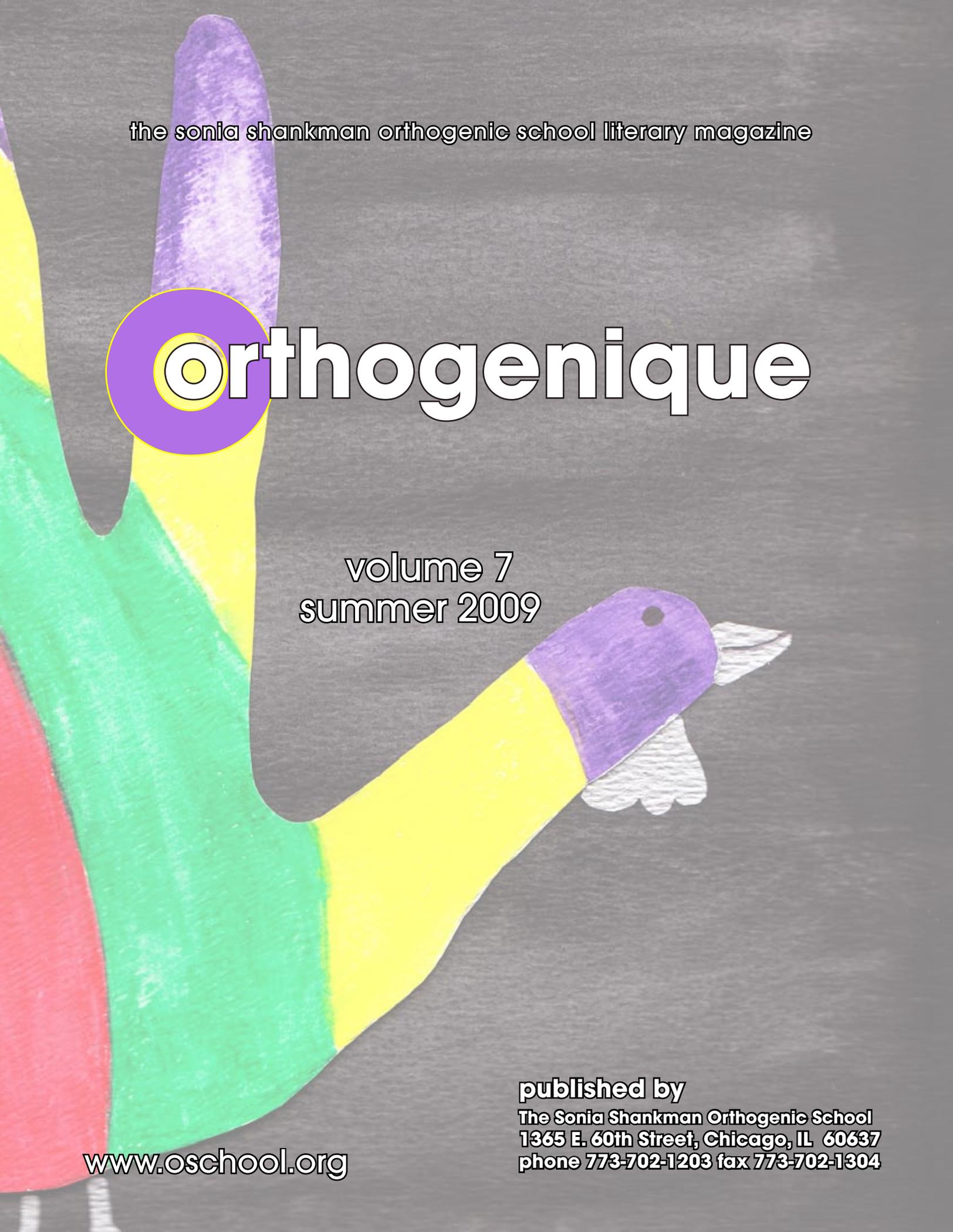


volume 7
summer 2009

Orthogenic

the sonia shankman orthogenic school literary magazine





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Orthogenique

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Orthogenique

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the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School

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Many thanks to the people who subscribed to this issue of Orthogenique. Your donations are greatly appreciated. All others who wish to subscribe to this magazine can do so with the order form at the back of this issue.

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SPECIAL NOTICE TO READERS

The next issue is scheduled for a January release. Anyone who wishes to contribute artwork or writing to Orthogenique can do so by giving the piece to Michelle Z. or Michelle P.

Pieces submitted will be used at the discretion of Orthogenique staff and will be incorporated into existing spreads and sections.

forward

Words have always fascinated me. So much more than a series of symbols on a piece of paper or computer screens, words seem alive, always changing in meaning and usage. They can import emotional as well as factual information. They can lift you up or crush you depending on their combinations, delivery, and intent. Some words are just plain fun to say or have a musical quality to hear. Ultimately, however, words are meant to communicate meaning, often layers and layers of meaning.

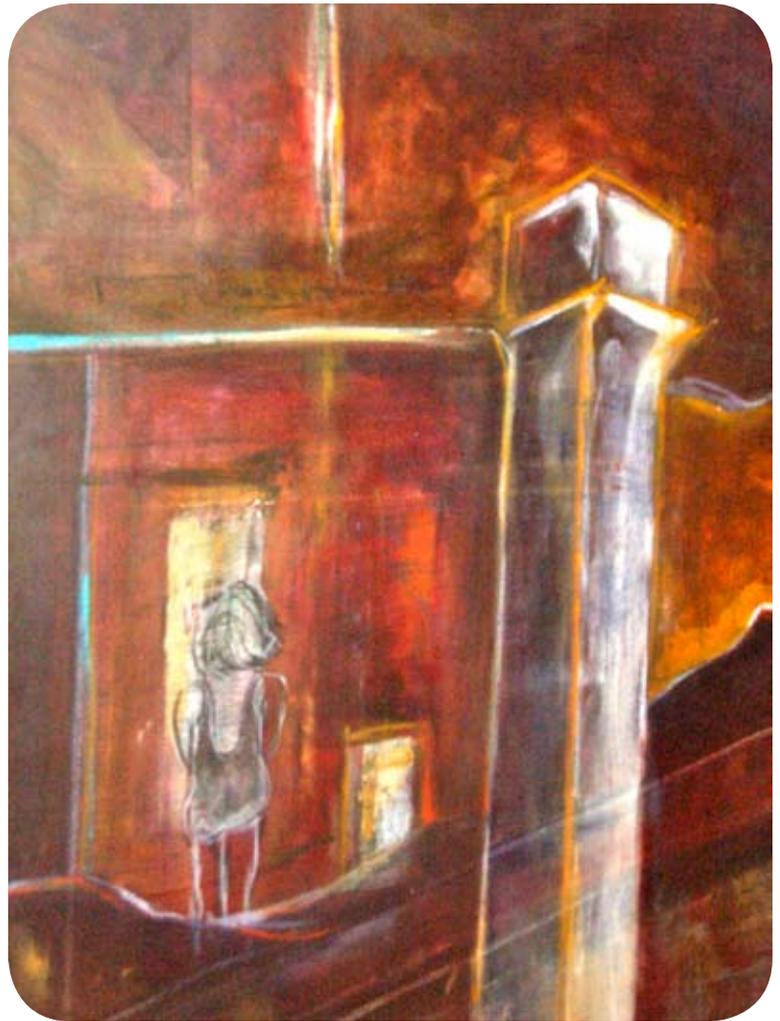
For each issue of Orthogenique, the day on which we choose the themes for the current issue is a very exciting one. Michelle and I never know what to expect when we begin the brainstorming process, but there are inevitably surprises of scary, intriguing and tasty little word morsels. The personality of the group starts to emerge with the list that they generate. Some groups show a thread of hope, while others take a walk on the slightly more dark side. Either way, the final choices have multiple angles from which they can be approached in the creation of art and writing.

Much like art, which is universally accepted as a medium open to interpretation and reaction, words can also generate and encourage creativity. A painting of a young girl in an urban setting can be seen as a depressing look at humanity against a backdrop of industrialism, or a moment of reflection in the midst of monuments of progress. Perhaps the viewer would focus more on the young girl alone in a large landscape and see her as isolated. Alternatively, she could be seen as finding a space for herself to think and be. We respond to the colors, red can carry very specific connotations, as well as the subjects and composition; the layers of paint create layers of possibility. This is not that different from words.

We respond to words in regards to the subjects we often hear them associated with as well as to their sounds and meaning. Infection, often used in regards to medical conditions, carries with it a traditionally negative connotation. Infection is something that rages unchecked, spreads easily, and destroys in its path. Our writers, however, also found the lighter side of infection. They saw others being infected with happiness or hope as well as death and disease. Some infection is portrayed as accidental, while some is definitely purposeful. The focus of the word became the spreading of something with no judgment on whether or not that something was positive or negative.

Truth, on the other hand, generally has a positive connotation. We are taught not to lie at young ages, seeing this as a hard and fast rule to hold to; then as we get older we are faced with those moments in which a little white lie seems like the kindest most appropriate option. People say that want to hear the truth, but Jack Nicholson's character in *A Few Good Men*, wasn't wrong in indicating that there are times when people cannot handle the truth. Much like infection, truth can destroy a person, eating away at their emotions. Still desirable, the fallout of truth can make for an interesting exploration in writing.

These varying perspectives on theme choices are part of what makes Orthogenique as vibrant as it is. No theme means the same to each student, and their individual expressions of theme never disappoint. Keep reading for infected truth; you will walk away with new perspective. Honest.

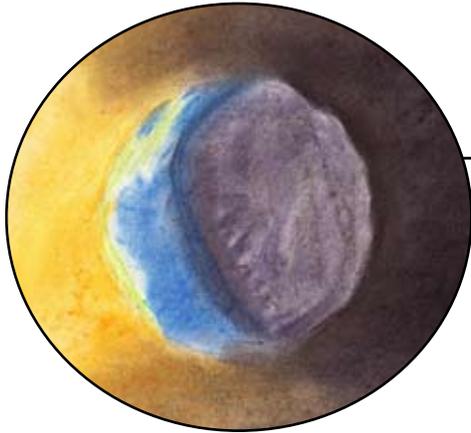


Written by Michelle Pegram, Artwork by Michelle Zarrilli



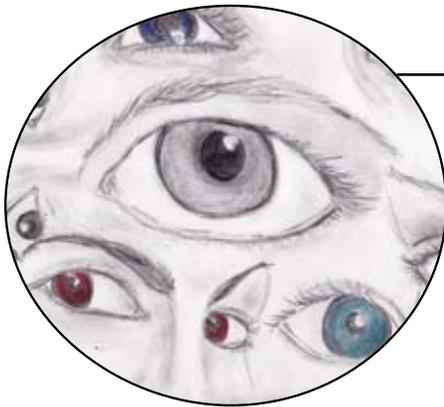
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truth



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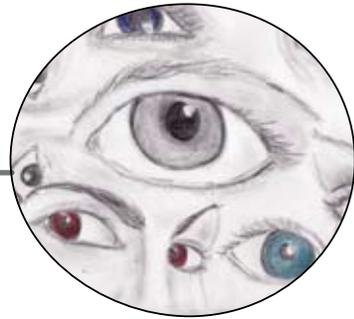


Orthogénique

infected



truth



W

The wind sweeps me off my feet
The wind crisply sways
As I cry out to the winds
A kite sails by...
With a miniscule boy behind
His leaping to the sky, with but a slight glint in his eye
The wind of the day, muttering a tune
Brings all this grace
And beauty forward
A flower breaks free of its encasing petals
Like the daffodils in the spring
I start to twirl,
Dance,
Sing to the birds,
My body feels light as a feather
Then the clouds start to

7

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*A Poem
By Olivia*



Smile in the Storm
By A. James N. Colored Pencil Drawing



Carefree field Colored Pencil Drawing
By A. James M.

Like cotton candy
Blankets and blankets
Then

BOOM

CLAP

The thunder screams
Mother Nature is spreading her wit among us
That one, minute boy's smile has kept my smile brighter than ever
As I see a cloud, I become a child with a kite

Spreading Pain

Short Story by Olivia

Platonic Bonds I by Alan



As a single night passes I watch out my window a young child who paces back and fourth six times just as I had done every day since about two months ago. Tonight was the night I decided I would find out why the child was there and what it wanted.

I grabbed my dad's flashlight, and quiet as a mouse, I tip-toed down the two flights of stairs separating my bedroom from the entrance hall. The second my bare feet felt the cold, hard wooden floor, I slid

my feet into my flip-flops as though I was walking on eggshells.

After a slow, careful turn of the doorknob, the front door opened and my foot balanced gently on the pavement outside. Step after step, being cautious as to not stun the child, I got close enough to see that it was a young girl. She looked like she had just come out of school, with her grey jumper dress that appeared to have been much worn. She had tomato red hair, and was as pale as a white sheet.

As I whispered softly "Excuse me," and gently tapped on her shoulder, she turned around and shrieked. This girl only looked to be about five or six years old yet she could cry out like a crazed Jonas Brothers fanatic!

I was about to turn my back on her and go back inside, but her tattered grey jumper had a pin on it that seemed to resemble that of a nametag. She stopped shrieking, at least for the moment.

I walked over, not too quickly or too slowly, and sat down on the old bus stop bench a few feet away from her. She hesitated but slowly she made her way to the bench where I sat. My first instinct was to see if she was ok. For some reason, and I just shyly smiled at her. She started to slowly open her mouth to speak.

Finally she said, "Hello, my name is Victoria Adams." Victoria bent her knees with one ankle behind the other and bowed her head.

I was struggling to let words come loose from my throat. I managed to choke out something that possibly could have been deciphered as, "Hello Victoria, I'm Jasmine."

The one thing that struck me was that Victoria had a very strong European accent, I couldn't quite pin point which country for sure, although my thoughts said British. As I learned more and more about Victoria, I discovered that she had been brought up in Seaford, in England. As Victoria went on telling me about her life, it seemed like she had lived for ages. After what seemed like days had passed, she turned to me with a questioning look on her face.

She asked, "Jasmine, if you don't mind my asking what day is it today?"

My reply was Thursday. She looked at me like I had lost it.

"What, it is Thursday," I reassured her.

"I am well aware of that. I wanted to know more along the lines of what date it is."

"Oh, it's the 24th of June," I said. "Why, is something wrong?"

Victoria shook her head weakly. She also started to tear up slightly. It was almost as though she was ashamed of saying that there was something wrong. I reached my hand over gently and started rubbing her shoulder. I started speaking of how when I feel down it can be helpful to share my troubles with someone. Victoria started sobbing and it seemed as if a waterfall was pouring down her face. She had to catch her breath for a second as she was choking on her tears.

As she slowly calmed down, Victoria began to tell me that her mother was dead as well as her father. She had made her way over to New York with her brother, Jake. She then continued by sharing that somehow Jake had wound up in the hospital with some sort of disease. The doctors had called it Yellow Fever. Victoria, naturally concerned about her brother, had

taken it upon herself to find out how she could help cure him.

As much as I wished I could help, I really didn't know much about Yellow Fever other than the fact that there have been some epidemics *of it in the 1700's and 1800's*, that is if the novel 1793 has any accuracy. I suggested to Victoria that we visit the hospital where Jake had been admitted. She thought it was a reasonably good idea.

Victoria followed me down the street to Dartmouth Medical Center. As I entered the marble-floored lobby, I noticed the information desk over to the right. I approached the desk and inquired whether Jake Adams was still in the Intensive Care Unit.

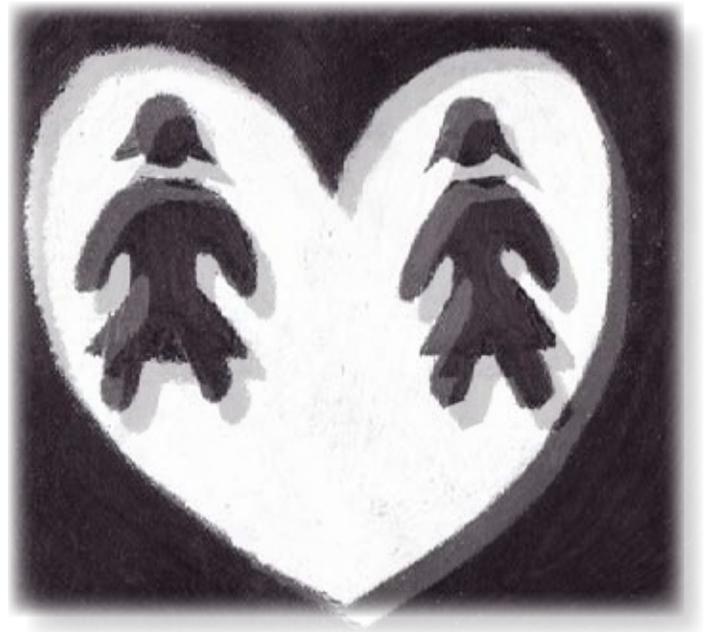
The lady at the desk answered in a very monotonous tone that "Jake Adams died two days ago, is there anything else that I can do for you?"

Victoria replied "No thank you," in her beautiful British accent.

We strolled out of the hospital and out to the street where Victoria sat down on the sidewalk and watched a few cars pass. As they passed, her tears fell faster and heavier. She let one more statement slide out of her that night.

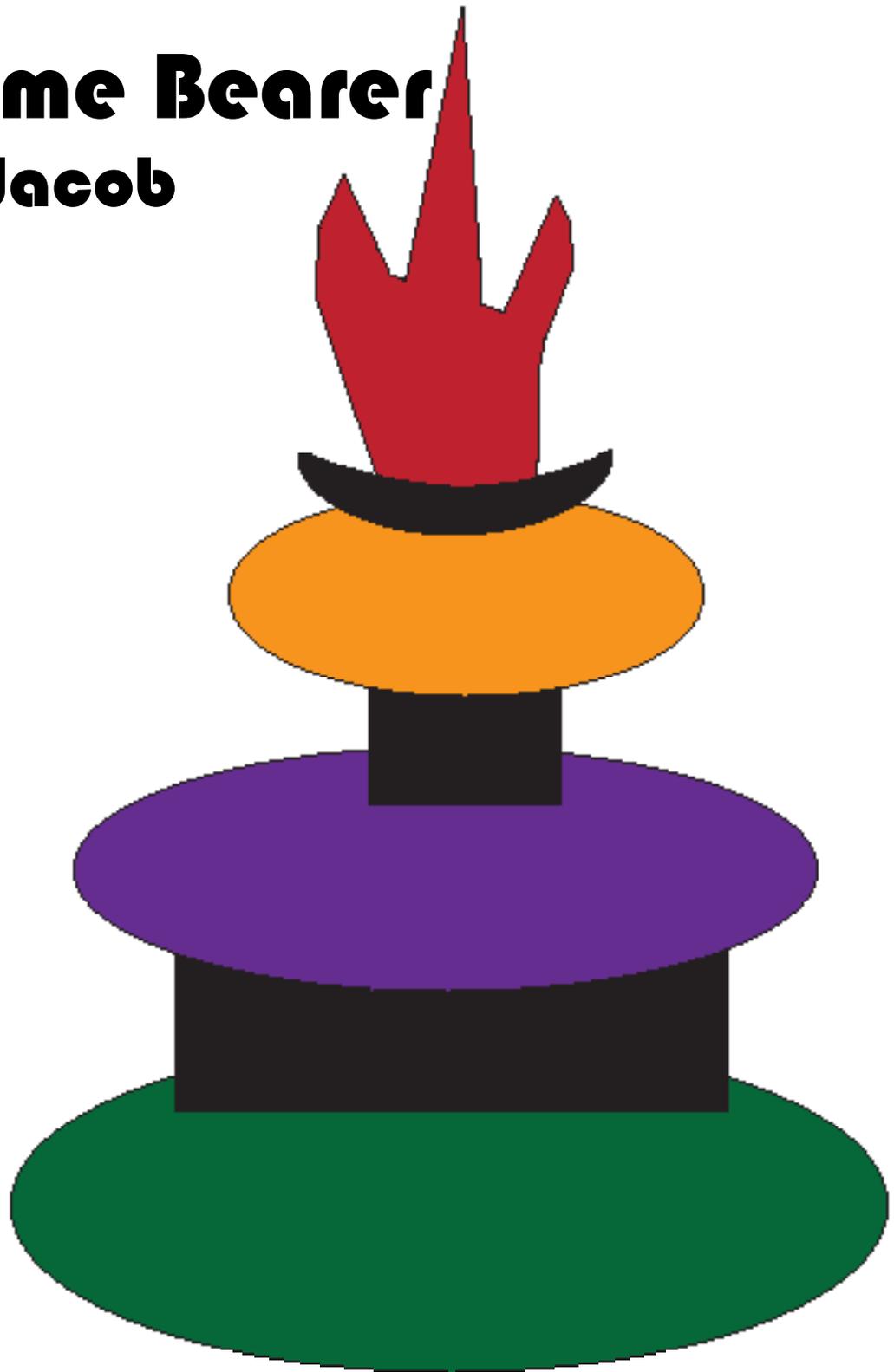
"Jasmine, I believe that although Jake was the one with the fever, his death has placed a scar on my heart and I know that although I do not have the actual disease, I have been infected by a pain much worse. Death..."

Platonic Bonds II by Alan



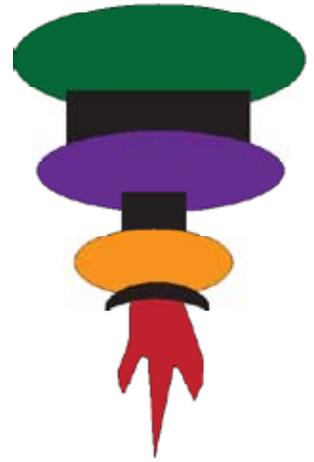
The flame Bearer

Poem By Jacob



The flame Bearer

Digital Image By Jacob



The Bearer of the Flame
Has naught but for a Name
A grand design in Destiny
Bestowed a poisonous Entity

Running rampant through the streets of Blame
Destroying anything with a holy Name
The sickness of the Battlefield
Now released upon the standing Shield

When all the blood has been bled Dry
Leave the infection for all Time
But once a greater victim Found
It sets its flames upon the Ground

But where does end, this story Close?
After many a year, of hammer Blows.
Thus weakened into dying Form
Unleashed the lightning of the Storm

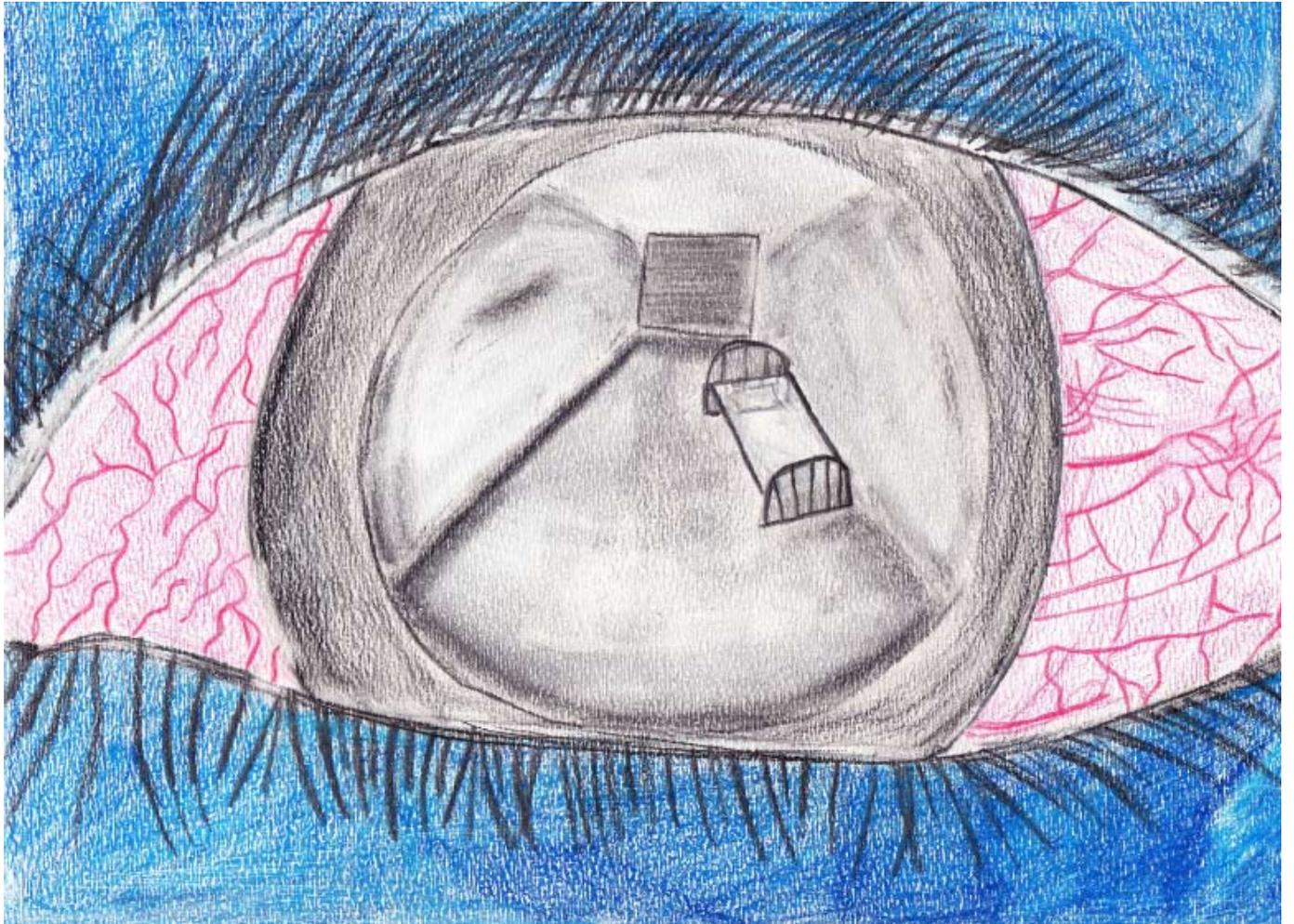
And when at once, your eyes do see
Is far too late to change the scene
And turning towards the poison's wrath
You end the light-
Your heart still hath...





EMOTIONALLY INFECTED

SHORT STORY BY JOE



Reflection Infection
color pencil drawing by Jill

Why me!? John screamed to himself, looking at the white walls of the hospital. This is crazy! John screamed inside his head. Nathan was a traitor to all mankind, and no one would ever know. As they strapped him to the hospital bed, he thought to himself: This is it, I must become infected.

Three years, 6 hours, and 22 minutes ago:

“Hello?” John said, grasping the phone two rings before it went to voicemail.

“Yes, is John present?” an unfamiliar voice said on the other side.

The voice was rather dull, almost as if the person was just awaking from an extremely long rest and was still exhausted.

“My name is Nathan Tucker, and I am calling to let you know that there was an accident at the Valencia power plant early this morning. This unfortunate event has led us to neutralize the power plant and we are sorry to say we must let you go as an employee of The California District of Water and Power.”

John’s eyes widened in response to what he was hearing. He couldn’t believe his ears!

“Why!” John exclaimed. He almost lost his temper over the phone. “Why would you neutralize the power plant?”

There was a cough on the other side of the phone line. “Thank you for your time and hard work at The Valencia District Power Plant. Mr. Quest. Have a pleasant life.”

“Something must have happened.” John mumbled, slamming the phone on the cradle. “I’ve got to find out.”

Locking his bedroom door behind him, he walked outside, hopped into his brand new Duggatti Motorcycle, and sped off toward the power plant.

“It must be at least 85 degrees out today...what a nice day!” John yelled to himself.

He was forced to yell, he couldn’t hear himself over all of the traffic and car honking in the busy streets of Valencia. He must have been riding at 75 miles per hour, about 25

miles per hour over the speed limit, the norm for him.

After about 35 minutes of riding, he finally reached the power plant on McBean Drive. The air smelled of burnt rubber, and piles of rocks were all over the street. Two cars had collided, causing an accident, and both drivers had been knocked unconscious. John looked ahead and smelled smoke. He rode along the sidewalk, looking left to right for people to ask to find out what had taken place.

After a few minutes of riding, John arrived at the power plant. He was sick of the smell of the asphalt, which smelled like burnt rubber. The power plant that stood before him was now on fire, and fiery debris was falling from the top of the plant, crushing cars and benches alike. John’s bike skidded to a halt, just barely dodging a giant patch of falling debris.

“Holy...” John said to himself, watching in utter amazement as the debris skidded to the ground and hit a man in the distance.

“Are you okay!?” John yelled, racing over to the man.

John’s calves felt like Jell-O. “I must be dreaming.” John thought to himself, but as he reached the man, John sighed a huge sigh of relief. The man had no injuries.

“My name is John Quest,” John said in a rather shaky voice. “Do you know what happened today?” The man looked at him. He had grey eyes and a giant nose. John estimated that he had about 6 percent body fat throughout his whole body. “My name is Nathan Tucker.”

John jumped back, amazed at what he had heard. “You’re the man I spoke to on the phone!” He exclaimed. “What happened here?” John was sick and tired of asking this question. He wanted answers and he had been looking for hours.

Nathan stared at him with his grey eyes, and once again, his dull voice came out, like nails on a chalkboard. “A virus...” Nathan said bluntly.

He showed no emotion in his grey eyes. John couldn’t stand those eyes, they made

him angry.

“What kind of virus? Like a computer virus?”

Nathan was staring at him, looked away for what seemed like a split second, and returned to staring before he continued, “No, a mental virus that attacks your mind. It sucks the emotion out of you.”

“You’re saying that there is a virus going around that is taking away people’s emotions?”

Nathan shook his head. “No John, I’m saying that I am the virus that takes away people’s emotions.”

Then...black. John felt a surge of pain as he was lost among the thoughts of his own mind. All he could hear was his own breathing, and then he started to drift to a forceful sleep.

John awoke

in a hospital. It

was a bright

s u n n y

morning,

a couple

of blue-

birds ap-

peared at

his window,

and the air

smelled of morn-

ing dew. There were

many people in other beds.

They were totally quiet, looking at the ceiling, and staring at the white in the walls. One of the little boys turned over to him, and uttered something to John that seemed to sound like, “Get out.” John noticed the same dull gray eyes that Nathan had. They were starting to give him goose bumps.

Something was definitely wrong.

John reached with his right hand and rubbed his right eye with his forefinger. Suddenly, he cried out in pain.

“What the...” he screamed. He got up out of his hospital bed, and looked in his bathroom mirror. John had been burned on the right side of his face down to his right pectoral.

“Oh...My...God...” he said, thinking about the last time he could see out of his right eye and how he remembered Nathan’s face. In what seemed like a split second, the door creaked open. The doctor stepped through.

“That is quite a burn isn’t it?” The doctor had the same voice as Nathan, and it made John shudder.

“How long have I been asleep?” John asked, almost afraid to hear the answer that lay ahead of him.

“About three years,” the doctor said without a smile, without a glance.

Nathan almost fainted. Three years? How is that humanly possible?

“The N-Virus has wreaked havoc around the world, taking peoples emotions and desensitizing them. You sir, are the last one to be infected.”

John backed into a

corner, starting

to cry, await-

ing his punish-

ment,

awaiting

the in-

fection.

The last

one?! It

didn’t seem

possible that ev-

ery other person in

the entire world had been

sucked dry of his or her emotion. There were too many. He had to escape. He had to get out of this hospital.

Why me!? John screamed to himself, looking at the white walls of the hospital. “This is crazy!” John screamed inside his head. Nathan was a traitor to all mankind, and no one would ever know. As they strapped him to the hospital bed, he thought to himself: This is it, I must become infected.

This is it, I must
become *Infected*



Curse

Short Story By Julie

Hexed and What Will Be
Pencil Drawings By Angie

When I was 14, a few friends and I went to a small town in Indiana. We had been at the Dunes, but were bored after a while and went searching for something interesting to do. We found a shop with chipping paint and cracked windows called "Hoodoo Voodoo." It didn't look like anything special in particular; it just had a cool doll in the front window. We went in and the moment we stepped through the door I knew something weird was going on there.

The old woman at the register looked up at us, and stared directly into my eyes, sending a shiver throughout my whole body. She wore a baggy, torn dress, and her teeth were yellow and crooked. Her gray and white hair fell randomly around her face and back. Her eyes burned holes into my body. All in all, she looked dangerous.

I followed one of my friends around for a few minutes before I suddenly tripped and fell onto an antique looking mirror, shattering it to pieces all around me. Out of nowhere, the old woman was suddenly there, looking even more dangerous by the second.

"I'm so sorry, ma'am. I'll pay for it or replace it. I'm so sorry!" I cried.

"This mirror was not for sale," she said in a raspy voice. "This mirror belonged to my great-great grandmother, and has been passed down from generation to generation. There is no conceivable way for you to replace it, nor do I want you to pay for it, not with your money, anyway." Her eyes squinted and I sucked in a sharp breath for I was terribly afraid.

"Wha- what do you mean, not with my

money?" I barely managed to whisper.

"That mirror was cursed. It was built to bring good luck to those who owned it, and bad luck to anyone who damaged it. Now, you, young lady, have shattered it."

"I'm so sorry!" I cried out again.

"Shush!" She snapped at me. "Do not interrupt me!"

My friends had all gathered around me, helping me to hopelessly try to pick up all the shattered pieces of the mirror.

"Can you just leave her alone?"

Damien said, turning to the old woman. "Can't you see she's upset, you crazy old hag? What's your problem?"

"I don't have a problem; it's she who has a problem. In seven years she'll be even more upset, when her luck goes from terrific to terrible, and after three days in that seventh year she'll be no more."

"Come on, Cassie, lets just go!" another one of my friends, Amber, said. She grabbed

my arm, hauled me up and dragged me out of the store, with me still gripping onto one of the shards of mirror.

"What a crazy old hag," my friends were muttering as we headed to the bus station. My arm stung from where glass had scratched at it, and my hand burned and bled from the glass that was clutched within it. The voice of the woman still rang in my ears, even when we were miles away.

Seven Years Later...

My luck had changed within the last few days. I had suddenly gone from living the

"She laughed, mumbling something that I couldn't quite understand. I did understand some of what she was saying though. She mentioned 'death to those who break it,' and 'cursed for seven years.'"

high-life to nothing. It all started after I passed out and fell into a huge antique mirror at my mother's house three days ago. Ever since then everything had gone horribly wrong. My mother died, I was fired from my job, and my apartment burned to the ground I was also kicked out of my college, which I had been accepted into with honors, because I apparently had "forged" a paper, which I still swear I never did. Add to that seven parking and traffic violation tickets, and this had been the worst three days of my life.

Previously, I had been valedictorian at my high school and given a full ride into any college I wanted. My family and I, especially my mother, had just recently begun to get along. I had moved into this amazing lakeside apartment, and gotten a brand new car for free by winning it in a casino.

Then I fell. I don't remember anything about the exact moment, only that my mother, my friend Damien, and I had been packing up some things in her house because she was moving. The only thing I know about that moment was that my mom and Damien heard me scream, and they found me covered in glass and blood. That was the beginning of everything, and I had a feeling that it wasn't going to be the last. I was right.

So, back to today; I'm walking down the road to Damien's apartment, because that's where I'm staying, when I trip and fall flat on my face, scraping it from my hairline to the tip of my chin. I start to cry, sob actually, because nothing could go worse in my life

than the past three days. I'm laying there for a long time, just sobbing, when Damien shows up.

"Cassie? Cassie, what happened?"

"What didn't happen?! What couldn't happen?!" I sob.

"What is going on with you lately?" He asks, pulling me up off the ground.

"I don't know! Everything was great, and now my life has gone to crap!" We begin walking back to his apartment when, once again, I trip and fall, this time landing on my arm and breaking it.

"WHAT THE HELL?!" I scream, grabbing at my clearly broken arm.

"Come on, we need to get you to a hospital," Damien says, trying again to pull me to my feet. I reluctantly get up and let him take me to the hospital.

As I knew would happen, Damien gets a ticket as we're on the way to the hospital. Just my

luck.

After getting a cast on my arm, we go back to his apartment. We sit on his couch and watch television for a good long time before we get a phone call.

"Cassie, Damien? We need to talk," our old friend, Amber, says.

"What's going on, Amber? We haven't talked to you in nearly four years," Damien replies.

"That's unimportant," she counters. "Do you remember when we were in Indiana and went to that creepy old store with the crazy hag? The one where Cassie fell and shattered that mirror?"

I jump a bit when she says that. I



haven't thought about that place or that mirror for years. In fact, I never even thought about it much after we left that store.

"Yea, what about it?" I ask, my voice shaking slightly.

"Well, about a year ago I moved to Indiana, and today I was walking down the street when I saw that shop. I decided to go in to see if it was any different. It wasn't. It was exactly the same. The doll in the window, the old hag, and..."

"And what?" Damien questions. My voice is gone, otherwise I would have said the exact same thing.

"The mirror was there. The exact mirror. It wasn't shattered or anything. It was as if nothing had ever happened to it. I asked about it, and the hag said it was filled with magic. I asked about you too, Cassie." I could hear her voice turn into a whisper.

"What did she say?" I barely manage to squeak.

"She laughed, mumbling something that I couldn't quite understand. I did understand some of what she was saying though. She mentioned 'death to those who break it,' and 'cursed for seven years.'"

"NO! I've had good luck for the past seven years! I haven't had an ounce of bad luck until the past three days!" I scream.

"I think you need to come down here. Now," Amber said, before hanging up the phone and without giving me time to say that I wouldn't go.

Damien and I pack a few things before getting in his car and driving straight to the store. It doesn't take us long to find it once we're there. We storm into the store and I head straight to the old woman.

"What did you do to me?!" I scream in her face. I'm not worried about other customers, because there are none. The woman laughs in my face.

"I did nothing! It was your own clumsiness and stupidity that brought this horrid luck upon you, and now you will pay

for your doings!"

"What are you saying, you crazy hag?! That I'm going to die?! That the rest of my life I'll have bad luck?! Is there any way to stop it?!"

"You have been infected with the curse of the mirror! There is nothing you can do now!"

I look around, panicked. When I find what I'm looking for, I run straight towards it.

"If it was the mirror that brought this upon me, then the mirror has to go!" I scream as I slam my fist into it. Once again I watch as the glass shatters around me. I swing at the mirror again and again until there is nothing left of it.

I stand there breathless for what seems like an eternity before I walk back to the register and the old woman.

What Will Be





Hexed

"There. There's nothing left," I say, breathless.

"Fool!" She laughs, "There is no way to stop a curse!" She laughs and laughs.

I run my hand through my hair, and when I pull it back, an enormous chunk of my hair comes out. I panic, and run my hand through my hair once again. More hair comes out. I stand there motionless, and that is when I start to cough.

I cough and hack, suddenly there is a hot liquid in my throat, and blood sprays from my mouth. I look up hopelessly at the old woman, begging her with my eyes for help. She does nothing.

I cough but this time a sharp shard of glass and teeth come out with it. I fall to my knees as I erupt into another fit of coughing up blood, teeth, and glass.

I feel myself become very hot, and I look down at my body. I gasp in horror as my body reveals my muscle tissue and bone. My skin is melting off my body.

I'm scared, and I feel as though my body is as broken as the mirror that I shattered. I can feel the burning on my neck and face as the skin melts off from there. I look up one last time at the old woman and at Damien before I fall face first to the ground...

Three Weeks Later...

"Hey, it's Amber. I got your message, for the, like, hundredth time. Why do you sound so freaked? What's going on? What's the matter? Call me back as soon as you can. 773-555-6677" The voice on my answering machine was saying. I write down the number and call her back the second her message is over.

"Hey you," she says after the second ring. "What's going on?"

"I've been trying to reach you for the past few weeks," I say. "I wanted to know if you called me about three weeks ago about that creepy Hoodoo Voodoo shop we went to a few years back. You remember, the one in Indiana?"

"Yea, I remember, but I haven't been there in years. In fact, I haven't been to Indiana since then. Why what's going on?" I stare out in front of me, not knowing what to say. I swear it had been her who had called, but the area code and she herself say differently. What is going on? Who had called us? Was it the woman?

"Hey, are you there?" Amber is saying.

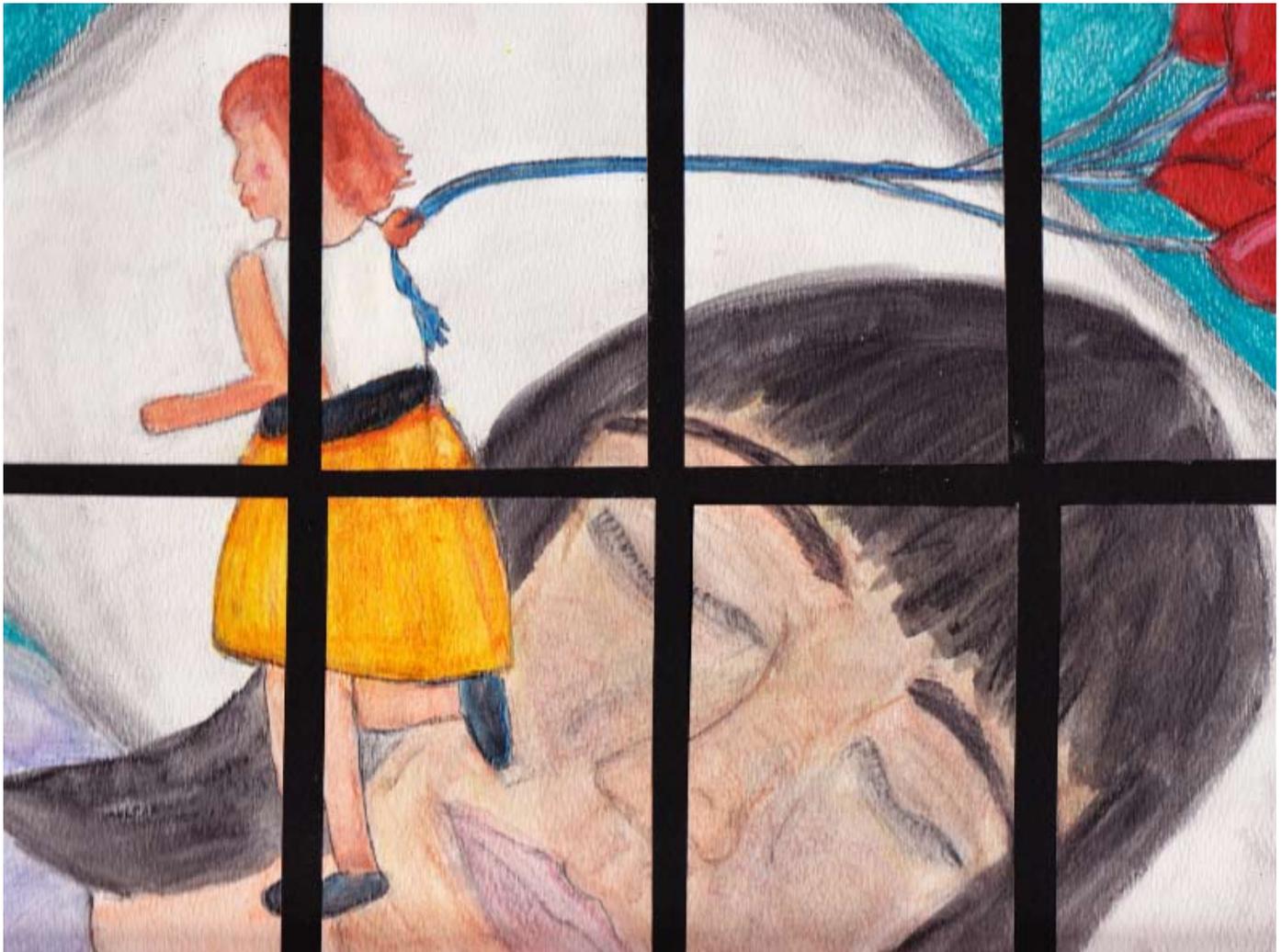
"Yea, I'm here," I reply.

"What's going on? Is this about the mirror and that creepy shop with the old hag?" I could distinctly hear the worried tone to her voice. "Damien, what happened?"

"She's dead." I reply. "Cassie's dead."

THE COLD

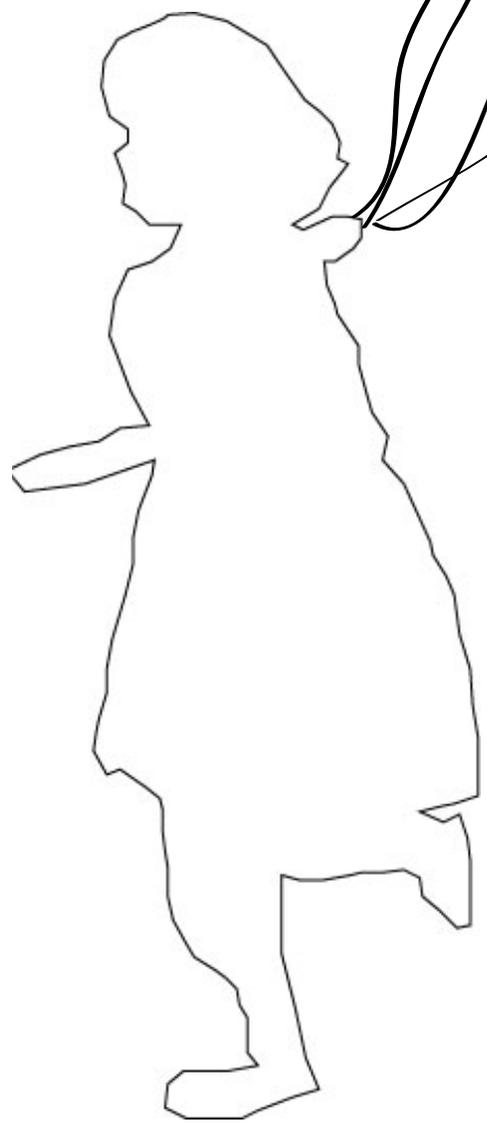
free verse poem by julie



FEVERISH DREAM

watercolor by michelle

You wake up
 Sniffle
 Cough
 Can hardly breathe
Skin is burning
 You're cold as ice
 Now hot as fire
 Cold again
You sweat
 Sneeze
 Wheeze
 Cough again
Your nose runs
 Drips
 Doesn't stop
 Fit of sneezes
You're sick
 Sun beams in your face
 Eyes are burning



 You're woozy
Sleepy
 Beginning of week
 You lay down
 Feverish dreams
No real rest
 Wake up again
 Skin is melting
 Lay down again
Five more minutes
 Sleep evades
 You sigh
 Sneeze
Wheeze
 No cure
 Must endure
 Too tired
Time slips by
 You sweat
 You're hot as fire
 Now cold as ice
Hot again
 Muscles ache
 Relaxing shower
 No cure
Must endure
 Common cold

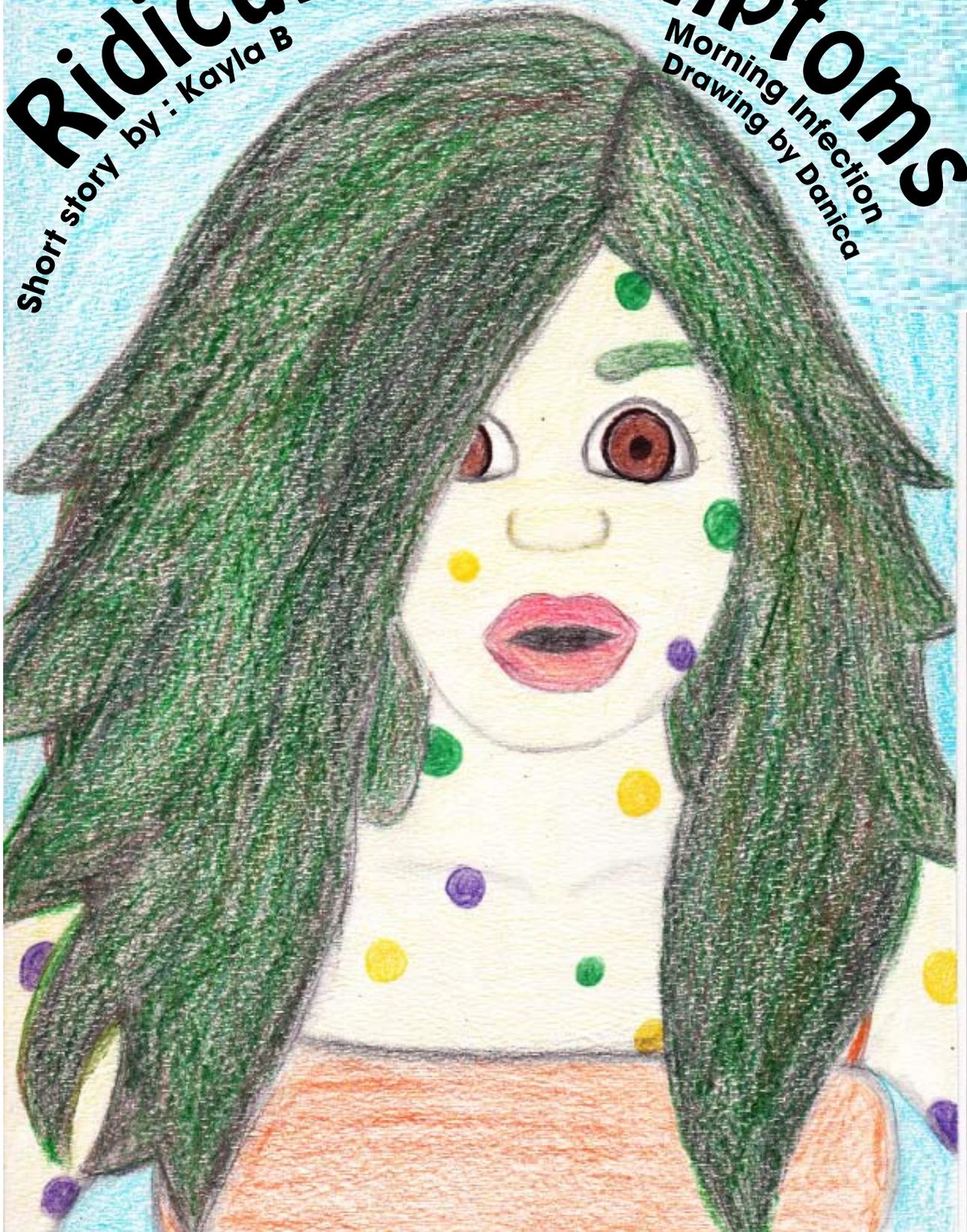
infected



Ridiculous Symptoms

Short story by : Kayla B

Morning Infection
Drawing by Danica



It was Monday morning, and I had just woken up to get ready for school. I put my slippers on, walked into the living room, sat down, and turned the TV on to channel 9 news. I smelled Mom's home made chocolate chip pancakes. Mom's pancakes were so good, always light and fluffy. They always left a wonderful taste in my mouth. They were my favorite, but for some reason the smell was not appealing and started to make me feel nauseous.

I felt my stomach turning, so I quickly ran into the bathroom. I lifted the seat and threw up straight into the toilet. My hair fell toward my face and it wasn't the normal black. It was green!

There was no way I could tell Mom that I was sick because then she would go on a rant about me not being able to go to school. I would have been stuck in my room all day, forced to drink her soup. My mom is an amazing cook, but soup was the one thing she couldn't make.

I had to hide the evidence. I quickly flushed and sprayed the toilet. I opened the cabinet underneath the sink and grabbed four deodorizers. The smell did start to go away, except that I had sprayed so much it was hard to breathe. I grabbed an old toothbrush, knowing I would have to throw it away, and brushed my teeth before grabbing my mint mouthwash, pouring it into my mouth and swishing it around. Lastly, I rinsed the sink out.

I grabbed the really old, blue cloth and looked at myself in the mirror while I wiped my mouth off. I looked at my arms and noticed these purple, green and yellow

dots. I knew that wasn't normal. I was trying to think of what it could be. I was pacing back and forth around my bathroom. I ran to my room, slammed the door and screamed as loud as I could into my pillow. I have heard on the news of people getting green or yellow dots, but not purple! I didn't want my mom to see the dots so I quickly put my hair in ponytail and put on a black hoodie. I made sure that my mom couldn't see my green hair.

I hurried back to continue watching the news. I put my hand over my chest and I could feel my heart beating really fast. It

Revelation Drawing by Danica



was mostly because I was scared, nervous, and I had just run really fast. I couldn't miss anything else. When I sat down the TV flashed Health Beat! I felt my throat sting, so I gently rubbed my hand on my throat. Then I coughed a really loud cough that did not sound normal.

"A new virus was discovered yesterday after several people showed up at the ER with

many ridiculous symptoms. A few people came in with spots all over their body. Some people's hair and skin have changed colors. If you have any of these symptoms do not worry too much, but do call your doctor and stay home. This virus is very infectious. Make sure you cover your mouth when you cough. That is all for Channel 9 Health Beat. I am Deb Reilly and we will be right back after these messages."

After that I started to get even more nervous. I decided that I should tell Mom because if I didn't, besides her becoming worried, she would be very frustrated with me for not telling her. So I walked into the kitchen where my mom was reading her new gossip magazine. She had a plate of chocolate chip pancakes and bacon and a cup of orange juice.

"Good morning Mom" I said very calmly.

"Oh, good morning, Sophie. Would you like to have some pancakes?" Mom asked.

"Um, no thanks, but I would love a glass of orange juice. So what is the new celebrity gossip?"

"Not much. However, there is an interesting article about this four year old girl who was kidnapped. The authorities think the grandparents might have taken her. Not much else. So what did they say on the news today?"

"I was watching health beat and they were talking about this new, very infectious, virus," I said, slowing down on the words infectious and virus.

"Oh, Sophie you look nervous. Is it bothering you?"

"Well..." I trailed off not knowing how she would respond.

"What? Well what?"

"All the symptoms they listed were all the symptoms I woke up with this morning."

"Oh no! Let me call your doctor."

"Um...okay."

Mom walked away and went to go call my doctor. I loved school except when it came to biology. So I wasn't going to be that disappointed if I couldn't go. Today in biology we were going to be dissecting frogs. The idea of dissecting any animal just makes me shiver. All I could think about was that poor frog who is being used as a science experiment. I didn't think that was necessary.

I started to hear little footsteps heading back to the kitchen.

"Sophie, I just got off the phone with the doctor. She said that it sounds very infectious and the dots on your arms may cause you to lose your memory..." Mom told me.

"What? Lose my memory! WHAT ABOUT MY TEST TOMORROW?" I started yelling really loud which probably wasn't any more necessary than frog dissection.

"Can you please let me finish?"

"Oh...sorry mom."

"Thank you. The doctor said that the dots will probably spread over the rest of your body. She said you could also start hallucinating. Your skin may also change to the color orange, you may become very sensitive to light and your eyes will hate looking at the color pink."

"What? That is way beyond ridiculous. First, I hate the color orange and I love the color pink. It is supposed to be a wonderful week to be outside, too. Why does everything bad always have to happen to me?" I kicked over a chair that was in the kitchen.

"Sophie please come pick up this

**"I had to
hide the
evidence."**



Painfully Pink
Drawing by Danica

chair!”

“NO!”

“Then go to your room...NOW!”

So I ran to my room and took off my black sweatshirt. On my bed was tons of stuff that I didn’t really care about. I started throwing everything including stuffed animals, my backpack, and some books. If my mom had been there she would have said something about how angry I was. She would have been wrong. I was way beyond angry, I was furious. My skin was turning orange, the pink walls in my room were driving me insane, the green, yellow and purple dots were spreading everywhere, and my hair was the brightest green I had ever seen. I got into bed, threw the covers over my head so I couldn’t see the walls,

and slowly started to fall asleep.

“Sophie, wake up! It’s time to go to school,” Mom said.

“I threw my covers off of me. I tried to start waking up but it was very difficult.

“What?” I asked.

“It is Monday morning. You have to go to school.

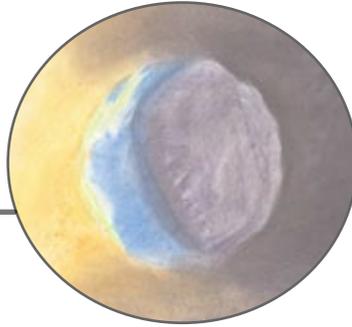
“Are you sure?”

“I am one-hundred percent sure. Yesterday we went to Grandma’s house. Don’t you remember?”

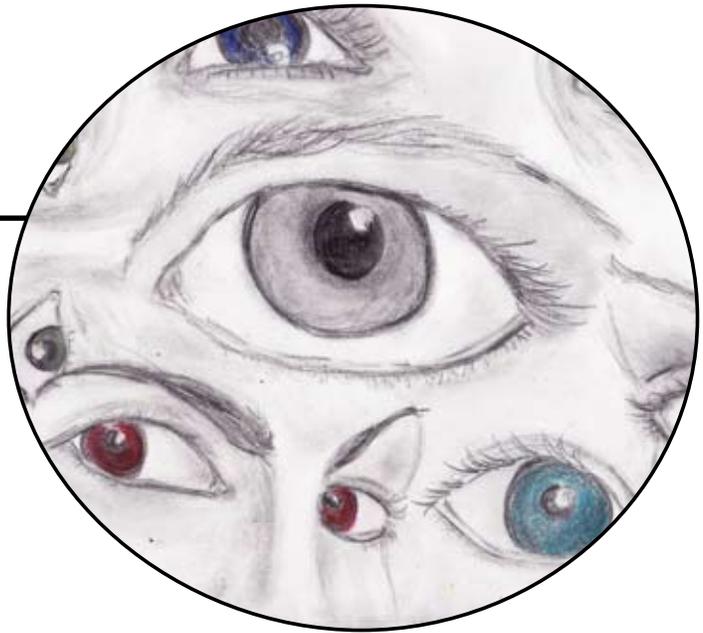
I thought I had already woken up. I can’t remember exactly but I know tons of weird things were happening to me. I guess it was just a dream. Only a dream.

Orthogenique

.infected



.truth





The Alien and the Box?

Short Story
by Tommy



The Green Dude
Painting by Danica

A long time ago, there was a green alien named Zarg. Zarg hailed from a distant planet named Al-Tongo. Zarg was a very curious alien. He had green skin, black hair, a necklace, and no arms.

One day, Zarg landed his UFO on a field somewhere in Kansas. He walked over to a gray box on the field. The gray box had a yellow explosive sign on it, which confused Zarg because he didn't understand it. So he decided to kick the box.

"I wonder what would happen if I kicked this strange box," thought Zarg.

Zarg kicked the box, and then he started screeching in agony.

Next, Zarg came back holding a



*The Explosive Box
Painting by Danica*

knife in his mouth. He tried wedging the knife through a corner of the box, but the knife bent because the box was incredibly thick.

Zarg also attempted cutting the box with scissors, but the scissors couldn't even pry the box open. Zarg tried everything else made from metal, even the sharpest axe, but nothing seemed to open the box. Zarg had become very frustrated because everything he tried couldn't reveal the contents in the box. So, again, he kicked the box as hard as he could.

"@#%&!!!" screamed Zarg, at the top of his lungs.

As his last resort, Zarg came back with a blow torch. He torched the box until he had burned a peephole. There was a hole in the box, so Zarg peeked inside.

The truth about the box was revealed. The box was made from metal, and it was full of very thick books. The books were written in languages that Zarg couldn't understand. Zarg decided to bring these books to his home planet of Al-Tongo so he could describe his discovery to his friends.

Upon his arrival on Al-Tongo, Zarg talked about his adventure on Earth and how he found a box full of



books. Zarg couldn't understand these languages, so he asked a translator on Al-Tongo to translate the Earthling books into alien languages. The translators also solved the mystery of the symbol on the box. The symbol meant, "Books will explode if pages are torn out."

The Earthling books contained information about human behaviors and interests, such as sports, entertainment, science, and history. Over time, the residents of Al-Tongo would become an advanced race because of Zarg.

According to Zarg, the moral of this story is, "you can't judge a box by its symbol."





Redefined Truth

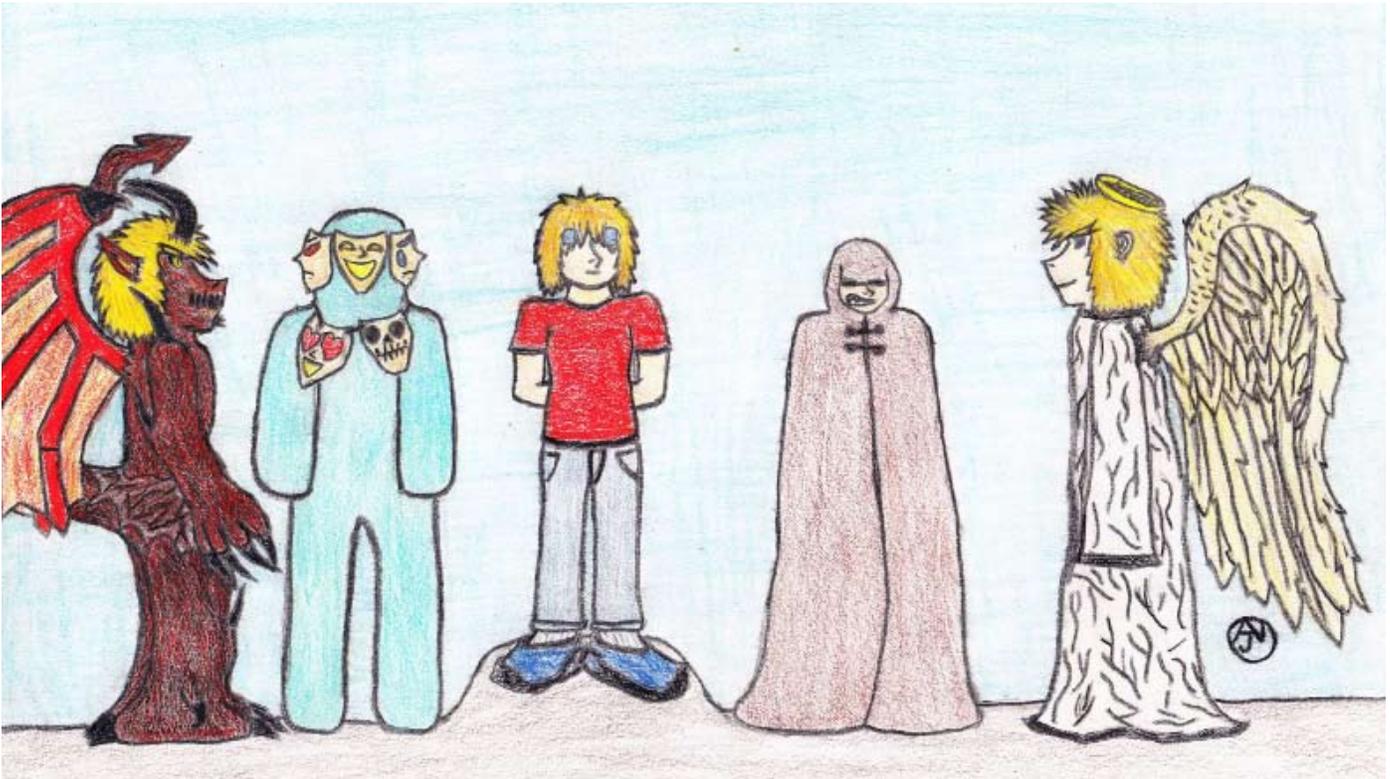
Short Story By Jacob G.



Self

Colored Pencil Drawing By A. James D.

Tilting his golden-wheat hair out of his vision to stare up at the mighty tree before him was like trying to keep lunch down after a particularly death-defying roller coaster in some kid's fantasy world. Leaning further back, shadowed lines and pits surrounding his eyelids stood out in a darkened landscape with crags and rocks all around. Yes, he was tired, that



much was obvious.

But isn't this a dream? He asked himself. It certainly didn't feel much like one. The world, wherever or whenever he was, felt like an eternal twilight, a scarred and destroyed dust and dirt field with mountains in the distance. The plains around the aging tree were littered everywhere with burnt horns of massive behemoths and ripped, outstretched wings of some white-gold feathered entity.

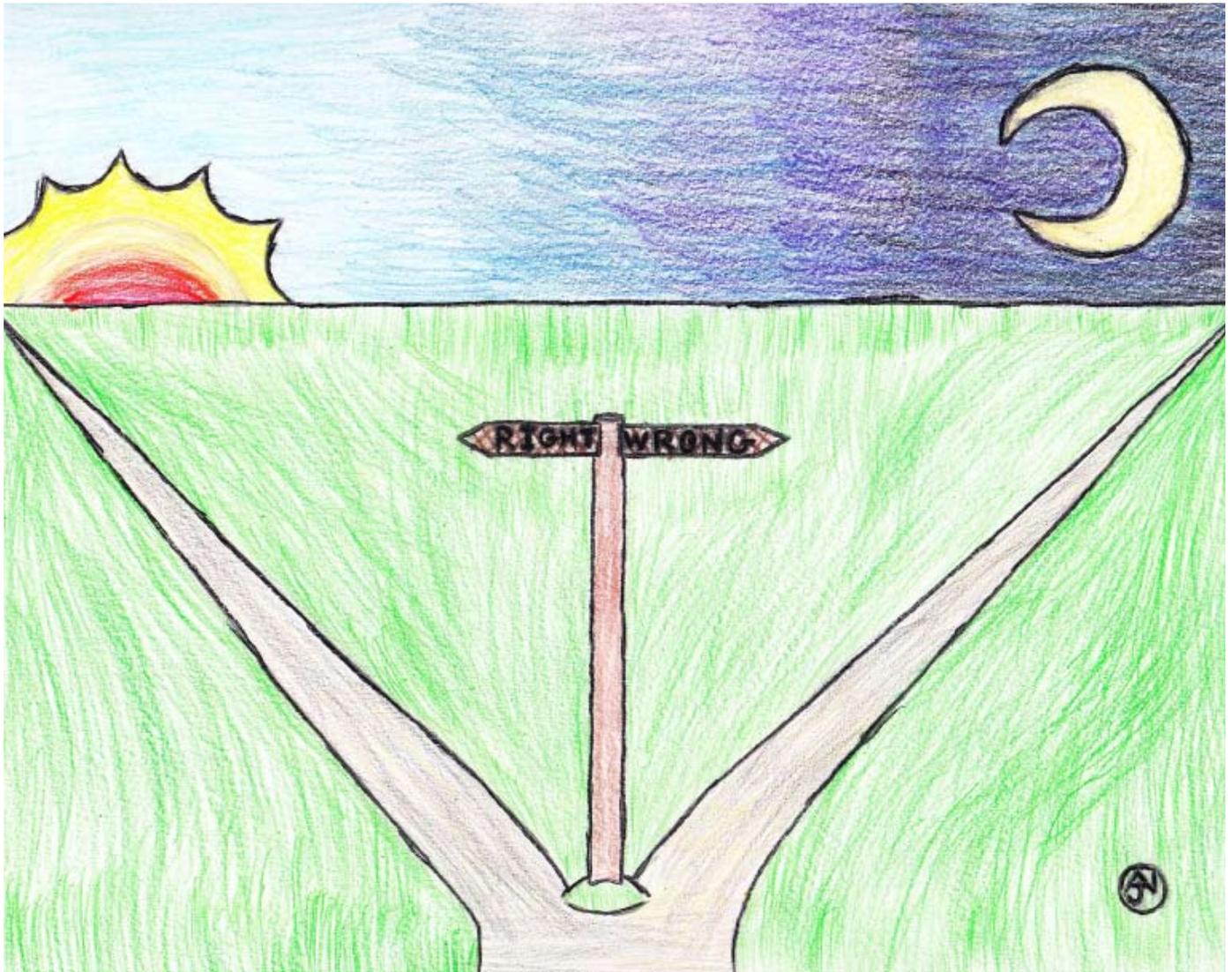
"Only your heart can tell you the truth..."

Backing up a number of steps, he tried, again, to see the top leaves past the never-ending gray, mid-hanging cloud cover. No luck this time, either, and he tripped over a weird shaped rock, nearly impaling himself on a rather large, charcoal black horn.

A voice from behind him spun his attention around, and without thinking he kicked out one foot as he had always been taught in martial arts.

"Hmmm. Hah-hah-hah. A bit young for the battlefield, aren't you, boy? I do so admire someone who is not afraid to stand up to anyone, no matter how much larger they may be. Of course, harmless displays of strength, especially from one so young, hardly make a difference in this place. What is this, my young friend, hmm?" the cloaked man admonished as he bent to pick up a mask, which had appeared to be a gray stone seconds ago.

Climbing to his feet, the boy could see very little that made this man stand out from any other, save for the fact that he didn't make an impression. It was as if the man could effortlessly float down the middle of a busy sidewalk and no one would be able to



Choice

Colored Pencil Drawing By A. James D.

remember seeing him just seconds after he would have brushed past with a slight twist and swirl of his robe.

His face, save for half his mouth, a darkened piece of one side of his nose and a down-turned chin, was completely imperceptible. Two tightened ties clipped to buttons at throat level seemed to be the only thing keeping the robe together. Not even the man's footsteps could be heard, as the cloak draped and dragged a number of inches around his feet.

"Wh-who ar-are you-you?" stammered the boy.

Looking up from his study of the mask, the hooded man cocked his head slightly before letting out a short grunt of a laugh. The mask in hand was whitish, with a pointed nose, saddened eyes, a depressed frown, and a single blue tear frozen in place. Tucking the mask into a fold in his cloak, the man gestured at the tree, before spreading his palms

to encompass everything around them.

“Your birthday was today, was it not?” he whispered. “Yes, yes. Thirteen, if I do recall. Everything you see around you is barren. Not a single leaf grows on the tree. As you enter the world, and continue to eke your singular existence out of the nothingness around you, the field will change, as will the tree. You see, I have been privy to watch an unfolding battle for thirteen long years now, the forces of Heaven and Hell waging war for your soul. It is your decision tonight, to fight for the good inside of every truth of your life, or battle alongside the darkness to take every lie as a new truth defining, in the end, your heart of darkness.”

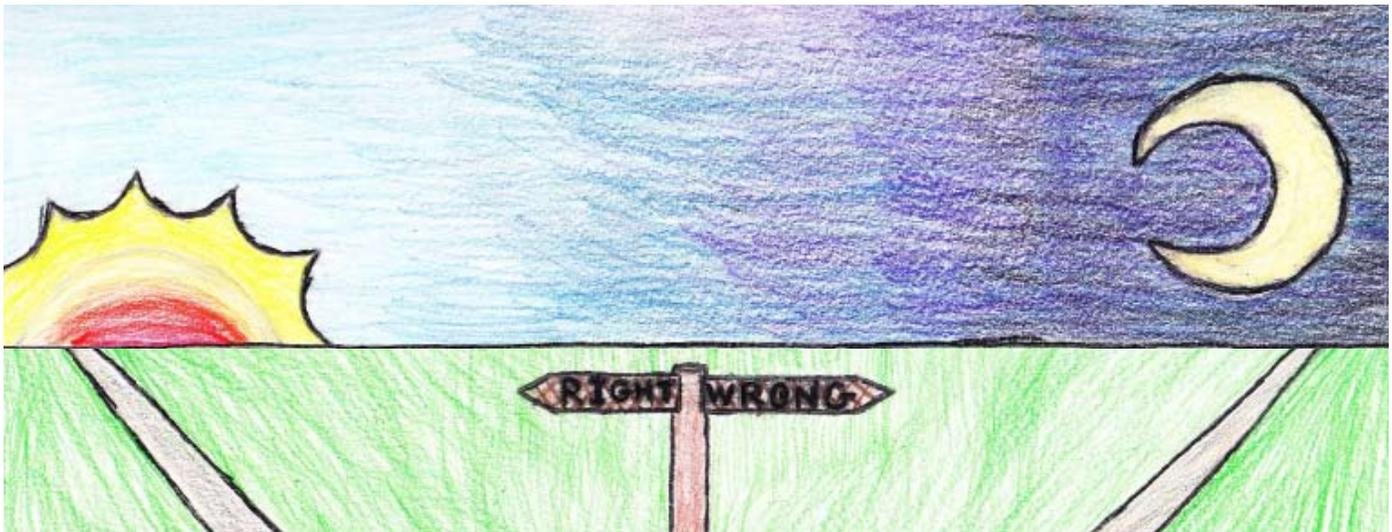
“I see you found the boy, and in record time, I might add,” a new, somehow menacing voice called as its owner stepped cautiously around the bones at the base of the tree. “Kindly hand me my mask,” the thing snapped.

A blue creature with four masks, it had no form save for blue feet and rotund palms. Its masks ranged from depictions of death and anger to almost overly joyful expressions. The hooded figure removed the mask from its inner pocket, and with an audible sigh, tossed the crying mask to the new creature, which almost seemed to magnetically attract it back to its place on the side of its head.

Distantly, the sound of wings began to be heard, from both directions and sets of mountains.

“We will be waiting for your decision above the cloud line,” the cloaked man advised almost softly.

“I wouldn’t get too close to the combat, though, kid. It can really hurt!” the five masks

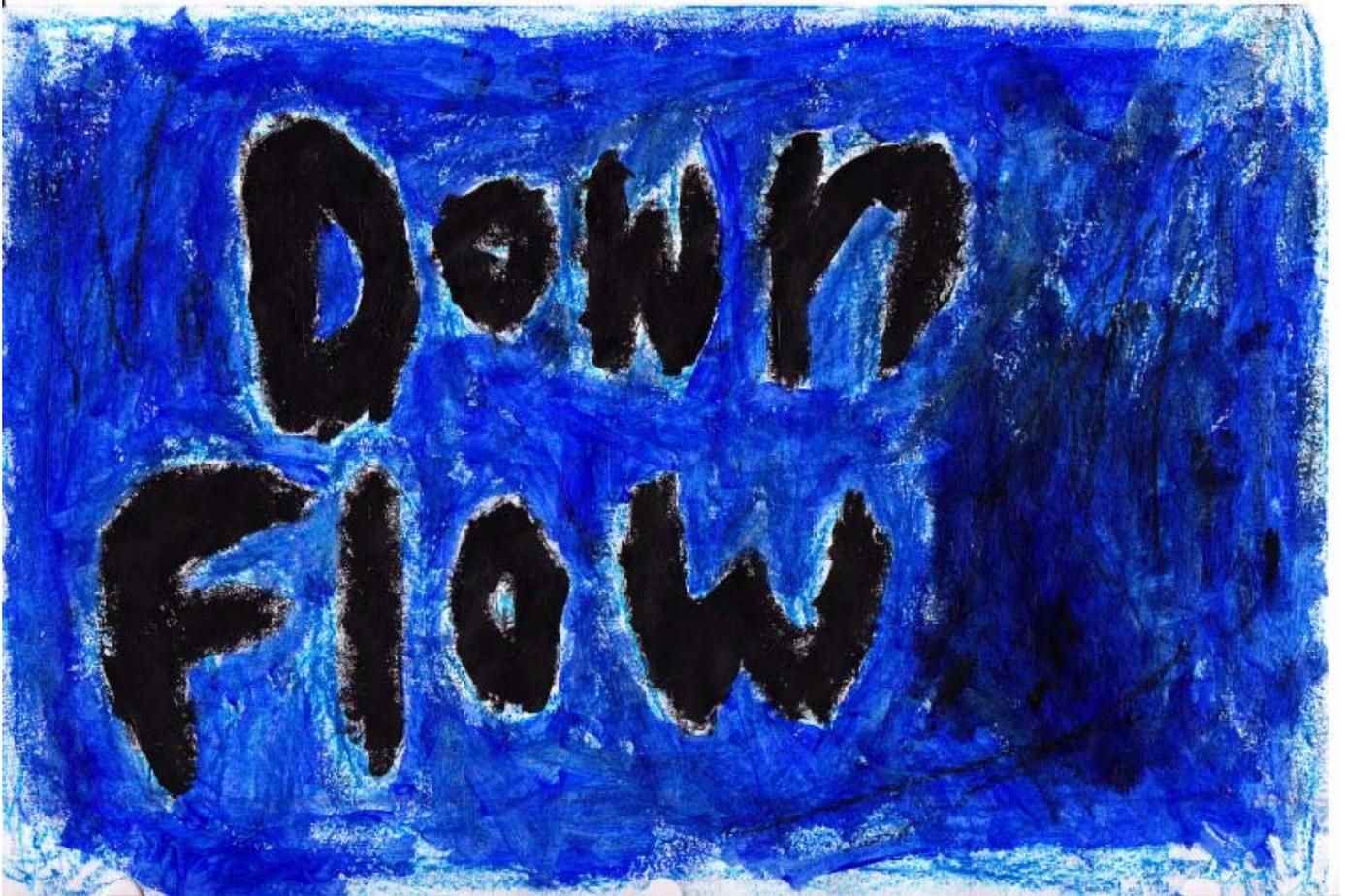


cackled in tandem.

“What decision? My heart? How do I know where my path lies?” the boy shouted desperately.

“Only your heart can tell you the truth of your path. It is not for us to decide,” responded the hooded man with a faint half smile.

A gust of wind passed, and suddenly, the two were gone. Looking up, the boy gulped, but somehow he knew. The hardest decisions and the most veiled truths could only be discovered through one’s own adventure, one’s own time in the world...



Short Story and Mixed Media Title Art by Mack

The Sty

There's a small studio on the sixth floor of an apartment building in downtown Long Beach. No one much goes in there any longer other than its occupant. The room is completely filth ridden, like that of a man who has been sick for a very long time and has no regard for his personal hygiene. The smell is horrible like bodily fluids, blood, body odor, chemicals, smoke and other weird smells most people wouldn't recognize. The floor is covered in dirty clothes, some rotten food, and other such garbage. Every thing has some kind of weird stain on it. The room is like a cave with the window shut and no light coming in.

In the bed in the back end of the room is the studio's occupant, a young man named Julian. He's getting some sleep for the first time in a few days. He's coming in and out of consciousness, half awake to his aching body just to fall back to sleep. When he can no longer go back to sleep he just lays there in bed with his body hurting, not wanting to get up. He just lays there in pain, wallowing like a pig in its own filth and this studio, his sty.



“How it came to be” straight from the piggy’s mouth

It’s hard to say when it all started. When everybody else was going to college, I stayed back doing whatever I could to get money for some relief. It was a real struggle because my mother refused to give me any help. She was upset with me for not going to college, and I suppose I didn’t do anything else for her either. I ended up getting in debt all over the place, and having to work it off in disgusting ways. I was disgusted by myself. I couldn’t stand to face my family or my old friends because of the things I’d done. It’s like I was living a perpetual dream, a nightmare from which I could never escape.

‘Twas little more than a year that I completely alone; I was so alone...it pained within the eye of the storm, or so I thought who I hadn’t seen for a long time. After a few him. I was surprised by how great a guy he



was playing this part in life. I was me. The dream seemed to be better when I went looking for my father, months of looking for him, I found turned out to be, and he helped

me out a lot. I also got back with my old girlfriend. We knew each other for a long time, and dated on and off through high school. We’d hardly seen each other since we graduated and at that time we had no bad feelings towards one another. She hadn’t been living any better than I had, and she was probably just as alone as me. We were somehow together for five years. Ours was one of those poisonous kinds of relationships where it seemed we only took more and more from one another like parasites feeding off each other. She was crazy and we both treated each other like garbage. I have no idea how it lasted as long as it did. I guess we needed each other, but I’m not even sure whether our draw to one another was real or superficial. The end was something sick and bittersweet; it hits me every time I think of her.

In my time with her, I managed to push everybody else further away than before. I’d been stealing from them and lying to them. My mother wouldn’t associate with me after I’d been stealing money from her purse and pawning off her valuables. She says



it’s killing her knowing how much of a “scumbag” her son is becoming. I don’t believe her accusations to be false, but I wonder if some of her resentment is because I remind her of how my father was and how he treated her. I was young when my father left. My mom told me he was dead, but I knew he was alive. I’d think to myself “where’s my dad” and I’d wonder what kinds of bizarre and horrible things were going on with him. For a long time, I didn’t want to believe it, but I came to accept I’ve become just as he was.

The pig out of the pen

Movement through life, like the daily motions of any other man, for Julian is unreal like floating. For a naïve child, seeing him passing by on the street is like seeing a zombie. His hair is long and matted, his clothes stained and wrinkly and his skin pale and discolored, littered with ruptures, bruises, scars, scabs, sores and rashes. The stench of death, pungent and unpleasant, permeated his inner being. He’s under weight, like a neglected animal. Outside the house he always wears sunglasses, but behind them are passive weary eyes inside sunken sockets. Julian only leaves his studio these days to look for money for what can relieve his pain. He pays very



Angry Tree 2 digital image by Alan

Down... Oh Down...
Down... Oh Down.



OH



...yep

little attention to the stares. To this bitter nihilist everybody else is as miserable as he is. Julian believes people lie to themselves that what they do makes them happy and is right so that they can make it through their lives.

The Pearls Before the Swine

Things have been getting real rough lately. My father has gone clean and now he is disgusted by me. I'm just as disgusted by him now for what I call his hypocrisy. We definitely had a falling out not unlike like me with my mother. For awhile I was all alone again. I felt as though for a **very** long time now, even before this whole ordeal began, my life has been filled with shadows and dread. I think I've felt this way since my father left when I was a child. I now look at my reflection and see myself growing old and worn, I can't stand it anymore.

I've been seeing visions and hearing voices. One hits me the hardest: I see myself drowning in a fast, deep, vivid blue river with a down current too powerful for me to swim against. The dream changes too. Sometimes I'm weighed down by my head tied to my waist; sometimes I have to pull off my skin to escape the current; and sometimes I grow a shell on the shore to protect my skinless body. I usually just try to put it out of my mind, but I know well that there's a reason I see what I see.

I've gotten back in contact with my **brother**. I remember when we were younger we thought no matter how far either of us went we'd stick together. I was surprised to see that despite all this time we've spent apart, the way he feels has stayed largely the same, but I felt that way **too**. I told him everything. I told him that for so long I've been **ashamed** to so much as be with him for having done what I have done.



He was as quiet as I remembered him, not knowing what to say when such things arise. I could see he was trying to be strong for me in his stoic way, but I could also see that it hurt him inside seeing how far I've gone. I felt selfish for having put this on him, but he insisted this was what he wanted. We've been **talking a lot** since then.

When I look back at myself, and compare then to now, I see my pain is self-chosen. Everybody said it to me and I ignored it though I knew it to be true. My father told me I had to come to terms with myself and with the world to find my peace. **He knew; he had done just that.** I didn't care to stop living with my death wish, and because of that selfishness my father was disgusted by me. Any attempts I've made to change my life have really been insincere, more just a way of staying alive to do the same thing longer.

I **haven't** understood really why I should change the way I live, I haven't been able to understand what there really is for me in a "normal" life. When I ask people for the point of living life the way they do and doing things the way they do, most people say there isn't one and if you go around looking for a reason for everything you're just going to drive yourself **crazy**. People just go on from one thing to another just doing what gets

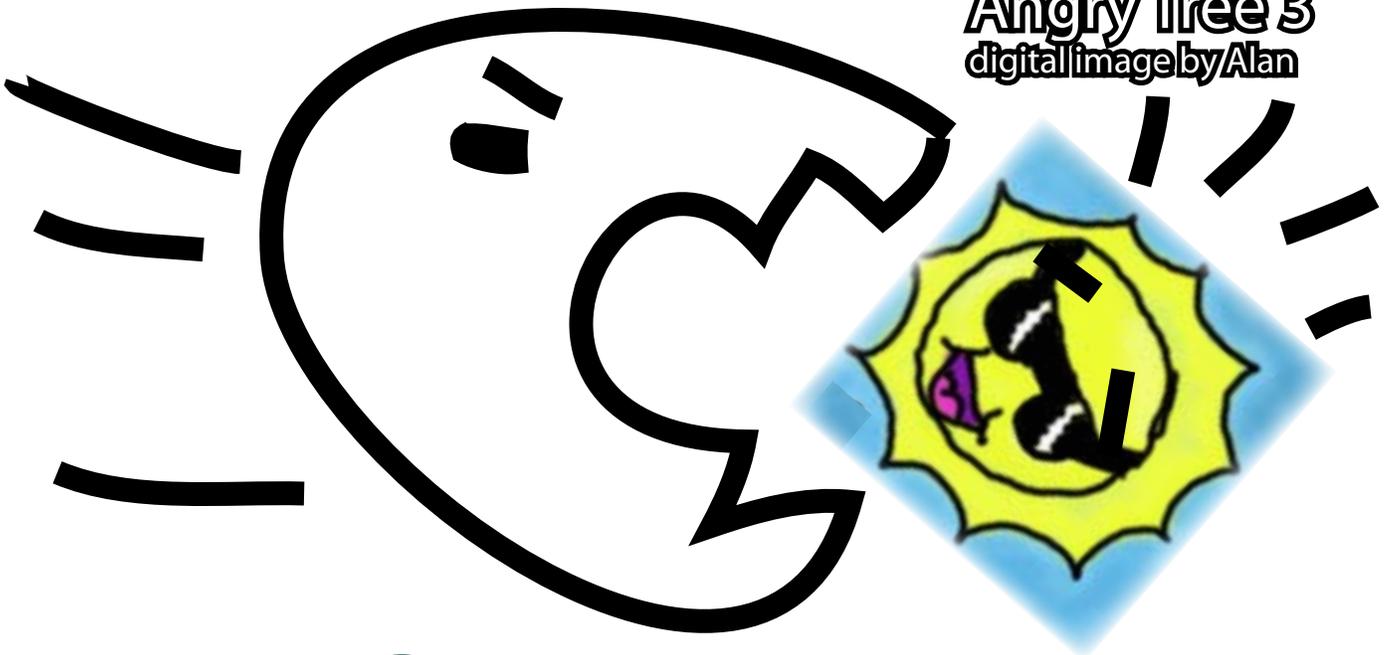
them all to the same meaningless end **to their** stories. They're all just floating through life, so I don't see why I shouldn't float through life my way instead of their's. I don't think I'm gonna change. I'm disgusted the most at my own selfishness. I bring down everybody around me as I bring down myself. Am I the maker of my own hell? I choose to walk in hell, endure the eternal flames of **damnation**, for I see the lie that exists within life... **Nothingness.**

Why must I...



...be a tree?

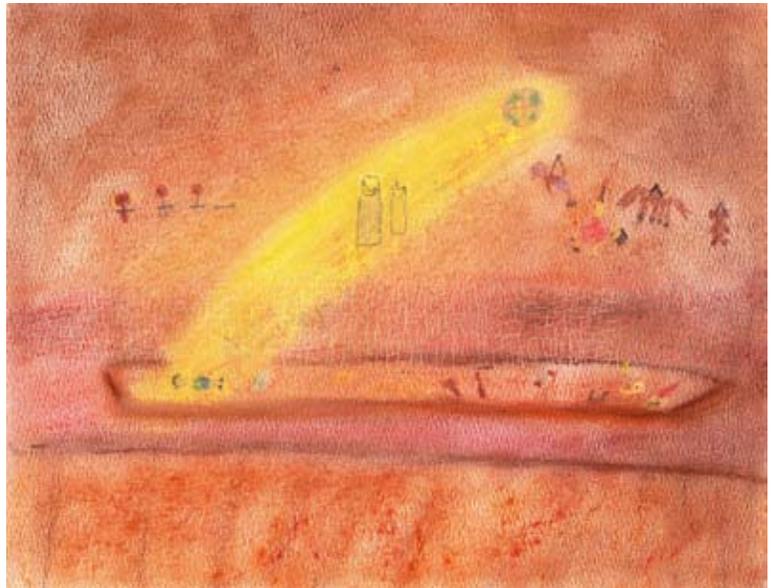
Angry Tree 3
digital image by Alan



I Cannot Tell A Lie

I first was born by my father's desire,
I was born out of truth and honesty
Nor was I spawned out of a fallacy,
I feel like I am walking a thin wire,
To show that I really am not a liar,
I think I was born out of a prophecy,
Maybe I will be sworn to secrecy,
To bring truth and when I finally retire,
There is no reason to sit and to think,
So much story, is a lie such a crime?
Never lying, I will always stand tall,
All of my words should be put into ink
Here's a question, do I lie all the
time?
Lies come out, all at once, or not at
all.

A Sonnet by Joe



“No Strings” pastel by Mick



the truth in an expression

free verse poem by julie

no one hears...

whisper

dance

art

clothing

song

hug

behavior

scream



whisper

dance

art

clothing

song

hug

behavior

scream

UNKNOWN
pencil drawing by angie

truth

a **whisper**

quiet thunder
soft ice
unheard
the first of many trials
to get to the understanding
and the expression
of myself
and yet
no one hears

a **dance**

body twisting
hips swaying
I throw my face back
to show the heavens
and the world
twirling
prancing
yet still
no one hears

art

paint flies
pencils scratch
pens erase
the world
imagination
in your hands
to show the world
this is who I am
yet still
no one hears

clothing

baggy shirt
mini skirt
high heels
torn sneakers
this is who I am
my tiara and my combat boots
formal gown and converse
the difference is in the outfit
yet still
no one hears





a **song**
your music
blaring
quiet
the lyrics match
they seem to understand
now will anyone else
screamo band
rock and roll
symphony orchestra
yet still
no one hears

a **hug**
arms surrounding
comforting
loving
a hunger and a thirst
this is a craving
an unnecessary need
to help your inner burning
yet still
no one hears

a **behavior**
an action
to get the attention
of those around you
to be the calm before the storm
to throw a raging fit
to show the world
this is not you
yet still
no one hears

a **scream**
loud
piercing
the truth is in the volume
the pleasurable pain
the carefree sorrow
the fateful hurt
you want to show
this is me
yet still
no one hears

HIDING THE PAIN

POEM BY: KAYLA B.



SPEAK FOR YOURSELF

DRAWING BY JILL

While I'm alone,
I see pictures of myself
Smiling, and having a good time,
In the garden, all the flowers were bloomed.
Now the flowers are dead.

One time I fell on ice, and got stitches.
The pain killed me,
The needle stung like a bee sting
And the stitches burned like I was on fire.

Now stitches have reached my mouth
I can't speak a word without the burning,
The stitches are keeping the flames
Inside from coming out.

Speaking is now the hardest thing to do.
Each time I try to open my mouth
It seems like my lips are hot glued together,
The words feel trapped,
Locked in a cage.

The flames won't ever go away.
The tears of lava won't ever stop.
I forgot the color of my eyes
Because,
The burning comes,
From looking in the mirror.

I wish I had the strength,
To tell the burning truth,
But hiding the pain seems the easiest.
If I told people, the pain would get stronger.

I wish the hot glue would disappear
The truth.
My flaming pain,
I wish I could tell people I'm terrified.
For too long, I have been
Hiding the pain.



A faith in a cross

SHORT STORY BY JOE

why me series
PENCIL DRAWINGS
BY MICHELLE

Tony sat in his room, platinum cross strung with ebony beads wrapped around his neck. It clicked against his chest every time he made a sudden move. Tony was 6'7, and weighed about 260 pounds. He was physically tough enough to take on a bull head-on, but Tony was not mentally strong enough to handle the simplest of problems. Today Tony should have been celebrating, as it was his birthday. He and his friends had planned to go out and party at The Heat, a local club near his residence.

Tony gripped the face of his platinum cross and started to cry. Tears dripped down his face and he fell to the floor, utterly weak from the amount of energy it had taken for him to hold in his own emotion. He let go of the cross and finally said what he wanted



to say, what he had been waiting to say, what he had been trying to say for a long time.

“Good-Bye Amber.”

He fell asleep, dreaming in his own tears, in his own sorrow.

Tony slept for days. Every now and then he would awaken only to find that it was dark out, and that it was a different time. He knew he was waking up every 24-26 hours and then falling asleep again.

Finally, he awoke one morning. There was coffee and cookies on the table beside him that Tony had not prepared himself, and the TV was on in the dining room. Scared to death, Tony creaked open his door and poked his head out ever so slightly, so that he could see who was in the room.

It must have been a dream. Sitting in his rocking chair was his deceased fiancé' Amber. Tony's regular beating heart began to beat twice as fast. Sweat began to drip down his forehead, and the room seemed like it had jumped 10 degrees from what it had been originally. Tony slowly walked over to his Fiancé, and every progressing step made his heart beat faster. The room seemed to get hotter and hotter, and it took what seemed like an eternity. Tony thought time had stopped. Then the unthinkable happened.

Amber turned around. Half of her face was gone. Her white skull was gleaming in the sunlight, although no blood could be seen. It was as if someone had torn off half of her face and thrown it away. Her right eye was missing and half of her mouth had no teeth. God...save this woman, Tony thought, as he reached out to feel Amber's skull. Amber's left eye shed a tear. This shocked Tony.

“Tear ducts and emotions huh? I guess even the undead can still have emotions.”

Something was terribly wrong. Zombies, Tony thought. He would usually be laughing at that thought, but instead he was freaking out.

Amber was groaning, she stood up and tried to walk over to Tony, muttering something that sounded like “Help me.”

How is she alive? Tony thought, trying to find the answer. He was ready to cry out, but he watched as Amber slowly made her way toward him.

“Having a bad dream honey?!” Amber said, tilting her head and smiling. Her jaw dropped, revealing no uvula, and no tongue. She had no eye on the skull side of her face. Tony screamed, running back into his room as fast as he could, locking his bedroom door behind him.

“What the hell?” He said, trying to piece together what he had just seen. He grasped his cross. God, if there's any way you can help, I would hope you would do it now, he thought to himself,



listening to the footsteps approaching the door. Tony had begun to realize that this was a huge mistake. Tony thought back to a few months ago, when things were better than they are in the present moment and he and Amber were happy together, or at least he was.

Tony had a history of abuse towards women. He began to realize that it was too late to change Amber into her former self. He brought his fist down hard onto the table beside him and cried in agony. He began to think about all of the awful things that he had done to her, and how he regretted every single one.

Tony knew that whatever had happened to Amber had caused her soul to disappear, but her body to stay intact. The door began to shake violently, about just as fast as Tony's heart. He could feel his heart through his chest, and he felt like he was going to explode.

Amber opened the door; she looked inside, and saw Tony on the floor next to his bed. She looked at him, her one eye seemingly saddened by the look of this poor man. Her mouth opened, and suddenly, the missing pieces of her face started to come back to her. Slowly, her uvula reappeared along with her tongue, and her skin began to shape shift and cover her face. Her long, silky brown hair began to grow back and then her eye started to take its place back in her socket. Tear ducts began to fill with fiery tears of sadness as Amber could finally speak.

"I guess god finally saw that you have seen the truth, that you should be more respectful towards women. Especially me." Amber and Tony both smiled, and leaned toward each other, ready to embrace in a kiss.

Suddenly, the cross began to glow and then disappeared into the light along with Amber. Tony knew that the cross signified a gateway towards Tony's faith in God and his newfound respect toward women, and that, my friends, is the truth.



A Place Like No Other

short story by Olivia



The Truth Behind Greedy America
Acrylic Painting by Justin

My brother Rahul and I have to work under a nasty old Greek man named Stavros. Rahul has worked at the shop for 5 years, he just turned 13. I on the other hand am just starting to work at the shop. Here in India we do not have so many resources to serve our families. I am now 8 years old. I am scared; from what Rahul had told me the shop is a living hell. Today, my first day, Rahul has told me to stick by him and follow his lead.

From the outside, the shop is what it was, an old airplane hanger beaten down and deteriorating from the outside in. Living in India, in deep poverty, and only Rahul and I being able to work, this is where we are able to work and the only way to support ourselves. The large sewing machines and processors are making the shop sound as though bullets were being shot at it. The inside is a horrid sight of young boys and girls being beaten and whipped.

One of the young children, who is probably about the same age as me, cries out in a rasping voice, "I'll try harder, just let me go, just let me go, please!"

"I don't have to listen to you, you little brat," the man beating her growls.

"Jai."

I turn to see Rahul ushering me over to what I gather is his station. Anxiously I travel through the crowd over to his side. On the way over I see that many of the workers have fingers missing. One lady seems to be missing her entire forearm up to her elbow. I take in a large gulp and force my way over to Rahul. He is smiling a sorrowful smile.

Starting the sewing machine is hard. My foot barely makes it to the pedal and the machine is a monster. After a couple of hours or so at that, I turn my head to try and

spot Rahul. He is nowhere to be seen. As I am shifting back to work, my raggedy shirt gets pulled into the fast beating needle of the sewing machine. My eyes widen; it feels like they are wide enough for my eyeballs to pop out. I start yelling for Rahul as my arm comes closer and closer to the rushing needle.

"Jai, my brother what's wrong.... ohhhh"

I start wailing as I feel the needle coming close to my skin. The hairs on my arms are standing on end. Rahul counts to three and my shirt comes out with a large ripped hole, my arm a second following. I feel a sharp sting on my middle finger, I go

to pull my hand out and blood starts to drip. My hand is out of the machine, but my fingernail has been pierced with a reasonably large hole that is now gushing blood. Rahul tears off part of

his apron to use as a bandage.

At that very moment, a tall, pale, ghostly man looks over Rahul's shoulder. His look is very skeptical. This I take to be Master Stavros. I tremble with fear as he leans closer and closer. Rahul turns around and immediately finishes tying the rag around my hand then stands up and goes straight back to work.

I am headed back to the sewing machine to remove the messed up fabric and Stavros rat-tails me with a damp cloth he was holding. I move faster.

He yells, "Stop it you nimrod."

I head toward the door, but it's locked; the whole shop is boarded shut. I ram myself against it trying to break the lock but it is no use. I ram head on into the door. I fall to the floor and feel as though I am drifting away.

*"I am scared;
from what Rahul
had told me the shop
was a living hell."*

Colophon

The Summer 2009 edition of Orthogenique was produced at the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School in Chicago, Illinois. The magazine was thermal bound by the Orthogenic School. The covers are 1/2 inch linen tab covers from General Binding Corporation in Northbrook, IL. The content pages were printed by an HP color laserjet 6015dn on 32lb. Hammermill Color Laser Gloss with 90 brilliance. Sixteen fonts were used in the magazine. Avant Garde LT was used for all body text, except for three haikus which were done in Apple Chancery, while magazine staff chose fonts in keeping with style and content for titles and pull quotes. The following fonts were used for titles and pull quotes: Lucida Blackletter, Papyrus, Zapfino, Mistral, Blackoak Standard, Letter Gothic Standard, OCR A Standard, Handwriting - Dakota, Futura, Edwardian Script ITC, Apple Chancery, Monaco, Bradley Hand ITC TT, Hobo std, Chalkboard, Catholic Schoolgirls BBJ, Big Caslon, and Bank Gothic. Orthogenique is a full color magazine. Layout was created in Adobe InDesign CS3 on Apple MacBooks. Adobe Photoshop CS3 was used for image processing. All submissions were judged using standards agreed upon by the staff. All text submissions were typed using Microsoft Word on Dell PCs running on Windows XP, and MacBooks running on Mac OSX.

Policy

All of the students at the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School are invited to submit their literary and art work to Orthogenique.

The Orthogenic School is a small private school consisting of students who represent school districts throughout Illinois and California. The school has limited extracurricular activities or after school meeting times. As a result, Literary Magazine is offered as a for credit course in which the enrolled students alternate writing units in which they write in reference to a specific theme and art units in which they illustrate for a classmate's writing. All students then create spreads that incorporate their writing piece and the illustration completed for the piece.

Students not enrolled in the course are welcome to submit their work to the advisors at which time the staff of enrolled students will decide which pieces can and will be used based on the themes employed and the fundamental belief of the school that all student work is of value. The literary staff reserves the right to edit the body of the works for spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

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