

Fall 2003

LANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The image is a cover for a Fall 2003 publication from Lane Community College. It features a close-up of blue denim fabric with two vibrant autumn leaves, one in the upper right and one in the lower left. In the bottom right corner, there is an oval logo with a black border and a white interior. Inside the oval, the word "Denali" is written in a stylized, red, cursive script.

Denali

DENALI

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Denali Literary Arts Journal is a student publication of Lane Community College, published three times a year. Denali accepts poetry, short stories, photography, and artwork from any resident of Lane County. We're ALWAYS hunting for fresh submissions throughout the year. Submission and contact information should be sent to Denali, c/o Lane Community College, 4000 E. 30th Avenue, Eugene, Oregon 97405. Check us out online at www.lanecc.edu/denali

FROM THE EDITOR:

A sincere thanks to all of the talented authors and artists that submitted to the magazine this fall. The past few months have been a crazed daze, getting this fine magazine into your hot little hands. There have been many that helped us along the way, and it's only fair that these great people are mentioned by name: **Dorothy Wearne**, for her golden advice and invaluable knowledge of everything; **Eugene Johnson**, for his incredible attention to detail and uncanny photography skills; **José Chaves**, for his excellence and literary prowess, **Gary Anderson**, **Ram Rattan**, **Trish Hamer**, and **Shirley Nagy**, of the LCC Printing and Graphics staff for their collective sunny smiles and can-do attitude; **Tina Lymath** and **Barb Delansky**, the Ivory Tower goddesses of Students First!; the great and friendly staff over at **Chase Embroidery and Digitizing** for their work on the elusive Denali patch; former Denalians **Brian Simard** and **Anne Starke** for not only opening the door, but letting me inside; **Emily Bean** for her tireless punctuality, dedication, uncompromising confidence and loyalty; and of course, **Dan Ball, Jr.** for his contribution to the website's well-being and physical health. A heartfelt thanks also goes out to you: The readers, the students, the *people*. There are countless others out there that have contributed in some way or another to the magazine, and to you, the ones I *haven't* mentioned, I'm having a party this weekend at my place.

You're all invited.

—**Jayce Barnhart!**

p.s.—B.Y.O.B.

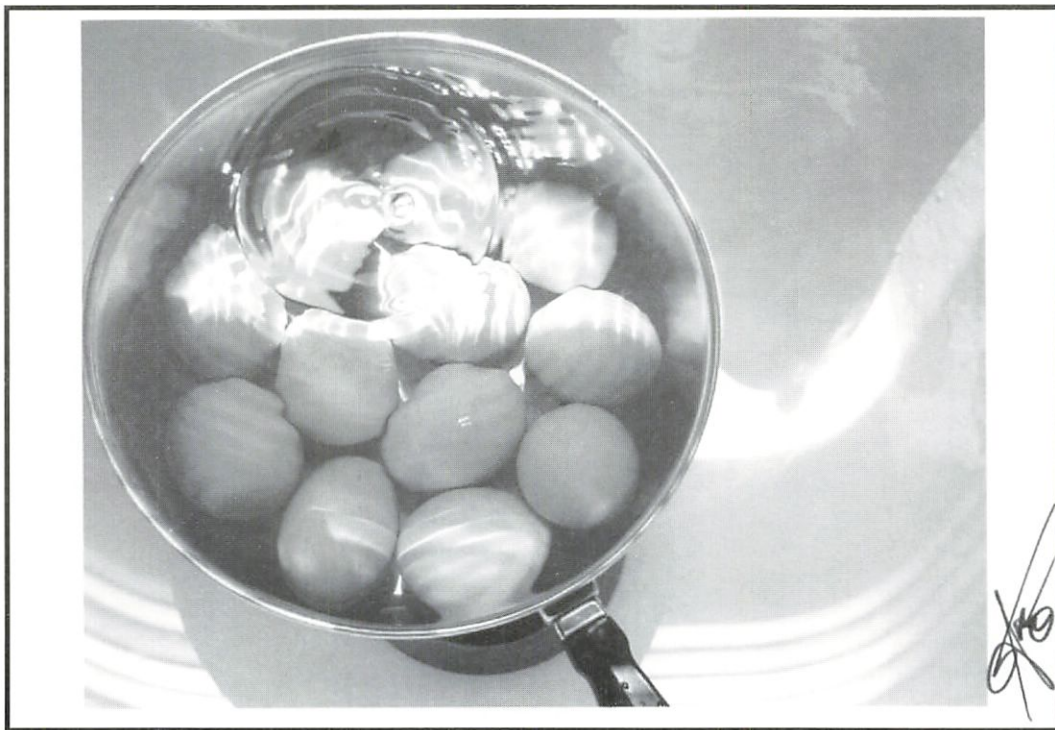
Table of CONTENTS

Eggs/Woman	Andrea Dervin.....	4
You	Sean Ealy	5
Raymond's Card	Howard Ebert	6
Helping Hands	Vida Nelson.....	8
Life	Vida Nelson.....	9
I Nodded	Waters Meet	10
Hike In Burnt Forest	Daniel Hanson.....	12
Back Home Again	Rebecca S. Hill.....	13
Vivian	Rebecca S. Hill.....	14
Firedance	Rebecca S. Hill.....	15
Ice is Nice	Debbie Bluth.....	16
Moved	Debbie Bluth.....	18
Untitled I	Ariel Schulze.....	19
Untitled II	Ariel Schulze.....	20
divided	Freddy Portillo	21
Sad Story	Kris Bluth	22
This World of Ours	Kevin R. Papagni	23
God Loves Ugly	Kevin R. Papagni	24
Untitled	Kerri Sullivan	25
A Fall Crocus	Daniel C. Cameron.....	26
Lil' Johny	Daniel C. Cameron.....	27
The Vortex/Spiral Light	Daniel C. Cameron.....	28
Magic	Daniel C. Cameron & Kris Dicus....	29
My Father's Hands	Cody Yarbrough	30
Cerebral Palsey, Self Portrait	Hollis Shostrom	32
Olivia Cheyenne	Sancheen Collins.....	33
The Village Idiot	Hack Menthol	34
If You Give a Junkie a Cigarette ..	Hack Menthol	35

EGGS/WOMAN

ANDREA DERVIN

"Art, for so long in my life, has been the cure for hope, god, romeo and juliet, food, and humanity when it isn't. Art then becomes a way of breathing, and relaxing the outer to the inner, the inner to the outer, until as in yoga, the breath is breathing me."



digital photography

You

SEAN Ealy

Your scent is still around
filling up my empty house.
And I try not to breathe—
But it's no use.
When I breathe,
I breathe deeply
and ghosts appear.
Some are of what used to be.
Some of what should have been.
And some, these are the most,
are of what I wanted to be.
I still want,
like the roses want water.
Like they need the sunlight—
I need you.
If pain is the earth
in which I have been planted,
then I grow in the emotion,
with your name as the seed,
and your presence as the water
that provides the nourishment.
I bear no fruit
because a dead thing cannot produce.
But what I have is only what I am chasing:
Memories, of you and me,
of things that held us together
over so many years.
If I showed you my heart,
if I gave you the truth,
would you cut this vine down?
Would you bury me in the very ground that I grow?
Whatever it is that I have,
I have it because of you,
And even if it's empty, I keep it—
because I love you.

RAYMOND'S CARD

HOWARD EBERT

"Thanks to this great country for forcing me to worship the dollar bill! God Bless America!"

I suppose that you'd be thinking that all classes have to have a retarded kid, right? Well, right. Our class did, back in the sixth grade...

...

Of all the teachers at our school, Mrs. Mersh had to be the absolute *meanest*. She knew that it was 'instinct' that drove the first human pair towards fornication. She also knew the name of Jupiter's largest moon. Mrs. Mersh didn't have too much patience with many of the kids in her science classes. That's why we figured she'd have a hard time with Raymond. Raymond was our class "retarded kid." He had soggy, moppy hair and sad, sad eyes. There may have been some inkling of cognition or happiness somewhere there within him, but it could never be smelt out.

I knew Mrs. Mersh was going to have a hard time with Raymond. In fact, everyone else knew the same thing. Mrs. Mersh was a crotchety young woman, droopy in the middle and flat on the top. "Her face was like a butt," most of her students would mention off the record. She often scolded her younger students, belittling them with acts of verbal warfare while brandishing an open stapler.

Mrs. Mersh had posted a yellow rectangular sign running across the top of the front chalkboard that read: FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION. I HAVE A LOW TOLERANCE FOR STUPIDITY.

This bright indicator of subtle classroom pressure was displayed evenly to the sitting students during her science classes. Personally, I thought the sign looked out of place. The big word "STUPIDITY" did nothing good for my subconscious, that much I knew.

Raymond's first day of class was not going to be an easy one. We all knew this long in advance. "Raymond is not going to have a good first day in Mrs. Mersh's class!" we'd tease each other, singing on the playgrounds of our youth.

When Raymond first entered Mrs. Mersh's class, he was tardy by most standards. But since he was mentally retarded, he was allowed an extra two minutes leeway time, in case he lost his way and ended up in a locker. (Don't laugh—it's happened twice before.)

We were all seated in Mrs. Mersh's class that afternoon, expecting Raymond's arrival, and there he was, standing at the room's threshold, holding a small scrap of paper and sniffing the air, smelling the scientific smells coming from long since faded laboratory experiments.

Mrs. Mersh was wearing her usual outfit: Pants and a tee-shirt. Today, the pants were a faded denim pink, and the tee-shirt was colored yellow with bright red lettering across the chest: "MATH..." And then written underneath in smaller letters: "...FIGURE IT OUT!" She stopped taking roll when Raymond stepped in, blazed from his dream and ready to unfocus and relent.

"Who's this?" Mrs. Mersh looked up from her rollbook and addressed Raymond. He looked faintly at her and sniffed. The color went out of his thought for a few seconds, and he recovered well.

"Raymond," he answered dully. "My name is Raymond." His last sentence had the undercurrent of speech therapy written all over it.

Some of us laughed. What Raymond said was funny to us, until we realized why it was so

funny. Then we stopped laughing.

"You're the retard?" Mrs. Mersh asked from across the room. Her keen schoolteaching eyes were darts, leaping at Raymond with preferred accuracy.

A few of us jumped a little—actually *jumped*—when we heard Mrs. Mersh call Raymond a 'retard.' I mean, sure, Raymond might have really *been* a retard, but to hear an adult, an adult *teacher*, call someone a retard—to their *face*—was just plain wrong. Wrong enough to make half the class jump out of their daydream boners and listless love notes. A few of us snickered. Some laughed out loud. A couple pointed. Many gasped, and several swooned.

"Yes," Raymond answered. He knew somewhere deep down that he was called "Raymond" and that "Raymond" was a "retard," which was another way of saying: "Unable to do what everyone else is doing." There were only three pieces to this complex mental puzzle, and Raymond had fit these together at an early retarded age. To Raymond, hearing the word "retard" come from this new teacher was no different than hearing it in the school's hallways, at home, or at the grocery store.

"Siddown!" Mrs. Mersh snapped, barking orders like a saber-toothed dog. She pointed sharply down at an empty desk near the front of the classroom. A few of us could hear her hand cut the air as she snapped it about.

Raymond started walking away from the doorway, into the classroom. His pants were dry and wrinkled, and he wore a blue "Members Only" jacket. He had no books or supplies with him, only a small folded piece of paper in his left hand. To me, it looked like Raymond was holding a schedule or a hall pass. There were only a few of us seated towards the back of the room that could see Raymond's folded piece of paper. My personal guess was that it was some kind of greeting card.

Raymond's walk across the classroom was more like a dead shuffle, heightened to a lurchy

step method. A little drag here, a little shuffle there. Mrs. Mersh continued pointing at the empty desk, waiting impatiently for the new kid to reach his seat. This new retarded kid Raymond would be her next star attraction. I could tell that she planned on teaching the mental retardation right out of his head. She had dreams of curing his mental retardation with ideas of flash cards and scathing Friday reports for the parents.

Raymond stopped before reaching his desk, now in front of the class and facing Mrs. Mersh. All of us were leaning forward, wondering who would speak first. Would Mrs. Mersh yell at Raymond? I think that's what most of us wanted to hear. We all secretly hoped that Raymond wouldn't start trying to defend himself verbally. It would make matters much worse, we all knew.

"Well?" Mrs. Mersh glared at the sullen face of her newest student. His face was pasty and round, with a misplaced dimple along his jawline. His nose was upturned and constantly sniffing, while his dull, flavorless eyes continued to search for new things to conceive.

A couple of us winced inwardly when Raymond handed his folded paper to Mrs. Mersh. Now she would have some sort of ammunition to further use against him. If the note happened to excuse Raymond's tardiness, Mrs. Mersh would no doubt find a tasteless and scientific way of working the words and related theme of "tardy" into whatever zinger she happened to pitch at him.

Mrs. Mersh took the card from Raymond, and upon opening it, her expression changed. We were all dying to know what the note said. We could tell by the way she handled the paper that whatever news on it was *big* news. Mrs. Mersh read and reread the greeting card. Read it a thousand times. Studied it, and formed an opinion. It took her only a moment, but she revised and composed herself.

"The card says: 'YOU'RE REALLY NICE,'" she said, holding the card open for the class to see.

Helping Hands

Vida Nelson

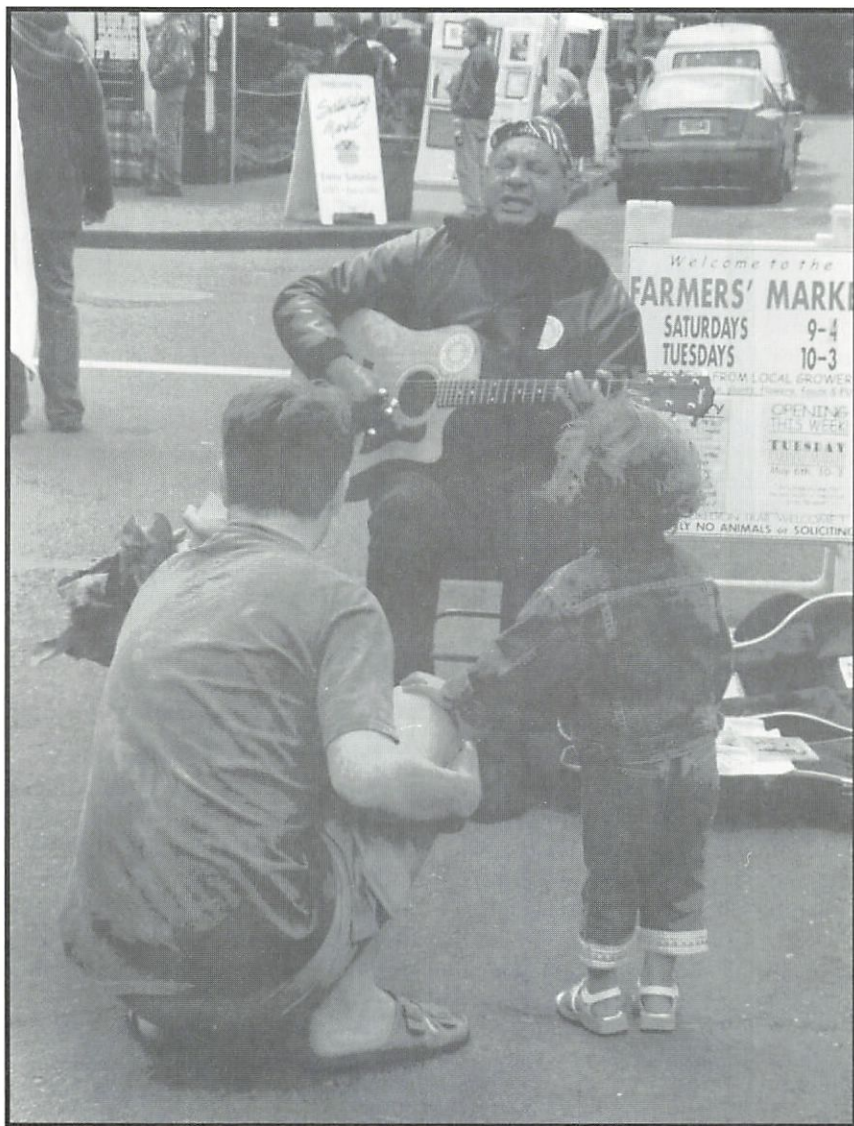
"I first began liking photography as a child, because of my father."



black and white, 35mm Nikon

Life

Vida NELSON



color, 35mm Nikon

I Nodded

WATERS MEET

I scuffed my bare foot on the concrete stoop, cringing at each *boom* of Mom's angry heels against the linoleum and the occasional shriek of metal on metal as she kicked pots and pans out of her way. Dad's voice was barely audible; Mom was screaming. "*I'm hungry!*" she yelled in her ex-husband's face, not really seeing him there.

"Do you want me to make you something?" he asked her softly as she stomped into her bedroom. "Do you want me to make you something?"

"Get out of my house!" she screamed as she came stomping in wearing just her beach cover-up; it didn't cover up much. "Your responsibility ends at my front door!" she bellowed, pointing a wavering finger at the back door.

He looked at her calmly and asked, "You sure?" She pushed him towards and then into the door before he could open it.

"Go!"

The sun was setting compassionately on this scalding July day; it knew that I could not take both the heat of its rays and Mom's scalding words. I sat still, wondering if I sat there long enough, still enough, whether I would still be there. I stood up suddenly as I heard her yelling again; I couldn't tell what she was saying. I didn't really want to. I watched the empty living room, clenching and releasing my fingers anxiously, wondering what they were doing that could be so quiet.

Dad appeared in the kitchen with the phone in his hand. Just as he started dialing, Mom came running at him from the back of the house and threw her entire belligerent body weight against him.

"Mary!" He cursed, stepping back to regain his balance. He tried to hold onto her shoulders but she just wailed her arms at him, punching

him over and over and over. He let go of her and stared into her wild, drunk eyes, completely unable to find the woman he had married, the mother of his children, his friend.

"Out, OUT, *OUT!*" She screamed at him, and he nodded, taking the phone and walking towards the front door.

I stared straight ahead as I listened to my dad's footsteps come nearer. He stopped before pushing the tattered screen door open, noticing that I was leaned up against it. I stood up to let him out, moving to the cool grass of the front lawn. I stared at the green blades poking through the spaces between my toes as I took small steps in a little circle, listening to the cries of the metal door hinges as Dad came outside and started dialing the phone.

"Hey," he said, seeing my long, tense figure tip-toeing in the grass. He stopped dialing.

"What's up?" I asked him, staring into sweet, vacant eyes. He shook his head and leaned down to hug me.

"It's okay, Kid," he said matter-of-factly before rising to leave.

"You're leaving?" I asked, all at once letting the meaning of the conversation I had just heard from inside the house hit me. He nodded.

"It's her house," he conceded.

"She's drunk!" I countered, furious. He looked at me and sighed mutely, walking over to his car. He started the engine just as I slammed the door behind me and stomped through our living room.

"Mom!" I barked irritably, peeking my head around the corner into her bedroom, but she wasn't in there. Then I noticed the blood spilled on the bathroom sink, the toilet, and the floor of the hallway leading into my bedroom.

Shit, I thought. I knew she was okay; I was

used to the cutting. It was still gross, though, and it still freaked me out to see all that life all over the floor. I never really could grasp why she did it.

I stepped over some clothes on my floor and entered the room. *Shit*, I whispered again.

I took three big steps and scooped up my little sister, who had squished herself into the corner of my bed, staring at Mom in horror as she lay on the floor beneath the window, sobbing. Abby wrapped her arms around my neck and clamped her tiny, strong legs around my waist as I carried her into the living room and set her on the couch. I brushed a piece of sweaty hair out of her face and kissed her forehead.

"Where's Dad?" she asked me.

I shook my head. "Robin's coming," I told her. "She'll be here in a few minutes." Abby nodded, curling into a tired little ball and closing her eyes against my warm, exhausted face. I kissed her nose and got up to stand outside and wait for Robin.

Robin was a friend of the family whose father was an alcoholic. Robin often acted as our saving grace. A thin, motherly woman with broad hips and fine blond hair, she was also the personification of kindness and strength. I sighed at the sight of her car, knowing her presence would bring at least the illusion of sanity back into our house.

"Dad left," I told Robin matter-of-factly. She had come straight from work, still wearing khakis and a delicate silk sweater. She nodded at my comment.

"That makes sense," she concurred, and I felt my eyes turn stoney.

"It does not! How could he just leave like that? She's drunk! Who's supposed to take care of her?" I demanded, but Robin just shook her head.

"Not you," she said firmly as she met my tired, stoic eyes. "Where is she?" Robin asked, pulling the door open. I stayed on the porch, pointing to my room.

I breathed in the sunset, knowing I couldn't stand here for long. Soon there would be more accusing, stomach-turning howls from my mother,

then more messes to clean up. After a few long minutes of silence, though, I still didn't hear anything other than my sister's sleepy breaths in the dark living room.

I turned and looked into the house. The kitchen light was reflected on three empty pots on the floor, the tools of Mom's noisy wrath earlier that afternoon. Abby lie passed out in the dark living room, the last of the sunset's violet goodnight glowing on the wall. I opened the screen door and went back inside to sit with my sister and wait for whatever was to come. I knew these nights too well to think the worst was over, and I was right.

Mom came shuffling in just as I sat down, her blood-encrusted bathrobe hanging open to let her bruised, somnolent body feel the hint of a breeze that was sneaking through the stiff curtains.

I stared at her blankly, unable and unwilling to feel anything. She plopped down at my feet and hugged my bare legs. I felt like pulling away but didn't, knowing that this touch might mean the difference between whether she gets drunk tomorrow or not. I knew that keeping her calm now might mean the difference between having Mom at home for the rest of the month, or only getting to visit her from 5:30 to 7:30 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at the Milwaukee County Psychiatric Hospital downtown with its plastic orange seats and cranberry juice in little tin-foil covered plastic cups.

Mom started crying and apologizing, rocking back and forth, still hanging onto my legs. That was the only time all night that I couldn't keep myself from crying. I sat down on the floor with her and held her face and cried, told her it was okay and that I didn't blame her, that she was going to be all right. I looked her in the eyes and told her she needed to stop drinking; she nodded and cried harder.

"Erin," she sobbed, mixing her salty tears with the dried blood on the back of her arm as she tried to wipe her eyes dry. "Would you understand if I killed myself?"

I wiped beneath her eyes with the pads of my thumbs, kissed each of her soaking cheeks, and nodded.

Hike in Burnt Forest

DANIEL HANSON

“The uncompromising exploration of the imagination and creating is a necessary component to being a virtuous human being.”

brown everywhere
ash and dead scattered pine needles
coaled fern tuft with single
new green blade celebrating the sun
occasional oasis patch somehow
untouched, gleaming in light

neon red plastic tape warns of
“killer tree”—massive old growth
leaning like an alcoholic on its
arboreal brother—near the end—
a stance that pronounces imminent fall

abandoned junk spider web
torn and holding seeds and needles

another potentially murderous fir
—defying gravity— somehow
stands on a charred foundation
refusing the condition

BACK HOME AGAIN

REBECCA S. HILL

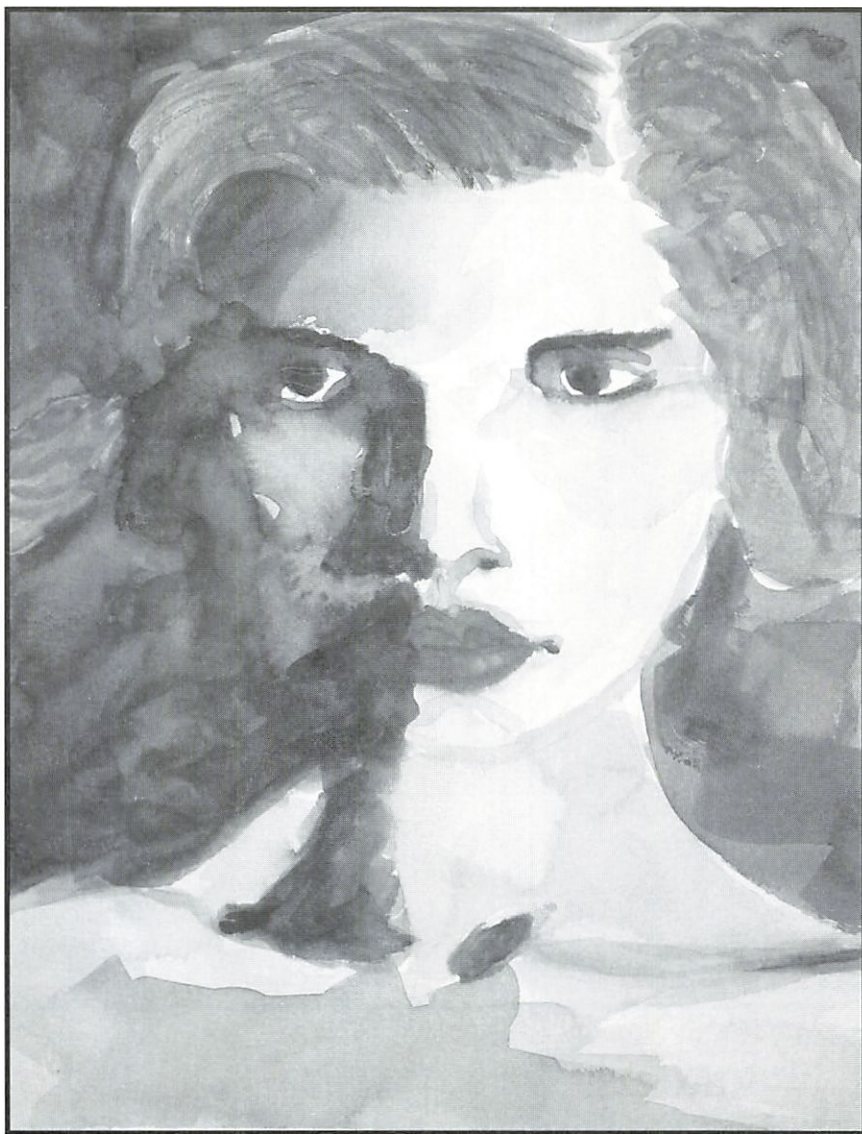
"I picked up a paintbrush and began to watercolor five years ago. I enjoy the freedom of expression as well as the portability of this art form."



watercolor

VIVIAN

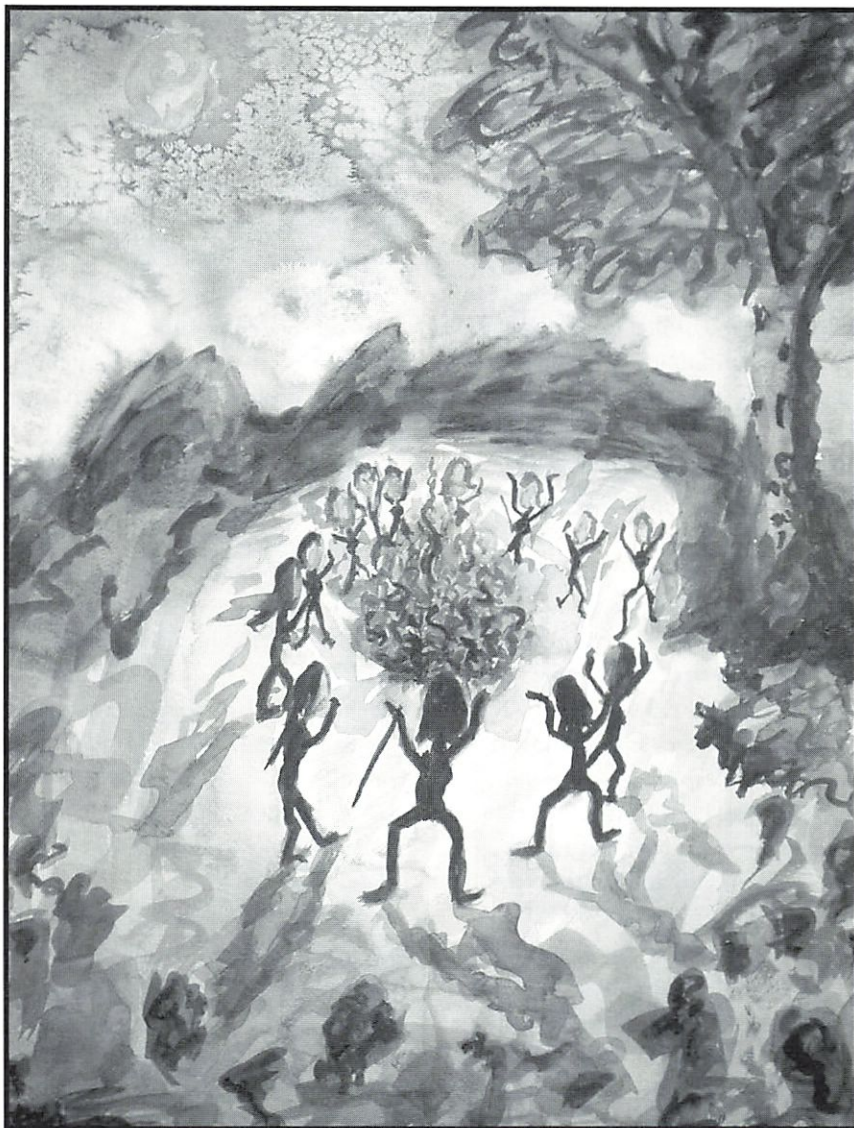
REBECCA S. Hill



watercolor

FIRE DANCE

REBECCA S. Hill



watercolor

ICE is NICE

DEBBIE BLUTH

"I'm a twenty-seven year old newlywed with a four year old son. I've just begun my college education and I love it. I'm an aspiring novelist and am passionate about writing."

I looked up at the dusty green board, at the words inscribed there in pale yellow. I bit my lower lip, and tapped my pen nervously. Again I read over the hastily scrawled words before me. My pen pressed deep into the paper, with heavy black porcupines obliterating the flat, ugly or misspelled words. It was good—I was almost certain it was good—but it was different, too. Would it earn me a smile of appreciation, or only the truly excruciating silence that only a room full of adolescents could make? At that point, I didn't—couldn't know.

I was, I felt, a rather average high school senior. Average that is, if every student dropped out of school after receiving their first 4.0 GPA after the first term of their junior year because they felt like a failure. "Over-achiever" might have been a more fitting description of me back then. In school, as in other parts of my life, I pushed to achieve in order to compensate for a lack that I perceived in myself. I'd worked hard and made it back to school, determined to graduate.

Once more I looked up at that familiar board, like so many others, aware of the faint scent of chalk from my front row seat. My teacher had given the class what she called an "Energizer" assignment: a five minute exercise at the start of the class to encourage her erstwhile slothful English students to "energize"

their minds. Today's assignment was to create a poem based on one line: Ice is Nice. A seed of thought had been entrusted to me, a seed that I was expected to coax into flowerhood with the light of my mind; to bring to blossom a poem in a mere five minutes.

Mrs. Romesburg strode to the front of the room. The early afternoon sunlight glinted off her glasses, giving her a merry twinkle as she grinned.

"So who wants to share with us?" Clearly she thought the line a challenge, and relished the chance to hear us recite our creations. I wanted to volunteer, I did, but I hesitated. While I waited, another student was chosen. The lithe and lovely girl stood gracefully. The liquid gold sun shone on her luminous, honey-blond hair, and she coyly lowered dark lashes over her sapphire eyes. This girl, otherwise known as "the academic goddess" coughed delicately and then said:

"Ice is nice...Ice is nice for lemonade in the shade..."

Another reading from a sweet, mousy haired girl immediately followed this poem. Hers sounded startlingly like the first.

From the back of the room, Grady Robleski, the class clown, nonchalantly raised his hand. Mrs. Romesburg beamed, obviously anxious to hear what the near infamous Robleski had to say on the subject. Grady

flashed a relaxed and cocky smirk from where he was slouched down low, his feet way out in front of him, the ultimate in laidback cool as he spoke: "Ice is nice for chilling cold beer, for throwing at friends and for putting down the front of girls' shirts." There was laughter all around, myself included, and yet I felt emboldened by what I considered my classmates' sophomoric take on the subject. I raised my hand high.

"Debbie?" My teacher prompted and I stood up slowly, a rosy color rising in my cheeks despite my best efforts to deny it. I couldn't help thinking in near panic "*Ice is nice all right, unless of course it's paper thin ice stretched over a frigid, watery abyss and you happen to be standing on it!*" I calmed my thoughts, cleared my throat, and picked up the innocuous-looking piece of notebook paper. I took a deep breath and began:

Ice is nice for packaging a fearful heart.
One from which happy moments flee.
A thousand shattered dreams are part.
Fortress defense repels all warmth from me.
Dark's the mark seen through the translucence.
There all time is frozen stand still.
Love's a horrid, painful, penance.
All's sweet, swift hunted for the kill.

There was a full heartbeat's hesitation, and then another. Only absolute silence greeted me. I swallowed, and sunk back into my chair, my cheeks flaming anew. Mrs. Romesburg approached my desk and leaned down. Her glasses were no longer flashing merrily. Instead, they seemed to be gauging me. She rested both hands on the sides of my desk, bringing her face within inches of my own. My heart nearly stopped. Was it really that bad? Then she told me slowly:

"This just sort of..." and she paused, as if searching for the right word before going on. "...comes out of you—doesn't it?" She said this somewhat accusingly, and I was at first taken aback before she said it again. "Just comes right out of you!"

It was then that I recognized it. The feeling emanating from her was jealousy! Not rancorous, but admiring and surprised and slyly amused. The woman was amazed by my poem and was letting the whole room know it. I was stunned speechless. How does one respond to a comment like that?

I think in the end I stammered out, "Yeah, uh, yeah, I guess." My cheeks were now a crimson-cherry color for an entirely different reason. Mrs. Romesburg had praised my work before—praise I appreciated—but somehow assumed was that generic kind of praise that teachers portioned out to most of their students. This time was different, though. This time I felt certain that it was sincere praise and just for me, and it left me delightfully dazed.

I'm sure Mrs. Romesburg wasn't aware of it then, but that kind of unabashed admiration of my skill, that kind of immediate and genuine validation of my talent was a spark that lit a fire of passion within me. It wasn't just anybody praising me—It was my *teacher!* My English teacher thought I was very *good*. I'll forever be indebted to Mrs. Romesburg for that, for loving English and writing and letting me know she thought I did it well. Who knows, someday I just might be a *New York Times Best Selling Author*, and I, of course, will need to dedicate my first book to my senior English teacher Mrs. Judy Romesburg.

Ice is nice in drinks for toasting Mrs. Romesburg.

Ice is nice, indeed.

Moved

Debbie Bluth

There's something almost magical
about the sight of the wind through the grasses,
It almost perfectly mimics
the look of waves on the ocean.
When the stalks press close and flow against each other
It resembles some sort of frenetic, tribal dance.
Other times it's as if the motion itself
Denotes an enormous, sentient thing,
Other times yet it's like the ripple of raised flesh I get—
When frightened
Or
Aroused.
The force of the wind on the field could be compared to
The swirl of packed New York City street crowds
pushing to move and ever make their way to and from.
Or even like the unseen, enigmatic electrons,
excitedly bouncing off each other in an amazing display
of the most basic primal energy.
It is mesmerizing to behold.
It is the beauty
and the
Power
of
Nature.

UNTITLED I

ARIEL SCHULZE



black and white, 35mm

UNTITLED II

ARIEL SCHULZE



black and white, 35mm

divided

FREDDY PORTILLO

Through the eyes of the unknown
Stepping out of the sand box
grabbing my mother's hand
walking to our casa
stopping for our cena
buying spices and beans
feel resistance for language
Is not understood
Crude, unethical remarks are made
Only understood from the ears of el niño
First recollection of a memory
Confusion sets in as the roots grow deeper
into the soil
My ears only hear their tongue derogatory

SAD STORY

KRIS BLUTH

“Hunter S. Thompson once said that writing is like sex; it’s only fun for amateurs.”

There’s a gene in
certain people that actually
turns sugar to alcohol
in the bloodstream.
I wish I’d known,
but I’ll never forget
the sight as I pulled up
to the house.
The fire truck and the sirens
and the neighbors milling around.
I made my way through the crowd
and there he was
at the end of the driveway,
my son, still tangled
in the wreck of his Big Wheel.

His blood/juicebox level was 0.23.

This World of Ours

KEVIN PAPAGNI

"I can't play music well, so I draw and write. I'm still no good at either, but I'm persistent. That's gotta count for something."

Just when you think your world is stable, it gets shaken
Every time you go to give something back you get taken
Shortly after you find happiness it's followed by depression
Instead of getting laid you're full of sexual repression
When you finally get what you always wanted, it's gone
And just when you thought you were right you find out you're wrong
This world of ours will break you if you let it
This world of ours will break you if you regret it

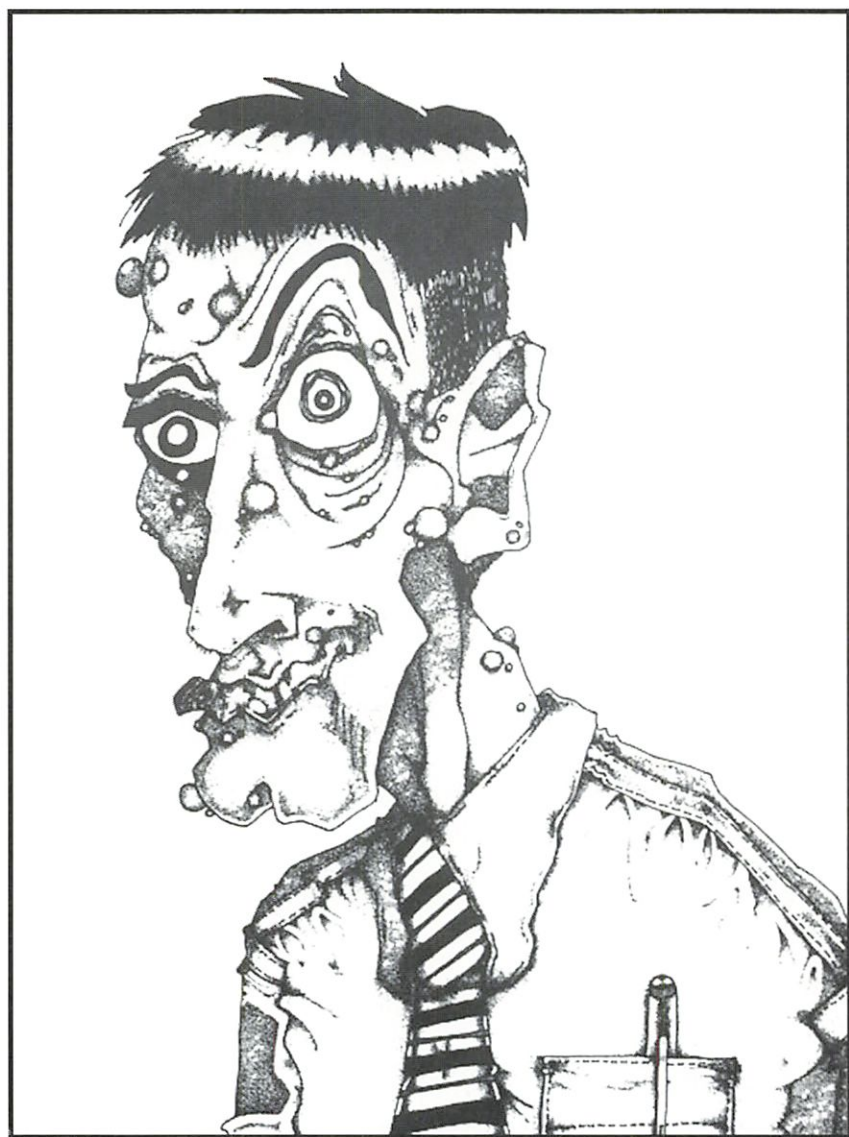
Just when you stand up someone pushes you back down
Every time you're free your friends are out of town
Shortly after you understand it, it gets confusing
Instead of being offended everyone else finds it amusing
When it finally looks like you want it, the lease runs up
And just when you go to take a sip someone knocks over your cup
This world of ours will break you if you let it
This world of ours will break you if you regret it

Just when you think you're clean the urge comes calling
Every time you think you're standing you end up falling
Shortly after you buy it, it becomes obsolete
Instead of hitting 'print' you accidentally hit 'delete'
When you finally find the right words to say, they get lost
And just when you save up enough money for what you want, they jack up the cost
This world of ours will break you if you let it
This world of ours will break you if you regret it

Just when I thought I had it all figured out, it disappeared
Every time I think I fit in, everyone talks about how I'm weird
Shortly after I thought I fooled everyone I almost died
Instead of relating to people like I thought, I find out they think I'm perma-fried
When I finally get you to smile, it's followed by a frown
And just when I make a new friend I find out they're moving out of town
This world of ours will break you if you let it
The only reason I've survived this long is because I don't regret it

God Loves Ugly

KEVIN R. PAPAGNI



black ink pen

UNTitled

KERRI SULLIVAN

"I spin records (deep house music). I love to write because I enter a world that cannot be found in everyday life."

My eyes are only golden because they have seen you
My skin is only moist because its absorbed by your dew
My dreams are only blissful because you consume my mind
My heart is only this rhythmic because you have set its time
My spirit is only so lively because you've inspired its soaring
My lips are only so loud because its you they are adoring
The night is only so silent because you sleep with such ease
...while it breathes
Fall is only so vibrant because you color its leaves
The sun is only so bright because you are there to illuminate through
Heaven only has angels because of attempts to recreate you
I am only a vagabond because you aren't here to feel
I only perceive nothing else because you are all that is real
My steps of perfection...embrace you with their vision

A FALL CROCUS

DANIEL C. CAMERON

"It is simply necessary for us to draw in closer and take a good look."



digital photography

Lil' Johnny

DANIEL C. CAMERON

The idea is a madman president,
Who wants to go to war
To defend his family's name.
Funds are taken from the people
And food is becoming scarce
No more money for the poor.

A resistance is rising
Those who wish to be truly free
Grow your own
Smoke your own herb.
People are taking the streets.
Finally, nations march together,
Millions take the streets.

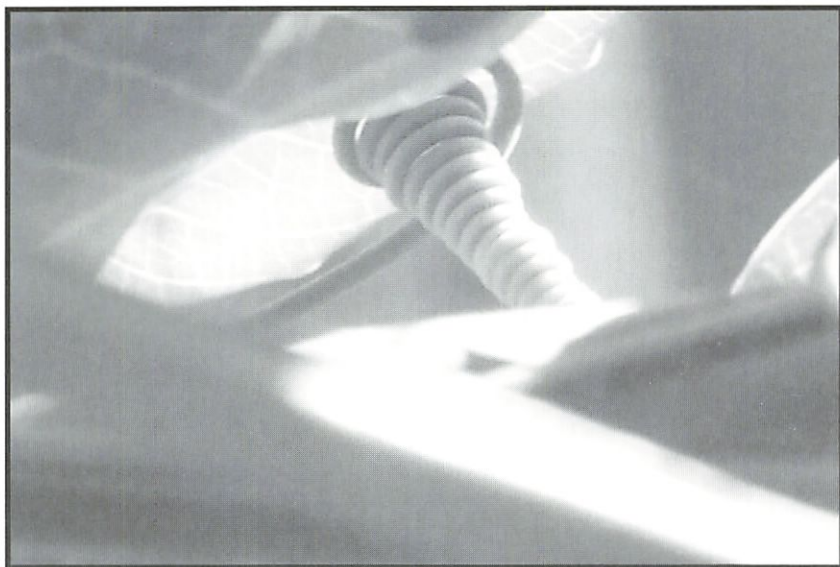
The Marches are met with resistance.
Tanks, gas, armor and guns.
Words exchanged,
Police and people.

On the front line
A brown girl with peace in her eye
Reaches out and hands Lil' Johnny a white and a red rose.
Lil' Johnny all iron clad,
Looks to one side
Then hangs his head down low.
You can just see him bend.
Lil' Johnny just crossed the line.

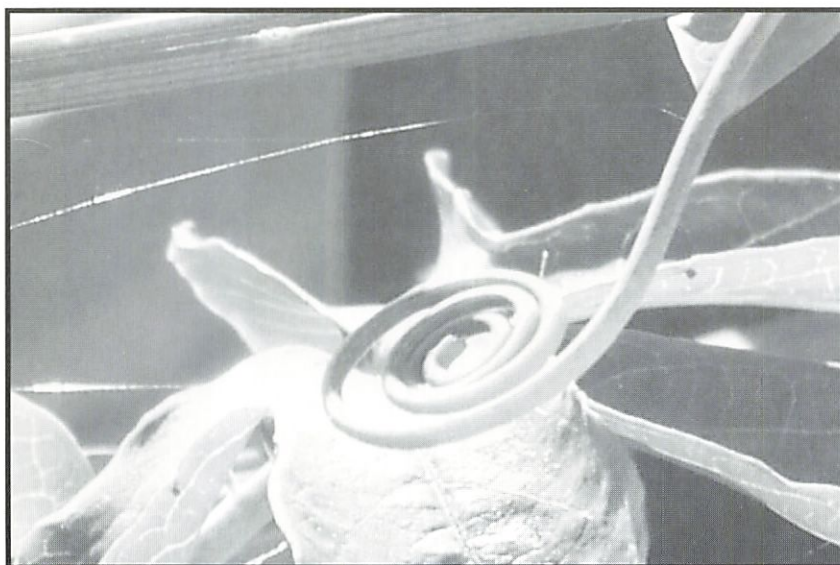
THE VORTEX AND SPIRAL LIGHT

DANIEL C. CAMERON

digital photography



digital photography



Magic

DANIEL C. CAMERON AND KRIS DICUS



digital photography

My FATHER'S HANDS

Cody YARBROUGH

"Thanks to Sandy Jensen and her 242 Intro to Fiction Writing class."

I was three years old. I remember it vaguely. I looked down and there was a cake there, with Mickey Mouse on it. I don't know where I was, or remember how the cake got there. I am told by my mother that I was three. I don't remember being three. I just remember the cake.

We returned to Oregon in time for my third birthday. We left my father in Texas. He wouldn't stop drinking. My mother finally had enough of his violent moods and his philandering and mostly, his drinking. I didn't know this. I don't know what I knew then from where I stand now, but I know that afterwards, my father was gone out of my life, and I know that it must have had some effect. I hear that he was always gone. I don't know. I was three.

I know that I miss my father now. He's been dead for two years. He died in front of me as I held his hand. I wasn't with my father often in his life, for reasons of his, later for reasons of my own. But I was there when he died.

He didn't know I was there. The hospital didn't call me, by his request, until he was unconscious. Unable to realize his surroundings, they thought his wishes didn't matter any more, and did me the dubious favor of allowing me to see my father die. They meant well, and they were probably right. It'd hurt

whether I saw it or didn't see it.

It was midnight when I got to the hospital. They contacted my mother, who called and urged me to go. I've often seen my father in hospitals. He was an alcoholic, and lived the sort of life that often results in hospitalization.

I held his hand, but there was nothing there, nobody on the other end of the line. He was breathing, shallow and weak. He would die soon, *was* dying, slowly, by a thousand tiny breaths. It would not be long.

What do you say to a dying man who can't hear you? I would have liked to tell him how much I liked him, how much I had always wished he were around. I would have guilt-tripped him, maybe. I would have tried to tell him that I loved him without making it sound trite, tried to be convincing and accurate, would have acted, maybe. He might have acted too. I wish I had been there when he was still awake.

Now he breathed shallowly, without strength. So unlike the man in life!

I told him I would visit him in the rest home, but I didn't. We could never talk. It was always too intense and unreal, or too passive and un-engaged, watching westerns in the afternoon. I never felt as though he knew who I was. I never felt as though he were looking at me. It felt as though he were looking at him-

self as a boy. I didn't know him, but I loved him like he would not have believed.

In the hospital I held his hand. His hand was shrunken up, not powerful as it had been when I was a little boy and loved and feared him with all my heart. He was wearing a pair of rings, oversized and overwrought, rings for fighting. His fingers rested inside the rings. The rings sat loosely on the old fingers inside. His hands were yellow against the steel rings.

I talked to him. Told him I was sorry I had not come to see him in the rest home. I did end up going a few times, but what do you say to man you don't know? I was no good at being there for him, like he had been no good at being there for me. I promised to come back to see him the next week. I never saw him again that he knew of.

His hands were cold and dead. No warmth in them, no heat, no life. These hands felled giants in the forest by day, and in the bars by night, had drawn cartoons, had built engines and houses. These hands had been his life, a man of creation and destruction. Though he still breathed, there was no life in him, and I knew that it would be soon that he was gone from me finally.

I was afraid to be sad when I realized that he was going so soon. When you have never known your father, how do you mourn his passing?

As it came closer, I cried hot streams. I talked to him, comforted him, told him it was all right, that I didn't blame him. None of it was true. I did blame him, in a way that I don't now. But I told his ragged form that I was okay, that I was sorry I hadn't kept my word, that I wished I had been there for him. Really, I was telling him that it wasn't my

fault, that he should have kept his end of the bargain, that he should have been there for me.

In that hospital, he died with my hopes that he would make it up to me, be there for me. Here I was in the middle of the night talking to a dead man, asking him why, and telling him that I was sorry, telling him that *he* should be sorry, wanting him to know I wished him well, that I was never trying to take anything away from him. I wanted to give to him, always. In the middle of the night, holding his cold, dead hands, I wanted him to feel okay. I felt sorry for him, forgot all the fear of him when he was drunk and angry. I wanted him to find the peace that had eluded him. If he could have felt peace, we might have been able to find time for each other. If he had felt peace, maybe he could have taught it to me.

I took the rings from his fingers there in the hospital room. They were his, and maybe I should have left them with him, but I felt entitled, and I took them. I gave one to my brother of another mother that I barely know. I kept the one that suited me.

We buried Dennis Yarbrough among his friends in a hillside cemetery, among scrub pines and underbrush, in red clay like the ground on which he built his log cabin. We lowered his casket into the ground ourselves, and I jumped down into the grave to retrieve the flowers we forgot.

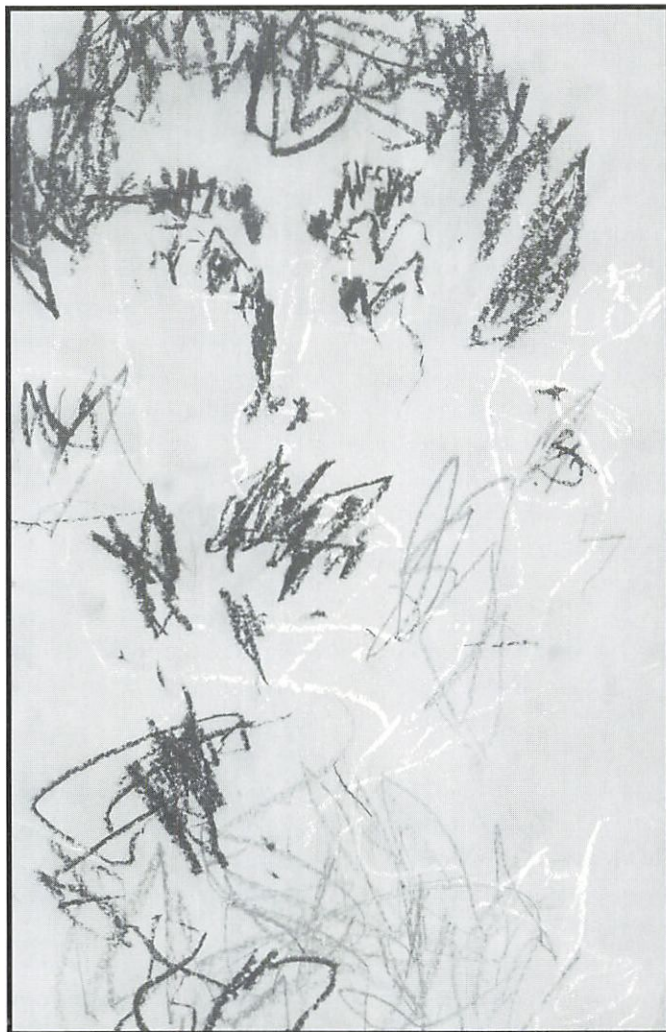
We threw dirt on the box. Soon it was covered, and then the hole was filled. We laid that spray of flowers across the grave, we talked about him for a while, and then we walked away.

I think of my father more often now, I think I know him better now, than I did while he was alive.

CEREBRAL PALSEY, SELF-PORTRAIT

Hollis SHOSTROM

"Hollis was born in Ashland, Oregon in the late seventies.
His primary interests lie in computers and engineering."



wax crayon on brown paper bag

Olivia Cheyenne

SANCHEEN COLLINS

"When permitted, everyone's camera seems so focused on us dancers in our regalia during pow-wows. I felt fortunate to capture such an elusive expression on the face of my beautiful niece."



color, 35mm Olympus OM-2

THE VILLAGE IDIOT

HACK MENHOL

“I spend a lot of time in my head.” (Samuel L. Jackson) I’m new to the area, spend a lot of time reading and writing, and I’m continuing at Lane for a transfer degree.”

To begin with, we shall take an average sized village from the European Middle Ages (approximately one hundred residents). The greater majority of these people are entailed in agrarian labor—they are peasants tending to the land. There may also be a blacksmith, an innkeeper, a constable or other representative from the local noble, and of course, a parish priest. For the most part, everybody has a designated place in the hierarchy and they adhere to it their entire lives, as the people of this hamlet have done for generations.

At some point in time, there is born among the villagers an individual that doesn’t quite fit into this mold. He (or she) isn’t quite content to sleep in cottages the villagers share with their livestock, as is the practice of the day. They instead seek residence in the woods, or under bridges, or in caves. Not quite suited for the menial labor demanded of the peasantry, this individual has demonstrated through some means or other that they may hold the potential to become an apprentice for a craft; they may, however, refuse this apprenticeship for reasons unclear to the community. This person is designated as the Village Idiot. They become the town drunkard, a witch, a vagabond, or (if they are lucky), they may gain an internship at the local keep as a Court Jester. The Village Idiot’s view of the world is

askew, and does not take the present situation of the human condition at face value, as most others do. The vacancy of their staring eyes suggests not idiocy, but rather that they live in an unconcerned universe, quiet, simple and vastly distant from our own. They see something else in the world.

The village grows into a township of a thousand people as it progresses into the Renaissance. Now among the population are merchants, soldiers, more artisans, and more administrators. If we remain with the original ratio of one Idiot for every hundred villagers, this would mean that there are now ten Village Idiots. These are the gypsies, highwaymen, and bards. The town grows again into an industrial city of ten thousand; we now have one hundred Village Idiots to complement the factory laborers, shopkeepers, educated professionals, et cetera. The Village Idiots are the luddites, philosophers, and adventurers not entirely content with the structure of European society; they become dissidents, revolutionaries, *Americans*.

Let’s take into account that we presently have over six billion people on our planet. If the ratio of one Village Idiot for every hundred villagers remains more or less stable, this would mean we presently have over sixty *million* Village Idiots existing among us today.

Something to think about...

If You Give A Junkie A Cigarette...

HACK MENTHOL

If you give a junkie a cigarette,
He's going to want a light
If you give him a light
He's going to say, "Hey, hit this shit with me!"
If you smoke anything of his, it's laced with heroin
He's going to say, "Yo, let's get some more of this shit!"
If you obtain more drugs, they are all essentially heroin
He's going to want your every available resource at his disposal to score more
If you follow his lead, you'll become a junkie, too
He's going to want to go to rehab, and he doesn't want to go alone
If you end up in rehab together, you'll be more compliant than he is
He's going to struggle, and he'll ask you to be his sponsor
If you accept sponsorship of your junkie
He's going to ask you for a cigarette...

Denali magazine wishes to make an apology to Bredan Marsh, author of "Shared Space," a short story presented in last spring's issue of Denali.* There were changes made to her work before the piece had been presented to the editorial board last spring. We at Denali would like to thank Ms. Marsh for her submission and would also like to issue a formal apology for the errors we made in editing her piece last spring.

*The one with the cowboy on the front

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