

OnCourse

2013



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Short plays or dialogues with a maximum of 10 typed pages
Poetry with a maximum of 3 poems.
We accept photographs of artwork and digital photography.

Please submit all work electronically to: ccconcourse@yahoo.com.

**For Submission Guidelines and Charitable Contributions, Please visit
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OnCourse

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A Place I Love



Story By: Jude Larrimore

We glided between two banks of kelly green grasses, which opened up suddenly into a wide lake of flat sparkling water. The water was so shallow that the bright midday sun shone straight through to the bottom, where we could stir up the sand with our oars if we wanted to. Neither of us said a word, we just listened to the silence of the island where meditation came as easy as breathing.

We paddled our canoe across the shallow lake to get closer to the specks of warm brown and cream on the other shore. The slow, even sound of our oars pushing through the water came in time with my steady heartbeat. The sun warmed my skin and melted away worries and concerns and lists. The specks were ponies lazily swishing their tails. Shaggy Chestnut and Pinto adults kept their noses in the green grass while the foals scampered as far away from their parents as they dared. We smiled at each other, with our oars across our legs and the canoe drifting slightly away, silently acknowledging how easy it was to breathe here.

-Assateague National Park, Maryland



Photo By: Kathleen Croft

A Place That Terrifies Me



Story By: Jude Larrimore

When I volunteered on Saturday mornings at Manor Care Nursing Home as a young teen, I headed straight for the physical therapy department to warm the wax and start up the whirlpool. I was happy and fulfilled to be able to make the withered hands feel less pain and the cold, numb feet feel warmth again. I enjoyed the wrinkled smiles and pats on the back that were just a little too hard. But I am forty now. The thoughts that now linger in the back of my mind are of the ammonia smell, the insistent but delirious yelling, and the family visiting room that was as empty as the parking lot.



Art By: Mike Templeton

Places



Story By: Kerry Cornish

There is a smell to books, whether they are new or have been touched by hundreds of fingers. It is a smell that has history and can let you know how many people have touched the books pages; how old the book is, and even how new the book is. The little café is full of people who are deep into reading and occasionally picking up their coffee or tea for a sip. The colors here are warm and inviting and comfy chairs are placed throughout the place to invite someone to sit down and peruse a selected item. There is no rush to make a decision to purchase, but instead an invitation to take your time.

It is dark in here and it is not the dark of night, but the dark that is the absolute absence of light. There is no warmth or words of comfort to guide you back to the light. It is just you. You are all alone with the fear, anger, desperation, and even guilt. Thoughts are self-defeating, and sometimes dangerous. Kill yourself, or kill someone else. The lies that promise relief from it all, because they have a small ring of truth, but can cause a soul to bleed.

The only real relief is to focus on what is light. Even when it is hard to find; it is there. A little bit at a time you poke holes in the dark and let the light in. It gets easier, and brighter.

In dreams there are trap doors so that if you get to a place that is to terrifying to face; you can escape by waking up. There are places in the real world where there are no trap doors, and no one around to help you escape. There are no locks on any doors that can keep out the pain.

It can happen at any time, and even when you think you are safe it can find you and hurt you.

The faces of the people who hurt and destroy you are not like monsters. They look like everyone else, and are even kind sometimes, but that is a tool they use to give you hope, and then crush it. The only safe place is very deep within; where no human being can touch.

It starts with a migraine that has lasted four days and is the record so far. Nothing is helping despite the multiple medications that dull all the senses until it is hard to focus. Your daughter comes home and announces with tears and a smile that she has been accepted into grad school, and will be leaving two months earlier than planned. A painted on happy face appears out of nowhere to hide the absolute panic inside. Midterms are coming, and meetings are planned, and there is no time to think. The layers are becoming thick and need to be thinned, one at a time.

There is a little cottage somewhere in the mountains where the trees are giant reminders of ages past. It smells like rich soil, and sweet decaying leaves, and there is room to breathe. There are a few animals, goats, chickens, and a rooster that struts proudly around his home and sings his song every morning. There are neighbors within walking distance so that trades can be made and conversations can keep us connected. There is a lot of work to keep up with the necessities like chopping wood for heat, milking the goats, and collecting eggs. It is all so satisfying when the end result is a relaxed and fulfilled time to enjoy the art of cooking while using the herbs and vegetables from the garden. At the end of the day a hot cup of tea and a good book send you into a peaceful state so that you can drift off to sleep...

A Change in My Life



Story By: Sarahi Chavira

What is it like to be bilingual? I used to ask myself this question over and over and every time it seemed to go deeper in my head. Nowadays, I can say that bilinguals feel more positive about their ability to communicate with more and diverse people, whereas those who only speak one language seem to stick, most of the time, to the individuals that share their same language. Bilingualism for me has been a gratifying experience in these past six years, but it was not as easy as I thought it'd be.

When I lived in Mexico, about eight years ago, I used to play "office" with my sister Dulce. She and I pretended to be the best secretaries in a major law firm, but the exciting part for us was that we spoke English (we only pretended, of course). I used to come up with words that sounded catchy and elegant to start a conversation with my sister. And it was something similar to this: "Washat dara maret dase cuse," I said, and she responded, "Ata whate chatudara." Neither of us knew what any of this meant, but it was fun to hear ourselves speak random stuff. I felt important and smart when I did it. As I think about it now no English came out of our mouths. I think it was only "tongue-twister" that we both excitedly spoke, but it sure made us have fun. We could spend hours and hours playing, talking, and typing on our unplugged chromed keyboard. Since I wanted to feel as if I really was in an office I would take the keyboard's chord and place it under a metal pot, and this I thought would cause energy to flow better through the chord allowing us, the secretaries, to work more efficiently and get paid more. As funny and innocent as it sounds, my sister Dulce and I fantasized about speaking English and this was a way for us to express our desire to do so. Of course, neither of us knew what we were saying.

During summer vacations I often came to visit family in Arizona, mainly in Tucson. But it was not until I turned 12 and graduated from elementary school that along with my oldest sister Jazmin, I decided to move to Tucson to keep studying. I will not deny that this decision made me get very nervous and I often thought about the movies I used

to watch with my dad on the couch eating ice cream cones dipped in hard Hershey's chocolate. Well, they, at some point, showed students getting off the bus, eating their lunches at the cafeteria, conversing with their friends, and raising their hands in the classroom to answer the teacher when they were asked a certain question. All of this just made me shrink of fear and also made me think I was going to be completely lost without the English language. I do not think it was a good idea to watch those movies knowing how scared I got from them, but very deep in me I knew it was a good way to mentally prepare myself for what was coming.

I started attending 7th grade in Tucson, Arizona, in 2006. On the first day, Samantha, a helpful mentor, showed me around the school so that I could find my classes. She was tall with Brunette skin, short dark-brown hair right about her shoulders, big brown shiny eyes, and very good manners. I felt comfortable with her company, but as soon as I entered my English classroom I felt a strong stomach pain and that just added more insecurity in me. During that entire class hour I did not say a word or even attempt to move a finger, afraid to have all eyes on me from making just a teeny tiny bit of noise. I kept close attention to the class discussion about the homophones in English, which are words with different spellings and similar pronunciations, for example "buddy" and "body", "here" and "hear", "whether" and "weather." At that time I could not even respond to "How are you doing today?" greetings and those sort of things.

Homework required me to answer in long and full sentences and class discussions began to overwhelm me with "Sarahi, what do you think is the cause for this mistake?" or "How would you fix this problem?" Or, "Come up and show the class." My patience started to go and I was beginning to feel frustration for not being able to understand what the teachers were asking me to do. Because of this, I strongly set my mind to focus on comprehending, writing, and reading English some way or another. That had just become my number one goal and my priority at that point. Every single day I literally forced myself to learn three vocabulary words. Then, those three words were going to be put into sentences that I made up using stories from my aunt's old coloring books and magazines. Little by little this helped me gain more knowledge because I noticed that the more vocabulary and the more real life examples I used, the more I could actually speak and put into use with friends, teachers, and neighbors too. I can say something for sure; there is no harder process

than to learn another language and to adapt to the logic behind it. It might depend on the person's willingness to learn and the age at which they start introducing themselves to a new language. Since I was only twelve my mind was still fresh, receiving new information almost like a baby learning to walk. This better allowed the process of bilingualism at some point, but it was not as easy as it sounds.

During my two hours of reading and literature classes, I was often asked to read a whole story or poem passage from Ventures, the ESL (English as a Second Language) book we used for all of our lectures. I thought that was simple since my classmates had to read along with me. But this read-along activity changed one Tuesday morning, when my teacher asked me to stand in front of the class where there were almost twenty students. He wanted me to tell them how my Thanksgiving dinner had turned out. For me this whole "stand in front of the class" thing was a humiliation. I stood there, in front of those kids who looked at me anxiously, but as I tried to recall that day, the wall behind their back just seemed to get my full attention. It was a wall full of pictures and dialogues that were related to those pictures and many colorful drawings we all drew at the beginning of the year around August: big red apples with a fallen greenish leaf to the side, a juicy watermelon with black seeds all over it, and a ripe yellow mango peeled halfway. All these drawings hung from the ceiling close to the wall and they seemed to grab my attention more than what I could recall about my Thanksgiving dinner. I started talking and telling them how we had to cancel the dinner because my mom did not feel good, and as I did I can promise I heard quiet giggles and rude jokes about my pronunciation. This was a nightmare for me that I even got to the point of not wanting to sit next to anybody who spoke English. I was too scared that they would also laugh at me the same way my classmates did. I could not get rid of the image of my classmates laughing at the top of their lungs just to make me feel dumb. I knew this had to stop and reminded myself that learning English was my priority and not just to show those ignorant kids that I could do it, but also to believe that determination does take you where you want to go and farther. I wanted to become bilingual, that was my direction.

During my 8th grade year, I asked for an English tutor, Eddie. He was double my age and was born in Mexico like me. He was tall, good-looking, and had short trimmed hair and hazel eyes, which I loved. He helped me so much that I will never find a way to thank him for all he

did for me, all the effort he put into my English learning process, even when I lost hope. Every Tuesday and Thursday I went to him and talked about my lectures, assignments and so on. I let him know about any doubts and questions I had, because I knew there was no better person than him to explain them to me. This way he helped me to understand the concepts more clearly. As time went by, all my teachers and even my classmates noticed the progress I made in my pronunciation (which was what made them laugh), but also the confidence that was now on me. The strength and determination I had to stand up in front of everybody and not only tell them about my Thanksgiving dinner but also about my sister's birthday party at the aquatic park close to my grandma's house! All this made me realize that small or big things in life, as well as processes, do not come easy. If we think they do, it would be absurd because nobody knows how much we can stand until we face obstacles in life.

Sleepless nights, and whining and crying moments were part of my process; they still are. Up to this day I whine, make mistakes, cry once in a while, and get frustrated but always remember that all my effort and determination will be rewarded. Now, I am a freshman college student who's gone through ups and downs just to learn a different language from my own, and I do not regret it because it is the best thing I could ever achieve in my 18 years of life. Thanks to this achievement, many rewarding moments have taken place in my life such as obtaining my driver's license, working in 6 different places in the last three years, being a leader in school assignments and projects, making friends from all over the world from Vietnam to Colombia, and being able to help my parents with their English the same way I was taught. This and much more makes me feel proud of where I am right now.

Based on my own experience, being bilingual is developing new capacities within oneself. There, you test yourself to see how capable you are, not just in adjusting to your own culture and language, but to a different one as well. Thanks to all the struggles and effort I put into learning to speak English, life never becomes boring because there is more than one language available for me.

A Place I Long For



Story By: Jude Larrimore

I can see it when I imagine my happy place. Its lushness almost creeps out onto the road, as thick, green grass edges the black concrete. The old growth forests of the Pacific Northwest seem to stand still in time. They are untouched like a house full of dusty antiques that you just inherited from your long-lost great aunt. But the priceless antiques are huge, dark trees that have been growing here for hundreds of years. The layer of dust is the luxurious moss that covers nearly every other growing thing like a soft comforting blanket. Have you ever seen that moss after one of the soft rains, when it is covered in silvery, glistening mystery?

There is one particular spot where a walkway has been worn down a slight hillside. Just at the bottom is the most beautiful tree, with its branches outstretched as if welcoming visitors down to it. The sun shines down through the canopy here in just a way to light up the springtime leaves of the tree. When raindrops fall down to its leaves, they sound like a whispered conversation that you want to be a part of. If you are quiet and still and just listen, you can almost hear what they are saying.

Olympic National Park, Hoh Rainforest, Washington



Photo By: Leslie Gilmore

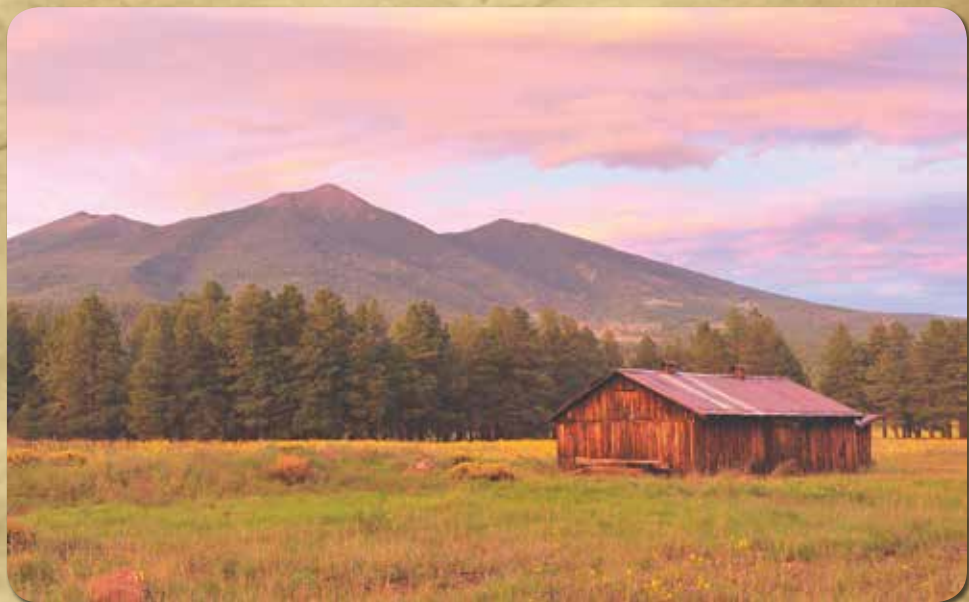


Photo By: Kathleen Croft

The Wax Museum



Story By: Alessandra Magana

Women will go to fantastic feats to impress their audience. This means as a way to please those who gaze upon us, we have squeezed into corsets, toppled on high heels, curled, tweezed, plucked, caked on make-up, bo-toxed, pushed-up, implanted, and waxed our whole bodies! Some women will argue that they do it for themselves, in order to feel good about themselves. But you know what feels good? Sitting on the couch watching reruns of *Grey's Anatomy* with a jar of Nutella in hand, brandishing your sexiest pair of sweat pants! I sit and wonder how many men have invented these contraptions of torture for women? Calvin Klein created the thong in the 1970s. Then came the water bra in the 90s. Oh, the things they keep coming up with, and even worse, women keep falling into! So why do we do it? I've asked myself these same questions since I was thirteen.

I remember all the questions that arose in my mind on the way to get my first bikini wax. I had just turned 23, and had a plane ticket to the Virgin Islands. I was planning on being gone for 4 weeks, and didn't want to worry about shaving. I had Googled every possible mistake one could make while attending a waxing appointment. I looked up whether or not I should get a design, what type of wax they used, if it would burn my skin, the after care, and most important how long I had to wait to have sex afterward. What I didn't realize was that the woman who was to perform my bikini wax worked in a hair salon. I walked up to the desk and asked, "Am I in the right place?" and handed the receptionist Lisa's card. My older, more experienced friend had told me that she was the best. I was asked to sit and wait in one of their over-sized plush EZ chairs. They brought me lavender-mint green tea to sip on while I flipped through *Self* magazine waiting for Lisa. In my mind she was going to look like my friend Becky. Becky is five years older than me, spunky and blonde with a big smile and reassurance in her voice. Lisa was not blonde, and did not have a smile on her face. She also seemed to be in her early fifties, and wore a look of impatience.

Being as polite as I could I introduced myself and put down the magazine and cup of tea. She immediately instructed me to carry the tea cup back to the receptionist. I followed her to the back of the salon, and it seemed like every person inside was looking at me. "Are they judging me?" I wonder. "Does this make me a skank?" Lisa pulled back a very light

curtain that I swear was almost see-through to reveal a room about the size of a small ½ bathroom, the kind with just a toilet and sink. There was a chair similar to a dentist's chair, and a stand holding the hot wax and tools. I was a little confused and didn't step in right away. "Is this it?" I asked, hoping for some reassurance. All I got was a nod. So I stepped in and waited for further instructions. Lisa put on gloves and looked directly at my crotch, which I made damn sure to use my loufa and grapefruit soap on just before. "Go ahead," she says. "Ummm? Take my clothes off?" I say a little unsure. Maybe she was going to do it through my jean shorts? I didn't know! So in the awkward space provided I pulled my shorts off, and continued to take my shirt off, which is totally unnecessary in a bikini wax. "Whoa, whoa, whoa, little lady, I'm not the Gyno!" Lisa yelled. "Holy shit! What the hell am I doing?" I thought. My hands started to sweat by then, and I got up in the chair and tried to relax. Lisa proceeded to move my legs around in all these weird angles. I couldn't help but giggle. One thing that has gotten me in trouble my whole life is that I have a nervous laugh, and it pops up in the most inappropriate moments. The atmosphere between us was really awkward and I couldn't wait to get out of there.

The first application of hot wax made me jump. She smoothed down the first piece of cloth, and ripped it away without warning! I winced through every strip of cloth that was pulled off of the most sensitive part of my body. This was repeated over and over again, which made me realize that maybe shaving wasn't so bad after all. When she was finished, Lisa asked, "Did you want a Brazilian?" I said yes because Becky told me that's what I wanted. Becky knows all! "Okay, roll back and hug your knees to your chest." Lisa said. "What?" I'm shocked! "I need to get to your bum" she patted my leg. The first nice sounding thing she said to me throughout the procedure. That's what it was, a procedure! I hadn't read about this from Google. So I gave in and rolled back. I guess I didn't realize how much those gymnastic lessons as a little girl had paid off. I rolled back with way too much gusto and ended up toppling the chair over! My heels went straight over my head and I landed on my stomach with my lady parts exposed out of the curtain. Yep, half naked! The entire salon stared. I was covered in wax and laughing.

After all the commotion, I just wanted to crouch in the corner of the little room until closing time. Lisa then escorted me to the counter. She was nice enough to give me a free sample of lotion, which smelled like Becky. Becky was going to get an ear-full. In the end, it was only \$46 dollars to be completely humiliated, with newly red, overly sensitive skin. I didn't have the courage to hook-up in the Virgin Islands like I had planned after that.

Yellow Elk



Poem By: Belinda Ayze

The rain washes away hidden fears, because at war
we don't show tears,
Walking in the rain, I think of how I used to play in the
rain
I trudge in the rain to inflict pain, faces of rage, faces
of someone's kin,
Do not fear me; I fear your sin, keeping my mind
clear of death,
Takes every last of my breath, the rain
annoys me now
Loud thundering from a distance; it's not the thunder
gods,
Sacred rain, the sacred path, the red road is bloody
red
Now on cold granite wall etched is my name
Carlos Nichol Yellow Elk, frozen in time forever
What happened to me? I'm crazy? No!
It's a mistake, my name, my name?
What the hell is this?
Yellow Elk was here I scribbled
My spirit lives, while my name is dead.

A Beautiful Sight



Story By: Morgan Thomas

After the drive that felt like it took a whole day, we finally arrived to our destination and could finally start our vacation. The sun was beginning to set beautifully, with pink and orange shades illuminating the sky. We got to our hotel and looked out of our patio and it was a perfect view of the busy town and the glowing beach beyond it. As soon as we stepped outside the strong salty smell of the ocean filled the air as if it was trying to lure us in.

After the delicious, fresh seafood-filled dinner, we took the short walk under the glistening stars to the pier. The stars were so bright it was as if there was a spotlight on us as we walked further into the darkness. We got to the end and found an old bench to sit on and stare off into the infinite dark water. The waves splashing against the post were very calming as we watched the seagulls fight for the gory dead fish on the dock for a few minutes before we headed back to our hotel.

The next day was more adventurous as we played tourist at the pier and went into all the local shops. The beach was a completely different place during the day. Everyone looked as if they were worry free and just enjoying the sunlight beaming on them. As I looked around I saw people playing intense beach volleyball, running and playing in the sand. Others were just relaxing on a bench listening to music and people-watching.

We found a spot on the beach that was close enough to watch the volleyball game but not close enough where we can get splattered with the ball. As we sink into the sticky cold sand we attempt to build sand castles as if we were six years old again and without any buckets. The mix of the swift cool ocean breeze and the brightly shining sun felt as if I were on my own private exotic paradise island. I then snap into reality and realized that where I was, was just as nice. We went down to the chilling water and let the subtle salty waves splash up against our legs. Spending a few moments in the water woke us before we headed back up to the pier where all the shops were. I could

have spent the whole day laying in sand and taking in all of the beautiful landscape, but we needed to eat.

After lunch we took a short drive to a nearby town to catch our express boat. This was my first time ever stepping on a big boat like this so I was enjoying every moment. It looked like something off of a movie with the bright sun beaming off the side of the boat as if it was freshly waxed. We stepped across a shaky wooden bridge, as if we were getting on pirate ship, to have our tickets checked. We are in Commodore seating! Which just allows us to sit in the covered lounge part of the boat and they provide one drink for us but we just liked the sound of the name. It made us feel like real boatmen. We sit next to the window so we can watch as the Catalina Express takes us across the mysterious Pacific ocean. The views were as if I was looking at professional photos off the internet. We finally arrived after only spending thirty minutes on the rocky boat.

The view as we were slowly drifting to the dock was breathtaking. There were beautiful houses on the side of the mountain as if they were perfectly placed. Many of the locals had their own boats bobbing around in their ocean parking lot. The smile on my face was just as bright as the sun shining that day. We walked from the dock to the busy little town and looked at everything that we walked by. The town reminded me of a small doll house, every building was close together and right next to the beach. We went from store to store looking at all they had to offer on such a small island. As the day went on we tried some local food before going back to the dock to catch our boat ride back. As we started speeding away from the island the sun was just beginning to set. It was picture perfect with the pink and blue colors shading the sky. As we got further and further from the island the sun was slowly falling into the ocean.

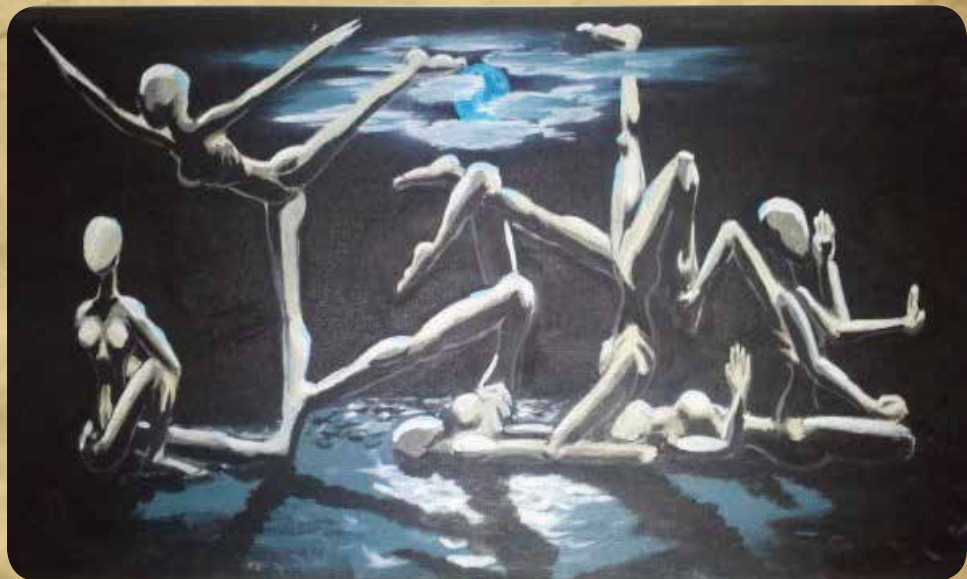
As our beautiful vacation was beginning to end I had realized that the last few days had been the most exciting and memorable days I have ever had. The ocean was so calming and everywhere I looked was another beautiful sight.

You Can't Change My Blood



Poem By: Steve Grover

You can teach me your ways,
You can lead me astray
All my traditions you may try and change
My religion cannot stay,
not even the way that I pray.
So you say.
Your history is my new way
No room for my people's own past ways
Everything I say is in vain
For you have to teach me your way to say my name
Everything I had has been washed away.
Day by day you make me learn your ways.
You tell me that I never will ever be the same,
that I will attain your ways.
And I say I may learn your ways,
but you'll never change the blood flowing through my veins.



Art By: Mike Templeton



Our Place in Heaven



Story By: Lavalerie Tsinnajinnie

The first time I met Tyrell was in December of 2003. Tyrell worked with my uncle Thomas, so my uncle felt comfortable setting us up on blind date. From the moment we met, we could tell we were total opposites. He liked Coke; I liked Pepsi. He liked Chevy trucks; I liked Ford trucks. He was a people person; I was quiet and kept to myself. He drank alcohol; I didn't. Most importantly, I was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and he wasn't. We were on different sides of everything but it was apparent, opposites did attract. Since we first met in December 2003, we have been to hell and back. Our relationship has had more downs than ups. From the first time I met Tyrell, I knew he was a drinker. I am not sure if I was okay with it, but I figured he would eventually stop but he did the opposite. Tyrell's drinking got worse over time, leading to behaviors such as drinking and driving, fighting, and the worst, cheating on me with other girls. During his 10 years of drinking, Tyrell has been charged with two DUIs, disorderly conduct, trespassing, and he has totaled our truck while driving home drunk after a night of binge drinking-which according to the Centers Disease Control and Prevention, is defined as consuming 5 or more drinks during a single occasion. Everyone knows that in the United States, the legal drinking age is 21 years of age but in Tyrell's case, he was drinking since he was 18 years-old. Over the years, I had come to terms with Tyrell's lifestyle and hoped he would someday change. Being a believer of the LDS church, I had this feeling like I should stick it out. There were many times I wanted to leave but I couldn't. I felt like I had to stay, not for me but for him.

So that was our life for almost 10 years of being together.

In November, last year, our life changed. Tyrell had one of his binge drinking nights and this time, it was different. All the other times before, he had a reason to drink. Whether he had a bad day, or he was missing his uncle who had passed years before, there was always an excuse to numb the pain. This time, however, he didn't have an excuse. He was simply drinking out of habit. I remember talking to Tyrell after this last incident of drinking all night and I remember him telling me he was scared. He had finally realized he was not the one in control and that the alcohol was. He was lost and didn't know how to help to himself. For the next couple days he was quiet and kept to himself. Several days after the incident, I got a text from him saying he wanted to attend church services that Sunday. While at work that day, he had confided in a friend of his, who was also a member of the church, and the friend had invited him to come to church with him.



Photo By: Andrew Beisemery

I remember reading that text and feeling so happy. My heart was dancing inside and I was excited.

That Sunday rolled around. I was nervous, as was Tyrell. I am not sure how many times we changed our clothes. Fifteen minutes to 11 o'clock, we climbed into our blue F150 truck and drove up to the church. We got to the parking lot and just sat in the truck, afraid to move. My leg bounced up and down as I sat in the truck. After what seemed like an eternity, we finally got out of the truck and went inside. We walked into the chapel and there were rows and rows of people dressed in their Sunday best. We found a spot near the front and waited for the service to start. The service started and a warm feeling came over me. I felt like I was glowing from the inside out and I could see that Tyrell had the same feeling too. When the service was done we got up and went to the restroom. By then, everyone was filing out of the chapel and going to their Sunday school classes. We stood in the hallway watching what everyone else was doing. We must have looked out of place because we were approached by two young men dressed in black suits, who immediately extended their hands and welcomed us. They asked a couple questions and we talked with them for a bit and let them know what was going on in our lives and that we were seeking answers. The two young men set up a meeting at our house to talk more about the church and the church's beliefs.

Days passed after our visit to the church and we were looking forward to our visit from the two guys in black suits, who turned out to be LDS missionaries. The day came and they showed up on our front door steps riding bikes. Our first visit was very informative. Even though I had been a member, I had been inactive for almost 10 years because life got in the way; I was simply too busy for church and all the responsibilities of church. Tyrell had questions and I had more questions. Over the next few weeks, these two young men came to our house and taught us about the church and the church's teachings. I like what the missionaries had to say about the church. The core of the belief was having a strong family. Family is what Tyrell and I wanted. These two young men, missionaries of the church taught us about the Heavenly Father's plan. Heavenly Father

wanted all his children to return to Him and we could do that and be an eternal family. We learned about the Temple and learned that we could be sealed together for forever and eternity through Temple ceremonies. These two men, no older than 23 years-old, had devoted themselves to spread the word of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. That these two men had saved up enough money to go on a two year mission, away from their families because of what they believed in, was admirable. These two young men go door to door spreading the word of the church. Sometimes they get invited in, other times, they get the door slammed in their faces. The day came when Tyrell had finished his lessons and was worthy to be baptized to become a member of the LDS church.

On December 27, 2011, exactly one week after getting married, Tyrell was baptized. Dressed in white from head to toe, Tyrell stood in the tub with the water up to his waist. There was pure happiness in my heart. Once again, my heart was dancing inside my chest. I was filled with that glowing light again and I had no other reaction except to shed a few tears. Elder Phelps, one of our missionaries, slowly put Tyrell underwater and cleansed him of all his sins. From that moment, our new life began. Things were perfect and all the things that happened in the past went down the drain with the rest of the water.

Today, I can honestly say that Tyrell and I are truly happy. We are active in our church and in our church callings; I work with the 8 to 11 year-old girls in a program called Faith in God and Tyrell works as a ward missionary. We have already been to the St. George Temple once and we have plans to go back in December 2012 to be sealed together for eternity. Looking back now, all the trials we went through was a learning experience and something we had to go through to get to where we are at now. I never thought we would be standing here today. Alcohol had a good grip on Tyrell but he turned his life around and because of one visit to the church, Tyrell secured his place, my place, and my son's place in Heaven. What can I say? Life is perfect. There is one big lesson I learned through this time in my life and that is to never give up on anyone, especially if you love them.

Ghost



Poem By: Kaytie Anderson

Oppressed and put to the test.
It's something you all ignore, but it needs to be addressed.
Please take a step back and put things into perspective
Before we are all beaten to our senses.
To entirely change us is what they've expected.
It's not right and it's not fair, but who seems to care?
I am just another long lost soul.
My heart is still with my family, without it I am dull.
To my family I am a ghost.
I miss them the most.
Right now I feel alone because I just want to be home.
They've told me to leave behind everything I have known.
It's so hard to let go of my culture,
But they watch us like vultures.
The name I now have is not mine.
They tell us we must learn to be fine.
But will I ever learn the ways?
I can trade my customs, but not my skin.
They hurt us on the outside,
But I feel the most pain within.
You see I have red skin.
Apparently it's not right.
The only way you're safe here is if you are white.

The Letter



Story By: Adrienne Martin-Wyatt

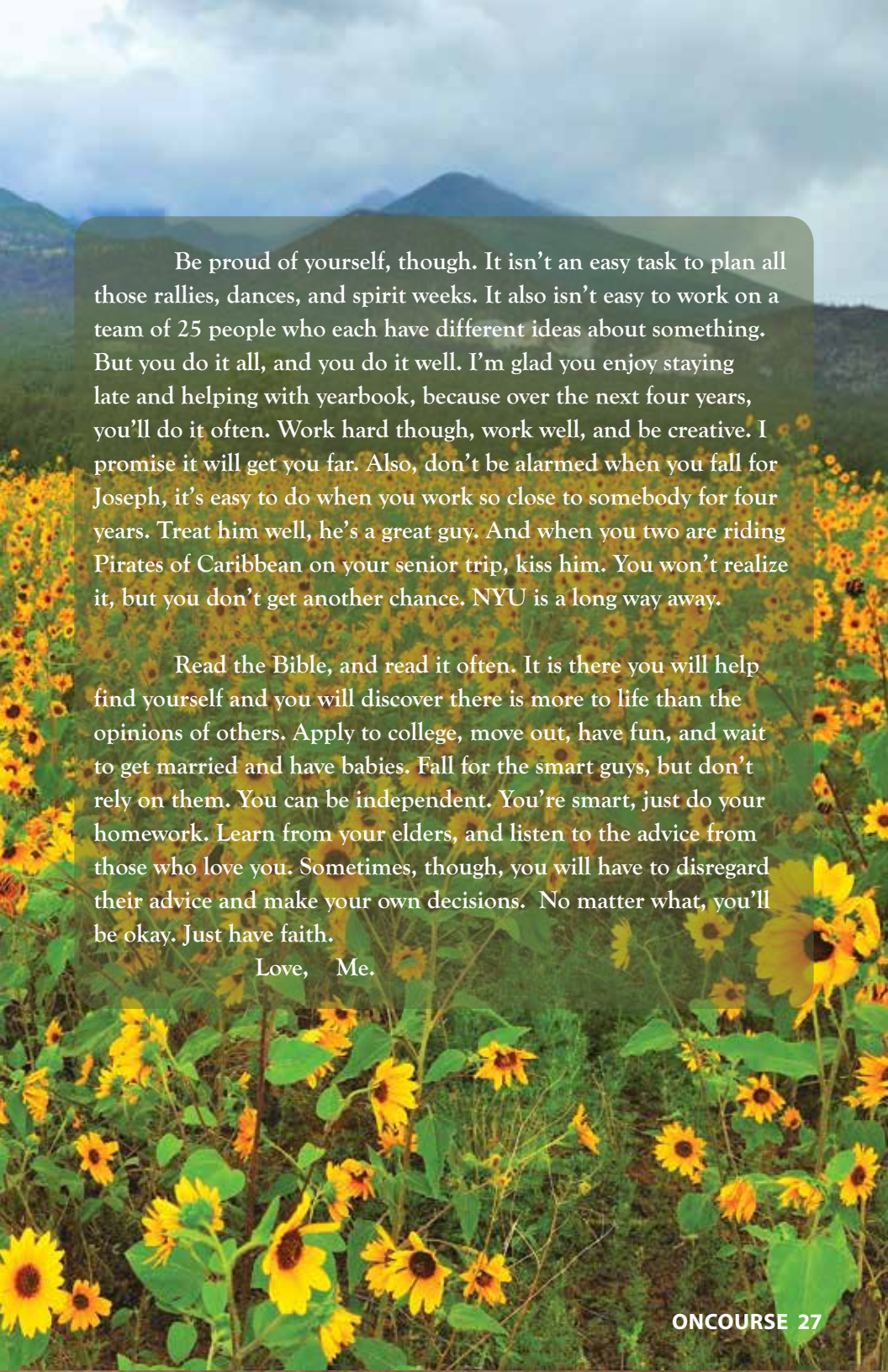
Dear _____,

Happy 13th birthday! You are now in your first year of high school. I know you thought 8th grade was scary and confusing, but high school is much scarier and much harder. But don't worry; you'll make it through just fine. You have wonderful friends and even though you don't know it, a wonderful family. I wish you'd be nicer to Mom though, she does so much for you. Where else would you have gotten your strong leadership abilities from? All she wants to do is be with you, get to know you, and guide you. Listen to her advice, because when you get to college, that's all you'll know. In fact, you'll call her often asking for more. Remember, as you're getting older, so is she.

Be careful with your words. Someday, you will regret being mean to your friends. I know how easy it is to fall into the routine of picking on the person of the week your friends are being mean to, but just try to remember how much it hurts when you're the person people are ragging on. I know how painful those days are, and even though it never feels like they will, they pass and people are on to somebody new. So please, don't join them. Be a friend to the one they're picking on, stand up against bullying, and stop using words as weapons. If you become a bully, you'll regret it for the rest of your life.



Photo By:
Kathleen Croft



Be proud of yourself, though. It isn't an easy task to plan all those rallies, dances, and spirit weeks. It also isn't easy to work on a team of 25 people who each have different ideas about something. But you do it all, and you do it well. I'm glad you enjoy staying late and helping with yearbook, because over the next four years, you'll do it often. Work hard though, work well, and be creative. I promise it will get you far. Also, don't be alarmed when you fall for Joseph, it's easy to do when you work so close to somebody for four years. Treat him well, he's a great guy. And when you two are riding Pirates of Caribbean on your senior trip, kiss him. You won't realize it, but you don't get another chance. NYU is a long way away.

Read the Bible, and read it often. It is there you will help find yourself and you will discover there is more to life than the opinions of others. Apply to college, move out, have fun, and wait to get married and have babies. Fall for the smart guys, but don't rely on them. You can be independent. You're smart, just do your homework. Learn from your elders, and listen to the advice from those who love you. Sometimes, though, you will have to disregard their advice and make your own decisions. No matter what, you'll be okay. Just have faith.

Love, Me.

Indian Boarding School



Poem By: Will Hernandez

I am excited to go to school
It smells like mud and rain
I go to class expecting to make friends
Immediately I am shut down
My expectations are wrong
I raise my hand to ask a question
I am hit from the side of the head
I ask why
Again I am hit
I did not speak English
I try to understand why
Why wasn't I allowed to be myself
I am stripped of my heritage
I am stripped of my voice
I am naked
I am empty
I am at boarding school



Photo By:
Abe Snider

Boston



Poem By: Hazel Kimball

the gainsboro sits humpty dumpt
on the corner
filthy brick wall covered in city
soot chewing gum
last night's cop fun

Ana Madonna Goddess of the Gutta
protect us--

the beat slams the door back--
and the pig bloods
roll up and grab another sista
for the road

to push her head down
slap her around
try and break her down
run her outta town

holymarymotherofthegoddess
protectyourgirlsnow
andinthebackseat



Photo By:
Abe Snider

A Special Summer Season



Story By: Lavon Hardy

When I was a young graduated Navajo girl about 18 years old, I was to experience my first feelings of love for another other than my family. It's odd the Navajo language has no real definitive word for "love," just a descriptive phrase: "a'yoo'oo'nii." The phrase may translate as, "to hold something valuable or dear." Well, this is an experience I hold dear and valuable to me as I would gauge all future relationships by it.

I graduated June 1986 and later I was expected at Brigham Young University by August. Filled with pure adrenaline, tingling mind rushes, and antsy anticipation, I was the first to go to college from my family and it was a huge responsibility to carry. I had to go to college and just do it! So after graduating and packing my stuff, I left California and returned to Arizona courtesy of Amtrak. While the train steadily snaked back on the rails, I couldn't stop thinking about my ascension into a higher place called "university" in the near future. We made it home to my windy, dusty rez town called Cameron and soon after, extended family members began arriving to congratulate me bearing humble, heartfelt gifts as only Navajo families can give.

Quieting my revving engine, I settled into daily activities with my two younger sisters, Neve and Gen, and Juli, a niece who lived with us. When we were done cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the livestock, I ventured up to a nearby church yard where the community youth and young adults came out to play volleyball and basketball on the only concrete courts in Cameron. We congregated without notice and we knew the games started as the day cooled off. As the sun radiated less heat, we formed teams to challenge each other until the sun dropped into the ocean, leaving us in posted light auras and truck headlight streams. We looked forward to the games and meeting up

with friends and family. Our young selves enjoyed the competition, the teasing and the exertions as we played. In slow motion, you could see and hear that summer's happiness, excitement and camaraderie. I can still picture my young friends running, jumping, diving, laughing, passing, teasing and being so alive.

So it was there that I saw my good friend, Danny, a boy I went to boarding school with and a fine, healthy, young man. He was very adept and serious at the game of baskets. He was to join a basketball league in August that was headed to play in Italy. I was surprised and happy to hear about his good fortune. We were both leaving the dry town of Cameron at the end of summer. We had reconnected when we were both 16 and just liked hanging out and reminiscing about good old boarding school and talking about our different high schools at that time. He was attending school in Utah, and I was in California. I had a faint memory about a boy giving me quarters at boarding school and he confessed it was him. My family knew his family in our small little rez community.

Around the courts the people parked, making a ring of spectators cheering from tailgates and truck hoods. As darkness covered the courts, people sat on the church sidewalks and the empty courts and just rested, talked and listened to loud music. Danny, his nephew, my three little tails and I sat in a group to talk, tease, and tell tall tales. On a particularly cool night after the games were over, Danny invited me to walk down the road to the store for sodas. I acquiesced and we started off by ourselves. Lately I had been feeling more inclined to get to the courts earlier to catch a few minutes with Danny, alone. I was relieved when he chose to sit by me first and elated when he smiled at me from across the court during a game. I felt an unfamiliar tingle mixed with apprehension. Pretty soon he was sitting closer and we stayed later on the court after everyone had left. It was a game of horse or just listening to the Cars or Billy Idol that kept us there together.

As we began our walk down to the store, we silently analyzed what we were dipping into. Was it warm or cold? Then, he stopped and turned to me and quietly said, "Vonnie, I think too much of you,

ah, ah, I mean, you mean a lot to me.” There it was, we meant more to each other than young classmates, community friends, or even family acquaintances. I, too, felt “something,” and our tangled Navajo minds couldn’t find the word for it. LOVE is what we labeled it to the best of our limited awareness of the subject. We loved our moms and family, our favorite pets, or even a favorite meal, but this was way different.

The confession was a release as long held emotions came forward to be acknowledged. We wanted to validate the moment with a kiss but were unduly interrupted by my little sisters as they caught up with us on that dark dirt road to the store. They giggled as we settled to hold fingers and they tried to break us apart as if in the game, Red Rover, Red Rover. We were happy and serene as we held hands. I could feel the calluses on his hand and a slight grip every now and then, as if to make sure it was real. In that moment, my senses were heightened. I could smell his cooled game sweat mingled with his mint gum as he talked. I could hear our feet crunch unseen pebbles and grind red dirt as we all walked slowly down the road. Somewhere above us, we could still hear faint sounds of music from the courts we left behind. My little sisters ran ahead of us, happy to be included and anxious to get a treat.

It was a moment I would always remember, the five of us walking into the night with two of us in love. Then summer ended. Danny and I reluctantly parted in new directions. We could have taken different paths together but we each had commitments to honor and so we left our dry dusty town and each other. So it was, life had different plans for us and it was okay. We had a chance to experience something surreal, like a comet passing in our century. I have always been a little melancholy about our parting but was able to adjust and carry on. Today I muse about the respect he may have had for me to walk away and let me begin my life and his own. I, now and then, recall the past to help the present and fill my quiet idle moments with poignant memories of the young girl I was.



Photo By:
Kathleen Croft

The Viola



Story By: Megan Herlihy

I used to play the viola but now I do not. Fourth grade was the first year I was eligible to play an instrument in school. I always wanted to stand out from the crowd so I decided to play the one instrument all the kids really were not interested in: the viola. Every day after school, I practiced and practiced. I had played my viola so much in the first two weeks that I had developed blisters all over my fingers. And where my viola rests between my chin and shoulder, I developed a rash.

I remember looking at professional orchestra players in books. They always had a chin rest for their instruments. Those rests were beautiful, made with bright shiny metal; they would suspend your instrument a good two inches between your shoulder and chin. I envied those rests, but never did get one. The one time my mom and I went over to Zera Music Land to get more resin for my bow, I saw one. I tried to convince her how essential it was for me to get it. I pleaded over and over with her in the store. I even remember asking her to use my allowance money. "So when did you start to get allowance money?" My mother asked with this puzzled look on her face. This time I wasn't able to use any tricks on my mom. Even the big brown puppy-eyed look wasn't working. Thinking I could pull a fast one by her but not lucky enough.

I never was able to get that chin rest. Instead, my music conductor was nice enough to give me this ugly yellow sponge. It was sat between my viola and shoulder held into place with a rubber band. I remember thinking that it was the ugliest and most unprofessional aspect of my instrument. It felt like a piece of dried up sea coral, scratching against the wood grains of my viola. For some reason it would always leave a rash. To this day, I wonder if it contained any latex. I am allergic to latex.

My conductor had noticed how I was starting to improve with my viola. By midyear,

I had excelled past most of my classmates on reading music and playing songs that are more advanced. I was doing so well, that at my first recital the conductor asked me if I would like to be first chair violists. I was so excited! I was going to be the center of attention, sitting in the front row. I even had my own solo to perform.

The night of my concert, my most important family members showed up. I saw my grammie and poppie, aunt Debbi and her girls Breanna and Madison, and of course my parents and sister Caitlin. Right before the recital started, the conductor pulled me aside and asked if I had my music all ready to perform. Oh no! I did not bring my songbook with me. In a panic, I asked to borrow one from another student. I was trying to keep my voice softer than a whisper so that the conductor could not hear, but she did, and refused to let me do so. Instead, she told me that I would not be performing the solo piece in the concert and instead, she would. I guess it was my punishment.

The room was silent and the red velvet curtains began to open. Have you ever held your breath underwater for so long that you felt like your lungs would collapse? That is the feeling that took over my whole body in the few seconds those curtains opened. First a wave of heat, then a cold chill causing all the tiny hairs on my arms to stand at attention. As the final curtain folded into itself on the corner of the stage, the audience arose from their seats. I remember thinking they all looked like little rocket ships, soaring right into the sky. Before the Concert started, the conductor decided to make an announcement. "Thank you all for coming. Your children have worked so hard to get to this point and I am truly excited to share their long journey with you. From not knowing what a note was, to reading music effortlessly, they are great musicians. On a side note, we have our first chair violist, Megan Herlihy, who was scheduled to perform a solo in our next piece. However, due to her neglecting to bring in her music book, I will be substituting for her instead. Thank you and enjoy the concert." I could feel my face become redder with embarrassment, and then the look of anger appeared. I did not know what to do.

Throughout the whole concert, I kept on replaying that horrible speech my music instructor had said. “I’ll show her,” I thought in silence as I tried harder to concentrate on the music than on the thought of that horrific speech.

What kind of a cruel hearted person would lower herself to embarrass a twelve-year-old girl? I was a very talented fresh musician. Even without my music book, I still played all of the songs with the whole orchestra flawlessly. With all of those practice sessions spending countless hours in my room I felt like Rapunzel trapped in a tower. Except instead of waiting for my prince charming, I was awaiting the praise and complements following my music.

After the concert, I had confided in both my parents and they too did not know what to say or how to express their feelings regarding that little speech from my conductor. I remember my grandparents telling me that it was okay and not to worry, there would be other times to shine. To this day, I am not sure if my parents were truly disappointed in me as their child, or if they just wanted to backhand that rude wench of a music conductor for embarrassing me instead.

After the concert, my family came back to our house. My mother served coffee and cannolis to all the adults. My grammie made my oh so favorite refrigerator roll: a whole box of chocolate wafers pressed together by fresh-whipped whipping cream, shaped like a log, topped with finely grated baker’s chocolate. As you would cut into it, the pattern reminded me of a Zebra’s back, black and white stripes, each one slightly different. Every bite was like a little slice of heaven. I loved it.

After everyone left, I retired to my room. I found my music composition book on top of the dresser where I had left it. As swiftly as I could I grabbed a hold of it and threw it under my bed with a force so strong I felt as though the floor underneath me would collapse. I never wanted to look at that book again.



Art By:
David Auble



For Those Deserving



Story By: Erin Licari

It's a sad day to say the least
A memorial for those who fought the
beast
A beast so tragic, a war filled with fear
For those who should be forever near
As my eyes pass through every name
Tears trickle down like quiet rain
But as my eyes wander through the
fallen
I see something so startling; I'm so
caught off guard
How could someone make an unfortu-
nate mistake?

And write that I too had such a horrible
fate?
My name is etched on a wall
I feel so confused and honestly wrong
To be written about on something that I
don't belong
Someone must know, but who to ask?
A fix is needed, a permanent mask
For I had no part in this horrific task
I am not worthy to be honored in this
way
But for those that did I simply pray.



Photo By:
Abe Snider

Grandmother and Blue Girl



Story By: Hazel Kimball

The old woman was grateful. The strength had returned to her hands during the night. She was sitting by the edge of the canyon wondering where Blue Girl had gone off to now that the sun had crept to the ledge where the interesting red-brown color had lived for so many years. She knew her twisted legs could not carry her down the trail and over the side, so she waited. The girl returned with a small basket of the corn that they had brought with them. As she ate, she remembered her Grandmother, and of the stories that had kept the people before they came to this place. This place of color and shadow.

She knew how to find the color her people used. Her Grandmother had taught her these many years ago. She would go with Grandfather, sometime for days, and search out the colors of the plants, the earth, and the canyon walls. When Grandfather became too old to climb the walls and rocky ledges, she did it for him. Much the same as Blue Girl is doing for her now. "Where is that girl?" she thought. "She had better be leaving snake alone!" Just as the old woman was pushing her walking stick into the rocky earth so that she could rise, Blue Girl appeared on the ledge across from Grandmother with the strong, hard rock that Grandfather's Grandfather had found in the river below. He had formed a sharp edge so that it could dig through the soft rock that covered much of this land.

Blue Girl was a good child. She was her grandmother's favorite, from even as a baby. This child, at a very young age, could scamper along and up the cliffs of this place. She would chase the animals who lived here and get close enough to prod them with a stick. Not too long ago, Blue Girl caught a baby mountain goat, and this goat is now a pet for the children back at the pueblo. The soft rock that was being scraped from the side of the cliff was the shade of red-brown the people valued in their painting of the kiva walls. Blue Girl was filling the large baskets they had brought with them. This was going to take a long time. The best they could do was to take what they could carry, and alert the men in the Pueblo as to where the good color was.

Grandmother was pleased.

Time passed and now Grandmother was a very old woman who could not honor her powers. That is, her twisted legs could no longer

carry her to the land of color and shadow. Thus, Blue Girl grew in the tradition of her ancestors. She found the good color for her people and lived with Grandmother. Blue Girl had not been long at Grandmother's hut when the old woman took her leave.

Here is the story of Grandmother's end and of Blue Girl's beginning.

The sun had brought light to the plaza sometime earlier. Blue Girl had prepared the corn and ground the colors to a fine dust. She shook out her sleeping mat and had thrown some nettle and lavender about the earthen floor. This was to quell the fleas that harried her to near madness nightly. Blue Girl poured her morning bowl of water, and considered that Grandmother was dead. After all, the old woman was always awake well before the light had reached the plaza. To wake the girl, she would knock the sleeping head of the Blue Girl with her walking stick.

"Yes, of course. Grandmother was dead." She must now find and listen to the old woman's echo. Blue Girl sat in the shadow of the ledge behind the hut. She sat very still and straight. She cleared her ears and opened her nose. She breathed the color of the rock, felt its shadow and found Grandmother's breath dancing above the rim of her water bowl. "Hello Grandmother. You have passed joyfully, I hope?" "Will you please share the last of your life with me?"

The old woman's elegant breath settled about Blue Girl's ears, and here is what Blue Girl heard: "As the time before darkness passed, I heard death approach. I awoke to talk to mountain goat. I said to mountain goat, that it has been a good and long life. I spent many happy years on the ledges with you, and found much color. I have comforted my people and helped to keep away the evil that tries always to creep among them. And mountain goat, you have been most gracious to have asked your fleas not to bite me all these years while I have slept. Will you now do the same for Blue Girl? And if she wishes, will you please be her counsel; as wise always and as faithful as you have been for me? Thank you and goodbye."

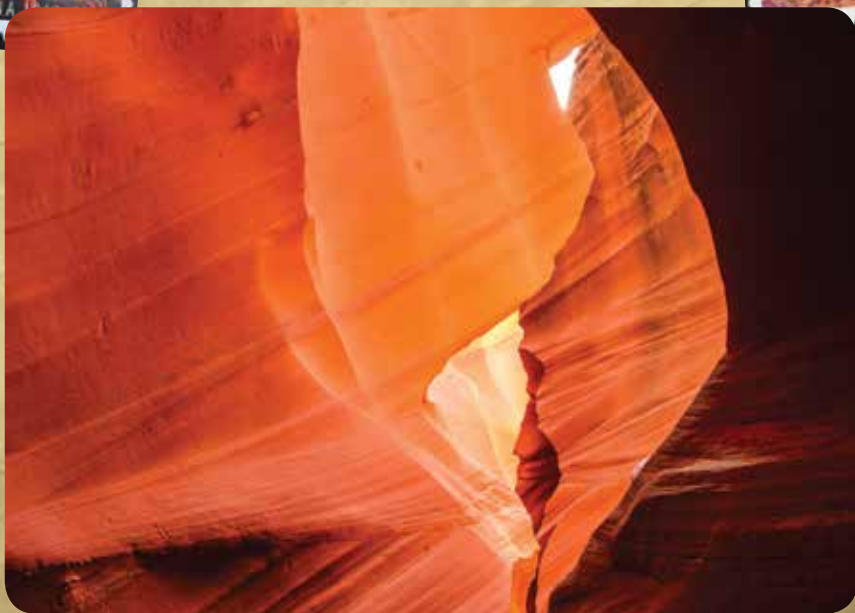
"And now, my powers pass to you, Blue Girl."

Blue Girl heard this and as Grandmother's echo faded, she closed her eyes and while matching the last of the old woman's rhythm, she breathed in Grandmother's breath and all that the old woman was flew into Blue Girl's nose.

The sun traveled beyond the ledges and there was no longer shadow. The young Shaman stirred and rose. She gathered her water bowl and her thoughts. She then went to tend to Grandmother.



Photos By:
Abe Snider



Ross and Rachel



Story By: Celia Aguilar

I know for me, it is so hard to think of anything that is embarrassing in my life. But when I think about the past and who I once was, the term embarrassment hits it right on the mark. Who was that girl that looked just like my present self? Same set of eyes, same hair, but with a completely different personality.

The year was 2006, the fall after I graduated from high school. Back then I seemed so happy. I had school, my friends, and finally the one I know I loved. Joey and I were our own “Ross and Rachel” from F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Everyone always thought we would be together in the end. At one point so did I. I mean he was everything I ever asked for. He was a caring gentleman whom I have known since the sixth grade, who always understood my needs and passion in life. After seeing him back in town for the first time in over a year, those feelings were still there. It didn’t seem like we were living in two completely different worlds at that point. The love was still there, and I couldn’t wait to introduce him to my Younglife friends.

It was homecoming week, and I was completely ecstatic to be there. It was my first game since I graduated and I couldn’t help feeling a sense of pride showing off my boyfriend. This was our first real public appearance since we started to date again. The nerves slowly faded away when we entered the parking lot. Joey took me in his arms and gave me that smile to let me know that my friends were going to love him.

The stadium was packed. Orange and black were seen everywhere: people’s faces and clothing and even the stand itself. The pride of the Vikings was in the air that night. It seemed so different now that I’m an alumni. Even though it has only been a couple of months, it still was surreal. The Younglife leaders always sat at the end of the stadium. They felt that it would be the appropriate place to sit since we weren’t actually school or faculty members. The butterflies in my stomach were getting bigger each and every second. I do not know why it was so important to me to get my friends’ approval.

My family loved Joey, wasn't that enough for me? We headed towards the group of leaders. Joey held my hand, and I could see the intimidation in his eyes.

"Everyone, this is Joey." I say pretty loud, "Joey, these are the Younglife leaders." One of the guys looked at him from head to toe, and made a face I couldn't believe. "Hey Joey, first question: Are you Christian?" I couldn't help but think that this was a rude question to ask.

"Yes I am." Joey replied

"Do you go to church?"

"Nope"

"Well then you're not a Christian."

The next thing I hear are the rude comments my so-called friends were making to the one man I loved.

"Cindy, what are you doing with this guy? He doesn't go to church, so he must not believe in God."

Each and every one of them treated him so disrespectfully. But what upset me the most was that I let it happen. I didn't stand up for the one person who has always stood up for me. How embarrassing is that? These people always let me believe that I had my own views and judgment, but since Joey didn't fit into their criteria of perfection, he was out of the club. I looked into Joey's eyes and saw the hurt and anger towards these people. I can still feel the shakiness in my hand in holding his own. And I just stood there and watched.

This one incident helped me understand that you should never judge a book by its cover. Joey never got a chance to shine with the people I once considered my friends. But he did open up my eyes. After that moment, I saw these people for who they really are. I was able to see the judgmental side of this group and I realized that I could never be that harsh toward someone that I don't even know. They said they did that for my own good and that I could have found someone better for myself. It doesn't surprise me that we never stayed together after all that happened. Joey couldn't believe that I became the kind of person who would let herself be pushed into a belief that wasn't her own. Today I still can't believe that I let this whole thing happen either.



Art By:
Belinda Ayze



After our break-up, we remained good friends. Joey saw me quit Younglife and turn my back on the people I once thought of as friends. With their disapproval they never really talked to me again. Joey also helped me believe in the word karma. A couple of months after homecoming we ran into the Younglife group. After a civil exchange of hellos they asked what I had been up to. I told them that we just came back from an art class. They had no idea how artistic he was, but then again they never gave him a chance. When he showed them his drawing, the tears welled up. His piece showed Jesus carrying a cross and Joey in the audience. They couldn't believe how beautiful it was.

"I thought you said you weren't a Christian?" One of the leaders asked.

"I said I didn't go to church, I never said I wasn't a Christian." Joey replied.

The look of embarrassment on their faces is still in my memory.

The Rocky Mountain River



Story By: Gabriel Haskie

Lee's Ferry is on the Colorado River. It is named after a man named John D. Lee, a Mormon settler who had 17 wives and who established a ferry in 1871. This ferry was the only place to cross the Colorado River for sixty years until the Navajo bridge was built. This place is my backdoor, and I block out everything from the world when I arrive at this delightful area. Lee's Ferry is a place of complete serenity. Lee's Ferry is composed and quiet. My imagination takes over the moment I see the trail to my favorite fishing spot. The first thing that comes to mind is the feeling of excitement of me holding that fishing rod, waiting to feel that nibble of a voracious rainbow trout. I become impatient for my arrival to the river. The hike to my fishing spot feels like an eternity away.

The beautiful trail to my area of destination is approximately one and half miles south of the river. The hike is overwhelming because of the magnificent scenery of the canyon. The attractive colors of red and brown earth toned colors hits your eyes at first glance. The canyon walls are high as sky scrapers and you feel as if you are in the Grand Canyon. You are not, but you are at the beginning of it. This point is where the river rafters start their journey down the Grand Canyon. It is slightly similar because they share the same land and rock formations, as well as the same river ecosystem. Once you pass the highest point of the trail, you can see the dark green picturesque river on your left side. This point is the halfway mark.

Rock climbing is what needs to be done to reach the area of isolation. Inhabitants are hardly there, because it is highly disguised to an individual's eyes. No inhabitants means peace of mind.

At river's edge I set up my chair and gear rapidly so I can cast my rod into the translucent river. At some parts of the river it is transparent to the naked eye, at which you can see the magnificent creatures in the stream of water. Once you have your line rigged up you finally get to cast your best cast, and hope you cast into the right area where there is an enormous trout lurking. Once you have your line in, you just wait. You are left with the beautiful scenery and where your imagination has no limit.

My senses are so keen with what I feel, smell, and see when I am at my fishing spot. I can feel the rushing cold water between my toes, and it feels so good after the sun beating down on me. I can feel the mist of the rushing water against my face. Another thing that catches my attention is the aroma of the area. I can smell the water, trees, and the sand. The scent is so refreshing that it makes you feel relaxed and revived. The scent of the earth is so pure and tranquility takes over. At this moment the river is quenching my soul's thirst for freedom of the outdoors. At this very moment I feel free, and untouchable.

Then all of a sudden I feel a slight tug on my line and then a jerk. That's when I know I have a fish behind that line that stretches into the depths of the water. I become overwhelmed with excitement and it takes over my whole body. The best part of this experience is when it is fighting and you treat it like it is a precious thing on this earth. This fish is so precious, and you must treat it with respect and kindness. You treat it like this, because you don't want to lose that fish. Then finally what you get is your trophy that is a bright colorful rainbow trout. This is the moment I've been waiting for, my first big catch of the day. The long drive and the long hike to my favorite place of fishing is what I've waited for what seems like eternity. I take a deep breath and take it all in and am thankful that I caught dinner. Now I can throw my rod back into the river and start the excitement all over again.



Photo By:
Abe Snider



Photo By:
John Peacock

This Place; My Place



Story By: Lauren Fischer

Places; there are many places in this world. Many serve as an escape, while others serve as a prison. We all have our favorites. Some prefer the sandy beaches of a far away tropical island, where others prefer the snow covered cap of a brilliantly high mountain, and others still prefer something more familiar, such as their home town coffee shop. My favorite place may be different than most and I don't even have to leave my home to get there. When I think of an escape, somewhere calming, I think of this place. It's a place where I can be completely enclosed, yet completely free. I'm free to be in my own little world, closed off from reality. This place is my closet. Sure, most may say that a girl's closet is a stereotypical favorite place to be; it has all her clothes, her shoes and maybe her accessories. But, this is not why I feel so comfortable in this tiny room. Yes, my closet is home to many of those things, but my closet is also my escape. When I need space, time to think, time to be alone, this is where I retreat. The light in there is dim, which I like. It's peaceful and allows me to forget about the hardships of my day and sink into a coma of my own thoughts. When I don't feel like listening to my own thoughts, there's always enough light for me to read or write or draw and it doesn't overpower the small area.

My closet has a crevice that I fit into perfectly, and I'm one of those people who never puts their clean clothes away properly. I always find myself nestled into a pile of clean shirts, blankets and towels. I breathe slowly to fully appreciate the clean laundry smell that barely tickles the air. I love to just sit there and stare at the

shapes the plaster has made on my walls. I live in an older apartment where the patch work has been preformed rather sloppily. Shapes gently caress every corner of my home, but none tell stories quite like my closet.

My closet tells me stories through these pictures and each story is unique. My favorite shape is one right by the floor board; it looks like a little man walking along a path. I've named him Joe, for no unparticular reason. Joe seems sad to me and I often find myself feeling sorry for him. You see, if you follow the floor boards, the texture along Joe's path changes drastically. Right now, he's walking through a valley.

The valley eventually turns to mountain, which reach a beach and across the ocean lays another valley. Finally, at the end of this valley, there is a house with little plaster children playing in the yard. I know that this is Joe's home and that is where he belongs, but he's so far from his destination. Joe knows this too. Looking at him, you can tell how depressed he is. His shoulder is slumped and his head hangs low. Poor Joe; I look away because his situation begins to depress me all over again. Looking around my closet I begin to relax again. Each item that lives in my closet has a different story to tell; a different memory attached to it. I love being able to sit on the floor and relive my life.

My life; it's been pretty stressful and today is just the type of day that I would crawl into my closet and lock myself away from the rest of the world for a while. As said before, my closet is a calming place. I settle deeper into my crevice and focus on something else. My eyes go to my shoes. I have a rather large pile of shoes and I use the fact that I'm a girl as an excuse for that. I love my shoes, both for sentimental and materialistic reasons. For example, I've had one pair of moccasins for six years. I refuse to get rid of them because of all the memories they hold, hence the sentimental value. I also have a pair of heels that I've hardly worn, but I still won't dispose of them because I like the way they look. It's rather silly, actually. I look up above me to where my

shirts hang and my eyes stop at a particular black blouse.

I love that blouse. I wore it to the interview that got me the job that I so successfully perform. I wore it to my sister's graduation and my brother's play and even on my first date with the man I fell in love with. There are so many happy memories that that blouse holds, but I'll never wear it again. One of my best friends passed away recently. It was very unexpected, and as with any death, his passing left a wake of sorrow behind it.

I wore that blouse to his funeral. It still smells of roses. There were roses all over the place. On the floor, in the pews and up by his casket. They even framed the pathway up to the funeral home. I know that the flowers were there to ease the pain and honor his life. As I sit and remember the ceremony I become overwhelmed by the smell of roses. You think that this memory would make me feel sad, but I felt surprisingly calm. That day was horrible, the day I received the phone call; but today isn't that day.

Looking at that shirt I can only remember the good times I spent with my friend. That's why I won't wear the blouse again. I want to remember the good things about him. I don't want to remember his death; I want to remember the roses. At that moment I look back at Joe and think about the journey he's on. His path seems like a hard one. Everyone's path has its challenges though. There are speed bumps in every road, some small like a flat tire, some big like the death of a loved one, but the world keeps turning. Joe looks different to me now. His shoulders aren't slumped and I can almost make out a smile on his tiny plaster face. I smiled and said "It's your journey that molds you isn't it Joe? It's your journey that makes you who you are." I follow his path to the little home on the other end of the closet. "It's your journey that helps you find where you belong." And suddenly, today wasn't such a bad day. Life is what you make it and it's all about perspective.



Photos By:
Kathleen Croft



Promotes student achievement by showcasing student coursework and demonstrates the variety of intellectual and artistic opportunities at Coconino Community College.

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