Perceptions is a creative arts magazine published by the Humanities Division and Student Activities of Gainesville College to encourage the arts among students, faculty, and friends of the college. Some of the works published herein are the creative products of art and writing classes; others are contributions from friends of the creative arts.

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collage

Title Page: Richie McDowell
watercolor

"If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is infinite."

William Blake
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The Peaceful Masochist

Here stand I,
the peaceful masochist.
Hell-tranced emotion
spreads through my soul.
Catch the message
tarrying on recognition:
Look, see yourself
as my mind imagines.
My imagination projects
one million people reacting the same way I would react
when I hurt someone,
I am really pinching my own heart.
Expectations monopolize liberty,
they immobilize the freedom to "be."
If I could be anything other than a peaceful masochist I would be a circle because circles never change and always know the beginning and the end.

Does it surprise?
Love is the highest form of masochism,
Love is given,
and once given, what then?
Love is self-inflicted danger
if you do it right,
if you follow the rules,
give, but don't expect anything.
Please.
Here stand I,
with thriving masochistic heart in hand.
Offering to whosoever is willing
to taste salt
to touch scars,
and every so often alleviate the chest bruise left behind.

Sheila Casper

Dandelion Dreams

Dandelion dreams
Describes my world
Made up of puffs of my imaginings
Often blown away
Fragile things
These dreams
So quickly gone
A dandelion dream
That is my love for you
Built up and up
Along came the wind
All is blown away

How sad it seems
Can't help but want to hold
My dying
Dandelion dreams

Connie Baechler

Encouragement

Limitations happen without effort
Reservations flood my passionless lungs
as two do battle for my soul.

The one loud, insistent, proud
laughing out "You foolish child!
There is no purpose that makes life worthwhile."

The other quiet, gentle, meek
says "Come my dear, Why do you fear?
Before your birth was the path made clear."

Katherine S. O'Neill
Daughter

Arms aching to hold her eyes fixed on her face
I gaze through glass in wonder beholding a part of myself
one step away.

A smile on her young face
lunch pail clutched tight
my expectant child
confidently walks into the classroom
one step away.

Radiant Beautiful
she walks down the aisle
all satin and lace
our happy tears blur each other's face
one step away.

She holds close her newborn
love glows in her eyes
the circle is complete
I relive my first born joy of my heart
one step away.

Joanne Martin

Angelina Gunterina

I think I miss you, Angelina Gunterina
I miss what you were
And the aura of sophistication you carried
Like a taste of some sweeter day
Sitting here with my thoughts all astray
I miss the part of me that was you
With all the right friends
Amid a myriad of lovers
Always interesting, forever bubbly
I am you, in some small part
And I try to take sophistication to heart
For as I watched you enveloped in a glamour world
As it dragged you down
I remember thinking how unsound
The world leaves us
I think I miss you, Angelina Gunterina
Indeed I do.

Connie Baechler

Remembering

There she sits in her rocking chair
And quietly combs and braids her hair.
Her face though wrinkled holds a glow
For in her mind it's long ago.

There's bacon frying in the pan
And she's made biscuits for her hungry man
A grandchild in the kitchen doorway appears
She reaches out and draws her near.

"Breakfast is almost ready," says she
"Will you run out and tell Grandpa for me?"
Then the three at the table take their place
And bow their heads while Grandma says grace.

Elsie Nelson

Dianne Wheeler oil painting
Enough

It was merely another battle
In an endless universal war,
Fought throughout the world,
A war for growth,
For principles,
For freedom,
A never ending war,
Without a winner,
Where no blood is seen.
Yet hearts can be broken,
Tears can be shed,
And lies are often told.
The battle scars are shared
By every warrior,
Never to be healed.
It is inevitable,
Unavoidable,
Predictable.
For years,
I'd watched the war,
Yet always sat by.
Battle after battle,
The scars tallied up
And the anger built inside.
Suddenly someone believed
And I joined the army
Of unbanded freedom fighters.
I let my voice be heard
For the first time,
And she almost listened.
No winner was named
In my first active battle,
But a truce was called.
Though the war rages on
As it always has
And always will,
I now know I can fight,
...and so does she.

D. Thadious Monroe

As I Grow Older

When I was younger
I was afraid of ghosts.
As I got older
I grew afraid of people.

When I was younger
I was afraid of being confined.
As I got older
I grew afraid of running away.

When I was younger
I was afraid of starting high school.
When I got older
I grew afraid of graduation.

I am now younger-
I am afraid of starting my life.
As I grow older
I will be afraid of its ending.

Lisa Roberts

Solstice

This summer of plenty
Has been long.
If only the slow, temperate
days will last, we say.
And if only the frost
Won't come too early,
We'll have a good harvest.
But there is nothing to reap
From what we have sown.
The autumnal equinox
Will be cold, bringing
Frost of a new kind.
Another summer will
Be a long time coming.
Our season of sun
Is ending. Soon
The winter solstice brings
Darkness.

Jessica Jackson

Rain Song

Pounding, continuously pounding, on my rooftop,
The rain sings to me.
Darkness fills my room.
The only visible light comes from the street light
Which vaguely peaks through my window.
Pounding, continuously pounding, the rain sings to me.
My room is quiet.
All that is heard are the thoughts that run through my mind.
The rain eases my mind and helps me to think.
Tomorrow is another day.
Pounding, continuously pounding.
The night is slowly fading and I sleep.
The rain sings to me.

GarlY Ke' Merritt

You

I trust You,
yet, I don't know if I can
give You my...everything

I love You, oh yes! I do!
yet, I hurt You
I nail You to my cross...

I'm afraid of You.
(You are Awesome!)
yet, I know You would never
betray...me.

You are my Lord,
without You,
I am nothing.

Andrea Blichly

Because of Loss

Because of loss
Roses grow in the garden
Not
But strangled thorns of time
Forgot
Envy imprisons the bitter
Soul
Of those whose Garden's stench doth toll.
Love is entangled, shredded,
Torn
Never emotions dear are born.
But jealousy, blindness, anger
Greed
Stilting growth of the bird's fine seed.
Insecurity of Hera's tainted
Fire
Dispises the dove that can endure the Pyre
Drives forth, the dove doth leave, the garden rot.
The flowers died, yet no lesson Taught

Ally Eildon

Usa Roberts

This summer of plenty
Has been long.
If only the slow, temperate
days will last, we say.
And if only the frost
Won't come too early,
We'll have a good harvest.
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Will be cold, bringing
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The winter solstice brings
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Jessica Jackson
Inner Man
Monarchs copulating—
Can you tell me you are not an animal?
Can you tell me that I am the sun?
With the dusky noises of the dark
Igniting errOers
in my heart
Can you tell me you are not an animal?
With butterfly wings floating in the sun?
You show me the beauty of a kiss
And I need you
Duck's feathers envelope me
in a soft, silky pillow
Upon which I float
The animal inside me unveiled.

Connie Baechler

To An Ant
You make your civilization of sifted dirt
nestle between blades of sharp crabgrass.
Many bodies scurry about working as if
the Sun will cease to rise.
The focus midst your traffic
is a temple or a shrine with one black hole in its apex.
Your cherished mound of dirt sparks my curiosity.
Ant, what do you have hidden in that most holy place?
Don't you know, don't you realize
that I have the power to determine your fate?
I can squash your temple with my big toe,
and leave crushed bodies for your survivors to mourn over.
But you do realize my power, strength, and superiority over you.
You also are smugly satisfied with the knowledge
that despite my destruction of your civilization,
you will never reveal the secret hid in that dark cavern.

Emily Duncan

Man-Made Aesthetics
Rosin, beeswax, Calcium Carbonate,
Water, aloe, Vitamin E Acetate,
Methylparaben, Cetyl Alcohol,
Garlic, nylon, Dimethicone Copoyol.
Camphor Stearalkonium Chlide,
Kangaroo Paw Flower, Polyacrylamide,
Chamomile, Calendula, horsetail grass
Cherry Bark, dandelion paba, and fragrance.
All these plus Hydroxethyl cellu lose
Creates the natural woman that men love most.

Emily Duncan

Traffic Jam
Traffic jam, dreaming...
Yellow—Sunflower!
warm, fiery
tranquil sunset, earth sleeps
the sun's fire quenched, ever so
...slow...

Red—brilliant roses
for love, lovers.
early—earth awakes
from darkness night
...stops!

Green—Nature's Zion
beauty, new exhilaration!
geese... HONK!
higher as they

Traffic
The sentinel flashes gold at me
The sun his signal captive screams
Hasten on my fair steed
dare not my path to impede.

Then—my foe feet before me
Crimson glare his only greeting
Thunderous peels as my stallion stops
Teeth clinch till my temples throb

Without warning pastures appear
Lincoln fields open wide
My fingers white tight like iron
Spur my mount. I cry "Thank God!"

Andrea B. Blachly

Airborne
Noise like a blanket, wrapping me in sound
Wrapped in a wave of nylon, a helmet for my crown
Posed at the door, a bird ready for flight
One slap and GO!, into a bowl of blue light
Sounds fade away in a rush of wind-shipped tears
The earth approaches faster, though strangely I feel no fear
A sudden pull, a snap, a pop, then a rush of billowing cloud
Delicate web of risers embraces me to that shroud
Swaying suspended below tightly bound in that comforting fuse
I pull the toggle, turn and swoop, dance with the airy muse
All too soon, a jarring crash in a muddy bog
I roll over, look up again, into the face of God

John McKay

Traffic
Traffic Jam, dreaming...
Yellow—Sunflower!
warm, fiery
tranquil sunset, earth sleeps.
the sun's fire quenched, ever so
...slow...

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Without warning pastures appear
Lincoln fields open wide
My fingers white tight like iron
Spur my mount. I cry "Thank God!"

Katherine S. O'Neill
He and She

She said:  Do not search for me
I will not be found
I have hidden myself away
Behind a wall of fear.

The past is gone
You were mistaken
I kept myself from you
Nothing is all that is left.

Stay away from my heart
The me you knew is gone
Only my memory remains
To haunt you forever.

He said:  If the you I know is not you
You have lied from the beginning
Who is this girl I once called friend?
Where is she now?

Yesterday has gone
I thought we knew each other
Where did you hide the real you?
How can memories be called nothing?

Keep your love and life
The you I knew ran away
You are a ghost in my memory
Never to live again.

Lisa Roberts

Kentucky Blu

Are you an inmate in your own emotional prison,
living behind thick walls
that keep your love from coming out
and others from coming too close?

Did you sentence yourself there
in desperation,
thinking you would be safer inside
than out?

You know you don't have more in your life
because those same walls
that protect you from pain
also keep out happiness and love.

You have the power inside to release yourself,
a key that unlocks the doors and walls
and allows you, once again,
to feel the sun and breathe freely.

Use it.

Dondi Vickers

Scott Penoncello  sculpture

Simple Pleasures

They were simple pleasures
A rainbow's delight
Catching fireflies
On a hot summer night
Enticing doodle bugs
From under the floor
A nickle or dime
Candy from the store
Eating blackberries until
Juice ran down our faces
A family meal
with everyone in their places
The crisp clear sound
A church bell ringing
Sunday morning
Mother sweetly singing
Simple pleasures
Yet etched in time
Precious memories
In the niches of my mind.

Elsie Nelson

Welcome to the Real World

When I was young I used to dream
I dreamed of things to come.
I dreamed of places far beyond
The boundaries of the sun.
I longed to see the real world
To view it in its glory.
I yearned to step out on my own
And live to tell the story.

And then one day I lost that dream
It changed as I grew older
The real world's lights are dimmer now
Its red sun has grown colder.
I see the world for what it is
I fight to reach the top.
But now the real world comes for me
And I can't make it stop.

I'm afraid to leave and seek my dreams
I fear what I might see.
But the hands of time keep marching on
And even though I'll be afraid
I know I'm not alone.
For we all have had our childhood dreams
And we all fear the unknown.

Welcome to the Real World

D. Thadius Monroe

untitled

I was afraid
in the beginning
I'm sure I'll be afraid
till the end
But she took my hand
and walked away with my heart
Emotions I'd never felt
I'm afraid...

Dondi Vickers

Allison Eidson
Kell S.

I. The Past
Imagine
a world full of pain
a world full of tears
a world full of emptiness
Imagine
a world where loving is giving hate
a world where truth is telling a lie
a world where living is wanting death
Imagine
a world of stone hearts
a world of cloudy skies
a world of blood-stained tears
I was the imagined...

II. The Present
Imagine
a soul that has no feelings
a soul that is no longer scared
a soul that has given up hope
Imagine
a soul that no longer loves or hates
a soul that no longer knows lies
a soul that no longer fears death
Imagine
a soul whose stones cannot be broken
a soul whose skies cannot be cleared
a soul who cannot care enough to cry
I am the imagined...

III. The Future
Imagine
a heart that will never hurt again
a heart that will never be afraid
a heart that will never be lonely
Imagine
a heart that is full of love
a heart that is full of honesty
a heart that is full of life
Imagine
a heart without walls
a heart reflecting the sun
a heart that cannot be cut
I want to be the imagined...
D. Thadius Monroe

Reflections on Losing or My Window Leaks
(for dgh)
The cold November rain blew in over the boards
and water leaked from the window frame.
I could hear it dripping
regular as a clock
drip drop
drip drop
Nights are the worst when you're losing
and the raindrops ticked off the minutes
as I lay there listening, losing.
drip drop
drip drop
The passing storm reminded me of you.
Counting the slowing drops, I could imagine
I was counting miles between us.
But mostly I just thought of you:
Drip...
Drip.

Jessica Jackson

A Day in the Life of a Dieter
Stand straight and tall
Bend down--flex
Up again
Grace in motion
Music pulsing
Body leaping
Slenderness emerging
All the stomach crunches
All the sweat
Is finally
Worth it...
Delectable danishes
Steaming hot pie
Meets the coolness of ice cream
Stay away
Pass up the cave of the refrigerator
I will not fail
Temptation--so sweet
(Want to be fat forever?)
Turn away
Thus passes another day.

The Puppet
Strike...
Strike at me
Stifle...
My creativity
Love me...
For myself
Lift me...
Down from my shelf
Play...
With my emotions
Take me...
At your notion
Dance...
Oh dance with me
I'm falling
To the crystal sea
Dream...
My dream alive
Taut strings...
My love survives
Hold me...
A yearning child

Connie Baechler
Dream

See now
   the old as they sit in the open doors of their tin-sided shacks
   Their bodies tired and worn out
   Their faces lined with age and the pain of living
   The flies circling in and around their eyes
      as they stare into the distance

Hear now
   that precious commodity—laughter
   The blessed sound of children as they play in
      the dirt streets of the Township
   Oblivious to the worn out tires and junk cars
      dust filling the dry, hot air

Laugh now
   you children and play
   For soon laughter will be heard no more—
      Only tears as you cry and ask why
   As have we of Old
      Only to be pushed deeper into the grave of despair

Dream now
   in the age of innocence
   as once we dreamed of a caring world
   as once we hoped for honesty and justice
   as once we believed in human decency and compassion
   Only to be tortured on the rack of prejudice
   Until there was no life
   Only emptiness

Dream, my children, dream

Dream for a day when the world is
   Weary of injustice
   Intolerant of apathy

Barbara T.

Bobby Nash  felt tip pen
Shadow
I live in a shadow—a product of light.
I am doused in the dark apparitions of every object
and every man's soul.

That likeness—one's self-made mystery
never leaves—and yet we remain two untouchable elements.
This shadow is neither light nor darkness,
but a spiritual avatar constricted to air.

My little one taken from me
Soldiers came
Battering at my door
They left me battered
Helpless on the floor

I am not of them
An outlander, I admit it
I am punished
And I finally...
Get the picture.

Sheila Casper

Web
As we weave our webs of life
I wonder of worldly and unworldly things. Will He weave a wonderful life for us or are we in control? Do I wish for too much when I ask for answers? Am I too weary of love or perhaps it is the unknown I wish to avoid.

There is safety in knowing
Every time I turn around, my ear hears everyone else's problems. All etching out their lives in stone, only to be eulogized and summarized with an epitaph. But around every corner, the unknown existed and so they stay on the straight road of knowledge.

For there is safety in knowing

Because I believed I was safe I brought her into my world but she became a battering ram that bowled me around that corner and I could no longer avoid the unknown.

There is safety in love.

D. Thadius Monroe

Get the Picture?
(On Nazi Germany)

Get the picture?

That's what they ask
A form of speech
Do you understand?

What picture?
Do I understand

The boy who sleeps
In my picture frame at home
Do I comprehend

The tears I weep?

Do I know

What's to see

My little one taken from me

In his dreaming
No solace

Soldiers came
Battering at my door

They left me battered

Helpless on the floor

I am not of them

An outlander, I admit it

I am punished

And I finally...

Get the picture.

Connie Baechler

August

The smell of Autumn
burns the August wind.
Leaves lusciously green
malinger on their stems
and are threatened by
the golden-red paint of late September.

August
is the first conspirator
in the plot to re-throne the harvest moon
for the celebration of October,
and the silent bridge that unites the embarkments of Summer and Fall.

Sheila Casper

Parts Of Me

On my private beach
seaweed wrapped around my wrists,
bangles from the furbomed deep,
they became a part of me.

I gazed blankly into a water sparkle wave,
no diamond thrits me more,
it became a part of my mortal orb.

Stretched o'er my lot of possession
I plucked inspiration from a tiny grain of sand.

That inspiration flickers—
but it is part of me.

Though the winds blow until the rocks blink
I stand steadfastly on the cliff
and cloak myself in courage
to withstand the tidal wave that became a part of me.

I ride the waves
I imbibe the wind
I hold gray mist
in my battered hands.

I bathe my face in thought

In my battered hands,
I bathe my face in thought of heroic mariners.
The beacon shines on your island,
the light piers like rays of salvation into the abyss of my soul.

On the buoyancy of perplexity
I am drifting on eaten wood,
And when at last I'm secure
on the island where the beacon shines,
I shall replace the shattered shell of misplaced time,
I will pause to glance at the turmoiled sea,
but never shall I set afloat the parts that are undoubtedly me.

Sheila Casper

Yardwork

I was workin' out in the yard
When my mind started to wander
As I pulled the weeds from the ground
Of life, I began to ponder.

Grass grows and is promptly cut off,
Is the life just the same?
When life becomes very interesting
Something happens, and we pull up lame.

Weeds are weeded out, unwanted;
Like troublemakers, they are isolated.
What in the end happens to them?
Is this how they'll always be fated?

I was workin' out in my yard
When my mind started to wander.
Despite the problems it presents,
Of life, I've never been fonder.

Ally Edson
Experimentation With a Fetal Soul

I once had a dream.
It was as futuristic and ideal
as any of yours.
It was average but nonetheless,
worthwhile to come true.
One day it tapered off into a horrible
sequence of nightmares and ghost games.
All at once my new and quivering dream
faded into an unheard chant-
like a child's cherubic wish upon a star.
Being the fetal soul that I am,
I have actually experienced
far less than I profess,
I had not the knowledge
of alternate or numerous dreams.
I did not understand that to live
without one's mind in the bustling air was to really be no more
than an ugly and sickly fetus,
unable to breathe on its own.
And so from that moment on
I helplessly swallowed the ambivalent
and watery juices
of the womb of a world I felt foreign in.
A womb whose reaches
pinched me and caused my thoughts to bruise up and bleed
a much too common jargon.
I would look at any reflection
of what I remembered as me
and scoff at the flaky passion
produced by the demised dream.
I would scratch the poison sensitivity
off and lick the sores of
a skinless brute.
How simple-
-much too easy to live unknown for dreaming;
for I have already discovered the insomnia
of the ferocious awakening.
and I know how busy one's mind can be-
even without the soft sultry delta of a
flighty and carefree dream.
What I mean to do
is to sleep forever.
As if the prince had never kissed Snow White,
and I intend to
Dream my doubtful dreary days away-
like Rip Van Winkle free from the chaos of
an alarm clock.

Sheila Casper
Impressions
Caked up flattery
flakes in shallow eyes
as worthless syntax
gurgles through purple lips--
there is no connection from the brain to the soul.
Jibberjibberishy verbatim--
a hollow word
resounds in defeat when thumped
by an honest forefather.
Complimentary deeds
sear like lethal acids
into the rope of virtue
when self-satisfaction ties the hangman's noose.
Mirrored respect reflects fools.
Impressions
engrave themselves into the skins of wordly people
like unwanted war tattoos.

Jessica Jackson

Old Men
telling stories,
remembering woodlands,
thicket and forest,
land they know better
and have travelled more often
than the varicose highways
of their dead wives' legs,
land they will never walk again.
If they live long enough,
the scent of midnight passion
will fade from memory,
but never the scent of new spring growth,
the scent of pine straw in autumn.

Sheila Casper

Hot Omen
Wind sucks the vibrating water
into its succulent mouth of freshness,
and the ducks behead themselves
with the water's surface.
Swans guffaw at petty duckling feathers
as gracefully they circumnavigate
the border of Lambert's pond.
I sit on the bank,
rounded at both ends
like an oblong ornament
and picture tiny sailboats
behind the grass stalks.
Rich summer days in Georgia
perspire thought out of me
as I boil for the silent visions
of snow-capped Dogwood trees in January
swaying with the weight of icy branches.

Sheila Casper

The Caste System Never Dies at Oma's Diner
Callie Rae worked at Oma's Diner
ey every afternoon after school
serving some old men outside
Coca-Colas and peanuts in a glass bottle.

Sitting on discarded theatre chairs
wearing heavy-duty overalls and wornout Goldkist baseball caps,
they's take a swig of their Coca-Colas with just a hint of peanut
and taste the grease that lined their tongues and throats.

They'd shake their heads when Callie Ra'd turn to leave and say,
"She ain't nuthin' but white trash from that holler--hardworkin'--
but ain't never gonna 'mount to nuthin' just like the rest of 'em."

I reckon one day she heard them say that
'cause one day she didn't show back up at Oma's.
They say she got ruint.
She believed what them old coots said to be true.

Then Oma hired Dory Etta.
She brung them old men Coca-Colas and peanuts in a glass bottle
just like Callie Rae, and soon she didn't come back either.

Dory Etta got ruint too, but that's life
and Oma keeps flipping hamburger patties on the grill.
He peered through his telescope until it seemed the stars had become one cosmic streak of light that stretched across the sky. He stood back, rubbed his eyes hard, and walked over to his personal-sized coffeemaker to pour out a cupful. He then proceeded to pop a NoDoz in his mouth and resigned himself to the fact that he would be awake for the next two hours studying astronomy.

It was quiet throughout the entire dorm, but he knew that no one was sleeping. No one slept the night before finals. The clock on his desk read 2:55 a.m. As he pushed his trashcan filled with wadded paper to his window, he heard mischievous noises coming from the silent surrounding dorm rooms. He threw up his window, and as he stuck his head outside, myriad heads were already there waiting for other heads to emerge from every window. As the last head appeared, they all yelled and hollered as loud as their voices could get. Every head craned its neck out in the chilly outside like a crazed wolf howling at a full moon. Crumpled balls of notebook paper showered the air and covered the ground like a blanket of snow. The tradition of releasing stress university-style had once more been fulfilled, and slowly the heads vanished to continue their studying. He remained though; something had caught his eye up on a hill while watching the barrage of paper fall to the ground. A glowing light captured his attention so much he didn’t realize he was the sole remaining head sticking out of the window. Figures appeared to be circling around the light, so he reeled his telescope down and focused on the light that soon became a fire with people dancing around it.

It didn’t take him long to realize what he was witnessing was an actual ritual of the occult. He watched the dancers as they orbited the fire; some of them were groveling on the dirt as if they were seized in a fit. This barbaric behavior interested him, so he watched them carry on with their primitive practice. He continued his observation and noticed a tall and attractive blond woman being led to a make-shift altar near the fire. He could tell that she was struggling to escape but was shoved to the altar anyway by several people. Clad only in a simple white robe, she was forced to lie down on the altar while her arms and legs were strapped together by the dancers. She was terrified as the leader approached her.

The priest closed his hand on the dagger...

As the leader regally sauntered over to the woman, the student could see the red robe and tall hat with a five pointed star in the center the leader was wearing. The leader smiled with delight as he grabbed the young woman’s head and yanked her head up to spit in her face. The student focused more on the leader and saw clutched in his hand was an ornate dagger that glimmered in the light. He could see the carving of a skull and an upside down cross on the handle. The priest closed his hand on the dagger's handle and poised it up above her stomach. The student stared hard into the priest’s face then gasped as the priest lifted his wicked eyes and stared back at the student as if he were well aware of his audience and the telescope. The student shuddered as the priest plunged the knife into the woman and ripped open her body...
as the worshipers fell to the ground, beating the earth with their fists.

The student let out a yelp and stumbled away from the telescope, landing in his bed. He panted for breath and placed his hand on his chest feeling his thumping heart; he was certain he could hear it beating too. He jumped out of bed, threw his window down, and pulled the shade all in one second. He stepped on the bed not caring about what he broke or knocked over and pulled the covers up under his chin. He stayed there until the morning. He then got up and took his astronomy final—or did he? He was too dazed to remember.

Two weeks later he shuffled his feet into the science laboratory. It was the beginning of a new quarter, but to him it felt like last quarter had never ended. Since that horrifying night he had not been able to sleep through one entire night without waking up from a recurring nightmare in the dead of the night in a cold sweat. The pictures of the sacrifice played over and over on a screen in his mind. Dark circles had formed around his eyes, and he was not aware of anything or anyone. He was not even sure why he had registered for archeology; he certainly did not need it, but something persuaded him that he did.

He sat down in the desk and stared at the blackboard as the instructor strode into the room and began to write his name—Dr. Daemon Sanderson. The instructor turned around, and the student found himself gazing into those same oppressing eyes that stared back at him through the telescope that night. The emotions he felt that night crept up his neck and face as they both turned red and broke out into a sweat. His throat turned dry as he squirmed in his seat desperately searching for an escape but found none except the door in the front of the room near Daemon. What a nightmare, he thought, now I know the real meaning of hell on earth!

"This quarter's focus in archeology is pagan artifacts."

With that sentence, Daemon opened a lab drawer and pulled out a dagger with a skull and an upside down cross on the handle. By then the student's heartbeat was racing; he was trapped with a demon bent on taking human life. The door opened and the blond that he had thought was sacrificed walked over to the professor and flashed a smile to the class. He gulped and turned to the professor.

...and this quarter for this course lab, my loyal lab assistant, Lisa, and I will reenact an actual pagan ritual that is believed to have originated around 700 B.C. This lab is only one of many labs you may participate in, but I find this lab to be most beneficial to your learning. Besides Lisa does a wonderful acting job. She should get an Academy Award for her portrayal of a human sacrifice.

The student couldn't believe what he was hearing as the entire class laughed at the professor's remark. He began to feel dizzy as thoughts rushed through his brain—the sleepless nights, the altar, the dagger, the blond, the dancers—it was all fake, but it had seemed so real. This is too much, he thought, as he fainted.

The class erupted into a demonic cackle as the student's limp body slid down to the floor. Two brawny athletes sitting both behind and in front of the student grabbed his arms and legs and carried him to the front of the room. With a sinister grin spreading across his face, Daemon snorted, "Take him down to the basement boys; Master Lucifer should be well pleased with this offering—or shall I say this lab?"

The classroom filled with laughter and chants as the witches and warlocks joined with their priest in the celebration. • • • • •
You Have to Draw the Line
by Connie Baechler

Attaining the rank of sophomore in high school was exciting! No longer was I a lowly freshman, at the bottom of the ladder of social worth. I had climbed a rung, and my little world was revolving quite steadily. Then I met her. It was like a scene from a dime store novel, when the hero is smitten at first sight. Suddenly, my world was topey-turvy, and I was giddily trying to regain some semblance of control.

She was compelling—very charismatic. Tall, with an offbeat, yet totally cool way of dressing, she commanded attention wherever she went. I met her through my job in a local fast-food joint. She would drop in occasionally to chat with friends of hers who worked there.

Tabitha's poetry had the exact same interests.

I came to know her. Tall, always her style rubbed off on me, and I began to dream of owning a sportscar so I, too, could speed down expressways at 65 mph. Through Tabitha's poetry I gained new insights. Through her, I also met all sorts of interesting people. We spent hours talking on the phone, and we wrote piles of notes. She knew all the ins and outs of the high school, and several times we cut class for the sheer excitement of it. Enveloped in a sense of camaraderie, I was content.

One morning my father, being human, overslept. He was leaving for work just as Tabitha pulled up. I had a moment's worry about the car's loudness, but Dad just smiled as my mother sat quietly at the wheel.

"You are not to ride to school with that girl!" my father demanded, as my mother sat quietly at the kitchen table. I told him, and then I tried to explain about the car's noisiness. I assured him that Tabitha would get the muffler repaired soon.

"You are not to ride to school with that girl! I can't believe you didn't tell me!" my father fumed.

"I'm sorry, Dad. It doesn't mean the car isn't safe—it just..." I'm not TALKING about the muffler," he growled. "I'm TALKING about the fact that you didn't tell me she was a NIGGER! I couldn't believe my ears. He hadn't even MET Tabitha yet, so who cared what color her skin was? What right did he have to insult her?

"Dad—what DIFFERENCE does it make if she's black? She's a great person, and you haven't met her yet." I said, trying to sound calm.

"Meet her?! I just TOLD you—she will not take you to or from school! She will take you to all kinds of nigger hangouts and the next thing you know some black man will rape you!" my father yelled, fully losing his temper.

"Don't talk like you're missing the point..." "You will NOT see her!" he bellowed. Definitely maximum anger level here, I thought to myself. There was no use arguing—I would be like trying to break down a steel door with my bare hands.

So I turned to my mother, who was always calm and gentle. She was the peacemaker between my father and I. I asked her to explain my feelings to dad. She looked, and her eyes seemed suddenly tired.

"Your father's right," she said, "You have to draw the line."

"What?! My mother saying these insane things to me? Draw the lines?! You have to be nuts! There IS no line except the one of bigotry!"

All these thoughts rushed through my mind as I stood there, dumbfounded. I retreated to my room without speaking and sat down on my bed, dazed. How could I possibly deal with this? My parents had always been understanding of me. I had never realized that they were prejudiced, since the subject had just never come up before. My brain was telling me, "You are right! Why should you give up a terrific friendship over THEIR narrow-mindedness?!", while my heart was saying, "You CAN'T go against your parents. It wouldn't be right." Anyone who has ever found himself in a similar situation can surely empathize with my plight.

Eventually, I had reached my decision. Surely, it was not MY fault that my parents were not understanding this time. I should not be forced to suffer for someone else's stupidity. I would see her anyway, without my parent's knowledge.

Life went on. To some extent, I made Tabitha aware of my parent's views. She didn't seem surprised, and she made no complaint when I asked her to pick me up at a spot farther down the road from my house. Certainly my neighbors would inform my parents if they knew.

She will take you to all kinds of nigger hangouts!

At home, the air always felt strained. I would look at my parents through the eyes of a deceiver, and though most times I felt guilty, sometimes I felt nothing but bitterness. I went to parties with nice white friends, who dropped me off at Tabitha's on the way. I spent nights with my childhood friends, who were approved by my parents for being lighter in pigmentation, and left at midnight to stay with Tabitha. Life became a web of deception, and I often wondered at my capacity for side-stpping my parents.

Then different things started to occur. Tabitha introduced me to a friend of hers who was dealing speed. My rebellious side said that I should go ahead and try some, since I was always open to new experiences. But, though I was friends with this person, I never did go that far. I reflect back now, and I think to myself that perhaps I would have gotten away from...
Tabitha's influence then, had it not been for my decision to persist in spite of my parent's opposition. Tabitha and I went to Atlanta, we dined at Mardi Gras, and we ran from the police one memorable night, for trespassing on private property. Yet I still did not break away. Surely she was good underneath it all.

It took me six months to realize that I didn't want to be around her anymore. During those six months, I gave her stolen food from the restaurant I worked in, I gave her fifty dollars, and I masqueraded as a student and gave a forged pass to a teacher in order to get one of her friends out of class. I guess reality hit me when I found myself standing in front of the assistant principal whose initials I had forged. Ten days detention can not be put out of one's mind so easily.

So there I was, back with my old white friends. I had to separate where I was right from where I was wrong. Because she was black, my parents assumed that I would get into trouble. This WAS prejudice. And yet they were right, I said to myself. But Tabitha was not a bad person due to her skin color. She chose to be herself, just as all people, no matter what their skin tone, must choose between right and wrong.

Now, I think I was right to have defied my parents over the issue of prejudice. I also think that had I been allowed to continue my friendship with Tabitha openly, I would have broken it off before it went so far. I was very lucky. I could have ended up in jail on several occasions, and I kick myself now for not getting away from her sooner. But the unavoidable fact remains that my parents should have known more about her before making judgement, and in spite of the outcome of my ill-fated decision to see Tabitha, I am proud of my initial reason for making it. The only lines to be drawn are those of judgement for oneself, which may be nearly invisible at times, but which will always exist.


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**Patchwork**
**by Elsie Nelson**

As my mind tums back the pages of time, a sea of color immerses. The sea has been created from small squares of cloth that have been stitched together in an array of colors. Without regard to pattern or design, the squares of solids, prints, checks and stripes intermingle to form a quilt top.

Since the squares have been sewn in patch-work fashion, the primary purpose of this quilt will be for warmth. Therefore, a little, inexperienced quilter will be allowed to learn the skill of quilting.

On this particular day, Mother has invited some of the neighbors to come and help her quilt. Before Daddy left for work, he and Mother set up the quilt frame in the back bedroom. Mother had made her specialty, apple sauce cake. Just before time for the quilting party, Mother had put JFG coffee in the coffee pot, filled it with water and put the pot on the back of the stove to brew.

"Granny" Jackson was the first to arrive. She lived at the end of our road. And, as usual, she was wearing a big apron. Today, it was white with red roses. "Granny," who was slightly plump with short gray hair, came in talking and wouldn't stop until she left.

Mrs. Henson, our next door neighbor, whose hair was as white as snow, arrived next. Her twinkling blue eyes matched the blue flowered dress which covered her willowy body. When she looked at you, it was as if she knew something exciting and couldn't wait to share it with you.

Mrs. Wilson and her "old maid" daughter, Mary, also came. They lived just across the road from our house.

The ladies stretched a quilt bottom across the quilt frame and covered it with layers of cotton. After the quilt top has been attached, nimble fingers began to make stitches.

The room fills with talk and laughter. I stand and stare at the colors in silence, trying to remember who had a dress of pink checks. And, wondering why none of my other four sisters were standing around like I was, enjoying a part of an adult scene.
Growing up in Beaumont meant Saturday afternoons on Main Street. When I was young, my mother would drop me off at the movie theatre where I would meet my best friend Kelly for the Saturday matinee. My mother would shop at the Big Save at the far end of the street and pick me up when the movie was over.

Kelly and I loved the movies and the brightly lit marquis. The marquis was the highest thing in town next to the steeple of the Baptist Church on the square. Ours was a small town and our theatre only played one movie at a time which was the way Kelly and I liked it; that way we never missed a one. Some were war movies; some were comedies, or romances, or westerns, but we never missed a one.

When the movie was short, we would have a little time before our mothers came from the Big Save to pick us up, so we would walk down the street to Sherman's Drug Store. Beaumont had several drug stores (and lots of old ladies to keep them busy), but Sherman's was the best. It had a soda fountain in the back where you could get ice cream and Coca-Cola (this was back when Coca-Cola was served in glass bottles, back when Coke was fresh and cold, not flat and metallic). Kelly and I loved the movies which is why we sometimes felt guilty for loving short movies the most, but really it was Mr. Sherman's fault.

On short days the three of us walked down Main Street together. Just to the right of the Theatre was Mr. McMilligan's Hardware Store. Next to that was the Post Office, the smallest, bleakest office in town; it was even worse than the Public Library which was so awful they didn't give it a space on Main Street, but I guess mail is more important than reading.

On the corner, just past the Post Office was Preston's Ladies Fashions. It was the snootiest and tackiest store in town. Those of us possessing the practical nature to select our own clothes looked just alike, but they weren't.

Katrina and I would always leave the theatre fantasizing about the movie: dancing with Gene Kelly, watching Gene Autry ride out into the sunset, blowing smoke in Bogie's eyes.

"Don't you know that isn't real?" POOF—needle-tongued Katrina bursting bubbles again. I never understood why. Not having any dreams or imagination didn't mean she had the right to ruin ours. "Those movies are just make believe; nobody really lives that way," she would say—every Saturday.

When the movie was short, we would have a little time before our mothers came from the Big Save to pick us up, so
dinner, and come back to town at 8:00 to see the evening show. Afterwards we all went to Sherman’s. They were the only ones still open at 10:00 at night, and they stayed open because all the teenagers came in after the movies.

We thought Katrina was making a spectacle of herself...

Like I said we all got jobs. Kelly and I agreed not to work at Sherman’s. Mr. Sherman would only hire one of us and it wouldn’t be the same if one of us worked there. I got a job running the cash register of McMulligan’s Hardware (my Dad was a good customer), but I don’t know anything about hardware so Andy McMulligan did all the real work. He said he didn’t mind; it was probably easier to do the work than to teach me about hardware. Mr. McMulligan played golf.

Kelly got a job at Anderson’s Drug Store. As for the job at Sherman’s, Joey Kellerman got it, which did nothing for my diet but give Kelly one more excuse to go in there. I still can’t believe she told him the Cokes were colder at Sherman’s.

As for Katrina, she was employed by Preston’s, but she really spent most of her time looking out the window watching Ricky Beaumont drive by in his new car. Ricky’s Dad owned the mill where both our fathers worked, and most everybody else’s, too. Andy McMulligan worked one day a week so his father wouldn’t have to, and everybody else’s father worked five days a week so Ricky wouldn’t have to. Katrina was determined to go to the Christmas Eve dance with Ricky. In fact, she bought her dress in October and spent most of November and December working on Ricky.

Katrina did go to the dance with Ricky, dressed in one of Preston’s Ladies Fashions. She clung to Ricky’s arm the whole evening dragging him from one circle of guests to the next as if they were a close couple. Ricky looked rather bored, and it certainly didn’t matter to anybody else. Ricky had never been good to a girl and probably didn’t know how. We all thought that Katrina was just making a spectacle of herself, and that sooner or later she would be disappointed.

I went to that dance and every other with Andy. We married shortly after graduation, making me queen of hardware. Kelly went to that dance with Joey, and to the spring dance with Jimmy Reed, the new guy in school. Four years and half a dozen boys later she finally married Robert Greene, who had lived next door to her since she was three.

Katrina dated Ricky for about nine months. About four months after they broke up, she ran away from home. It was four years before we heard anything of her. Kelly was in Sherman’s waiting on me when a traveling salesman came in. It seems he thought she was Katrina and asked her out. She told him she was married, and that’s when he told her about Katrina. He had been down in Atlanta for a convention and had been to this night club with several other guys and had seen a girl dancing in the show that looked just like Kelly. He had heard rumors about a kid, but he didn’t know for sure.

Most people weren’t surprised. When they heard about it, they acted appalled for a few moments; then they forgot it. Sometimes I wonder about her, though. I had always assumed she was so different from the rest of us kids, but I don’t know that she was. Nobody did. She didn’t have any friends; she was just Katrina—Kelly’s twin sister. I wonder sometimes if I would have been any different if I hadn’t had Kelly. I wonder if Katrina would have been.
The boy stood in front of our third grade class speaking nervously.

"The third President was Thomas Jefferson. His Vice Presidents were Aaron Burr and George Clinton. Jefferson served two terms from 1801 to 1809."

He shifted his weight from side to side on his cheap crate bottomed shoes which had earned him the nickname "Supercrates." Between the shoes and the bottom of his pants was a two inch gap that exposed his dirty socks. His shirt side on his cheap crate bottomed shoes was also too long it was going to take Kenny to recite like his father lying on the floor with a gashed head. He would interrupt the teacher by talking to no one in particular. By the beginning of our junior year, thin red tracks could be seen on the veins of Kenny's left arm. He had made no attempt hide his drug problem. Instead of memorizing Presidents, he now memorized the different types of drugs and their side effects. But even drugs couldn't completely cover up his intelligence; Kenny got his GED by the end of the eleventh grade. He immediately began to help in his father's "business."

After one year, I had read at least two occasions when Kenny was arrested for possession of drugs. I also heard a story about the police checking out a disturbance at Kenny's house and finding his father lying on the floor with a gashed head. They also found Kenny standing in the kitchen sink, with his arms outstretched, trying to fly.

It was after I graduated that I read an article about Kenny's father. It said that Kenny Ross, Sr., had been found behind a convenience store in Lawrenceville. He had been shot in the head at point blank range. When it was over, Kenny's face was a bloody mess; his shirt and even his pants were becoming soaked red. The only thing that kept Shane from throwing more punches was his hand, which had broken in two places.

I can't say what was going through Kenny's mind, but I believe that incident took away whatever hope he had left. His entire life had been an uphill battle. He endured name-calling and a screwed-up home life only to get beaten senseless.

Kenny slowly became a problem afterwards. He would sometimes come to class with alcohol on his breath, and he would interrupt the teacher by talking to no one in particular. By the beginning of our junior year, thin red tracks could be seen on the veins of Kenny's left arm. He had made no attempt hide his drug problem. Instead of memorizing Presidents, he now memorized the different types of drugs and their side effects. But even drugs couldn't completely cover up his intelligence; Kenny got his GED by the end of the eleventh grade. He immediately began to help in his father's "business."

There was one prank I played on Kenny that I will always regret. On the last day of our fifth grade year, I tied Kenny's backpack to his seat. When the dismissal bell rang, Kenny went to get up and was immediately jerked back into his seat. He laughed until my side hurt, and then, I left. It was a prank that didn't matter much; from my second row seat, I yawned and wondered how much longer it was going to take Kenny to recite all the presidents of the United States.

There was an awkward silence as I tried not to look at Kenny. I was getting a quick flash of a small kid with thick glasses trying to get out of a chair, but he couldn't because someone had tied him to it.

"You going to school?" he asked.

"Yeah, Gainesville."

Kenny nodded. "I thought about going to school a few times. But after my old man got killed, I just said fuck it. Just fuck it all."

There was an awkward silence as I tried not to look at Kenny. I was getting a quick flash of a small kid with thick glasses trying to get out of a chair, but he couldn't because someone had tied him to it.

"Well, I gotta go. See you later, Scott."

And he was gone.

I ask myself why I did it; why was I so cruel? Kenny was never a mean kid. He never had an attitude that he was smarter than everyone else, he just liked to learn. He was just different and I condemned him for it. He had so many obstacles and I played my part as one. Would it have been too much for me to have been his friend? God forgive me; I helped him go to waste.
Most everyone has heard it said that it only takes a spark to start a fire, and the glowing tip of the Camel belonging to the elderly gentleman sitting two tables away was about to start an inferno.

"Excuse me, sir, could you please put out your cigarette?" a clean cut young man seated behind the smoker asked.

"Why should I?" the elderly gentleman asked, clutching his Camel a bit tighter.

"Because the fumes from your 'cancer stick' are ruining my meal."

"Why don't you make me put it out?" The smoker was now on his feet.

"You have no right to poison me," the young man protested, also rising to his feet.

"Let the man smoke!" someone from the other side of the restaurant yelled.

"Stay out of it!" someone else returned.

Suddenly, the entire restaurant was divided: smokers on one side, non-smokers on the other. Both sides swapped insults and obscenities until, inevitably, a fight broke out. I don't know who won because I immediately found an exit and made my way home.

That night, the local news had a report on the incident. I grabbed the phone and called a friend of mine.

"Jake, are you watching the news?" I asked.

"Naw, I'm watchin' wrestlin'," he said.

"Well, they were talking about this fight at this restaurant today. I was there, man."

"Was it some kind of political thing?"

"No."

"Racial riot?"

"No, it was over smoking. Some guy wouldn't put out his cigarette."

"Did you fight?" Jake asked.

"No way, I left."

"How do you feel about the issue?"

"I think the guy should have put the thing out if it was annoying somebody."

There was a long pause before Jake spoke. "What about the man's right to smoke if he wants to. When I'm around you, you never tell me to put out my cigarette."

"It doesn't bother me that much. Besides, you're my friend."

"Oh, really?" he said. I could tell by his voice that he was getting irritated.

"Settle down," I said. "It's no big deal."

"No big deal?!" he screamed. "You call wanting to take away my lawful right to smoke 'no big deal'?"

"What are you getting so mad about, buddy?"

"Buddy?! Ha! you don't know the meaning of the word. Don't ever speak to me again."

There was a loud bang and then silence.

Needless to say, I was puzzled by Jake's behavior. I decided to worry about it later, and I sat back down to watch the rest of the news.

For the next few days, more reports came about smokers and non-smokers confronting one another. The most notable of which took place in New York City in the middle of rush hour. A nun asked a hot dog vendor to extinguish his stogie. He refused and the nun picked up a nearby wino and used him as a battering ram against the hot dog stand. The stand flew into the streets, causing a multi-car accident. As motorists exited their cars, it wasn't long before they too picked up on the topic of conversation between the vendor and the nun. The ensuing melee took police five hours to get under control.

A week later, Nightline had a special about the escalating violence over the issue. During the discussion segment, the advertising executive for R.J. Reynolds...
called a member of the Surgeon General's staff a "communist fairy." The staff member retaliated by calling the executive a "propaganda-spouting mutant." Tempers flared, fists flew, and Ted Koppel was nearly trampled to death as ABC workers stampeded to join the fracas.

After this nationally televised incident, the hatred grew. Known smokers were tied to posts and pelted with nicotine, and Smokey the Bear dolls. Also, it was not uncommon for a non-smoker to wake up with a camel's head at the foot of his bed.

On one particular, rainy April night, several smokers stormed the home of Larry Hagman, stuffed the dazed actor into a burlap sack, and took turns blowing smoke into the bag. A group who called themselves the Tobacco User's Relatively Deranged Society (TURDS) claimed responsibility. In retaliation, the Lunatic Organization Of Non-Smokers (LOONS) was quickly formed.

Finally, the Federal Government decided that it was time to intervene. Armed with tear gas and rubber bullets, the National Guard was instructed to get things under control. Things did not work out quite so easily.

The LOONS chased the guards away with gasoline-soaked smoking jackets, and the TURDS simply ignored the tear gas. Heated debates in Congress were getting no-where, and it wasn't long before practically the entire country was divided and teetering on the brink of anarchy.

Then the largest battle yet took place. Two hundred thousand LOONS gathered on the border of Los Angeles and reached themselves for an attack on the nearly one million fighting TURDS stationed there. But the smokers were ready; they had set up an intricate array of tobacco leaf fields. As the unwitting LOONS began to storm the city, the fields were set on fire. The smoke was too much for the pure lungs of the non-smokers and they quickly retreated. The smokers had won the now famous "Battle of Black Lung Hill."

But the TURDS happiness was short lived. Friction between top officers caused a four-way split. The pipe smokers, cigarette smokers, cigar smokers, and the smokeless tobacco users (who were never really accepted anyway because they were considered unclean) went their separate ways.

But even with this split, the nation was still divided down the middle: LOONS to the east, TURDS to the west. The few neutrals like myself fled to Alaska. Even as I sit writing this, my fellow countrymen to the south do battle. The split ranks of the smokers still send bombers full of flaming Winston cartons east, and the non-smokers still burn Jerry Lewis in effigy at the dusk of every day. Friend against friend, Brother against brother. Teamster against teamster. This war knows no bounds.

Just a few moments ago, my phone rang.

"Hello?" I said cautiously.
"Hey man, it's me," the voice on the other end said.
"Jake?"
"Yeah, how ya doin'?"
"I'm okay. How'd you find me?"
"I'm cleared for just about everything, telephone numbers included," he explained. "So, have you ever considered signing up and fighting for our cause?"
"No, not really," I said, and then quickly tried to change the subject. "How goes the glorious struggle for freedom?"
"Not so well. The split up has caused a lot of turmoil."
"Just thin, I heard a "click" over the phone.
"What was that?" I asked.
"Just a lighter."
"Oh, I guess you're lighting your cigarette."
"Are you kidding? I was lighting a fire bomb. Who's got time to smoke; there's a war going on, you know."
It seems to me that mothers should be able to understand that a kid's room is his own personal space in which a young mind, much like mine, could learn to formulate and hypothesize such universal questions as to why the sun comes from the east, where do little baby siblings come from and why, and why does Johnny Cash sound like Mr. Ed. A kid's room is where one can find all sorts of fun-filled hours of joy and amusement, as long as you're not having to clean it. A kid's room is where great minds have been molded, not to mention three-month-old PBJ sandwiches. And hobbies galore can be found within a kid's room. For example, with enough leftover-overs like the PBJ sandwich, one can easily start an ant farm without all the dirt and glass to separate master frogmen. This, of course, ranks right up there with hermit sitting. Like I said before, my mom gave me a few years to get me to clean my room when I was twelve. I had, and still have, a very good organizational system to everything. Everything goes right where I need it so I know where to find it if ever I need it again, whatever it may be. For instance, the dirty clothes go on the floor, if they're to be washed; in the closet, if they can be worn again; and on top of the desk, if they're clean. All of my socks are in one drawer, although, I'm not sure which one. All my shoes, and I think their matches, are in my bookcase. I think this whole room cleaning routine is a big waste of time. As a matter of fact, the last time I cleaned my room was Christmas, 1987. I'm still not quite through. I used to wonder what my mom would do with her life if it weren't for me getting into all those jams that she somehow always seemed to get me out of. Now that I'm "almost-an-adult," I've found that my mom can be more than just a mother. I find her often cast in the role of mother and friend, a friend with a social conscience and love of hobbies. Every once in a while, you might catch us out doing fun stuff like protesting against the uneven distribution of wealth by super-privileged hermits to rich people's cars.
Anna stood on the dock and thought, once again, how alive she felt next to the bubbling sea. She looked around and noticed the sun as it made its first appearance through the early morning fog and drizzle. The rocky shoreline of the small Maine peninsula looked dark and menacing, but Anna felt comforted by the familiarity of the sea-weed and barnacles on the rocks. This was the place where she had found out that she was pregnant and where she would recover herself, where she could be free from the nightmare that had led her back to Maine.

Anna had been ecstatic when she found out that she was pregnant. Jason had been happy, too, even though the baby was five years too early. They had finally started to build their first house in the Georgia mountains, and the nursery was the first room to be decorated and made ready for inhabitance. Even her parents were looking forward to their first grandchild, and her younger sister and brothers had eagerly offered their services as future baby-sitters. Jason's parents were happy, too, but they worried that Anna and Jason would get too far into debt and Jason's parents to arrive. Her panic grew as dark fell. Finally, Anna saw the headlights come around the corner. Anna ran out to meet her parents, but then she stopped short. Jason stepped out of the back seat and looked at Anna. She felt vaguely like she had forgotten something, but she didn't know of anything she could have possibly over-looked. As the day progressed, the feeling that something was amiss persisted, but Anna had other things to worry about. Her parents were coming tonight, and she had lots to do. As evening neared, she put Dad's favorite fudge cookies into the oven.

Anna admitted to Jason that she had determined that Anna would be able to carry the pregnancy to full term. Anna did exactly what the doctors said: she ate only foods that would not aggravate her condition, she avoided salt, she got plenty of rest, and she worked so little at her job that she could hardly earn enough money for gas to get there. Anna never thought anything could go wrong. This child was loved, and she would have done anything for her unborn baby.

Anna put the dinner on the beautifully set table and waited...
The Final Good-bye
by Lisa Roberts

I realize now I should have done something nice for her before she left. I wanted to give her a going away present that Monday afternoon, but I couldn't think of anything appropriate. She had everything she needed, and I didn't see the point in spending a lot of money on something she'd never get to use. I guess I was trying to console myself, because I knew I'd miss her a lot more than she'd miss me. Hell, I don't know if she'll even think about me. I mean, when you're a long way from home you have a lot of things on your mind. It'll be practically a lifetime before I'll get to see her again. It's a good thing her Father will be there to look after her. It was the day before the Homecoming dance, and North Gwinnen had just won its only game of the season. The air was brisk and comfortable for a mid-October day. My brother Anthony, Jeannie's father, had raked mountains of leaves in my front yard, and I remember seeing Jeannie jumping through the air and landing in the middle of one of the piles. Laughing, she picked herself up and brushed off the leaves that had clung to her clothes. She skipped over to her car, a red 1966 Mustang, a seventeenth birthday present she had received the month before. Taking out the dress, she held it up to her and said, "It'll be perfect for the dance tomorrow night, don't you think?" She was so happy that afternoon. She was living the high school dream: the dance, the football game, the football player, dinner, a new dress. She had the world at her fingertips. I remember wishing I was in her shoes, wishing that I could be back in high school again. My thoughts were interrupted by the phone, and I rushed inside, hoping Jeremy would be on the other end. He was. Five minutes later Jeannie came in to get her jacket. "I have a lot of things to do today," she said. "I've gotta go." I nodded, and lifted up my hand to wave good-bye. Jeannie waved back and left. I gazed out the window as she pulled out into the street. I could still hear her blaring radio as she rounded the corner. looking for her father. Her friend Carrie had invited her to spend the night and she wanted permission. I ran outside to my brother's car and kicked at his feet, for it was the only part of his body I could see. Only an idiot would be working on his car this time of night, I thought. I told him what she wanted and he said it was OK, so I ran back inside to relay the message on to her. "Why don't you just come on home?" I asked. "I kinda wanted to talk to you about Jeremy.

It was the day before Homecoming and...
now? and then I hear a door slam, followed by a long, low moan comin' from the back of the dark house looming up over us. Mark reaches over and pulls out the dead cop's gun while I get out the radio and tell the dispatcher to send many, many police right goddamn now!

"Ready?"

Ready for what? I want to scream, but instead I just nod, and we crawl up the steps and hunker down on either side of the closed door. I feel something wet soaking through my pants leg. Without even looking I know what it is and at the same time know that this is gonna get real bad real quick. Lookin' at the twisted pounding in my ears and my palms are so even looking same time know that this is gonna get follow and most of the rest of her head missing. And my mouth is too dry to say anything and right there is another body, a young body sprawled across a couch, and can get out of here! but my throat's too tight to make a sound, and my heart slams in my body up tight against the jamb, over at me with his eyes wide and gleam­

so slowly up to the last. Mark takes the doorknob, turning it ever so

kneel on the other side of the door. Marking in the darkness .

pushes open the door.

looks lowly while it fainlly squeaks, then slowly

flashlight and stick at me ,

The strange man had a candy bar. First he fondled it. He stroked its pretty pack­age and cocoo at it as if he were some damn pigeon. I could tell he dreaded eating the food. It took him at least twenty minutes to muster enough strength to unwrap the candy bar. Oh, he didn't want to open it. He would have been content just to have memorized the ingre­dients listed on the side. Finally he succeeded in unwrapping the candy bar, but I knew and he knew it would not be an ordinary treat.

Love Is the Better Psychosis
by Sheila Casper

A thin man leaned against the waiting room door. He seemed to have been cut out of poster board. He resembled Woody Allen in a sick and degrading way, having long bushy "Bozo the Clown" hair and a ridiculous nose. The hospital waiting room was full with tired and worried people. It seemed odd to me that everyone in the room was smoking, even though it was against the rules. I sighed, then inhaled imaginary smoke from a pretend cigarette. I don't know where I left those damn things.

The strange man had a candy bar. First he fondled it. He stroked its pretty package and cooed at it as if he were some damn pigeon. I could tell he dreaded eating the food. It took him at least twenty minutes to muster enough strength to unwrap the candy bar. Oh, he didn't want to open it. He would have been content just to have memorized the ingredients listed on the side. Finally he succeeded in unwrapping the candy bar, but I knew and he knew it would not be an ordinary treat.

Lovingly he undid the tared paper and glued ends. Apologetically he cocked his head and smiled as the candy bar's naked and brown body was exposed to him. For a moment he gazed tearfully into the imaginary smoke from a pretend cigarette. I don't know where I left those damn things.

I don't know why I'm alive, or why Mark and the cops are all dead, but I don't really care. Every night it's this same dream, every day I sit looking out the window at all the people who don't know that they're really dead, too. I can't play my pipes anymore. The wood chancellor feels like death in my hands, and the loud drones sound like the moans of the dying. I never left that room. I never will leave that room. This is my dream, this is my night­mare, until death do us part.

Stephanie Crisler  computer design

eventually changed into a streaming mass of dark red blood. He did such a good job at condemning himself while he scratched his face off. What a crazy thing to do! I tried to figure out why he was so upset, and could only reason that he was in agony over taking the innocent life of a lower being. And out of a selfish need at that! I watched that man and I did not feel anything. I did not say anything. I did not attempt to think. Oh, it didn't really matter to me or to any other of the tired, worried people. Hell, we've all had our insane frenzies, our moments on the flip side of normality. Most of us lived to tell about it. This man was just a flea on the body of in­sanity, and he was carefully being plucked off by Doctor Morrow and his assistants. I blessed the man's aura as they moved him into sedation. Quiet abounded me. The quiet noise moved into my left arm and moved down my arm. And then, like a true epiphany, I remembered I had put my cigarettes. I reached into my back pocket to retrieve them and became very frustrated. A switch went off in my brain and the wrong nerve was activated. All of the cerebral Gnomes popped out of their hiding places and started to braid my eyelashes together until I could no longer see. Steadily quiet moved through my bloodstream and I thought my skin would mold, itched so badly. Then I gave up. Damn, those straight jackets are bitches when you gotta scratch.

•••••••
knowing the temperature would drop below freezing before dawn. Carefully, she tried to move her leg closer to her body. Instantly, pain shot through her left knee. Jonni berated herself for about the tenth time. The sharp pain subsided, returning to the familiar dull ache. Jonni sat under a pine tree in the dark, her shoulders hunched forward, her arms wrapped around her right knee that was tucked closely against her chest. Her injured left leg stuck straight out in front of her. She gently touched her leg, wariously running her hand over and around the knee. It had swollen so much, her jeans tightly encased her leg from below her knee to the middle of her thigh. She was cold and afraid, wondering if she’d be able to hobble along on her injured leg in the morning, or if she’d have to crawl on her stomach to reach the car. That is, if she could determine the right direction to the road where her blue Ford was parked. It had been a good day until a couple hours ago, Jonni thought, as she remembered the beginning of this day.

The sun crept over the horizon and peeked in Jonni’s window about 7 o’clock. Its brightness increased until she awakened. Glancing at the clock, she was thankful for five hours of peaceful sleep, but the small sliver she needed to sleep late this morning, after reading until 2 A.M. Now that she was fully awake, she knew it would be useless to try to fall asleep again. For one night at least, she had cheated the dream and slept undisturbed for a few hours.

After a shower and a cup of coffee, Jonni listened to Rimsky-Korsakov while she tidied up the small house. Finishing in the living room, she glanced around the neat room filled with new furniture she’d purchased two weeks ago, knowing that next Saturday everything would still be the same. No evidence of her Cherokee grandmother complimented her oval shaped face. Jonni ran her fingers through her dark, shoulder length hair, noticing a few more strands of gray as she pushed it away from her face. In the kitchen, she poured coffee into a thermos, telling herself one more time, that she drank too much of it. Before walking out the door, she stuffed a Hershey Bar and a bag of peanuts in the pocket of her jacket. She might get hungry and she sure didn’t have to count calories. Jonni locked the back door, then got in the car.

Driving north on the highway out of town, she marveled at the mountains surrounding her in this wild, desolate place. On her right, the Chuska Mountains soared 10,000 feet high, rising miles beyond the flat topped cliffs that lined a deep gully. To her left, a wide valley sprawled west and north, until it met a smaller range of mountains. Sagebrush, tumbleweed, and small Pinon trees grew in the sandy soil. Jonni drove across the edge of the valley at a leisurely pace. There was little traffic on the road. She found the cut-off to Farmington and turned east. The landscape changed as the road climbed higher. It curved around outcroppings of rocks, dipping and rising over gentle foothills. Meadows filled with grazing sheep slipped by as she drove steadily up the mountain. Small thickets of aspen trees, with bright, butter yellow leaves contrasted sharply against the dark green of the pine trees that grew in abundance on the mountain rage. Across narrow valleys, the earth had eroded into deep, jagged trenches, caused by the rushing torrents of icy water after warm spring sunshine melted the deep winter snow. Jonni could feel the loss of power in her Ford, as the elevation increased. She was immersed in the beauty that was all around her on this glorious fall day. Ahead, on the left, she saw a turnout where she could park. She crossed the yellow line and parked the car.

Below her, the mountain dropped away into a valley that stretched as far as she could see. Jonni got out of the car to see better. She was standing on the summit of the mountain. Blue sky enhanced the perfect view of the valley below. She sucked in the cool, thin air as she gazed across miles of desert, empty except for an occasional clump of sagebrush. The enormouse of the landscape made her feel small and insignificant, as her eyes feasted on the wonder of God’s Creation. Her vision blurred when she thought of Mac, and how he would have enjoyed this sight. A tear spilled down her cheek as she thought about her son and husband. Quickly, she got back in the car and started the engine. She willed the tears away and wiped her eyes. “I can’t think of them,” she whispered softly to herself, as she pulled back on the highway, driving back the way she had come minutes before.

Meadows filled with grazing sheep slipped by...
decided to walk over to the little lake. Picking up the thermos so she could enjoy a cup of coffee, she left the car. The light breeze stilled the sun seemed warmer. Then she scooted down until her head rested against the glare of the sun. Within seconds, she was sound asleep.

Ding-Dong. Hearing the doorbell chime signaled the beginning of the dream. Jonni struggled against the pull of the nightmare, but was powerless against it as it pulled her onward. Reaching the front door, she pulled it open. Two men in dark blue uniforms stood on the porch. "Are you Jonnette Foster?" the older man asked. Unable to speak, Jonni nodded her head. "Is your husband's name David Ray Foster?" he asked. Dumbly, she nodded her head again. "Do you have a son about ten years old?" "Yes. Mac. Why?" Jonni found her voice again. She looked from one man's face to the other. Seeing their sympathetic, sad expressions, she knew what they were here to tell her. Jonni knew at that moment that life as she had known and lived it until this second, was over, gone forever. Two cops were at her front door..."we come in..." to announce her end of her world. "...bad accident..." The nightmare within a nightmare pinnned her down. "...sorry to..." Jonni knew she had lost herself. "...helpless against its strength and power. The ugly reality..." "both died..." of those moments washed over her, drowning her in pain and anguish. The policeman's mouth continued to spew out words..."...come with us to identify..." "Her life, her purpose for living was gone. With a last desperate surge of strength, Jonni ripped the nightmare apart, screaming "No-o-o" in a long, mournful wall.

The sound echoed and faded in the still darkness around her. She was cold, wondering at the strange new twist this familiar dream was taking. With a start, Jonni realized her eyes were open. Terror mounted as she knew she was no longer dreaming. She saw the outlines of trees silhouetted against the faint glow of the rising moon, and remembered walking to the tiny lake. Scrambling to her feet, she turned to her right and started running. She had to get out of here. Stumbling, she dodged around trees, running toward the road. The high altitude with its thin air gasping for oxygen. Jonni silently kept repeating. The terror of the nightmare lingered, mingling with the new fear. Suddenly, her toe caught under an exposed root; her leg twisted abnormally, as she fell forward heavily, face down on the ground. The breath whooshed out of her lungs, as pain exploded in her left leg. Struggling for breath, gasping for just a tiny bit of air, fearing she's never breathe again, Jonni slowly regained the ability to breathe normally. The pain in her knee was excruciating. "Dear God," she whispered, "Please help me." Carefully, she pushed her hands against the ground and raised herself up, pulling her right leg up to support her weight. Gingerly, she moved her left leg. Pain over pain engulfed her knee as she tramped her weight it to, so she could stand up. The pain was monstrous, and as she tried to step forward, her knee buckled, collapsing under her, as she fell once more. She felt nauseous as fresh agony ripped through her knee. She rested awhile, wrestling with the pain, then tentatively raised her upper body, lifting her arms stiff, so she could look around. The road must be very close, because she'd run quite a ways in her headlong flight. Stars twinkled overhead and silvers of moonlight filtered through the branches of the trees. There was enough light for her to make out shapes in the darkness. Straining her eyes, she looked for the familiar shape of her car. Carefully she searched, as it slowly dawned on her that she didn't see the faintest glimmer of starlight upon water. Her terrified mind refused to believe the insistant voice saying "You ran the wrong way." Searching frantically in every direction, seeing only the dark shapes of tree trunks and bushes, she finally listened to the voice inside her head. She knew that she had bolted and run away from the road instead of toward it. In terror, she had scrambled up and turned to the right, away from the road. The certainty of her act triggered a scream that she managed to choke down. "How could you be so stupid!" she said in place of the scream. She tried to visualize the location of the lake, then thought it didn't make any difference, because she couldn't walk and even if she could, she might wander so far into the mountains she'd never find her way back to the car. The smartest thing to do was to stay where she was. It was also the only thing she could do, unless she pulled herself along on the ground like a soldier crawling under barbed wire. Jonni slumped to the ground, unable to stop the tears and cried in frustration, fear, pain, and despair. It was cold and Jonni knew it would get colder, hour after hour, until after daylight. Pulling together every ounce of determination she could muster and getting her teeth against the pain in her knee, she dragged herself across the ground to the nearest tree. She managed to pull herself into a sitting position, after a great deal of pain and effort. Sitting with her back against the trunk of a pine tree, she asked herself again how she could have done something so dumb, but she didn't have an answer. Jonni shivered in the darkness. The dream crept into her mind and she allowed it to stay. That evening fifteen months ago, when the doorbell rang, she had thought it was her son Mac at the door, too impatient to wait for his father to unlock it. David and Mac had gone to Pizza Hut to get a pizza for dinner that evening. They'd been gone longer than usual, when Jonni heard a car in the driveway, and the familiar sound of two doors closing. When she'd opened the door to see two policemen standing before her, she'd known Mac and David were dead. Days later, her mind became clear enough to understand that a drunk driver had run a red light, smashing into the car. After the funeral, Jonni returned to Oregon with her parents, so they could take care of her for awhile. Day after day, she sat in her childhood bedroom, overwhelmed by her loss. She didn't want to keep on living in a world without David and Mac. Gradually, time and the loving care and concern of her parents, helped her to heal enough to face life again. Three months later she returned to Alberquerque, determined not to think of her husband and son. To do so caused too much pain and she needed the pain to go away.
had been another attempt to stop the memories. Now, lost and hurt in the cold darkness of the mountain, she allowed the memories to stay. Intuitively, she knew the nightmare was the result of pushing away reality. She wondered if she might die up here, and discovered a strong desire to live. David would be disappointed in the way she had handled his death. She wondered if she might die up here, and discovered a strong desire to live. David would be disappointed in the way she had handled his death. That didn't make much sense, but he'd always admired the way she could take everything in stride, not allowing set-backs or detours to bother her, or deter her from her goals. But nothing in her life came close to the importance of her husband and son. Instead of facing the reality of a life without them, she had run away, refusing to acknowledge her loss. Now, she might be facing death and knew she had to face her life first.

Through the long dark hours, Jonni remembered everything she could about David and Mac. One memory triggered another as the cold night continued. She'd smile or wipe away a tear once in awhile. As it grew colder, she gritted her teeth once more against the pain in her knee, and managed to scoo p up all the leaves and pine needles she could reach, to make a nest of sorts. It didn't really make her much warmer, but there was a small comfort from her efforts. She remembered the Hershey Bar in her jacket pocket, and ate it slowly, one small bite at a time. She saved the peanuts for tomorrow. Once the sun rose, she'd be able to see and would be able to do something to get off this mountain. Seeing his face, and hearing once again the sweet laughter of her son, Jonni fell asleep.

"Shahi aniyyed," a man said.
"Hagoshii, nika ushyeed, shich'e'e," a second man replied.
Jonni opened her eyes to see two middle aged Navajo men bending over her. Daylight had arrived, bringing help with it.
"Ya'ateeh. Haadi nineghan, shi'achini?" One of the men said some-thing, but Jonni was so numb from the cold, and so fuzzy-minded, she couldn't think coherently enough to understand what was being said to her. It didn't matter, because someone had found her and she was safe. One of the men held up her thermos, and smiled from ear to ear when she reached for it. He opened it, and poured her a cup. It was cold, but it was liquid and she drank every drop.

"Haa leidza a?" the second man asked her. Jonni smiled when she understood why she didn't understand him before. Many older Navajos didn't speak English. It was easy to convey to the men that she had injured her knee and couldn't walk. Gently, they carried her to their pick-up, where she reveled in the warmth. One man drove her to the hospital in Ft. Defiance,while the second man followed in her little blue Ford.

At dusk, Jonni was resting comfortably in a hospital bed. Her leg was in a cast, elevated on the bed by two pillows. She watched the sun slip below the horizon and saw the first stars appear in the sky. The darkness brought no fear—she'd faced and conquered her terror in the darkness last night. Jonni knew she would no longer run away from the pain and loss in her life, instead she would accept it, and build upon the strength she had found within herself. She would welcome the memories of David and Mac and be thankful for the years they had shared together. She was also thankful for the night she'd spent in the Chuska Mountains, learning to accept her life, in the midnight hours before dawn.

• • • • •
Science Project
by Bill Fegins

Not too long ago, in our distant past, in a small science lab... Mrs. Rhea walked to the front of the class, her hair just right, her dress just right, basically everything about her, just right. But then, that was only to be expected of Mrs. Rhea for she ran a tight ship. "Everything has a place, and if it's not there then it's out of place and if it's out of place, it has no place in science." Absolutely everything in Mrs. Rhea's science class was in perfect order. Even the presence seemed neat.

As Mrs. Rhea reached the front of the class, she turned and told the pupils that there would be a quiz the next day over everything they had covered today. She knew of Gwendalyn's feelings. She had heard her. "Gwendalyn, and, of course Mrs. Rhea even let out a sigh of anguish, except that everyone else in the class could feel the other pupils staring at her, waiting for yet another outburst, but she resisted. "Don't worry," she told herself, "you've still got your project, which is going to be the best on this class has ever seen." And Gwendalyn was conviced of this, so she held back and simply sat by passively. "Just don't let her get to you, O.B." Gwendalyn always called herself O.B. which is short for her middle name, O'Brien. She never had been told where such a name had come from, although she had often imagined that it had been a long family tradition that was a symbol for good fortune and a great family tradition that was a symbol for good fortune and a family tradition that was a symbol for good fortune. Fortunately, Gwendalyn's fairy-tale was being interrupted at the moment by Mrs. Rhea's railing on and on about studying and science and everything being in its right place.

Mrs. Rhea finally finished her little lecture by saying, "Well, we'll find out who has and hasn't been paying attention when we take a look at our projects. We do all have our projects ready, don't we?"

Again, the class responded in an almost ethereal unison. "Yes, ma'am." Gwendalyn's voice could even be heard this time, though she tried not to make it seem like she wanted to be heard.

"Very good. You've all had one week to work on them. You've all had access to most any materials within the lab that you wished to use. Your work will be graded upon originality, presentation, and endurance. Again, the central focus of this project was to create paradise. Now who would like to start?"

With that, there was an outburst of hands, all wanting to show off their talents and what they had learned and created. "Well, well, Paris. Let's see what you've come up with."

"Thank you, ma'am." Paris smiled as he pulled from under his desk, a small brown box which he carried to the front of the lab. From within the box, he produced a small blue-green sphere with white swirls circling within.

"That's very interesting Paris. Tell the class a little about it."

"Well, I call my creation 'Aphrodite Urania'. It is composed mostly of various gases, which gives it it's color. There are several lower form organisms deep within its core, but none that can cause any type of harm to the perfect balance of gases and other agents within the outer atmosphere that I've blended together. A blend which is an utterly perfect combination of light and space to create a world of pure beauty, while at the same time holding some scientific value by giving us a chance to observe the reactions of different gases to different atmospheric conditions that may occur within a single organism.

With that, everyone in the class burst into applause over Paris's own little paradise. Everyone, that is, except Gwendalyn, who just sat there dream-eyed, hoping that her project would be viewed as highly as the one she'd just seen.

Mrs. Rhea rose in the back of the room and everyone fell silent. The entire class turned in unison to face her and awaited Paris's judgment. Mrs. Rhea just stood there, her face void of emotion. She picked up her pen and grade-book, slowly ran her finger down the list, (as if she didn't know exactly where Paris's name was), make a few marks, then looked up and smiled. You could almost hear the sigh of relief from Paris as Mrs. Rhea gave her nod of approval.

"That was very good Paris. An A for originality, an A for presentation, and as far as endurance, I don't see how this paradise cannot be around for years to come. An overall A Plus. Now who would like to go next?"

Again the onrush of rising hands almost created a whirlwind that swept through the room.

"Well, well, well." Mrs. Rhea began as she looked around the room for another volunteer. "How about you, Maia? Does your paradise look like?"

"Thank you, ma'am." Maia replied as she took from under her desk a box much like the one Paris just had, only smaller. As she reached the front of the lab, she pulled her week's worth of work out. It was a good bit smaller than Paris's, and was red in color. It didn't look that exciting to Gwendalyn, but she watched none the less.

I call my creation Talaria...

"I call my creation 'Talaria'. The atmosphere is very thin and composed mainly of helium and other light gases, which allow most of the light to reflect off its rocky, silicated surface thus giving it a slight red color. It has a molten iron center which gives it a slight magnetic field around its outer surface. Very few organisms can survive under such conditions, therefore, I added only a couple of minor organisms on the surface to allow us to observe their reactions and adaptability to such extreme conditions. And, just as with Paris, the entire room burst into applause. And again, everyone fell into a dead silence as they turned to Mrs. Rhea for a response. Just as before, she ran her finger down the roll and made a few marks next to Maia's name. She
then looked up slowly and, much to the relief of the class and especially Maia, she gave a little smile.

"Very good Maia. Definitely an A for originality and presentation. And, just like Paris, I don't see how this paradise won't be around for quite a long time. Now who shall go next?"

Again the whirlwind swept through the room, only to come to an abrupt end as Mrs. Rhea said, "How about our happy quiz taker? Ms. Dailey, what do you have for us today? You do have a project, don't you?"

Was it the HOMO SAPIENS that you used?

Gwendalyn knew the entire class was staring at her, expecting her to reply no, but she had a surprise for them all.

"Why, yes, ma'am!" Gwendalyn almost ran to the front of the room, then suddenly realized she has forgotten her project. She ran back to her desk and pulled out a little brown paper bag, and returned to the front of the room. Gwendalyn knew this was her moment of glory.

"I call my paradise 'Terra Firma'. It is an absolute beauty. It contains just the right amount of gases and particles to support almost any type of life-form. I added a mixture of liquid and solid to create a diverse area of surface. The atmospheric conditions are also very diverse providing quite an array of weather conditions from freezing snow to hundred-plus temperatures, both within fifty miles of each other in some cases!"

Gwendalyn hadn't been paying attention to the bag which she held in her hand. Her presentation was suddenly interrupted by a loud thump as the bottom of the bag gave way and her creation came tumbling out in a massive heap of smoke and dust.

Gwendalyn slowly reached down and picked up her paradise.

"It didn't look this way last night."

The small sphere that had fallen from the bag was a smoky-gray color with slight traces of green and blue. There were holes in it from which offensive odors were billowing out.

"This is wrong," Gwendalyn said softly as the tears began to build in her eyes. "I didn't create this."

Mrs. Rhea began to make her way to the front of the room.

"Ms. Dailey, did you, in picking out your organisms to add, use a small container labeled “Dangerous”?"

"Yes ma'am, but they looked so innocent, how could they have done this?"

"Was it the “HOMO SAPIENS” that you used?"

"Yes ma'am."

"Well, Ms. Dailey. I hope you've learned your lesson. As far as your grade, well, for originality, an A, for presentation, a C, and only an F can be given for endurance. An F overall I'm afraid, for not following directions. You were instructed to create paradise, not to destroy it."

And with that, Mrs. Rhea called for a recess, and while all the other pupils went out to play, Gwendalyn O'Brien Dailey stayed behind in the lab to clean up her paradise.
Who's Who in PERCEPTIONS

Connie Baechler is an English major at Gainesville who enjoys writing poetry.

Wally Beck enjoys playing football and studying physics in his spare time. He would like to make a difference with his life in the area of research and teaching.

Anne Bessac is an Assistant Professor of Art at Gainesville College.

Andrea Blachly enjoys reading novels, seeing good movies, and being around children. She hopes to go on to a career in social work and, eventually, to marry and raise a family with her fiancé, John.

Teresa Byler is a Gainesville College art major who enjoys drawing with graphite.

Michelle Cash is an art major at Gainesville College.

Sheila Casper is an English major and the editor of PERCEPTIONS.

Stephanie Casper is an art major at Gainesville College.

Andrea Cooper is an art major whose interests include music and entertainment. She plans to be a combination of artist, writer, and professional student.

Emily Duncan is a freshman English major, English Club president, and editor of the 1990 edition of hot politi, Gainesville College's anthology of essays.

Ally Eldson wants to be a successful and rich person. She is not sure of her major this week. Carpe diem.

Kim Freedman, an art major, is also interested in engineering. She plans to pursue a career in Industrial Design at Georgia Tech.

Robert Huff is an art major who particularly enjoys sculpture and ceramics. Robert hopes to one day be in the ceramic tile business.

Jessica Jackson is a geology major with a heavy emphasis on environmental issues. Jessica enjoys dance, gymnastics, and horses.

Gloria Kirby is a Gainesville College business major who will transfer to GSU as an art major.

Joanne Martin is a mother, grandmother, and student. Still learning, still exploring, still reaching, she is still trying to decide what she wants to be when she grows up.

Richie McDowell is an Art major. Richie enjoys fishing and country music.

John McKay is a history major, and will graduate from Gainesville this spring. He also does free-lance writing.

Garry Merritt desires to be a successful person, and he would like to use education to be a contributing member of society.

D. Thadlius Monroe—a.k.a Bill Feagins—is an aspiring journalism major and an Anchor staff writer. Bill hopes to one day see his name in Time magazine and have a book or two published.

Bobby Nash is an art major who hopes to become a comic book writer and artist.

Elsie Nelson is a student who is also a wife, mother, and grandmother. Elsie enjoys singing with the Gainesville chorale and working in her yard.

Katherine S. O'Neill is a Political Science major who plans to go on to study international relations at Georgetown.

Scott Penancello is an art major. He plans to attend UGA this fall and to pursue a career in architectural landscaping.

Jessica Peterman is majoring in interior design and French. She enjoys traveling and shopping. Jessica hopes to pursue a career in international interior design.

Lisa Roberts is a freshman English major. Upon completion of a journalism degree at UGA, she hopes to become a television news reporter.

Andy Scott is a computer graphics major and the art editor of PERCEPTIONS. Andy desires to have a career in computer graphic design at West Georgia College.

Barbara Thomas is an employee of Gainesville College. For her, writing is balm for the storms of the soul.

Donni Vickers is an English and Spanish major whose interests also lie in play-writing.

Sheila Waldrip is an art major. She also enjoys gymnastics.

Joanne Wallington is an art major whose interests lie in the field of scientific illustrations. Joanne plans to attend the University of Georgia after her tenure at Gainesville College.

Suzanne Watkins is an art major. She likes to draw and also makes a hobby out of dance. Although she is still undecided, Suzanne plans to pursue a career in art.

Dianne Wheeler is a non-traditional student who finds time to paint in spite of working fulltime.

Scott Wiley, a steadfast Epicurean, is a student at Gainesville College.
In Memoriam

David L. Singleton
Instructor of Mathematics
January 2, 1959 -- April 13, 1990

In gratitude for the time we learned together...