pushed the light door open. My eyes didn't want to adjust to the dim light, and I looked back outside. The little bright flowers were screaming silently to go on, and their petals waved at me to turn around.

I took a further step onto the faded linoleum and let the door bang behind me. The cramped kitchen let out a sigh, and the soft, familiar smell formed a blanket on my skin. The wooden cabinets had missed me, I could tell, and I longed to open them up, as I had 1,000 time before. My eyes fell on the miniature potted cacti on the window sill, begging for the generous sun's rays. I just stood for a second, the hairs on my arms crawling, wishing I were welcome in this kitchen again. I looked at the ceiling, and the old fan reminded me of sweltering summer days I'd spent drinking lemonade and listening to the local radio station.



The small spice canisters on the counter began to blur through my tears, and suddenly memories I'd long forgotten came rushing, wildly, back into the depths of my brain. His mother still kept a picture of me on the freezer, and I hated the rainbow magnet that held it there. The stainless steel faucet glinted in the sun and the dripping of water shook and resounded in my ears. I suddenly missed this comfortable room as much as I missed him, and I needed to steady myself on the Formica countertop, because my knees didn't feel so young anymore. Before my eyes I could see all the times he had pushed me up against the yellowing wallpaper to whisper I love you and kiss my ear. Dishes stacked by the sink told me I was a fool for having left him and framed needlepoints on the wall wished I would apologize.

The old olive green oven aged by grease splatters sagged, and gave a dumpy appearance to the place, despite the facelift of personal touch the kitchen bore. The salt and pepper shakers I had given his father for Christmas sat in their usual place atop the white bread box, and the abused pear shaped cutting board tried to remind me of all the times I had made sandwiches for us on it. The cereal boxes on top of the refrigerator stood back to back and I saw my twisted reflection in the toaster. Oven mitts dangled on little hooks, and ducks on the wallpaper gossiped to each other about me. A vice grip was wrenching my heart; I longed for him now. The mahogany grandfather clock boomed, and I spun around to leave, before I could get caught snooping in my lover's kitchen.

essay and photograph by **laura peterson**

Silent Heaven

"Don't try to understand me!" I threw the words at him, out there, somewhere in the darkness. My own words ricocheted back at me with the first, then the second and third echos. Maybe I imagined the fourth; the silent recoil shattering every semblance of control in my mind.

"Don't try to understand me... I don't under...", my meek cry dissipated in the abysmal emptiness that had engulfed my world.

I sank to the wet earth below me with the realization that he had heeded my words. He was gone. The tears began as the foggy mist off the water turned to rain. My glasses, without which I am blind, accumulated their own fog and left me sealed in a tomb of despair.

I cried because I was alone. I cried because I was confused; because our actions had made no sense. I cried because I once had a cat who died. I cried because no one felt the sympathy for me I knew I deserved. I cried because I knew I was selfish, had been all my life, and probably always would be. I cried because there was hatred in the world, and I didn't know if there was a God, and I didn't think I could ever make a difference in the world. I cried because it was raining, and that seemed like the sky was crying. I just cried; and then I began to shake.

I shook so hard my insides felt like they didn't belong. My whole body felt contorted, as if, by some fatal mistake, I had stepped onto a carnival ride I didn't belong on. The nausea washed over me in waves and visions of unsettling boat rides filled my head as the salt from the sea air wafted into my nose and brought my stomach crashing against the walls of my body. The sickly, sweet taste in my mouth was unbearable. I am glad, now, that I'm alone.

Rolling back from my fetal position loathing greasy, mass-produced, cafeteria food more than ever before, the anguish begins to lift and is washed away **completely** by relief that the episode has passed. I begin to experience an uncanny desire. A longing I have never felt before. A craving; a want of something *he* has.

His silent heaven. He always carries it with him, always. The distinctively sweet smell that drifts from the end of the pipe. I've always held it in a special, dark, wonderfully forbidden place that I now wish to venture to. Only through his words and expressions have I visited this silent heaven but now I want it all for myself.

"Yes, I am selfish," I cry out in my mind. I have always hoped to go there with him first, then maybe a large circle of friends, passing a traditional peace pipe; like the Indians. Native Americans; whatever. But now, I want to go all on my own.

"Let's go roast a bowl," I want to propose. "Take me!" I'd laugh, "to your silent heaven, where nothing is, and nothing was, and who gives a damn what will be!"

Yeah, that's where I want to be.

Not here, where the sky's raining down on me like some !@#\$^ dog. Where is he with my silent heaven? That *\$%!, I know he's hiding just beyond this vibrating darkness. Out there smirking. He's there, I know he is. In *my* silent heaven.

The tears come again. They taste salty on my lips, or is that the sea air? God I hate this place. I'm an inlander, I can't stand all this water.

I run my fragile hands through the hair on my head, which feels no different than his did, before he left.

I'm walking now, into the abyss which sucked him in only a few brief moments before. I'm stalking him. No, I'm after something else; I'm seeking silent heaven. *My* silent heaven.

essay by d'anne adams

I haven't spoken of Mark in nearly four years now. Not since I stopped coaching and retired. I've tried to achieve some semblance of talent for writing since then, but I'm a mediocre author at best. I know I can't do the boy justice with this scrap of paper, but I think I'm doing this more for myself than anyone else.

I spent fifteen years as the head track coach for Rimrock High School, and I had the opportunity to instruct dozens of star athletes, some with potential for scholarships. Only one, my final and favorite star runner, had that untouchable competitive flame inside him that some coaches never see. Mark was my protégé. Seeing him run with the magical and effortless smoothness that made him a champion made me believe that some people are truly touched by God.

As a quiet, seemingly shy transfer student in his junior year, Mark didn't at first strike me as anything special. He was just a part of the team. There

Winning

"I think I had an idea that it was happening, but coaches often ignore the small faults of their best athletes."

was nothing extraordinary that I expected from this well-built young Italian, who ran his workouts hard, and completed them almost religiously. Not until three quarters of the way into the season did he become a standout.

Mark's father had been bed-ridden with a terrible lung infection for the past few months, and finally passed away late one night. His suffering had finally ended, along with Mark's.

Something changed about the boy after that. You could see it in his eyes, like he had been through something horrible, and was now better for having survived it. I didn't know how much better until his district qualifying race the following weekend.

The 400-meter dash was about to begin, and everyone knew who would claim the first place medal. Mark was racing the defending two-time state champion. Even I knew he didn't have a chance. I gave him the customary "give it your best shot" pep talk and sent him off. Something was different about the way he approached the starting line. It was in his step, the way he got on the blocks, even the way his body was poised for the gun. It looked like the kid thought he was going to war.

Mark flew off that line like something out of a dream. The muscles in his legs drove in long strides, distancing him from everyone else by the first 150 meters. I have yet to see anyone, young or old, move so fluidly. He broke the tape in record time, and looked at me, the sweat gleaming on his smiling face. "Feels good, coach," he said.

"What does, Mark?" I asked, not sure what he meant.

"Winning," he said.

That one word sums up the remainder of Mark's season, which went by in a flash of broken records and a state championship run. That summer, he took second place only by a fraction of a second in the High School National Championships. Taking it all with modesty and calmness, Mark continued to train and improve as the next track season approached.

In a matter of weeks, he became the talk of the town. He met friends he never knew he had,

and became quite popular in school. Some think people only liked him for his athletic abilities, but I don't think that was all true. Being a winner brought something out in Mark, and everyone could see it. He made people believe in him as easily as he glided across the track. Not that he needed the support. He would have done just as well without the publicity, the popularity, and the constant letters and calls from colleges around the country.

Mark worked hard in school, and maintained a high grade point average. Everything about his eminent success seemed to be written in stone, until a few weeks before the start of his senior track season. I would ask him everyday in school if he was ready to be a national champion.

"I know you wouldn't accept any less, Coach West," he would say with that small grin creasing his lips. He always worried about meeting my standards. I don't think he realized that he had surpassed all expectations of mine the first time I saw that gleam in his eye as he approached the start line.

Mark's eagerness to please was what inevitably ruined everything he had. Apparently, he had been partying heavily with his new friends since his senior year began, as many seniors do. I think I

"As a quiet, seemingly shy transfer student in his junior year, Mark didn't at first strike me as anything special."

had an idea that it was happening, but coaches often ignore the small faults of their best athletes. From what I could gather, he had had a couple of drinks and was driving two of his very intoxicated friends home from a party in the hills outside town. One of these friends refused to wear a seatbelt.

They rounded an icy bend and Mark lost control of the truck, trying to turn too sharply. The truck slid straight into a tree, sending his unbuckled passenger through the windshield and into a fatal impact with the large oak. Mark and the young man in the back seat were injured, but not badly. Word spreads like fire in a small town, and soon everyone heard that Mark had been drinking. The blame fell on him alone.

A fallen hero, he became just another face in the crowd. I tried to ease his depression, assuring him that it was far from his fault. But, the opinion of everyone else was too strong. The school suspended him from all athletic activities, and the letters and calls stopped coming in. The guilt slowly picked its way through him, and finally broke the boy one night a few weeks later. Mark's mother awoke the next morning to find him in the bathroom, his wrists cut with a razor blade and his blood pooled across the tiles.

Those who had condemned him so recently now mourned his loss with all their hearts. Once again, he was looked upon as the flawless idol. It sickens me, even now, to think of their quick change of face. At least he is remembered as a hero, and not the drunken murderer they all made him out to be.

I know I wouldn't live to see Mark's kind of flare for competition again, so I retired early, grieving the loss of this young man who was so much more than one of my athletes. Mark was just a normal kid with a talent that surpassed all that anyone had seen. A lot of people forgot that he was just a young man, bound to make mistakes. They set him on a pedestal, and he fell hard. I'll always remember Mark as being human, with abilities and intentions that were venerable. He was a winner, in all respects.

short story by blaine hunt



artwork by john clark

Reincarnation

"What is reincarnation?"

Slim the cowpoke asked his friend.

His pal replied, "It happens when your life has reached its end.
They comb your hair, and wash your neck, and clean your fingernails,
and lay you in a padded box, away from life's travails.

The box and you go in a hole that's been dug in the ground,
reincarnation starts when you're planted beneath the mound.
Them clods melt down just like your box and you who are inside,
and then you're just beginning your transformation ride.

In a while some grass may grow upon your rendered mound,
and one fine day, upon your grave, a flower might be found.
And say a horse should wander by, and graze upon this flower,
that once was you, but now's become your vegetative bower.

*The posies that the horse ate up, with his other feed,
makes bones and fat, and other stuff essential to the steed,
but some is left that he cannot use and so it passes through,
and finally lays upon the ground, this thing that once was you.*

Then say by chance I wander by and see it on the ground,
and I ponder, and I wonder, at this object that I found.
I think of reincarnation; of life and death and such,
and I just can't help concluding: Slim, you ain't changed all that much.

poem by levi g. dobson

Daily Read

"OH, COME ON!" shouted Jake as he slammed on the brakes of his battered Ford Pinto. The aged, rusty car screeched to a halt on the busy New York street, leaving streaky black tire marks behind it on the pavement. "What in blazes is he thinking?" Jake muttered to himself, staring haplessly at the car in front of him. The white Chrysler wagon, dilapidated from years of weather and use, weaved jerkily between the two right lanes of the road, seemingly undecided about its direction.

Jake paused for a moment thinking, then veered right into an alley. No use putting up with some idiot who didn't know his rear end from his elbow. He sighed unforgivingly, shaking his head. People like that shouldn't even be allowed to live. He reverted his attention to the road, and found himself in a dirty, narrow alley. The pungent smell of garbage and cheap alcohol thrived here, making Jake wrinkle his nose in disgust. He cranked up his window quickly, decelerating as he did so. The Pinto continued slowly down the

alley, Jake fuming behind the wheel. First, that imbecile on the road, now this! The barren little roadway, surrounded on both sides by tall, battered apartment buildings, had no apparent end in sight and there was no room whatsoever to turn around.

He glanced both ways, fed up with the circumstances, and his anger soon was forgotten. A slow, churning feeling of fear crept over him, dancing down his spine like a scorpion, scuffling in on its helpless prey. A man was closing in on his car from the rear. Dressed in tattered jeans and a soiled T-shirt, the hobo stood over six feet in height, and had intimidatingly broad shoulders and muscled arms. The dirty face, sporting a thick, unkept beard, grimaced at him through the back window.

Glancing defenselessly attempted to outdis-

However, he was so he failed to notice the partially blocking the crashing into the rub-debris spilling over its

Jake panicked to lock the passenger bum yanked upon the cursed loudly. He maneuvered in front of the car, and swept the refuse from the windshield with one swipe of his mighty arm, grunting loudly as he did so. The hobo then looked Jake straight in the eye, his shoulders rising and falling slowly with each drawn breath, a demented smile spread over his face. Jake sat frozen with terror behind the wheel gazing into the crazed eyes of the giant vagrant. The tramp bent to the ground and picked up a long, heavy piece of wood among the garbage lying there. He swung it forcefully into the windshield, sending shards of glass flying into the vehicle's interior. Jake drew in his breath as the fierce onslaught of fragments shot by his body. A sharp piece sliced his cheek, causing blood to flow freely over his face and neck, staining his shirt and seat a crimson hue.

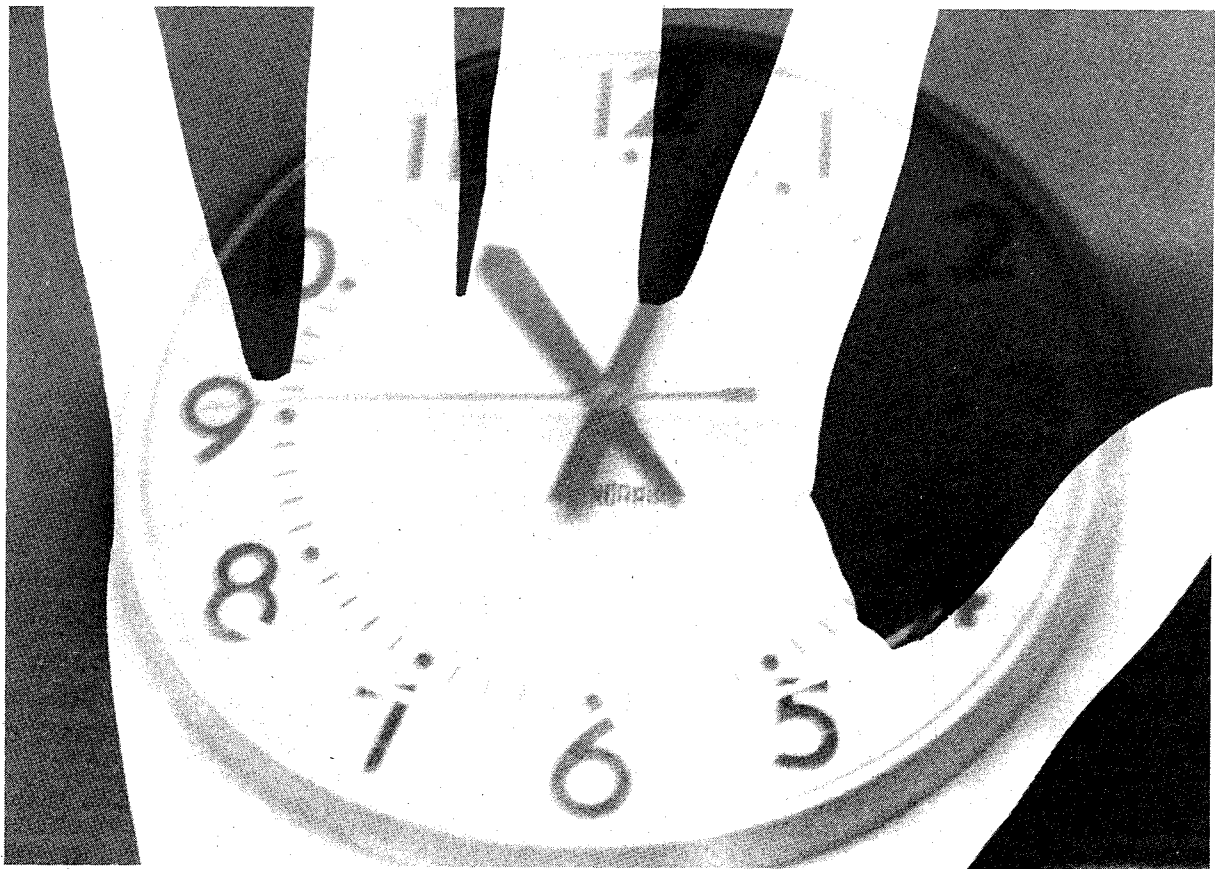
The huge man drew a long, wickedly pointed knife from his belt and bent over Jake through the large hole, placing the blade taut against the skin of Jake's neck. "Money," he uttered through clenched teeth, his foul breath in his victim's face. The one word so horrified Jake that he wet himself, and the smell of urine wafted upward toward the criminal. "Now!" the piker yelled, shaking Jake by the shoulder, jarring him and cutting his neck slightly. Jake tried to move for his wallet but could not, paralyzed with fear. He simply lay there against the seat, breathing heavily, beginning to whimper. The vagabond took Jake's hair in one hand, jerked his head up, and slit his throat in one swift cross-motion. Jake's lifeblood spilled out over the man's hands, onto the seat and floor. The last sight of his life was of the vagrant's unshaven face, just inches from his own, gritting his teeth as he held his prey by the shirt collar, pushing him back over the front seat.

The street urchin muttered to himself as he hurriedly turned the corpse over, fumbling through its clothes. He found his objective, withdrew the money, and threw the wallet into the street as he emerged from the car. Looking quickly around the deserted street for witnesses, he jogged down the dark alley, away from the vehicle, stuffing the night's earned wage -- fifteen dollars -- into the back pocket of his filthy jeans.

A slow churning feeling of fear crept over him, dancing down his spine like a scorpion, scuffling on its helpless prey.

into the rearview mirror, Jake tance the man by accelerating. worried about his predator that pile of boxes and garbage cans alley. The old car sputtered, bish, and came to a stop, the windshield.

icked, quickly reaching over door. Just as he did so, the handle. Finding it locked, he



photograph by evie kelly



My Cloud of

Darkness

My hope was for our future,
my dream was of our past.
And now I sit and wonder,
why we didn't last.
Our love was something wonderful,
something no one else could share.
And then one day it happened,
it seemed you didn't care.
I'm in a cloud of darkness,
suffocating in despair.
If only things didn't turn out this way,
if only you had cared.

poem by levi g. dobson and photograph by jace bailes

Seems Pointless



analyzing the mind
seems pointless at times
when a personality doubles
or depression sets in
nobody knows their struggles but them
what's in this picture?
a puzzle for you
can you see the faces of your family?
a trouble or two?
Seems pointless at times
when the question is asked
to delve into the past
turn it around and you'll see...
analyzing the mind
seems pointless at times
So don't always ask why

poem and artwork by keena taylor

Waiting in

Vain

On this particular hot August day, Libby goes through her usual routine. After being helped into blue shorts, a green blouse and sandals, her mother, Carol, brushes her hair and pulls it back out of her face.

"Now you know the drill," Carol says, placing some money in her daughter's hand. "Go to the cafe, eat your lunch, and come right home. If you get into any trouble, just ask someone for help."

With her eyes fixed on the ground, Libby starts out along the sidewalk. Her mother stands at the door, her arms crossed over her stomach, watching her only child with a proud look on her face. Yet in her eyes there is a sorrow, one that is visible all the time, like a dull, nagging headache.

Spotted with shadows from towering maple trees in the surrounding front yards, the familiar slabs of grey sidewalk pass steadily beneath Libby's feet. A child up the street spots her coming, and scampers to the momentary safety of his front porch, where his mother sits in a rocking chair, sipping lemonade.

"Mama, where does she go every day?" the child asks in a loud, innocent voice.

"She goes to Ruby's Cafe to eat lunch. Now hush."

Both the child and his mother stare blatantly as the well-known stranger passes in front of them. Once past, the little boy runs back to the front lawn and resumes his Tonka truck game, making crashing noises with his mouth.

"It's wonderful how she's able to venture out of the house," one middle aged woman across the street says to her friend, who nods her head in mock agreement. They sip some lemonade and watch Libby intently, as if to see through her plain exterior and into the depths of her abnormal mind.

"But you know what the doctors say," the friend adds after a moment of unsuccessful searching. "Waiting in vain, I'm telling you, Margaret, that's all that poor girl's mother is doing. Twenty-five years of waiting in vain."

Libby moves steadily along her path, counting the cubes of cement below. Four-hundred



eighteen. Four-hundred nineteen... at this familiar number she raises her gaze to see the entrance to Ruby's Old-Fashioned Cafe. The bell over the door jingles softly as it is opened, and Libby walks past the "Please Wait To Be Seated" sign to her favorite booth in the back. A waitress saunters over, smacking a piece of pink bubble gum, and produces a pencil from somewhere in her mass of blonde curls.

"What'll it be? The usual?"

Libby nods, and the waitress retreats behind the counter, where she speaks with her co-workers in a close huddle.

"You know the saddest part?" she muses with the other girls. "How her mother seems so oblivious to the truth. She seems to think that any day now her darling daughter'll just wake up and be completely normal. Waiting in vain, that's what she's doing." They all look at the strange girl in the corner by herself, placing the white and pink sugar packets in a careful arrangement on her table. For a moment they just watch, then they sigh in unison and go about their work.

After a few minutes, the waitress brings the food, a grilled cheese sandwich and a large ginger ale, and gently sets it next to the sugars. Her eyes rest on the colorful packets, which spell the word VAIN. A look of surprise and wonder crosses her face.

"There you go, Hon. Sorry to keep you waiting." She turns and walks away, bewildered, and carefully Libby pushes the sugars over the edge of the table, watching them as they fall slowly to the ground.

**Snow
fall**

A possessive child
it clings to all
For some, it is heaven
For others, not quite
Please stay for a while
Or get out of my sight
But do not concern
Yourself with this state
For only this snowfall
knows its own fate

**short story by jaya williams, photograph by annie scott
and poem by paul charlton**

You Can't Run Forever

The trail was steep; steeper than he remembered. Was he on the right one? It seemed like an eternity since he had broken camp. That tree had to be around here somewhere. It wasn't this far up, was it? The small child squirming at his side forced him to slow his pace, and his grip tightened around the small wrist.

"Daddy, I'm tired..." Anna mumbled. "Where are we going?"

"Shut up," Jeff snapped, "I thought I told you I didn't want to hear you say another word, didn't I? Didn't I?!"

A small nod affirmed his control and the two continued on the path. Sweat glistened on his forehead and his arm was tired from pulling Anna along with him. He checked his watch: 11:30 a.m. Could it really have been three hours since he'd left the camp site?

Two years before, he'd been in this same forest, at that same camp site. He'd been looking for the perfect spot to hide \$500,000 that he'd stolen from the First National Bank. There was a knurled old tree standing by itself in a little clearing, and half-way up the trunk was a small hole later found to be rather big on the inside. It was perfect for \$400,000. The rest would go to pay off debts and accounts, but more important, to get his daughter back from his ex-wife.

The divorce had been hard, but to be accused of not being a good parent! Those charges of drug abuse and assault were bogus, and he knew it. Sure, he'd hit Cindy and Anna sometimes, but that was *discipline*, not abuse. They should have known not to bother him while he was drinking, that was *his* time.

Jeff had bided his time for a while before starting to pay off bills; he was a patient man. Slowly, insanity had crept over him and enveloped his mind like a warm blanket on a cold night. Finally, he knew it was time to collect his \$400,000 and "pass go," so to speak.

Anna stumbled beside him and called him back to reality. A glare from him silenced all would-be moans or cries, and quickly he picked up his pace. He hadn't really noticed where he was going, just following the path looking for that damned tree. He found that the path had narrowed, and was overgrown with the thick shrubs and tall grass native to this area.

Panic overcame him as he checked his watch: 12:45. Where was that clearing?! He had to get that money! The stress of the situation forced him to sit down on a mossy rock to catch his breath, and his daughter was glad for the rest. His heart was pounding so loudly that it sounded like a drum sending Morse code. He was sure Anna could tell he was nervous, but that didn't matter, what does an eight-year-old know anyway?

A small voice drifted to him from seemingly far away.

"Daddy, I'm hungry..." it pleaded. "When are we gonna eat?" Rage overcame him and he stood up, towering intimidatingly over the little girl. She shuddered and sat down crying, not knowing what to do.

"I thought we agreed you wouldn't talk to daddy anymore..." a sinister voice said. Jeff couldn't believe it was his. "Be a good girl and *stay quiet*."

He was getting too nervous, and the kid was starting to tell. If she knew too much... No, he wouldn't think about that right now. He hadn't taken her from Cindy to hurt her, only to be the good parent she needed.

His legs like butter, he slowly began to move on the trail once more. The grasp around Anna's wrist was the tightest it had ever been, and she started to resist the pain.

"Daddy, you're hurting-"

"SHUT UP! You're not my concern right now! I have more important things on my mind." The little brat. When would she see that this is for her own good?

The tree! Where was that tree? The path stopped at a rock face, and a small ledge was all that led to the other side. Jeff crouched down to look Anna straight in the eyes, and he saw fear and pain dwelling inside them.

"Honey," he said in his sweetest voice, "we're going to go across that ledge. Now you just hold on tight to daddy and nothing will happen to you." She looked so much like her mother, those bright blue eyes and long blond hair... he could imagine what Cindy must be doing now, sitting at home wondering where her child was. *Don't worry, I have her*, he wanted to call out. After all, no one was around for miles.

"I'm scared," the punitive little voice called to him, and his only reply was that of a glare and a yank in the direction of the cliff.

Slowly and cautiously he stepped out on the ledge, towing his little angel behind him. It wasn't far to the other side, just a long drop if you didn't make it. The rocks were loose and he lost his footing a few times, but nothing too dangerous. Anna was paranoid beyond caring if she fell; her daddy was in one of his moods.



The only thing she was scared of was making him mad enough to get mean like he had with her and mommy.

Once Jeff and Anna were across the rock face, Jeff knew exactly where he was. He had just taken a longer route to get to his destination, that's all.

The tree was there, old and decrepit like an elderly man standing alone. It looked wise and omniscient, as if it could speak; Jeff wondered at the stories it would tell. Jeff almost forgot that he was holding onto Anna in his haste to get to the oak, but a squeal from her reminded him.

Approaching the tree, he turned to Anna and told her to wait there for him. "And if you move," he threatened, "I won't be very happy..."

New life sprung into his body and he climbed the tree as quickly as any twelve-year-old could. He reached his hand in the hole and felt around amongst the dead leaves and wood chips to find the back pack containing his secret. Upon finding the strap, he pulled out the nylon bag heavy with bills, and clambered down with his treasure.

Unzipping it, he found inside an untouched fortune just waiting for him.

"Okay, honey, we can go back to the camp site now," he promised. "Daddy got what he came looking for."

The walk back took a mere two hours, and the fast pace was exhilarating to him, though tough for Anna. Her short legs refused to go so quickly, and within sight of the camp ground, she collapsed. Jeff bent over, uttering a few choice words, and picked up his baby girl. Some of the other campers stopped to look at him, but his winning smile and rugged look made them think only of a father out having a good time with his daughter. No one would have ever guessed how right they were. Besides, some hunters had looked at him strangely this morning, but he'd put them at ease by chatting with them about how excited Anna was to go off hiking with her dad. Why would this case be any different? It wasn't. Everyone just smiled and went about their camping business. *Suckers!*

He had been coming here to camp ever since he was a boy, and had enjoyed bringing Cindy and Anna

.....
"M.ommy! M.ommy! I want to go home..." Anna screamed. She tried her hardest to get out of her father's grasp, but it was to no avail.

up here with him. He knew how to play the role of a father and did it exceptionally well when others were around.

Jeff stopped short when he came within sight of his bright yellow tent. Cindy was there, tears streaming down her face, her hands shaking at her sides. He nearly dropped Anna out of surprise.

"Mommy! Mommy, I want to go home..." Anna screamed. She tried her hardest to get out of her father's grasp, but it was to no avail.

Cindy's face took on a look of horror at seeing her child in danger, and Jeff's took on one of maliciousness.

"Jeff," Cindy pleaded, "Jeff, please don't hurt her. I'll do anything. Just don't hurt Anna. If a hostage is what you want, take me..."

Typical, Jeff thought. Selfless and obsessed with her child... It's a shame it had to happen this way... Jeff's eyes glazed over and his heart turned cold.

"Put the kid down, Jeff, and you won't be hurt," A strong male voice said behind him, and he instinctively turned to see who it was. "Jeff, put Anna down." It was the hunters! Or who he thought had been hunters! Now they wore an FBI patch on their jackets and carried rifles.

"How...?" Jeff stammered. He reached into his inside pocket and withdrew the mini-pistol he had

stashed there. It was loaded, and he planned to use it the way his dad had always told him to. "The only good pig is a dead pig," was the saying around his childhood house.

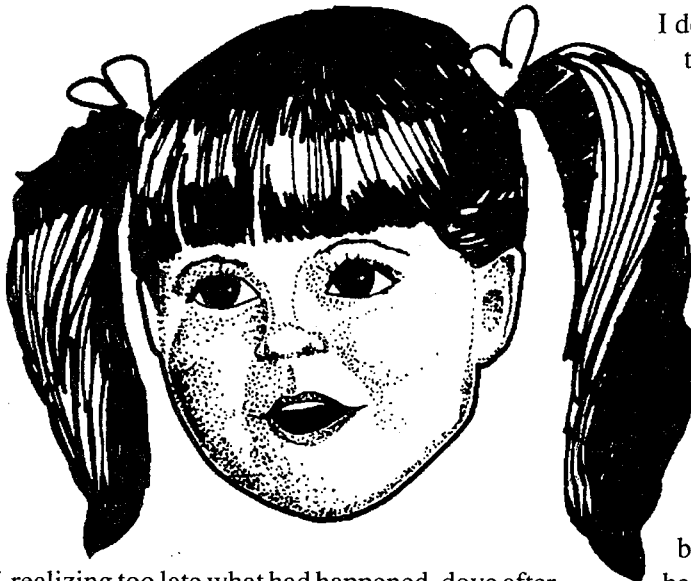
"Jeff! No!" Cindy screamed. Her legs gave out beneath her, and she would have fallen to the ground had it not been for a near-by gawker. Her breath came in sobs and she shook uncontrollably, her hands clutched her sides and a silent scream was etched on her lips. "Oh, God, no...", she muttered. "Please, not my baby."

Jeff glared at the federal agents and smirked in the direction of his ex-wife. His grip on the pistol tightened and his index finger played at the trigger. *What harm I could do right now*, he thought, *how many lives I could ruin with the slightest tug of my fingertip.*

Anna's blond hair was ragged and she was crying in his arms.

"Shhh... It's okay, sweetie, Daddy's got you. It's okay," Jeff soothed his baby girl. No matter how much he tried, he couldn't get his little angel to be quiet. This noise was getting on his nerves! What more could he do to make her happy? If only he could get her out of here he knew she would be better. With \$400,000 at their disposal, he could buy her anything she wanted, *and I bet that would keep her quiet.*

Agent Hannigan watched the whole scene in horror and pure disgust. This monster was getting some sort of perverse pleasure out of torturing his kid. Hannigan had two children of his own, and knowing that there were freaks out there like this one made him want to quit everything and stay home protecting his adolescent treasures.



"Jeff," Cindy said, more composed now, "what can I do to make you stop? I don't want you to get in trouble, I just want Anna safe."

Jeff pondered this question for a moment, then decided that there was nothing Cindy could do except leave them alone to enjoy life the way he knew they would. His hand around the pistol grip was growing more relaxed, but he didn't care. Who would risk Anna just to try and get the pistol away from him? No one, that's who.

But Jeff was wrong. Hannigan watched as the pistol started to droop in Jeff's hands and acted quickly. Coming in from Jeff's blind side, he tackled the father and brought him to the ground. Anna was thrown out of his grasp by the fall and landed on the ground with a thud. Hannigan wrestled the

Jeff, realizing too late what had happened, dove after her and caught her ankle. Hannigan wrestled the gun out of Jeff's hand while he was distracted, then rolled

over onto his stomach to pry Jeff off Anna. With a scream of denial, Jeff's hands were wrenched out of reach of Anna's squirming body and thrown behind him.

Jeff was too dazed to realize what had just taken place, and sat there lethargically, unwilling to believe it was all at an end. His arms were brought to the proper position, and the cold steel of the handcuffs made him shudder.

"You have the right to remain silent..."

As the vehicle holding Jeff pulled away, he looked out the back of the window at a mother and daughter finally reunited and holding each other close. His last impression was one of joy before the happy couple disappeared behind some bushes as he was driven off to his destiny. But he knew, somehow, some way, he'd have his little girl back...

short story by jennifer campbell



artwork by vonchi pimomo

For Them

poem by abby large

Born again I fly so high,
 But look below and I must cry.
 The spirits of their souls are dead.
 They have forgotten to use their head.
 I move on, but still look back,
 They have found a different track.
 It goes in circles and never ends.
 When all I see is the next unexpected bend.
 I can't stop here, there's so much more.
 My life will never be a bore.
 As for them, they won't stay stuck.
 Perseverance brings mercy and luck.

God saw you getting tired
 when a cure was not to be
 So he closed his arms around you
 and he whispered "Come to me."

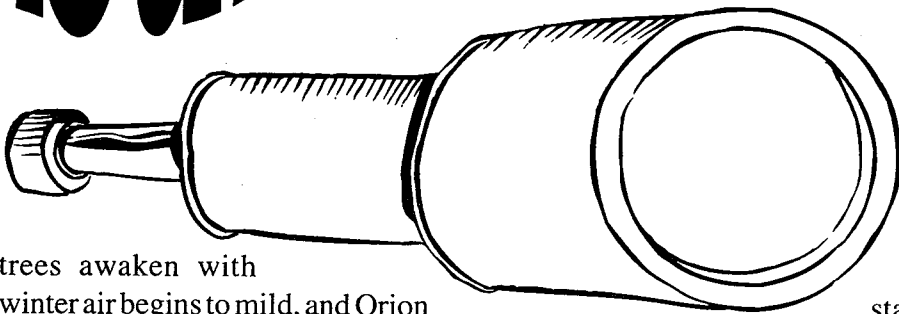
You did not deserve what you went through
 and so he gave you rest
 God's garden must be beautiful,
 he only takes the best.

And when I saw you sleeping,
 so peaceful and free from pain,
 I could not wish you back,
 to suffer that again.

In Memory

poem by angela minear

Summer Night



trees awaken with
winter air begins to mild, and Orion

When the flowers and
new color, the sting of the cold
starts to sink beneath the western

horizon along with the setting sun, I know that summer is beginning to emerge. Along with many gifts of summer, I often anxiously await the intense heat of the afternoon to spill over into the depths of the night so I can gaze at the summer sky and venture into a sleep blanketed by the warm air. When the heat even slightly approaches an unbearable state in my bedroom, I never hesitate to retreat outdoors to the center of the dark lawn with a mattress, warm blankets, and soft pillows.

Sometimes for as long as a couple of hours, my mind wanders aimlessly through the mysterious glittering world floating around our own. Enormous Jupiter lies still and shines steadily above the southern horizon, while fierce Antares blazes wildly with deep red flames in the heart of constellation Scorpius. In the late evening, marking the top of the sky like the point of an umbrella, is the blinding white star of Vega in the geometrical constellation Lyra. With Vega as one of the vertices, the Summer Triangle is formed along with the flickering stars Deneb and Altair. In the western sky lies the smooth curve of Corona Borealis and Spica, near the horizon, is connected in an arc with the brightest flaming star in the sky, Arcturus, and the rounded handle of the Big Dipper. Two other stars in the Big Dipper point to quiet Polaris, or the "North Star," on the end of the camouflaged Little Dipper. Nearby, Cepheus looks like a simple house shape drawn with crayons by a toddler and Cassiopeia spells a 'W' in the arm of the dusty Milky Way galaxy.

Eventually, my eyelids start falling, pleading for sleep. The warm air comforts me gently while sometimes a refreshing breeze glides along my skin. Everything is quiet and still, except for an occasional bark from a dog disturbed from his slumber. The city lights create a gentle glow in the eastern sky and simple silhouettes of distant hills and scattered trees lace the horizon's semi-circle. Finally, I drift into a deep sleep and begin to explore yet another world.

essay by robin read

You talk of mad escapes,
 of journeys amidst seaweed
 weighted by your breaths.

And you ask to slip
through the fingers of the wind,
 To be given, without invitation
a token
 through the grandest gate of time.

Helpless and flustered,
I watch you draw up these maps.
 With miserable eyes,
you ponder a better world.

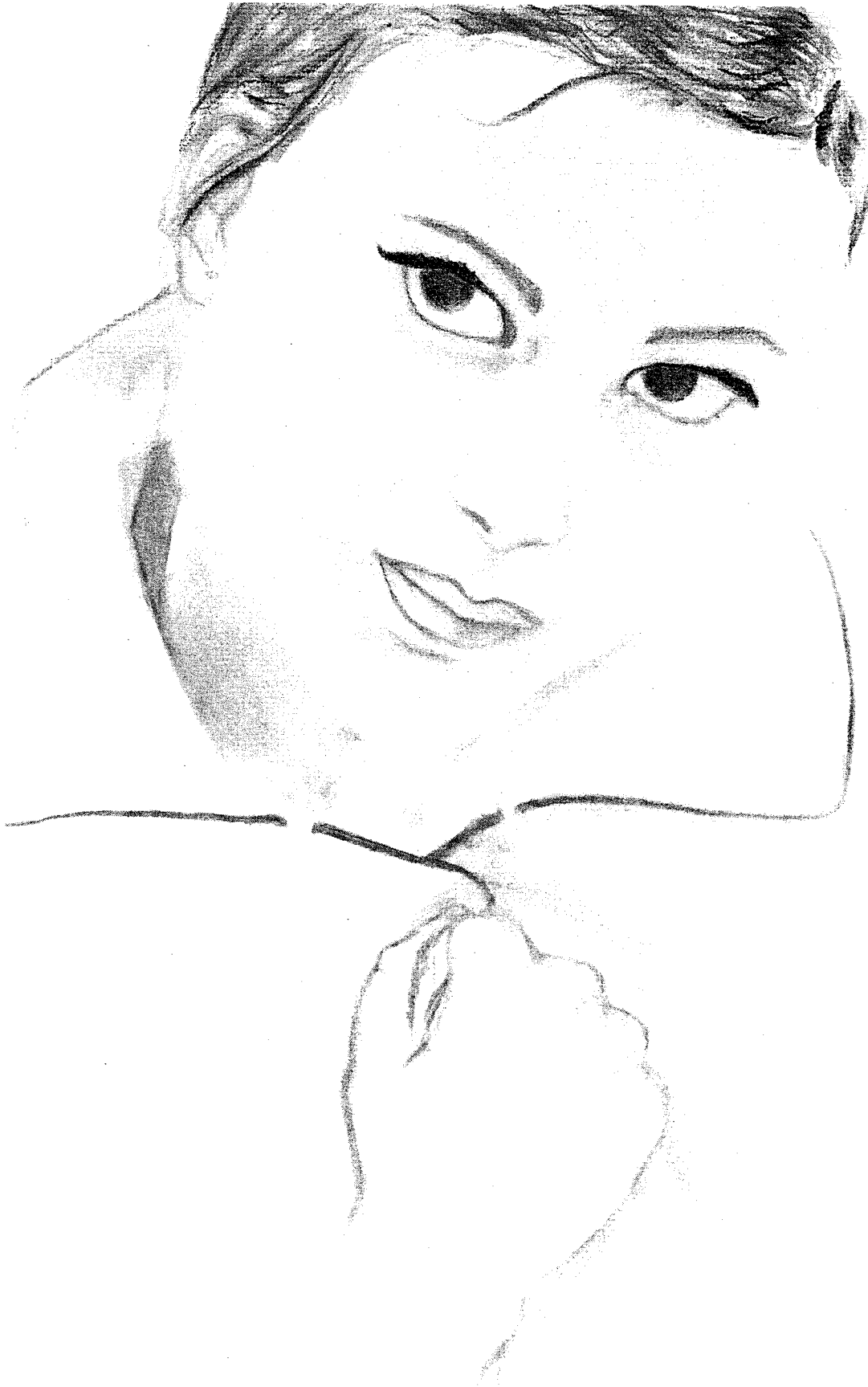
By walls you have raised
I cannot reach you--
 and my heart falls.

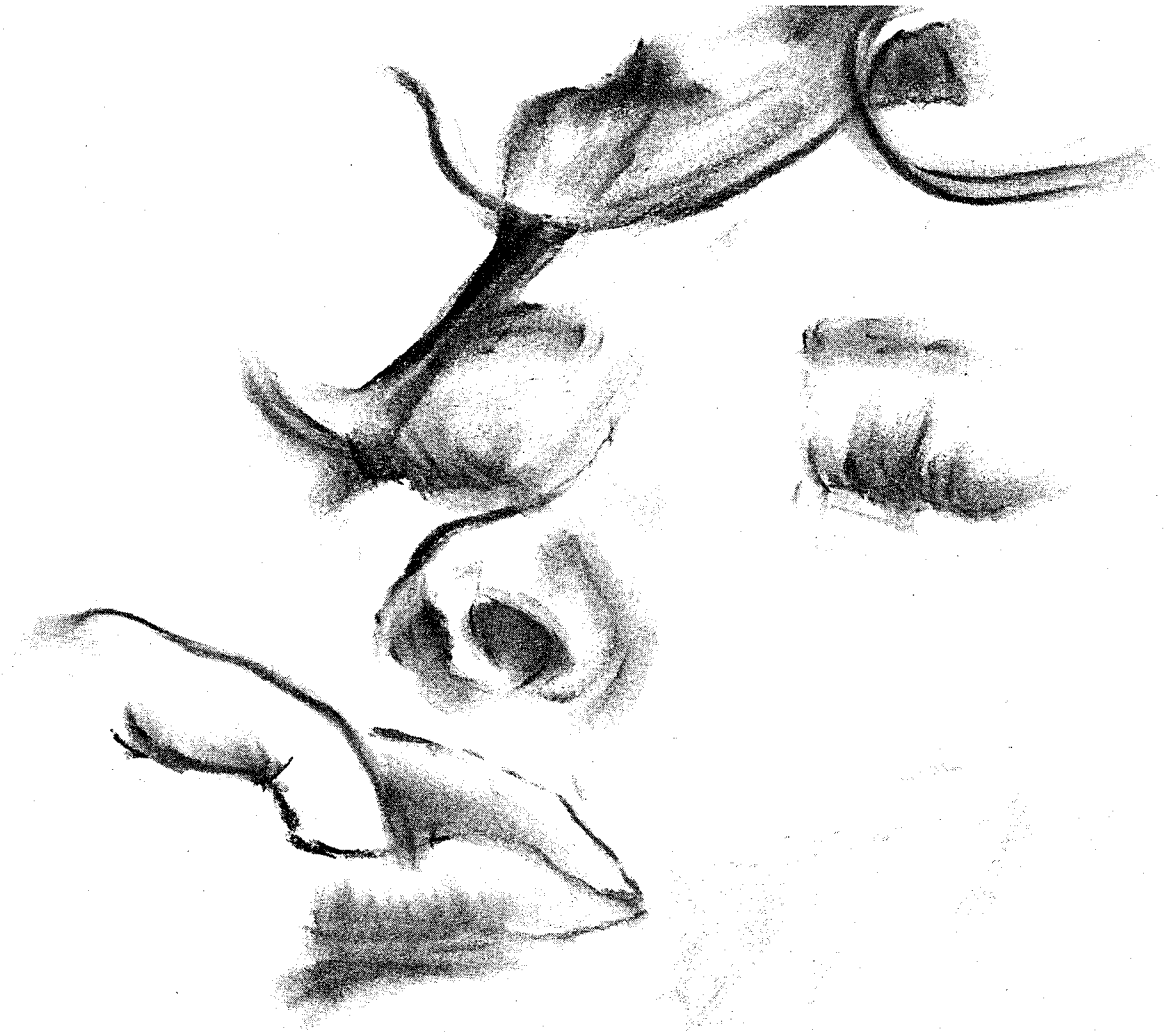
What joy lingers,
or even arrives with these gifts
when what you ask for seems only to drive
 you deeper
into saddened adventures?

Funny, for all my panicked fear
 I would rest easily,
having placed the coin
safely beneath your tongue,
 And seen your walls,
falling through the fingers of time.

W
FINGERS
N
D

poem by megan schrag





an artwork collection by hannah sadler

The Quest for Duracell Batteries

Once upon a time, in a galaxy far, far away, there was a small, insignificant blue-white globe, turning in space. On this world were two significant tribes of sentients, the Verz and the Sumlz. The Sumlz were divided into small, distinct sub-tribes, and this is the story of one of them.

This particular tribe was a tribe of five: Tom, Jerry, Blinky, Zippy, and Bob (their chief). This particular tribe wasn't the smartest in the empire. As a matter of fact, they were routinely beaten at chess by a tribe of orangutans.

One day, Tom, Jerry, and Blinky were out playing in the yard of their local hangout with pieces of the sixth member of their tribe, God rest his soul. Suddenly, Zippy came flying out of their Buick Skylark, displaying the characteristic enthusiasm which earned him his name.

"Guys, we have a problem!" Zippy declared, as he skidded to a stop in a cloud of his own dust.

"What is it?" asked Tom and Jerry, while Blinky rolled in the dirt.

"The stereo ran out of batteries, and I can't play my Fred Penner tapes anymore!" whispered Zippy mournfully.

"Evy Gads!" gasped everyone except Blinky, who was busy rolling in the dirt.

Suddenly, Blinky stood up with an idea, "We must go see Bob!" he declared.

A quiet hush settled over the crowd, and Tom solemnly walked over to the Buick and opened the trunk. A lance of light stabbed into the dark cubicle, illuminating the great Bob's face.

"Take the Mentos to the Energizer Bunny at the sacred vale of Thorp," Bob said, holding up a glistening white package.

"But we haven't even asked yet?" asked a very perplexed Tom. But he got no answer.

And so, Tom, Jerry, Blinky, and Zippy set out to find the sacred vale of Thorp, having many adventures along the way. Finally, after months of questing (and a three day stop over at Madam Laude's House of Fun) they arrived at the vale. As our intrepid adventurers approached the only building in the vale, Jerry caught sight of the final challenge, and alerted the rest of the tribe, all except Blinky that is; he was rolling in the dirt.

"It's a gigantic black river," Jerry exclaimed, "and it's full of yellow snakes and metal fish and we can't go around it." Everyone sat down to think. Blinky kept rolling in the dirt. Finally, an idea struck Tom, but it escaped before he could find out what it was.

Time passed. Fall came, then Winter changed into Spring, Spring into Summer, Summer gave Fall a miss, and went straight into Winter. Blinky continued to roll in the dirt. Suddenly, Tom's elusive idea gave up the ghost, and allowed Tom to express it.

"Why we can simply hop in these barrels and roll across," he declared, pointing to some nearby Squeezy-Cheez containers. The tribe agreed, and soon they were across.

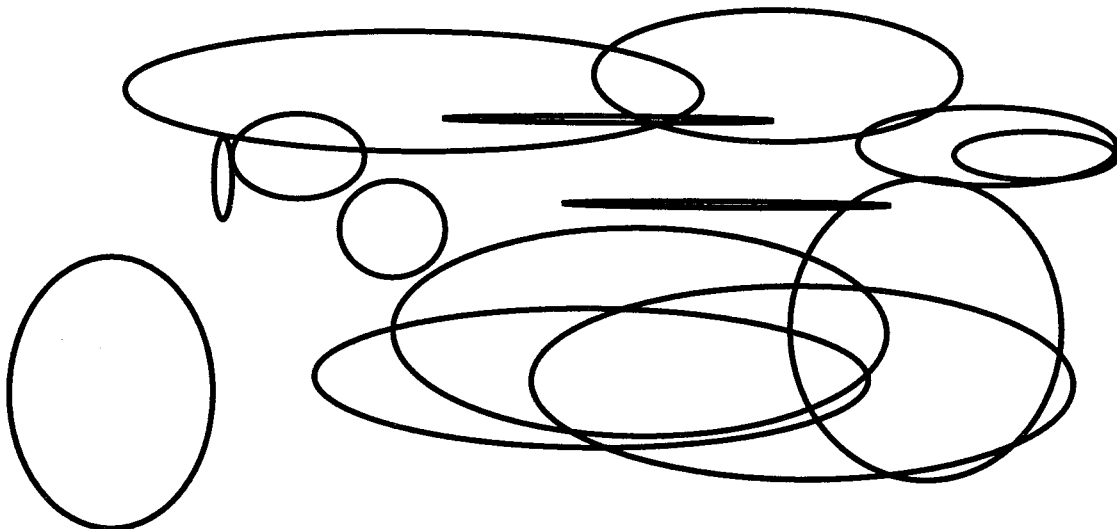
After successfully crossing their last challenge, the tribe entered the building and confronted the almighty Energizer Bunny! Savagely, it attacked, hurling Jerry across the room, then it tripped over Blinky, who was rolling on the floor. Tom, in a fit of sheer genius, pulled out the Mentos.

"Oh, why didn't you say so in the first place?" inquired the bunny. "Take what you want from my pile."

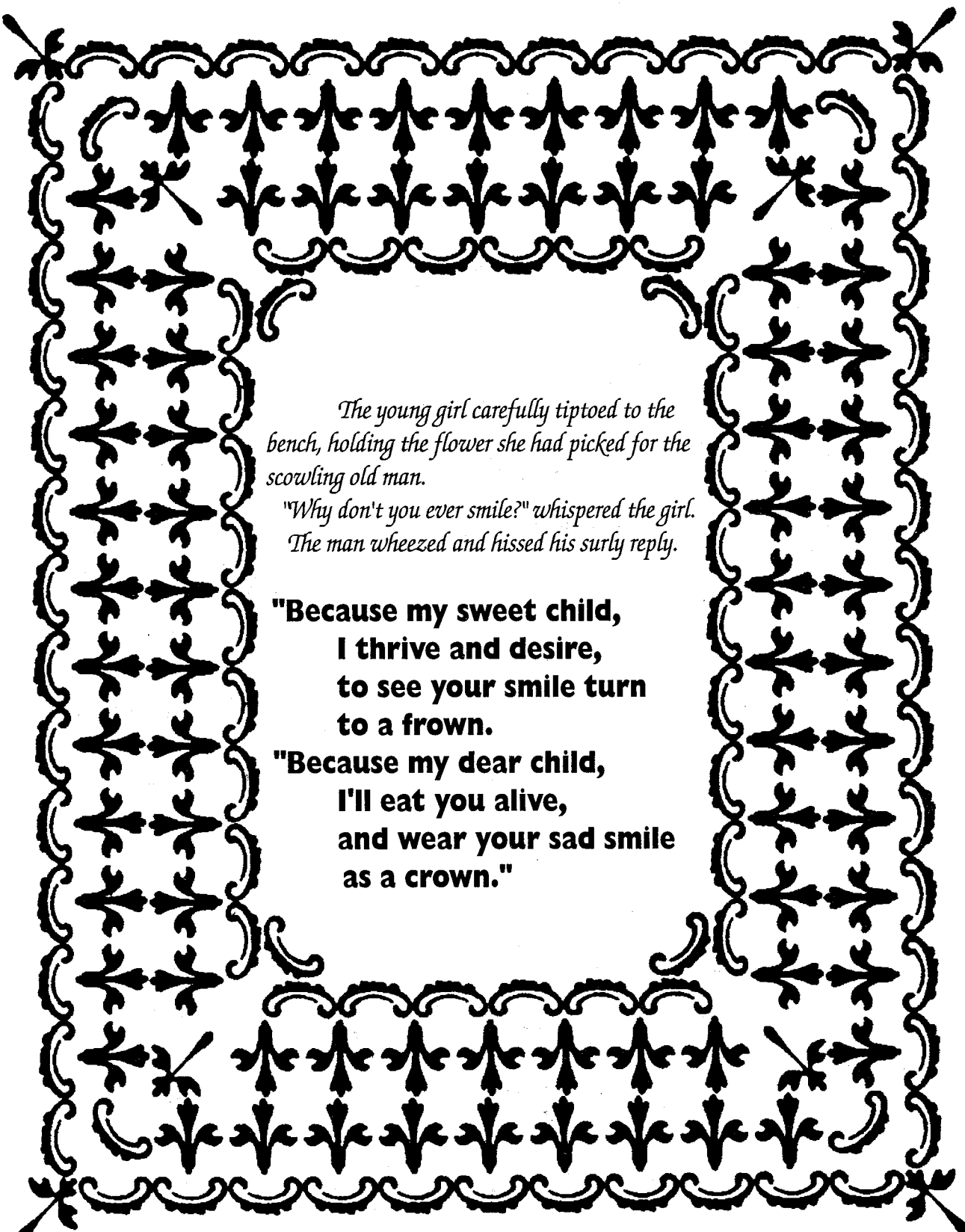
"Tom looked over to see mounds of energizer batteries lying against the wall. "No!" screamed Blinky, "We wanted Duracell!!!"

short story by jason hawks

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photograph by dave allen



The young girl carefully tiptoed to the bench, holding the flower she had picked for the scowling old man.

*"Why don't you ever smile?" whispered the girl.
The man wheezed and hissed his surly reply.*

**"Because my sweet child,
I thrive and desire,
to see your smile turn
to a frown.**

**"Because my dear child,
I'll eat you alive,
and wear your sad smile
as a crown."**

True Colors

Getting a little warm in here
Opening my eyes is not as easy as it used to be
Maybe I just don't want to listen to what they say

As the fire goes out, the shadows get longer
she said as she closed her eyes
as they frosted over again

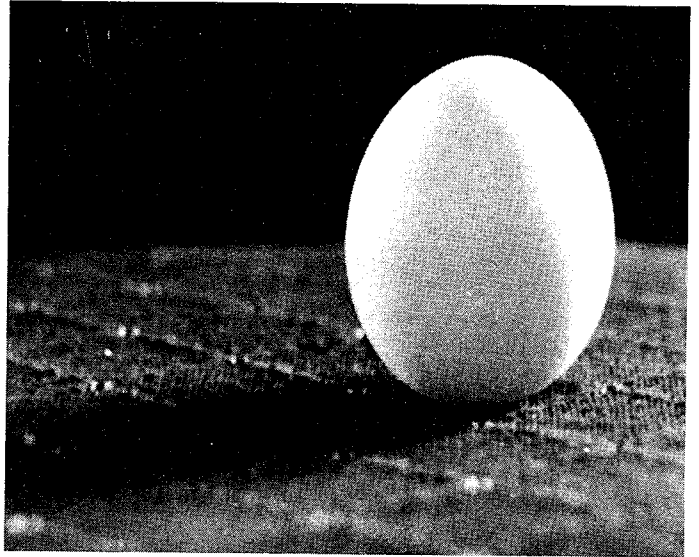
Think I figured it out
Just in time for you to leave
It doesn't seem quite so trite
anymore

He's got the Belle wrapped
around his finger
paint peeling
true color showing
is it chaffing Mr. Saint?

My teacher taught me everything except
what I needed
made his pretty hate machine
prism perfect

Shattered
into a thousand shiny pieces
He must be worth losing
if he is worth anything
Happy for you and I'm sure that I hate you

I could never hurt you, she said as her knife dripped red
and she sighed as the other one died
Such a pity, she said and smiled.



poem by bevin brand and photograph by emily wachsmith

Best Laid Plans

My saga began on a fateful spring day near the hill that bordered Mr. Stuart's playground. It was my fourth grade year and four of my closest friends and I had just been released for morning recess. After carefully pushing in our chairs and bundling up in hats and mittens, we headed out towards our favorite hill with some paper, a pencil, and a plan. Today was the day we had waited for all week. Today was the day we would declare our undying love for Dane Williams through the most beautiful and passionate love letter to be written in the history of man.

It was all Janelle's idea. Earlier that week, she had decided that love letters were the most unbelievably romantic things in the world. She told us that, if we really loved Dane, we would send him one of these magical letters and then he would instantly fall in love with all of us. Of course, we never even considered signing our names. We weren't that brave. After much thought, we were delighted in the cleverness of our decision to close our letter, "Love Always, Y.S.A.'s" (Your Secret Admirers).

"It seems that a few of the girls in this room have lost their abilities for self-control and have resorted to expressing their amour through anonymous letters. As you can see, this behavior has greatly upset poor Dane."

Finally, the day of Operation Letter arrived. Janelle, our leader in everything we did that involved boys (she was a bit on the boy-crazy side), spoke first, "Okay now. Tana, you have the best handwriting, so you can write the letter."

"Nuh-uh," she yelled, "I just came along to watch. There's no way I'm writing your letter. 'Sides, I don't even like him that much."

"Well, I guess that's tough," she replied. "Either you write it or you leave, what'll it be?" Okay, so she was a little on the bossy side, too.

"Fine then," Tana shouted, realizing she'd been beaten, "I'll write the stupid letter, but you have to tell me what to write."

"Well, then," Janelle went on, a smile of victory on her face, "now all we have to do is decide what to write. Any suggestions?"

Janelle looked over towards Katy, Kathryn, and me. Katy and Kathryn quite suddenly developed an avid interest in the wonders of the grass at their feet and were refusing to meet Janelle's eyes. I, on the other hand, jumped right in.

"I have a few ideas," I blurted. From that moment on, what had started as a group effort

"Nuh-uh," she yelled, "I just came along to watch. There's no way I'm writing your letter. 'Sides, I don't even like him that much."

quickly evolved into a one-man project. Because of my slightly dramatic nature, especially when it came to writing, I was the obvious choice as author.

I can't remember the contents of our letter, but judging from the reaction it got, it must have been pretty juicy. Later that afternoon, Mrs. Pollock interrupted class with a crying Dane at her side. Waving from her hand was a thrice folded sheet of college-ruled notebook paper that looked uncomfortably familiar. Disaster had struck. My life was over.

"It seems," Mrs. Pollock began in a voice dripping of sarcasm, "that a few of the girls in this room have lost their abilities for self-control and have resorted to expressing their amour through anonymous letters. As you can see, this behavior has greatly upset poor Dane."

With that, she motioned to a still sobbing Dane. Ppp-leease. Any normal person would be thrilled to receive a Secret Admirer letter. From Dane's reaction, you'd think someone just ate his goldfish. You can bet my undying love died in a jiffy!

"Therefore," continued Mrs. Pollock, "I'm asking that the guilty parties come forward sometime today."

She then turned around and walked back to her desk. My eyes darted around the room, establishing eye contact with my four accomplices. The looks they gave me in return told me what I needed to know. The knot in my stomach started to dissipate and I was able to return to my work, secure in knowledge that we'd all take our secret to the grave.

Boy was I wrong! The next day, Mrs. Pollock received a phone call from the principal. After a few minutes of hushed conversation, Mrs. Pollock hung up, looked straight at me, and uttered the ugliest words anyone had ever said to me.

"Moira, Mr. Robinson would like to see you in his office." Someone had told!

That day in the principal's office, I learned something about myself. I learned that, deep down inside, I was a big ol' hairy snitch. I didn't even wait for Mr. Robinson to say hello. As soon as I was through the office door, I started naming names.

"I wasn't the only one," I sobbed. "It was Janelle's idea. Tana wrote it! Katy and Kathryn were there, too," I wailed. "All I did was help a little with the wording. Why aren't they all here too?"

Eventually all five of us were called down to the office. Mr. Robinson scolded us for our actions, but eventually let us go with nothing more than a promise from us to refrain from further such literary attempts.

The lesson I learned from all this? You probably think it was to stop writing naughty letters, or maybe even to think about possible repercussions to my actions. Well, no and no. The real knowledge I gained was that things don't always go the way you plan.

*More things to practice,
More subjects to study,
dinner calls
as the night is born.*

*Last one to bed,
first to rise,
to school in the dark
as the day is born.*

*Another long day,
another long week,
slight respite is found
as the weekend is born.*

*The cycle begins
at the first of September,
but thankfully it ends
as the summer is born.*

The

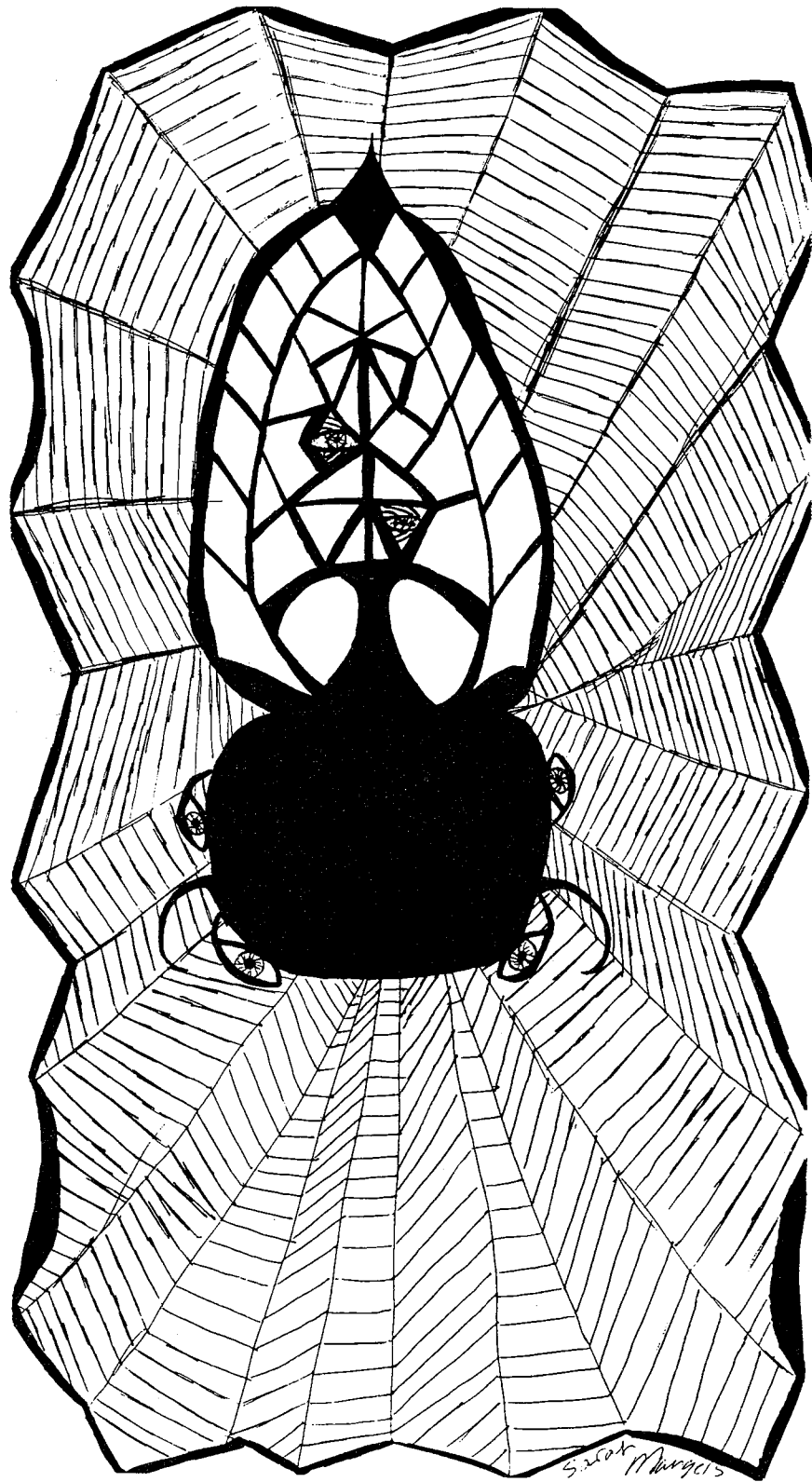
Grind

poem by paul charlton

True Love

There isn't a day that goes by
That I don't think of you.
Our love is the fuel of my life.
Without it I would cease to exist.
I look forward to holding you,
And just being with you.
The feelings that I feel
Are not those of a simple infatuation;
They are like a river, strong and unending.
There will never be another like you,
Oh Taco Bell Burrito.

poem by ben scellick



Sarah Mangels

artwork by sarah mangels

JEHOIM AND

COMICS





karen

was first diagnosed with chronic leukemia a month before her eleventh birthday. She was moved to the hospital where she began treatment. Her chemotherapy, drugs, and blood transfusions seemed to work and Karen came home from the hospital.

Two months later she was too sick for me to care for and was once again moved back to the hospital. I went to see her every day; she was the only reason I woke up in the morning. Three holidays came and passed. My husband and I spent Christmas and New Year's at the hospital all three years. We wore fake smiles and pretended to laugh when something was funny.

I prayed every day that God would save my little girl. The days dragged into weeks and the weeks into months. I suffered emotionally, I began spending my days sitting in our rocking chair gazing out the window. I would sit with tears rolling down my cheeks, remembering every memory I could recall.

At night I would go and visit Karen and watch as she suffered. Her beautiful brown hair was gone from continually undergoing chemotherapy. Those big brown eyes of hers were listless and sunken far into her skull. The skin that had once been warm and pink, now was pasty and clung to her bones.

Four years after she had first been diagnosed with cancer Karen was well enough to come home. We drove to the hospital to pick up a fifteen-year-old girl who hadn't been home in almost four years. She was pushed through the hospital in a wheelchair, too weak to walk. In her arms she clutched a ragged and beaten up teddy bear. The teddy bear was much like Karen, weary and ragged from fighting for her life.

After Karen came home, I began cleaning and baking, something I hadn't done the whole time she was in the hospital. I enjoyed the company of my daughter; we spent hours of playing games and being together. Once again we became a family. My husband and I grew stronger, but little did we know Karen became weaker.

I clearly remember the beautiful night in May; I was awakened by the sound of coughing. I quickly made my way to Karen's room where I found her coughing up blood. I spooned some medication into her mouth, picked up her small, sleeping body, and carried her to the rocking chair. Her breath was warm on my arm and soon I fell asleep to the rhythmic sway of the rocker.

The sunlight was prying my eyes open. I was aware of its warmth, and the cold, heavy weight in my arms. I awoke with a start and found Karen limp and lifeless in my arms. I remember screaming, the sound of foot steps, sirens, tears, voices, and the pain.

The funeral came and went, life seemed to go on for everyone but me. The funny thing I found was that I couldn't cry. I sat and stared straight ahead at some unseen object that was never there. My husband was always there for me; he took over the cleaning and cooking. Then again I don't think I gave him much of a choice. Once again I took to rocking by the window. Soon I quit doing anything, except feeling sorry for myself. I alternated between sleeping and rocking, and still not a single tear fell. I was so consumed in my own pain that I couldn't see how much my husband needed me.

One night before drifting off to sleep I asked God to please let me die. That was the night my miracle came. I awoke to see my daughter sitting next to me in the rocker. I don't recall everything she said, but I do remember her telling me to stop hurting everyone with my pain. She wanted me to know that she was safe and would always love me. After she left I cried and prayed again to God to let me get through this.

The next morning, after my husband and I had showered and dressed, I told him my dream. I smiled when I was done and we hugged with tears streaming down his face. We sat in the kitchen crying and talking, savoring every moment we had to share.

short story by christy terrell

"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength."

As I take that last stride to the finish line, there's an overwhelming amount of relief. Thinking back; I could have been beaten. But then I think of what Jesus said, "*They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*"

I first realized that track was an important part of my life when I was about 10 years old, and we had a track race at school. As the P.E. teacher called "ready-set-go," I had a natural reaction to fire off the start line and run as hard as I could. When I crossed the finish line in first place, I realized that track was a valuable asset in my life.

Now, seven years later, track has become my life. Beginning my freshman year, I placed second at state, in a field of mostly upper-classmen. The following year I went back and won both the 100 and 200-meters. Not only that, but during the summer I competed in many invitational meets and I also competed in a national meet where I placed thirteenth and fifteenth in a field of the top junior (18 and under) runners in the nation.

I never really thought about what track means to me, other than the fact that it's fun, and I'm pretty good. But lately I've been thinking that track could do a lot more for me. It could take me to college for free, where I could become educated, and learn more about life. It could also take me into the national spotlight at some time. Also, I could earn a lot of money at it, and give my family a comfortable life.

The paragraph above is all the good things that track could do for me, but there's also the down side of all the hard work and dedication that I have to put in, to achieve these future goals I'm setting for myself. All those endless hours that I put in on the track to prepare me for that next big meet, pays off when I stand on top of the podium.

One vivid track memory that I have is my 200-meter final, last year. As I rounded the turn, and headed down the home straightaway, I noticed I was in fourth place five meters behind the leader. While I moved up through the field I thought to myself, "Second isn't that bad." Then suddenly, "*as if I were soaring on the wings of an eagle, I ran and did not grow weary,*" I passed the leader and won the race.

*quote from Isaiah 40:29-31

essay by jawarren hooker

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