

# DENALI



Winter 2004

Lane Community College



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DENALI Literary Arts Journal is a student-run publication of Lane Community College. We publish three times a year, once a term. Denali accepts creative submissions from all residents of Lane County.

We accept submissions at any time, any month, any year.

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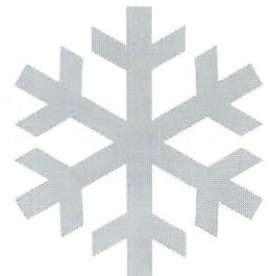
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You can also check us out on the web at [www.lanecc.edu/denali](http://www.lanecc.edu/denali)



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## Art

Singers, sculptors, painters and poets,  
Musicians that create,  
Artists I celebrate  
The great wonder of giving birth,  
Of breathing life into inanimate and sometimes unseen matter.  
You shatter the barrier between people and their souls,  
You flatter, you destroy,  
You console, you annoy,  
Bring teardrops, bring joy,  
Stop wars, incite revolution,  
Illustrate evolution,  
Sometimes a question mark with no solution,  
Or a light in the dark,  
And you're stark naked with so much on the line.  
I take what was yours and it becomes mine,  
Because it's a piece of me now.  
You brought it out.  
It's about you, it's about me,  
But I borrow your eyes to see  
Your sorrow, your elation,  
All a part of your immaculate creation,  
And I'm left to wonder what inspired you to make your opus.  
A heartbreak or divine love?  
For whose sake?  
What did it take for you to feel this way?  
There's much you don't say.  
I try to read between the lines,  
See behind the notes,  
But Art is a man wearing ten thousand coats.

---

"I've never published my poetry before. Last year, I began reading at open-mic poetry sessions at the Buzz Cafe. These pieces are meant to be read aloud. Enjoy, and think."



**Self Portrait # 5** Watercolor

All day I pick the right answers. I have to use my head.

“I’ll leave the speaking to you; All I have to say is “Paintbrush.” Grows gradually. Finds peace.”



**Sketch of Irene** Pencil



**My Daughter Clover** Pencil

Lots of ice in your car. That's the reason to eat soup or bread for dinner.

---

"I am a fine arts major, getting ready to transfer to the University of Oregon, for my BFA."

## Freedom

I am not here at all. I am just this girl who happens to have hairy armpits at a time when natural is “in,” and who happens to be in this hotel room with this long-haired pornographer who calls me “baby” and “bitch” and who says I have “amazing tits.” But I am not here. I am inside my head with the blankets pulled up around me, cozy and tight in my mind. I am smiling and laughing and talking to Dora, trying to calm my outside down, trying to make it as non-responsive as my inside is so good at being. This man, John, old enough to be my father, is like a businessman, ready and intent on doing his business. His business, though, is porn. His business is getting the best light in my darkest places. His business is my business.

“So, what do you think?” he asks as I stand in the doorway, waiting for Dora to come into the room with me before I venture any closer to this man, this camera, this reality. I realize as he looks at me that he is asking if I can handle it, if I can really do it, if I am enough meat to satiate him. Dora, my roommate and consequential bodyguard, came with me because she wants to do porn, too. Formerly a dancer of Divas fame, she needs a job—the same reason I am here, but with as different demeanor as possible. Confident, even cocky, she sits across from John at the table where he is fiddling with his laptop.

“I have one of those,” I say shakily, trying

to desperately to feel normal in this insane situation. “The computer,” I try to explain, but he only looks at me as he would a child, unsure of what I am going to do or say next, and not very interested in either.

Dora interjects with business, asking what, where, how much, and answering everything he wants to know that she wants to tell him, saying no when she means it and yes when she can. She amazes me at one point, pulling her pants down shamelessly to show this stranger what she has to offer.

When she walked in I wanted to hold her hand. I felt like a little kid afraid of Santa Claus... ‘Go on,’ my mom would say, ‘Go tell Santa Claus what you want for Christmas!’ She would be smiling and I knew what she had told me, that if I just sat on this stranger’s lap for a few minutes and blurted out all my secret wishes, I could get everything taken care of. Just like that, just like magic. Now, if I would just take off my dress and sit on the couch for a minute, we’ll get some test shots and see what you look like naked. Amazing tits, by the way. Amazing.

My eyes glaze over with boiling embarrassment, my mouth goes dry with fear, my joints turn stiff with unknowing. I can feel self-respect beginning to ooze out of every pore of my body, but I bend, I lower, I put on the wig, I let a stranger take pictures of me naked so he can see if his bosses like me. Goddamn.



This room is warm, at least eighty degrees, and the heat whispers of the other naked bodies that have crouched on this bed and this sofa during the past two days, which John has spent “interviewing” girls. It is warm, but after ten minutes of following his orders, of smiling like a corpse into his camera, of blinking anxiously back and forth between that nauseating flash and the reassuring nods from Dora, after this I am ready to put my damn clothes back on. I am ready to walk outside and breathe the cool, fifty-something degree air because it means that I am not in this room anymore. It means I am not taking off my clothes for money. I am not giving any part of myself to this strange kind of entrepreneur.

**As we hurry down the stairs to begin our walk back home, I realize that I have lost something important.**

Dora gets up and puts her chair back under the table, exchanging phone numbers with John, and I open the door to the afternoon sunlight. I walk out mute, smiling generically at John as my brain begins to recover itself. I begin to emerge from my mind bubble, that place where one doesn't *think*, one only *does*; that dark, safe space where I feel the most covered, the most invulnerable during those times when I am truly the most exposed. After all, just because I am undressed does not mean

I am naked.

As we hurry down the stairs to begin our walk back home, I realize that I have lost something important.

“It’s your innocence,” Dora states, so sure of what it was she lost when she started dancing. But I think she’s only half-right. It is something else, too. While I was doing everything, while I was spreading my legs and doing a “hang pose” and having camera presence (whatever that is), the “*something is fucking wrong here*” light inside my head was not screwed in all the way; the battery was taken out so it couldn’t go off at all. It was totally disabled because I knew that if I had let myself register what was truly happening, what I was doing to myself just for the possibility of a little extra money, I would have freaked out. I would have asked what the hell that guy thought he was doing with that camera and would he please leave so I could get my clothes back on? Or maybe I wouldn’t. Maybe I would just swallow my modesty and bend over a little more to get just the right light on my tits, wet my lips and say: Okay, baby, I’m ready. Come and get me.

“I don’t know whether to be scared, or proud, or embarrassed, or what,” I tell Dora, exhaling heavily, laughing a little. “I can’t believe I just did that.”

“You’re a capitalist,” she asserts loudly, smiling. I can tell she wasn’t shaken by the situation, and she can tell that I was. “You’re working with what you’ve got, you’re making

## Waters Meet

money, and you're bettering your situation, girl. You're doing what you've got to do to get by. Yeah, sometimes it sucks," she paused, shrugging her shoulders. "But at least you're not working at McDonalds." I smile at the reference to my last job, and indeed, am happy not to be there. But as she continues to advise me on how to "get over it," to let go of my "hang-ups," to be free, I realize that this is not where I want to be, either. I can sit on as many laps, whisper my secrets into as many ears as will let me, but that won't get me any closer to where I want or need to be.

"I will not get over it," I think to myself, "and I like my hang-ups just fine, thanks. And if being naked and unhappy is a requisite to being free, then bring me the chains and I'll lock myself up, for I don't want to be that kind of free." But I only say, "Mm-hm."

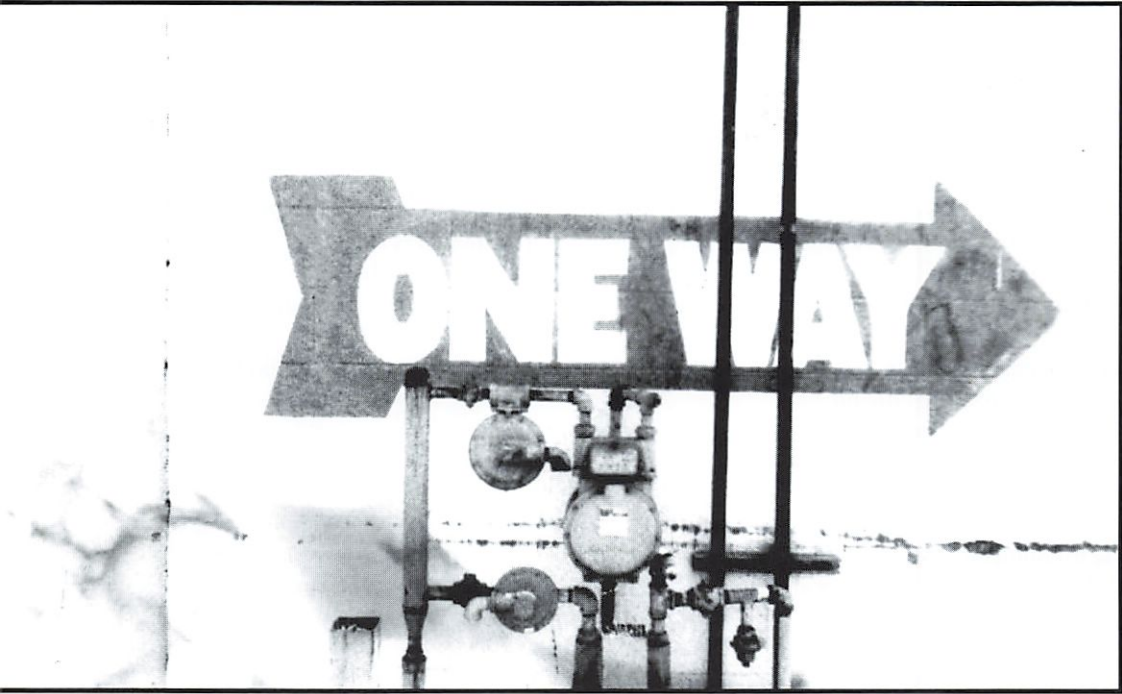
Dora stares at me for a few moments, apparently sensing the rush of self-righteousness, then shrugs again. "So if you get the job," she asks, "are you going to do it?"

"Well...yeah," I answer, and we laugh at the irony, the tragedy of the situation. Too smart

to want to say yes but too poor to say no, we talk, aware of the way our hips are moving in unison, and the way our toes are tapping the pavement at the exact same time.

"It's kind of a roller coaster," I say, and Dora looks at me blankly. "You sit down, and that bar comes down so you can't get out, not until the ride's over. You're trapped, but you got on the ride in the first place." Dora nods, and I don't need to say the rest of what I'm thinking: you will scream, you will be scared, but you will be better for having done it. For having gotten on the ride at all. For taking a chance, for allowing the possibility that you could handle it; that the G-forces are worth the thrill—that the stress of pornography is worth the money. But part of taking chances, too, is allowing that other possibility—that you can't handle it. That the pull of Earth's energies on your body is just too much—that keeping some extra money in your pocket in the dark is much more dangerous and self-destructive than struggling in the light. ❄️

**A Moment After Pause**



Turkeys star in the best cartoons.

Beginning to dissolve  
Ending in a plight  
of wishful Tears

Enigmas resolved  
illuminated light  
on contrasted Fears

Frustration impedes  
only followers lead  
Still, compelled to stay  
all signs point One Way

---

“A victim of the human condition and the unquenchable thirst for knowledge.”

# Clover Dodge

## Principal Interest

Principal Josh, he strides down the hall  
An amiable smile on his face  
He walks with a purpose but waves to us all  
Not a button or hair out of place.

The blue of his eyes compete with his tie  
His suit makes him look so austere  
My heart races fast, I forget where I'm at  
Every time I see him appear.

The arrogant preteens that pass as my class  
Don't bother me one little bit  
When one of them starts to get out of line  
I escort him to Josh, and we sit.

While Principal Josh sternly lectures aloud  
And my student stares off into space  
My foot leaves my shoe, sneaking under his desk  
And arrives in a far better place.

The principal doles out detention with ease  
And dismisses my kid at the bell  
The students burst forth from the classrooms for lunch  
Giving teachers a short break from hell.

He latches the door. "I believe that it's time  
To evaluate your performance."  
He catches my breath as I undo my blouse  
Revealing lacy adornments.

In a matter of seconds, his shiny black shoes  
Reside on the floor with his tie  
Skin to skin, we're embracing atop of his desk  
My principal interest and I.

The person, place, and thing are right  
His diction is amazing  
His participle dangles  
And it is surely worth praising!

"It's you I'm always thinking of,"  
He says with conviction,  
I say, "Never, ever end a sentence  
With a preposition!"

Our meeting ends with one long kiss  
Our verbs are all in past tenses  
The bell rings loud and urgently  
And brings me to my senses.

He calls me the apple of his eye  
I'll always be his gal  
And I tell him he's not just a *prince*,  
But also, he's my *pal*.

## The Lone Croissant

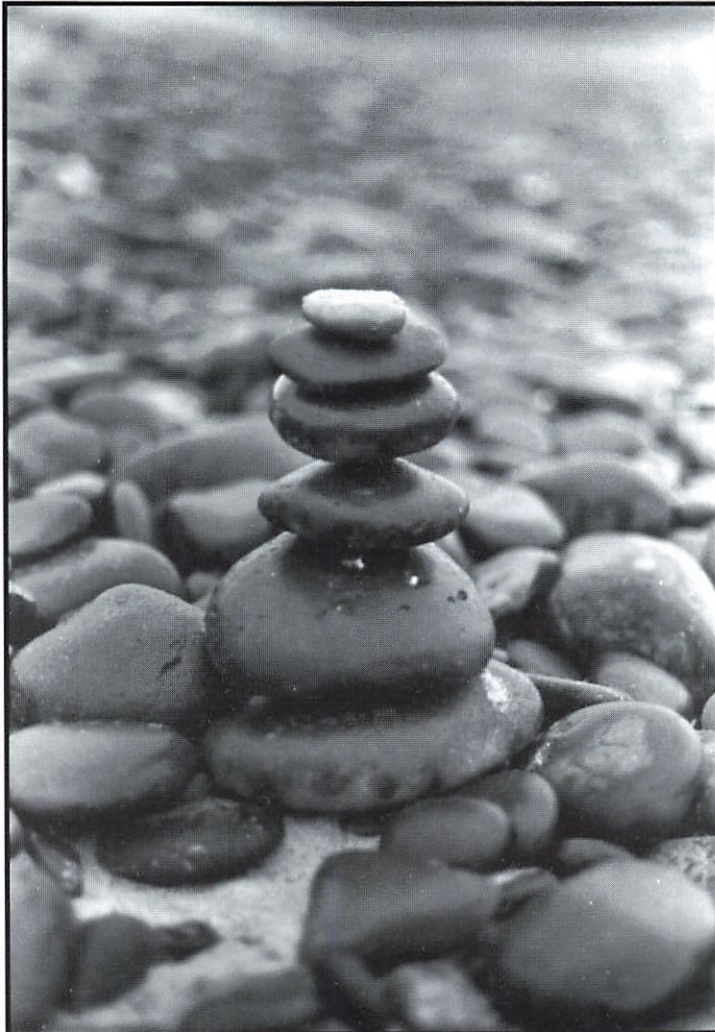
He sits with his arms crossed  
Amidst crumb cakes and scones  
And maintains his strange foreign facade  
Wild bear claws grumble in threatening tones  
Instilling the pure wrath of God  
The turnovers flip about, dainty and free  
The donuts all laugh in a clique  
The sticky buns motion provocatively  
And promise the danish a trick  
He looks on forlornly but seems to be bored  
At the updos the cinnamon rolls flaunt  
He retreats in himself, away from the horde  
For he is the One Lone Croissant.  
Once in awhile he takes time to watch  
The flamboyantly frolicking fritters  
He grins at their kinship but knows he cannot  
Survive like those scurrilous critters  
He knows he is flaky and full of hot air  
Yet he sees it is hopeless to want  
So he crosses his arms like he just doesn't care  
For he is the One Lone Croissant.

---

“Clover Dodge, a self proclaimed ‘poser posing as a poser,’ has been writing all her life. In her spare time she enjoys motorcycling, water sports, firearms, and playing with her cats. She has every episode of *Dukes of Hazzard* on videotape. She cannot write anything serious to save her life.”



**Untitled** Photograph



**Untitled** Photography

Everyone knows that you eat softly on your own wedding day.

## Carpenter Ant Hatch

Once the choice is made, it isn't hard to kill them. They're everywhere. I watch one clutch the dead body of another in its pincers, carrying it home for food. One of the huge flying males bit me savagely on the fingertip. I have read that native people used these ants for stitches, letting them bite a wound closed, then snipping off the body, leaving the head clamped in place. In the dark, I can hear them fall from the ceiling to the kitchen floor like little paratroopers. I don't want to make light of this. It's a question of territory. They are destroying my house. So I use poison gas on them and they drop, well, like flies. I clearly have superior weaponry. They've got numbers on me. In Saudi Arabia a U.S. general described fleeing Iraqi soldiers as "scurrying like cockroaches when you turn on the light." A seven mile long traffic jam of retreating vehicles was destroyed from the air, as many as fifty thousand men killed in a few hours. When the ants see me, they flee, so I conclude they must have some sort of mind. Still, I use the fireplace shovel to smash them. They are slow, not very maneuverable, though they have the advantage of being able to climb walls. Broken in half, their bodies still struggle, the head biting and the feet running on opposite sides of the room. I don't want them to suffer and try to crush them till they're still. When asked why his forces had used huge bulldozers to bury thousands of Iraqis alive in their trenches, the commander responded simply, "There is no humane way to kill." In many of the burnt-out trucks and transports on the Kuwaiti highway no remains could be found, only a light dusting of ashes. I sweep the pile of black bodies, which look like tiny raisins, into a brown paper bag and toss it into the fireplace. ❄



## Consequence

“I didn’t do it,” he told the woman.

“It doesn’t matter,” she said, her gaze seeking something in the distance.

“How can it not? It’s the truth! It is a matter of truth, a matter of trust!” he shouted with a voice that was gaining certainty and confidence with each word, “And—”

“And the truth of the matter is I don’t trust you,” she interrupted.

She turned her head to meet his eyes with her own. A single tear making its journey down her cheek to disappear in the seal of her lips was the punctuation for the sentence that had been passed.

“I am not lying...I am not a liar,” he whispered.

“Nor am I,” she said, resigned to all fact. ❄

My mom asked me to go get a haircut. Honestly, hair in my face makes me go crazy.

---

“I am a sociology major currently attending LCC full time.”



**Chair With a View** Photography

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“I’ve tried to keep my subject matters simple, but while every object is fascinating to focus on, they prove to be more complex than they seem.”

## The Domino Effect

If nothing else, experience has taught me that any seemingly harmless little job should be viewed with utmost suspicion. Considering all the home and automotive repair catastrophes I've been involved with in the past, I really should have known better.

Do you remember the less than completely scientific principles of Murphy's Law? "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong." Well Murphy's Law has a kissing cousin I'm sure many of you are familiar with, the Domino Effect. Apply the Domino Effect to any endeavor, and a small simple task can set off a chain reaction leading to enough work to keep a battalion of penny-a-day Nike employees busy for a year.

Recently, once again, I tempted fate and paid the price. It all started out so innocently. My wife, Bonne, noticed a small leak in the bathroom. Knowing, through voracious reading of various technical magazines like *Home & Garden* that water leaks can be very damaging, she immediately marched into the family room to inform maintenance. Namely, me.

I was right in the middle of my favorite weekend activity—inactivity. I tried not to groan as she stomped into the room with her I-got-a-job-for-you stride.

"I need you to come look at something!" she said, positioning her body strategically in front of the TV, a hand planted defiantly on each hip.

"Now?" I said, twisting sideways to see the screen. It was my standard reply to most demands placed upon my all-important relaxation time. The word had served me well in the past, allowing me to put off hundreds of man hours of work indefinitely.

"Yes, now!" she said rolling her eyes. "Water's coming out from under the toilet in the

guest bathroom when I flush. We need to get it fixed before the whole floor caves in."

"I'll take a look at it later, sounds like the wax seal needs replacing." I said, waving her away from in front of the TV. "I'm kinda busy right now."

Bonne turned and looked at the TV, then swung back to me with a look that would make a prison guard shudder. "Is that reeeeeeeaaally important?"

"Well," I squirmed a little, feeling like an ant under a magnifying glass on a sunny day. "Uh...yeah, I've never seen this particular episode."

She threw up her hands and began talking to the ceiling, "God! He's watching Green Acres...in Spanish! Lord, he doesn't even speak the language! Can I kill him now?" She stood expectantly, hands held high, staring at the ceiling, waiting for a reply.

My eyes were drawn, involuntarily, to the ceiling. A moment passed, then another and Bonne didn't budge. I gave up, snapping the recliner upright and grumbled past her. "Let me know if you get an answer."

"Oh," she quipped cryptically as she followed me out of the room. "I got one."

Under Bonne's intense supervision, I flushed the toilet. A dribble of water escaped from under the base.

"See what I'm talking about?" she said, pointing at the fluid. "We should call the plumber."

"The plumber?" I said giving her my full what-is-that-horrible-smell look. "You want me to call a plumber to replace a part that costs one dollar? I'm not going to pay some plumber a hundred and thirty bucks to put in a one dollar part! I'll do it myself."

## Banjo Bandolas

“Ack!—I mean...Um, are you sure that’s what you want to do? Remember we have guests showing up tomorrow.”

“I’ll be done in plenty of time.”

“Be careful. Remember what happened last—”

“I thought we weren’t going to talk about that anymore?”

“I know, it’s just...”

“Don’t you have some grocery shopping to do or something?” I muttered indignantly, pulling my battered toolbox from the storage room. “I’ll have this all finished by the time you get back.”

“Promise?” she asked nervously.

I silently answered her with what I hoped was a withering stare. Eighteen years of marriage has obviously blunted my once powerful and frightening bug-eyed-get-lost-face because Bonne simply shrugged it off with a nonchalant “Whatever” and collected her purse and keys.

“I’ll take my time shopping, so don’t feel pressured,” she called from the door as she left, “I’ll be gone for quite a while.”

“Fine!” I grunted back, feeling and probably looking very Cave-Mannish as I squatted in front of the toolbox, digging for an adjustable wrench in the greasy tangle of tools. I located it and held it up for inspection, “Uhh, good wrench, oook! Fix toilet! Arrrrrg!”

I approached the bathroom confidently, trying not to show any fear. Plumbing, like dogs, can smell weakness in a man. Once the stale scent of fear is detected, the subtle, insidious attacks begin. Maybe that’s why plumbers always get the problem fixed the first time. They are strangers to the domain, an unknown quantity.

Perhaps if it hadn’t been my bathroom I would have stood some sort of chance. Knowing me as well as it did, I had about as much chance of making it through this job

unscathed as I would have running through a blackberry patch naked. I was doomed and too dumb to know it.

Steeling myself, I reached down to grip the tarnished chrome handle of the inlet valve to the toilet. It crumpled like a discarded eggshell in my hand. I stifled a whimper and retreated back to the toolbox for the proper weapon... er...tool. Armed with a pair of pliers, I returned and assaulted the valve stem in its cramped little hidey-hole behind the stool. Of course it was frozen. I had to blindly grip the metal shaft and pull, a quarter turn at a time, until I finally managed to close it. “Okay,” I thought as I began a list on the back of a discarded envelope, “Now I need a new valve handle as well as a wax gasket. That’s not too bad.”

Scooping and flushing, I emptied as much water as I could from the tank. Now it was time for step two...or three...oh God I’m already losing count. I disconnected the feeder pipe, which, taking instruction from the valve handle, promptly turned to scrap metal under my gentle touch. I scribbled “feeder hose” under “valve handle” and “wax gasket” on my list.

Thankfully the cap nuts holding the toilet to the floor decided to cooperate and spun off with little resistance. Our guest bathroom is very narrow with a sink and toilet on one side, the bathtub on the other, and a narrow walkway in between. I scratched my head trying to decide where to place the toilet once I’d removed it from the mounts. Of course! The bathtub would be the perfect place. If there were any water left in the toilet, it could harmlessly drain into the tub without making a mess. I scrounged up some cardboard and placed it in the tub to protect the finish and knelt down to grab the toilet.

You know, there really isn’t a good way to pick up a toilet by yourself. No matter how you grab it, you end up with your face where a face doesn’t belong. I don’t care how well that

porcelain's been scrubbed, it can never seem entirely clean when you consider its history. I shook off such wimpy thoughts and psyched myself for the clean and jerk. I caught the base of the stool with one arm and balanced the weight of the tank with the other. What happened next is not for the faint of heart and complicated matters greatly.

I stood up holding the throne. So far, so good. It wasn't nearly as heavy as I thought it would be. Slowly, I turned towards the tub. Halfway through my turn, the toilet decided to unburden itself of whatever effluent remained hidden in its mysterious chambers. A gush of what I could only imagine was the most disgusting filthy water on earth soaked the front of my pants and the bathroom floor. In my haste to get the toilet over and into the tub, I lost my balance and dropped it. The porcelain on porcelain contact made a sickening crunch as the toilet made a large divot in one side of the bathtub and tumbled to make two more in the bottom and the back.

Time to go back to the list. Let's see: Feeder hose, valve handle, wax gasket, one brand new toilet, and a box of porcelain patch. This was starting to get expensive.

As I cleaned up the water on the floor I realized how old and weathered the linoleum looked. I remembered the wood-grain replacement linoleum peel-and-stick squares I'd purchased on sale a few years back and promptly forgotten. "No time like the present. I'll ask at the hardware store if there's a special cleaner I should use before putting it down."

Feeder hose, valve handle, wax gasket, a new toilet, porcelain patch, and some floor prep.

Looking up from the floor, my eyes locked on the wall space previously hidden by the tank. Four different colors, only one of which

eventually washed off, graced the roughly four-square-foot area. "Guess I'll have to paint that." I found the correct paint out in the shed but couldn't locate a brush. A feeder hose, valve handle, wax gasket, new toilet, porcelain patch, floor prep, and one medium size paint brush. "Okay! Time to go to the hardware store."

I found everything I needed at the hardware store. They even gave me a new gasket to go with the toilet I purchased. Unfortunately, cleaner wasn't the answer for the floor. Since the old linoleum had a very busy pattern, I had to fill in all the lines with a thin grout they were only too happy to sell me. Of course, this also required a slew of tools I didn't have and now had to purchase. "\$Cha-Ching\$ again!"

Back at the house I swung into action. Clean the wall, clean the floor, paint the wall, grout the floor and wait wait wait for the grout to dry. I wanted to finish the job before Bonne came home and I impatiently watched the dark gray goo dry to a light gray solid. Laying the linoleum tile was easy. The hardest part was peeling the plastic off the back in one piece, which was something I never really got the hang of. Every time I'd pull, the plastic would tear unevenly and leave me picking at the stray stuck down ends with my well-chewed fingernails.

Finally it was done. The molding was back in place. Our new toilet stood, proud and sparkling, in front of a freshly painted wall. The wood-grained linoleum looked perfect and professional. Now all I had to do while I waited for Bonne to arrive was to come up with a good explanation for how a one dollar job turned into a two hundred and fifty dollar dent in our bank account.

"Hmmm, I wonder if Bonne's ever heard of the Domino Effect?" ❄️

---

"I try to remain true to my Southern roots in my storytelling, seeing the humor in situations. I've been previously published in national and local newspapers and magazines."



**Chess Set** Computer Generated

---

“I am a self-taught artist, mostly by trial and error; tutorials off the Internet, and just playing around with programs.”

## To Begin With

I handed him a strand of hair  
he twirled it between his fingers  
and marveled at the shine  
I pulled more out  
one by one  
and gave each to him  
he kept losing them

I gave him my eyes  
smooth and blue and white  
he rolled them  
round and round  
kissed them for luck  
and lost them in a game of marbles

I gave him my breast  
and then the other  
he moved them  
hand to hand  
rubbery little water balloons  
he squeezed them, smiled  
and they burst

I gave him my skin  
he stretched it tight around him  
felt it with his fingertips  
he poked and he pulled  
and it tore to shreds

I gave him my heart  
bloody, red mess  
cupped in his hands  
he held it to his  
let it slip through his fingers  
and fall to the floor

standing here  
flesh, no skin  
face, no eyes  
head, no hair  
body, no breasts  
soul, no heart  
I asked for it back  
for it all back

he shrugged  
I never asked for any of it  
to begin with

## Drain You

I love you with my eyes  
never my heart  
or you'd fill my body  
running with my blood  
places you can't see  
places that are mine  
but if I adore you with my eyes  
blink  
you are out of me  
no need to slit these wrists  
and drain you

---

“My mother makes films and does photography. My father paints and draws, and my stepmother sculpts. I thought I was being original when I picked up a pen.”

Dear Boz the Clown: You ate too much turkey.



**Leaf in Hand** Photography



## A Matter of Time

It was only a matter of time before the walls crumbled, before I looked around me at the shattered remains of my happiness and knew I could never put the pieces back together. There comes a point, I imagine, within everyone, a point where you stop, sit down amidst the rubble and debris, and cry. You can feel the dust of the mess rise up in the air, suffocating you like a heavy blanket of regret. The material scratches your inner soul as it rubs across the raw memories. Sobbing like a child who just dropped her ice-cream cone, your face becomes saturated with all the pain, all the confusion, and all the simple exhaustion of giving up.

It always is only a matter of time, regardless of how much hope rides your dreams as they burst into existence, and it always is only a matter of time, even though you've crawled on your hands and knees through the hallways of learning until you stood, finally, with your head held high and your back straight, with shining determination reflecting off the doubt that

hovers in its wake.

The letter lay across my lap as I sat amidst this destruction. It looked up at me with an empty expression, and I knew that whatever it said, when I parted its seam and pulled out that single sheet of paper, it would not make anything better. Those words, splashed across that page so carelessly, were only going to be like honey poured over the thistles than now cut my tender being to shreds.

In the beginning we never say, "It's only a matter of time," or at least we never say it out loud, even if it silently creeps around inside us. However, at the end of the story, when the beautiful princess loses her glass slipper, we know then that we always knew it was only a matter of time. ❄️

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"When I pick up my pen, I am free. Unforbidden stories, emotions, and fantasies are able to flow uninhibited across the page in the wide open spaces of white breath."

## Gabriella

**H**er name was Gabriella. I only knew her name because I'd overheard a conversation between her and the mailman one summer morning when I had been out weeding my tulip bed. Today, as I walked to the window and gazed across the street to Gabriella's house, I saw her sitting there, the same way she did at this time every day, when the sun had not quite climbed to the top of the sky but almost. It was ritual, one I didn't understand, and yet one that had mysteriously captured me in a web of intrigue.

She'd walk out her front door, clutching that chipped and peeling old wooden chair like it was the most completely natural thing to do. She'd set it down in the center of the small courtyard, off to the side of her front lawn, and gently lower herself into it. Her arched back never rested against the chair, but rather remained content just hovering there between the front edge, where she was seated, and the top edge, which stood just below her shoulder blades behind her. She would lower her hands to her sides, one grasping an edge on the left, the other on the right. Her feet, aligned perfectly side by side, would slide out in front of her, remaining always flat on the courtyard tiles until they reached the full extension of her legs. She always wore the same dress, a sheer, pale yellow that created a shadow beneath it with the varying contours of her long, slender body. Her dark brown hair hung loosely over her shoulders like that of an Egyptian queen's, perfectly content to lay there, unmoving and silent.

I watched her ritual every day and became absorbed in trying to soak up the wonder in her gaze. Her head would tilt upward, causing her

eyes to close protectively against the strength in the sun's rays, and complete calm would slip across her face. She would remain this way for one hour, exactly, and then as if some internal clock coaxed her from this reverie, as soon as the hour was complete, she'd slowly lower her head, rise from the chair and return to her house. Often I could see her mouth moving silently and I imagined a song being sent forth from her lips. It was an odd song, with words wrapped in an undecipherable language, yet it always brought a smile to her face.

I spent many hours contemplating and craving the simplicity in my life that I had come to love in Gabriella's small ritual every morning. I would attempt to picture myself sitting in that chair, with my head tilted upward, not understanding why, just knowing the need inside me.

Then I would wait, as if in waiting something was sure to be born, and though it hadn't yet, I still held hope within me as I arched my back, pushed my feet forward, and settled on the edge of the chair. I breathed a longing to feel the serenity that ambled silently across the street to my doorstep, like a familiar old friend stopping by for tea. I wanted to feel it the same way Gabriella felt it when she closed her eyes, lifted her face to the sun, and surrendered. ❄️



**Entangled Roots** Photography

Believe it, ladies and gentlemen, I will be famous for love and care.

---

“As a student of fine arts, I have a passion in capturing the undying beauty of the natural world within the medium of photography. I am an artist and nature enthusiast, originally from the beautiful southern Appalachians.”



**Watching Wolf** Colored Pencil

## My Mother's Kitchen

My mother's kitchen  
 An amber August evening  
 My brothers sit as I help  
 Prepare a dinner of  
 Fried tofu with rice  
 Fresh garden vegetables  
 My mother tooling  
 Over a leafy green salad  
 When she recoils in horror  
 She has forgotten to  
 Purchase sweet summer corn

"Blake, drive me to Bangerter's farm,"  
 She says

As the sedan pulls from the curb  
 Blake and my mother are leaving  
 I look at my brother  
 "We have ten minutes"  
 "I have a lighter"  
 A freshly mowed  
 Suburban back yard  
 A tall wooden fence  
 The food is simmering

The sedan rounds the corner  
 My mother and Blake  
 Present us with green and tan  
 Sheathes we busily husk as  
 My mother boils water  
 "I sure love summer corn,"  
 My mother says  
 As we melt into a yellow hue  
 That is so not Utah

---

"I woke up Sunday morning with no way to hold my head that didn't hurt. And the beer I had for breakfast wasn't so bad so I had one more for dessert."

– Johnny Cash

## The Time of the Crickets

When the Sun came up,

We ran out the door.

Sneaking over the land, quietly...

We raced toward the hills

Madness in our eyes—

Hurrying—through the valley—over logs that crossed streams

Up to the hillsides.

Into a forest.

We stopped and saw that all images of “cement world”  
were far enough back.

So we jumped into a ditch beneath some trees.

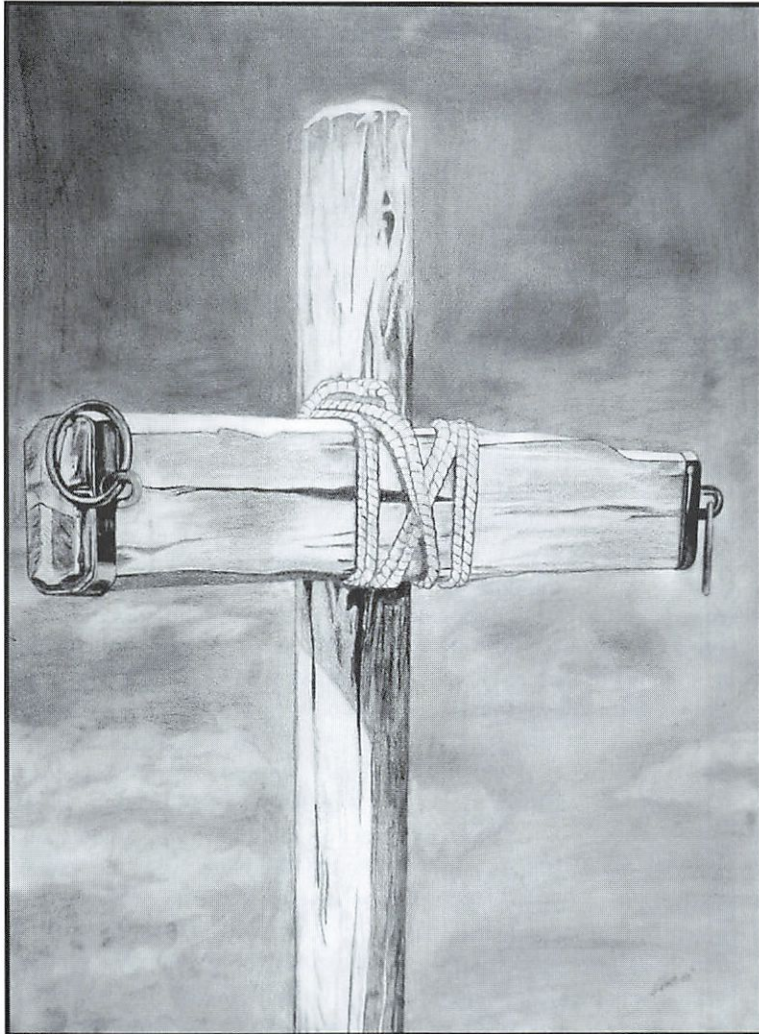
We rolled in the dirt and crawled in and through bushes.

The chanting of the crickets came on,

We crowded within the clearing to listen

as we ate leaves and flowers,

and talked telepathically with spiders.



**The Old Rugged Cross** Pencil

Later on, it will snow indoors. Better go out and take it easy for the next 98 hours.

"I'm a 24 year-old transfer student. I desire to use my talents for His good pleasure."

## Indifference

I wake up to the sound of pissing rain on my roof. I'm living in a loft in the back of a warehouse, and the only thing between my bed and the holes in the roof is a ceiling fashioned out of insulation, some kind of plastic-coated brown paper, and duct tape. I know exactly where the leaks are in the roof because there is mold growing on the paper where the water pools. Great—I roll over—more rain. I hate Oregon.

Mike doesn't understand why I can't get out of bed some mornings. Most mornings, in fact. He tells me that he can't be in our little loft. He is restless; he has to get out amongst people. I guess he thinks I should feel the same way. I just want him to stay in bed, preferably in the dark and with cigarettes. I don't know if it's my fear of other people, or if I just don't like them. Maybe it's none of that, or maybe it's a little bit of both, I don't know. I just want to be alone.



I finally end up at Icky's, local hotbed of anarchy, where misfits of every persuasion formerly have come to caffeinate and now come to read. I find myself here under the pretense that sometimes my own company is enough to drive me to interaction with others. I bum a Camel from J.

Here is J, with the wild-woven yarnhair and the face tattooed like war paint. Everyone calls her crazy; even I call her crazy (I live with her and therefore feel entitled), but sometimes I think that J's head is somehow straighter than everyone else's. That would be enough to make anyone crazy. She told me once that she hated her tattoos. Then she thought about it

and decided that she didn't hate her tattoos, she just hated the rest of the world.

No smoking is allowed in the library, so J follows me into the smoking hallway. A sign hangs above the doorway **CANCER ZONE-SMOKING PLEASE!** Thanks, I think I will.

I sit on a stool, and J pulls up a chair next to the door. It's one of those glass doors, and I remember when the glass used to be covered in stickers, put there by all the bands that had played at Icky's when the place had been in its heyday. Then one day the coffee was replaced by books, and you could see through the door again.

J lights her cigarette, takes a thoughtful drag. "I've been trying to talk to M all day. I've walked around with him all day, trying to talk to him, but he just says 'I'm gonna go shoot dope.'" She sighs and takes another drag of her smoke. She is a junkie herself.

I say, "Well, you can't save people. You can be around for your friends, but you can't save them." I feel like I am the last person who should be giving advice, and these words sound hollow to me as they leave my mouth. I wonder why she doesn't save herself.

"But I keep telling him that I would take care of him. I would hold him and play songs for him and sing to him and talk to him. I would take care of him when he was sick, but he just wants to shoot dope." She is beginning to sound frenzied, and I am noticing how the tattoos flow so nicely with the curves and contours of her cheeks. This is J waging war on the world with her face.

I look out the naked door at the dog tied up in the parking lot where there are no cars parked. There are other dogs running around loose, broken people just sitting and sighing



and staring. I have to look away. I can sit and sigh and stare at the day, but it depresses me to see other people do it.

“Yeah,” I say, “but you can’t save other people. You can’t fix what’s wrong inside them that makes them need whatever they’re addicted to.” Again, generic advice. I have no personal stake in this situation, and I realize that I am responding because it would be a breach of social contract not to.

“I know that, but it makes me sad because I want to help them, but I can’t, but I try to help them anyway.” She sucks absently on her cigarette.

I understand what she means. This understanding is driven home every time I see one of my junkie friends on the street. You look and feel the sting of sadness in the part of your heart that hasn’t yet written them off completely. You knew them before they were strung out; and now when you see them on the street you act like you don’t know them because there is shame and they act like they don’t know you. Then you avert your eyes and look at the ground or a tree or anything else because it’s just too painful to think about it beyond that.

“I don’t think it’s an addiction, anyway,” says J. She says this very matter-of-factly, as if she believes she is perfectly sane. “I can do it or not do it if I want to. I’ve done it a million times.”

Indifferently, I drag on my own cigarette and blow smoke rings, perfect and beautiful; one after the other drifting up, up, up, each one crashing into the one before it so that they all melt together, lift up, and disappear into the ceiling. I am mesmerized by cigarette smoke,

the way it writhes so tumultuously, like a storm under water; the way it just floats away. That is why I will never quit smoking. “I don’t know what I would do without cigarettes...”

“I like smoking,” declares J. “Fuck it! I don’t care if I get cancer.”

I say, “The only way I would ever quit smoking is if all my other needs were fulfilled. Then I wouldn’t need cigarettes.” J is looking at me, but vacantly, and I am aware that, despite her presence, I am speaking largely for my own benefit.

“I’m gonna go outside.” J stands, suddenly animated with purpose, and walks toward the library—PLEASE NO SMOKING TOBACCO—with a cigarette laced between her fingers, smoking like a lazy fuse. She stops at the end of the hallway and turns dramatically. She holds out the hand that holds the smoke and toasts, “To cigarettes...Fuck it!” Then she smiles and she’s gone.

I smile, too, for the first time in days. Fuck it, indeed. ❄️



**Neth** Polymer Clay, paper, and other materials

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“Human expression and emotion are incorporated into my work on a regular basis. I enjoy playing with gesture and structure.”

## Hmmm?

“Hmmm?” she wonders, at everything, slumping into a delicious white chocolate Ethan Allen love seat, briefly enjoying the feeling she gets floating against its expensive Italian leather, a cherub nestled in a bath-sized truffle with a single bite taken out of it. She brushes her cheek against her cashmere sweater, silently imagining thousands of tiny nerves rippling in orchestrated excitement, quivering like blades of grass under the mighty hand of a warm wind. Feeling silly for a moment, she recants her idealization, lost childlike for a moment in a feeling as simple as cashmere. Without thinking, she puts her head down to nuzzle her shoulder, and her cheek coos in tiny bliss at this expansive pink caress.

**It is the sound of her own internal rumination, simple and vast, churning and great.**

This moment of pleasure is, like all others for her, both hypnotic and hypocritical, absorbing and fleeting, and leaves her feeling momentarily askew, awkward against a backdrop of her own stillness, until another moment emerges from somewhere, ready to usher her on, and on, and on.

Shifting her body against the opposite arm of the chair to bring herself more upright, she presses the mute button on her day with an overfull glass of cabernet, taking a sip from the top like someone taking a bite from a crisp apple. This chair is like what she wishes sex could be for her: comfortable, stylish

without a hint of the pretentious. Reassuringly supportive. There. Her thoughts pass through her detached fatigue like a distant train, small lights, powerful ringing sounds that disappear suddenly, falling off, leaving you unsure of whether you heard anything at all.

She’s hoping her twin daughters aren’t going to take turns practicing turning her pretty blond hair to ash-gray when their father drops them off. “If ever a night to give it a rest, God, please tonight,” she asks, eyes rolling in cartoon fashion. And from somewhere in the tiny margin of her thoughts, riding beneath the surface of the sounds she can hear in this soft-lit living room of hers, there is a buzzing, a whirring, as if a motor were running, in this case, idling. It is the sound of her own internal rumination, simple and vast, churning and great. The din of a great mechanism that is like her, marvelous by design, attempting to power through this dilemma that has been tossed to and fro inside her stomach for years now, virtually forever, an as of yet digested morsel of her life: “How did this get to be me? How am I the person they know as ‘her’?”

Middle aged, still wearing the obvious attractiveness that was a shining beacon just a few short strides behind in her life, now vintage (though still very much in style). A senior partner at the advertising firm. Kids raised in a single-parent household. Double mortgage, braces. Litigation to get child support back-pay. Suitors that smile sweetly and treat her sex, predictably, like a Ramada Inn. Nightly lodging, with a complementary continental breakfast.

Con-ti-nen-tal. Mmm, she thinks, considering this under the vaulted arch of her brow. How she likes the sound of the word,

## N. Martin Zol

pouring its lingual syllables through her pursed red lips with careful musing, though not as much that which it was referring to in this context. Continental. "Is that European for one night stand?" she wonders, twisting her mouth, in that infuriatingly cute way that seems to send the signal to all single losers that she is available for a date.

Her legs, still long and slender, emerge from her skirt pouring into her high pumps like water from a dam; like a force of nature restrained, soon overlooked, as modern activity and social vogue chases our delicate attention spans elsewhere.

Yes, she decides, again pouring steadily into the open mouth of her glass like a child alcoholic; my legs are like the road less traveled; I had two stiff martinis in the hotel bar and took the road less traveled. Alone, too tired for lonely, and too committed to getting these girls by to really feel much between the stomach that is in knots all day and the vocal cords now hoarse from fighting with her life, husband, boss. Now the space between is just as blank as the billboards she's called to fill, and although without a statement written in her

heart, she is definitely sending a message to all that pass by.

And suddenly, with her plight out in the open, the sound has stopped. This ringing in her ears stops, and her numbness, her hidden others, all file past her attention like prisoners lucky enough to be near a gate when it accidentally opens. She watches deaffly now, staring into the silence and the walls, and wonders, in a very pure and honest way, what she is going to do about all this; this collection of facts that is no longer describing her, but somehow has come to *be* her. ❄️

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"N. Martin Zol is the mostly out of practice and occasionally talented written double life of a one time student living in Eugene."



**Brian Sumner, Willamalane Skate Park** Photography

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“When I first heard Tony Hawk and his entourage of pro skateboarders were coming to Springfield to dedicate the new Willamalane Skate Park, I never imagined I’d have a chance of meeting a superstar. As it turned out, I not only met the Birdman, I also got the opportunity of a lifetime to photograph some of the world’s most talented skaters up close and personal as they showed the local kids how it’s done. It was truly a dream come true.”

**Poem # 4**

The redwood protects  
with its canopy-like structure  
over my home as alone  
And the stars sing silently  
winking a shimmer of  
my heart flowing a rhythm of blood  
I travel up the river  
as my eyes nestle themselves  
up against my lids for comfort  
and morose moments of eternity  
I sleep sound as the moon  
when monsoon season looms close  
El Niño with iridescent rose petals  
falling into my glimmering soul panes  
Peaceful with love for the fluff  
the lust fluff my dreams capture  
and rivet into my soul each morning after  
I am but an instance of memory  
in this time of beauty dancing alone  
barefoot and blind  
Beside the angels who fall down  
chasing after petals for laughter  
To me they comfort...  
this distillation...  
this bursting beating beneath my cage



**Nude in Chair** Charcoal

Despite disappointments, life keeps going, and going, and going...



**Negative Space Self Portrait** India Ink

"I am a second year graphic design student at LCC. Some of my art pieces are being attacked by mildew... so, I decided to submit them before they become completely slimy and destroyed."



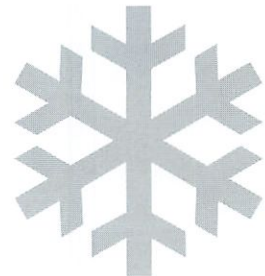


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**Thanks from the editor:** The editor would like to shower thanks and praise to the following for their wonderful contributions to the publication of this fine magazine: Dorothy Wearne for her wisdom and her patience, mighty thanks to Patrick and Jillian, our two newest and brightest. Thanks to Jose Chaves, Andrea Dervin, Tiffany King, Travis Roderick, John Mackwood, Natalie Voutsikakis, Ryan McGill, Chris Ingram, J. Klanke, props to my folks: Word up, M&D!



**Excerpts from “Mack World”** were published and printed with permission from John Mackwood, a columnist working with Lane Community College’s student-run newspaper, *The Torch*. John is completing his G.E.D. at Goodwill in Springfield in addition to studying art at LCC. You can find more Mackwood Zen in “Mack World,” published weekly in *The Torch*.



**Our apologies** to writer Hack Menthol. In the Fall 2003 issue, we misspelled his last name. He’s agreed not to file suit.



**Back Cover:** Andrea Dervin, **Self-portrait with Attitude**  
*digital photography*

“For long I have thought striving for peace an elevated path—the higher human path, seeking within myself those ‘flaws’ that impeded peace and compassion. Now I see I am merely a dove by genetic chip. These inclinations are genetic leanings to insure the survival of the species. Hawk and dove are equally balanced in a vital tension required to insure we human beings are neither slaughtered because we acquiesce nor so aggressive we reduce our numbers to the point of extinction. The dance of the environmentalist and the corporate polluter is the same. One pushes progress so we may evolve while the other demands accountability that our evolution may find adequate living conditions for an evolved survival.

“As a peacenik I have no greater calling than the professional soldier who defends the tribe. With understanding I dedicate this photograph to the soldier, to all warriors globally—we are all in this together, thanks.”

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