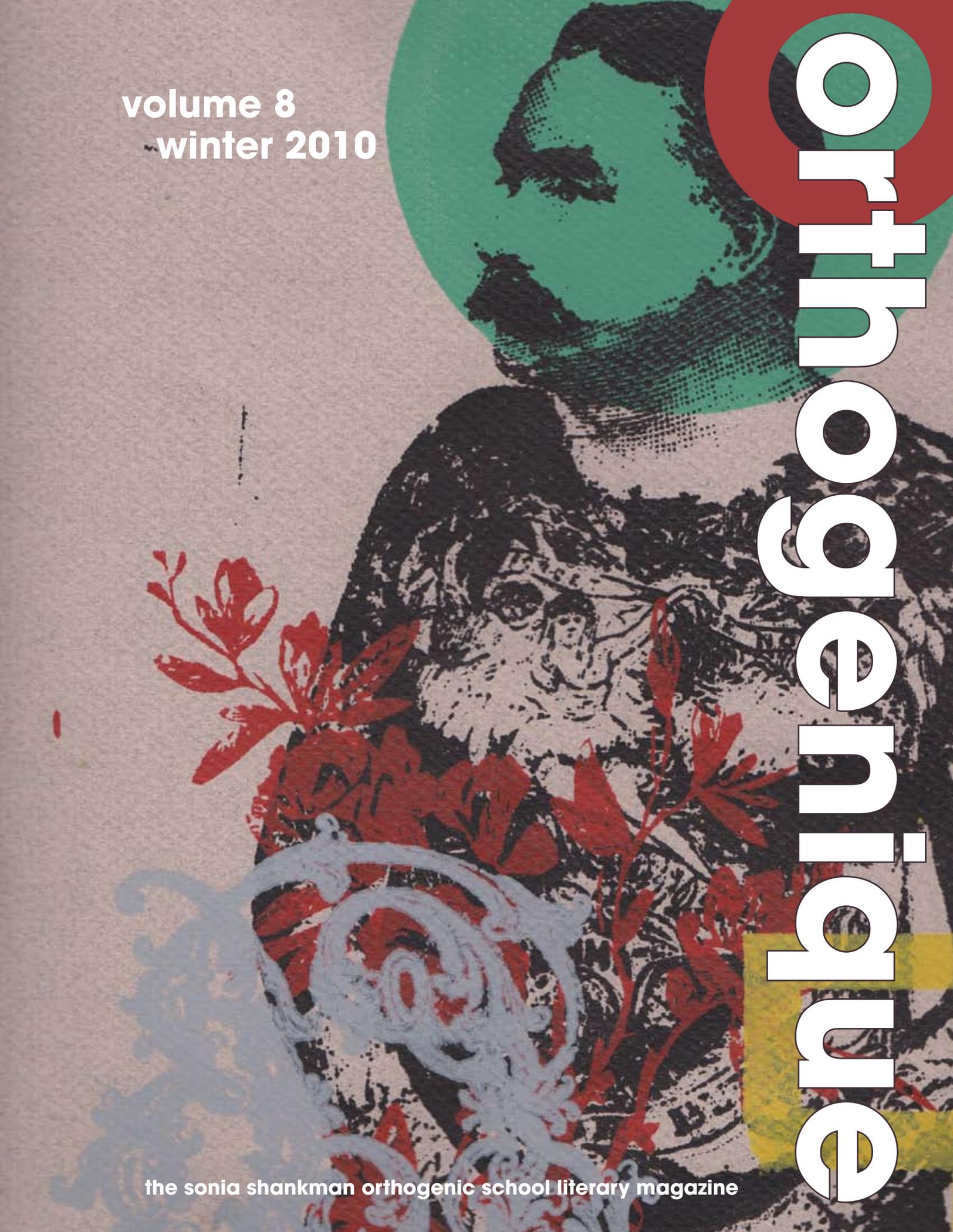


volume 8
winter 2010



orthogenique

the sonia shankman orthogenic school literary magazine

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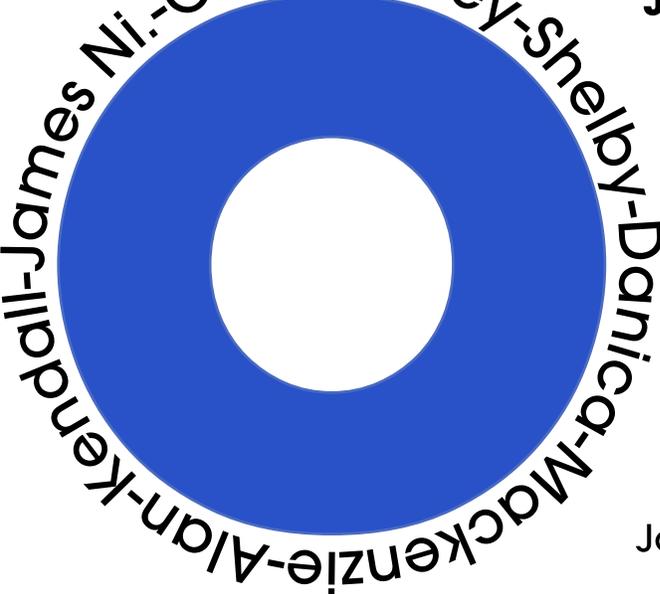
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orthogenique

A literary magazine
produced by the students of
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 June 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

What is normal and everyday for one person may be exotic and interesting to another. A stay-at-home mother may dream of going to work while a working mother may dream of staying home. Midwesterners may find accents around the world to be enticing and exciting, while those who speak the accents do not hear the same qualities in the sounds. For some, winding streets and quiet neighborhoods may define their everyday, while for others, chaos and annihilation may be a common and accepted background.

The themes of Volume 8 of Orthogenique, Normality and Annihilation, are thought provoking in themselves, but also in the way in which they interact with each other. Our students are dealing with both of these issues on a small scale just to try to rebuild their lives. Questions of identity, belonging, beliefs and values will ultimately be answered in order to determine "normal," for each of them. Small disasters in their social or family lives may feel like total annihilation, or they may have desires to annihilate all things that have done them wrong.

Exploration of normality, as you will see in the pages, included thoughts on senioritis, being alienated for different reasons, and figuring out how to belong. Annihilation topics ranged from the death of childhood to nuclear war and aliens bursting bubbles. Within the exploration, however, the desire to figure out what normal is and what annihilation causes, were consistent themes.

These musings are timeless. In October of 1826, a ship arrived in France that would forever change their view of normal. A giraffe, named Zarafa, sent by the viceroy of Egypt to King Charles was walked the 550 miles from Marseille, where her ship arrived, to Paris. She created ripples in a society where zoos were not what they are today, and giraffe's had never been seen. Would the reaction have been the same in Egypt? Likely not.

While easy to connect a giraffe to the concept of normal, how can it fit with annihilation? The answer lies in the reason for the gift. The Viceroy of Egypt was commanding Turkish forces who were fighting the Greeks for independence, and hoped that his gift would keep the French from intervening in the war.

While a giraffe would be considered exotic by much of the world, there are many creatures who would not be given this same title. The crow, for example, is a creature that has one claw in normality and one in annihilation. While none of us are likely to do a double take when seeing a crow on a power line outside our house, many cultures see this large black bird as an omen of death and conflict. Beyond omens, these birds actually cause the death of sick creatures, eating their carcasses and helping the environment. Annihilation to reestablish normality.

Hopefully reading and viewing the works in this magazine will help you see things in a new way to shake up your reality and make you think about annihilation beyond the realm of war and hate. Enjoy.



Written by Michelle Pegram, Artwork by Michelle Zarrilli

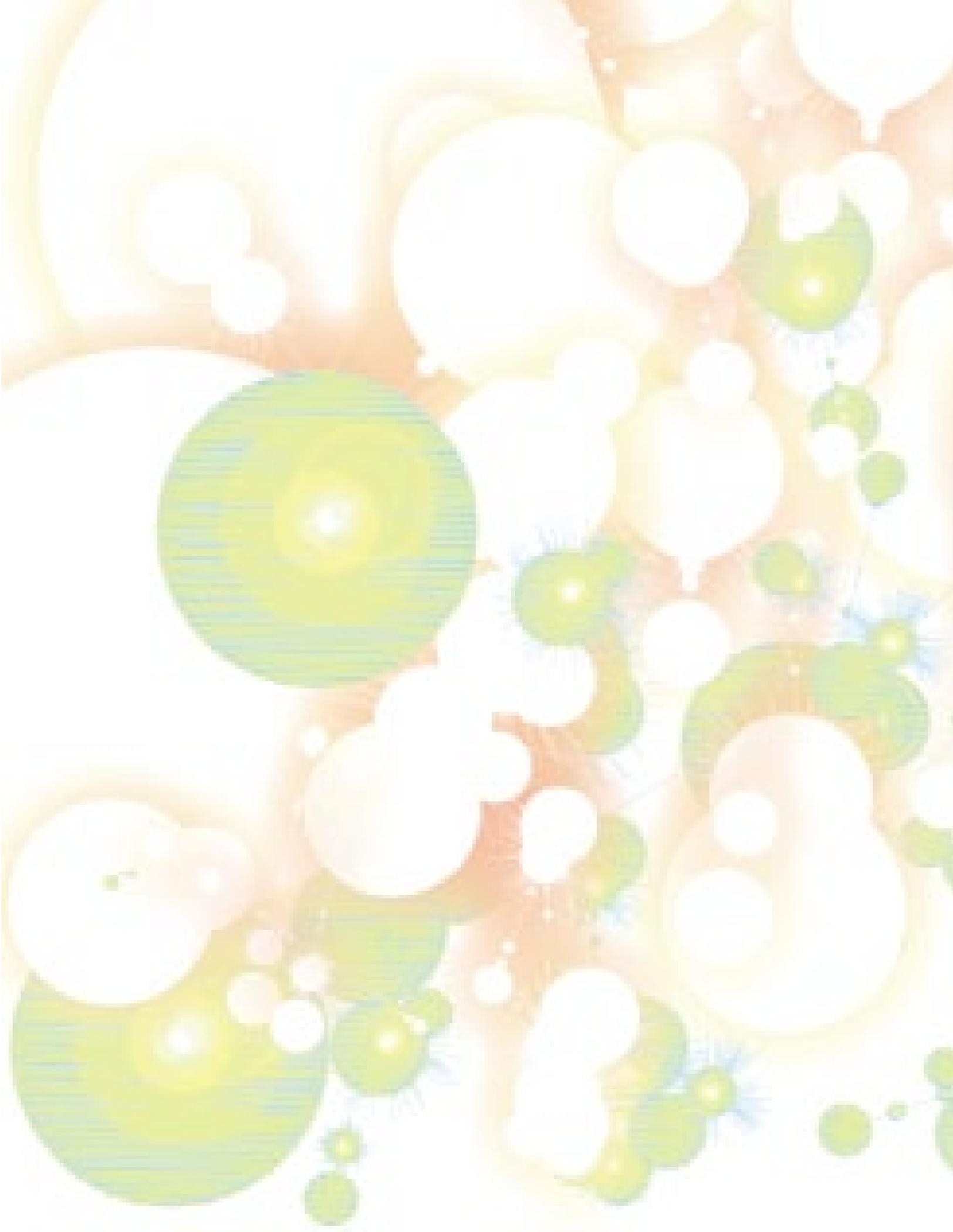


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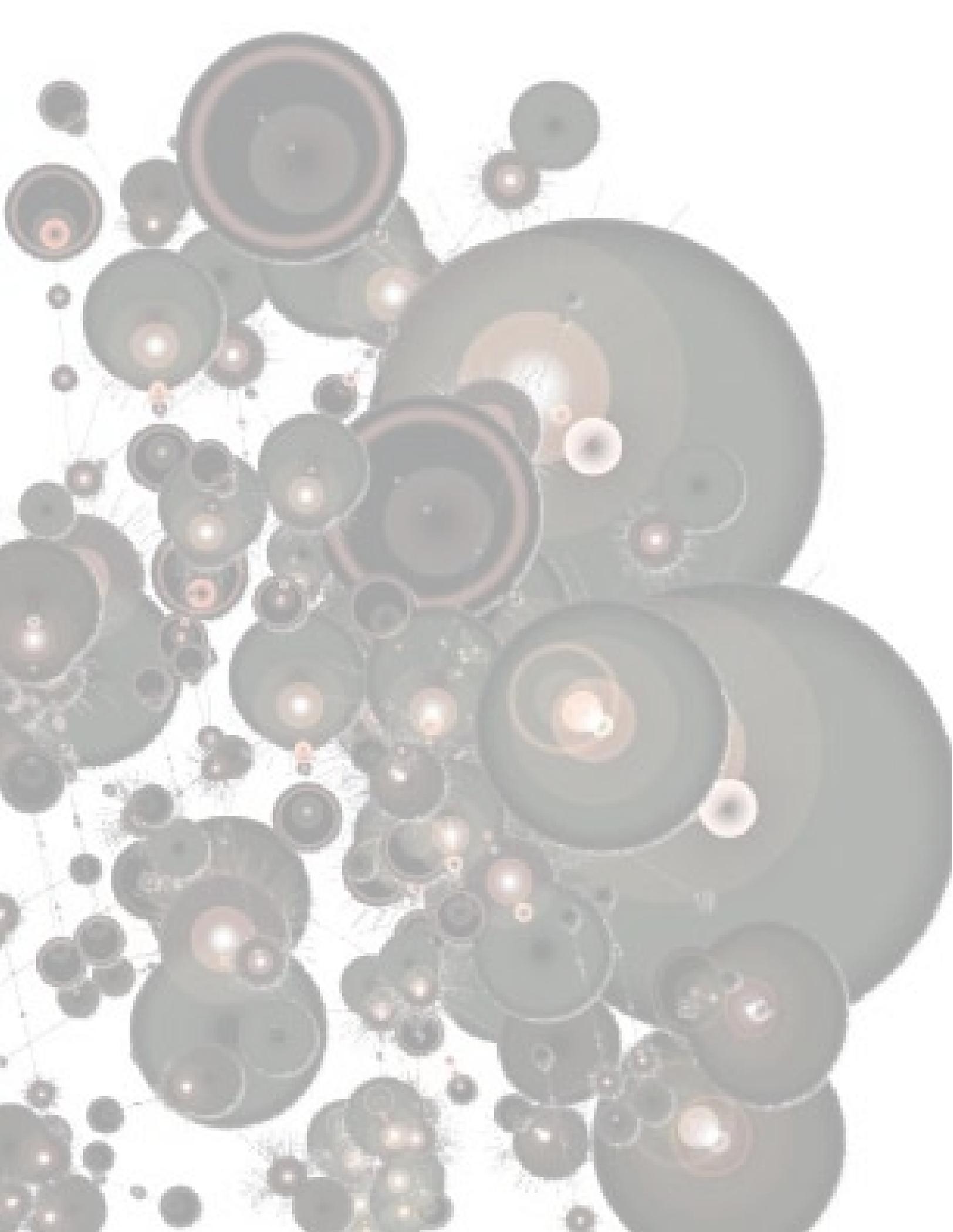
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normality



The Girl You

Don't Know.

Poem by Danica



Blind and Muted
Collage by Danica

She looks like a *freak*
With her dark black hair
So thin that you can
See all of her *ribs*. With
Lots of thick makeup,
She looks like a freak.

She doesn't talk much
Or to anyone
Other than Frankie
Her big and buff brother
Who turns his head, too.
She doesn't talk much.

Sometimes she will sing
Which surprises me
She closes her eyes

And a voice *soft and sweet*
Comes out of her soul.
Sometimes she will sing.

She hides her cute face
With a wall of hair
All **frizzy** and teased
No one knows she's gorgeous.
They don't look past when
She hides her cute face.

She goes home and cries,
Which I know because
I live right by her.
Walks in her front door then
Drops her bag and kneels.
She goes home and cries.

Today I said "hi."
She put her head down
And waved a **slow wave**
With a hand holding pens.
But I'm happy that
Today I said "Hi."

I want to know more
About this strange girl
Who I dream and think
About often enough.
But all I know is,
I want to know more.

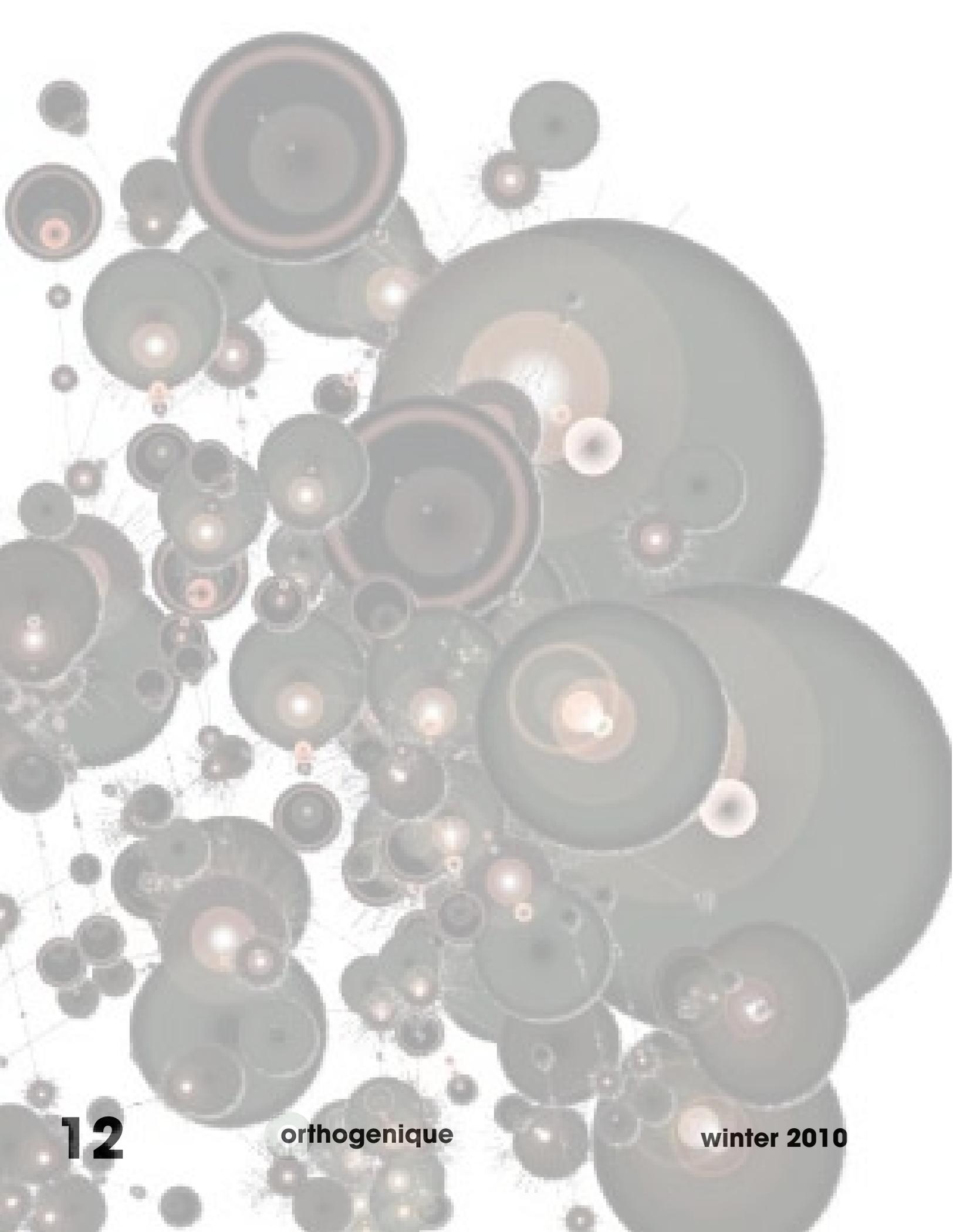
I sat next to her
And ate my cold lunch;
A turkey sandwich
With **floppy** yellow cheese.
We talked a lot then.
I sat next to her.

My friends think I'm weird.
I talk to that girl.
Who's cold like pure death.
She's just as normal as
A leaf in fall is.
My friends think I'm weird.

We talk about things,
Like spattering rain,
And the sound it makes
Slashing our car windows.
I really like when,
We talk about things.

They don't **understand**
So they call her names.
Mean ones that would hurt
If she wasn't so strong.
She doesn't care much.
They don't understand.

If only they knew,
Who she really is.
A bright **bouncy** soul
With a dark colored shell.
Shockingly "normal."
If only they knew.



SUBJECTIVE

NORMALITY



A Short Story by Alan

Jerry,

I'm sorry I haven't written to you in a little while. I've been busy settling in to my new home. A lot has been going on lately. I just want you to know that even though last time I contacted you, I said that I didn't really like this place, I'm growing fonder of, or at least more used to things. However, with the recent development of this thing called "the internet," I might be able to send you mail through a library computer connected to the phone lines. It's pretty amazing. Expensive, but amazing nonetheless. The 90's sure are epic, man.

I can recall the times when I still lived in Englemont, and I kind of miss them, Jerry. Things were different there. Or rather, things there were always the same, but here in the small town of Silverfax, things are different. The conservative Christian community of Silverfax isn't used to agnostic 'heathens' like me. I get my share of flack in my new hometown, due to the fact that there are many fundamentalist Christian doctrines that are sacrosanct here. For example, people here believe in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and are completely against homosexuals. I, on the other hand, not caring one way or the other what people do in their bedrooms, am considered a heretic and have been mentally branded with a stigma by all the folks in this community, as if they want me to feel the pain of Jesus and mend my ways. I don't even have to ask them – one look and I can tell how much fury is building up behind their eyes. If looks could kill... heh. I usually don't ask them how they feel about me, nor do they ask of my perception of them. I suppose the silent treatment is all for the best in a place like this.

A couple of days ago I went to get some groceries at the local "Stop 'N' Shop." When I went in, I could tell it wasn't the kind of grocery store I was used to. It was a little more... white and suburban, I guess. Upon entering, I got the feeling that I didn't really fit in. My dress style was completely different than theirs. A few locals glanced at me, shooting weird looks, as if I didn't belong. Like I'm the strange one. I was sporting my black trench coat, some blue jeans, a Damian Marley T-shirt, and a pair of worn-out black and red Converse. That was normal apparel for people in our neighborhood. But there they were, wearing their salmon-colored, button-up, collared golf T-shirts, khaki shorts, high

socks, and peach-colored tennis shoes. They weren't in any position to look at me weird and gawk, thinking I dressed oddly.

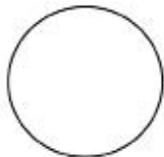
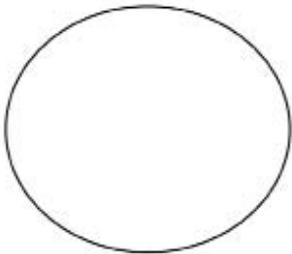
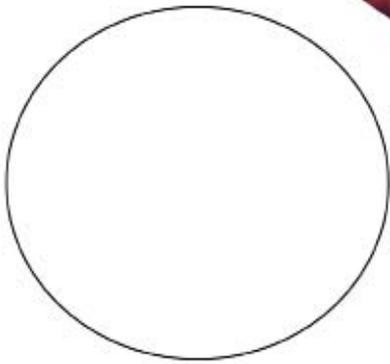
I tried to ignore them while I hurriedly scavenged the store for some red meat and seasonings. When looking for the meat, I stumbled upon all sorts of vegan and vegetarian foods, which is nothing like our old markets, where meat is a staple for every meal, as it should be. After quite some time guffawing at all the strange fake meat substances made of plant leaves and twigs, I found what I was looking for. Good old red meat. They had a decent selection of a variety of meats, but oddly enough, they had nothing labeled "kosher." I guess there aren't very many Jews in this part of town.

It's funny how we grew up being taught social "norms" and "stigmas." As a child I got the naïve, preconceived notion that they're universal. Well, I've found out otherwise in my recent months living here. Nearly everyone in Englemont was pretty non-religious, consisting of nihilists, atheists, and agnostics such as myself. I'm sure there were a couple Jesuits and Semites sprinkled throughout, though they weren't very vocal about their beliefs. I thought it was normal. Religion was this thing that people in far-off lands spent time quibbling about, arguing about whose God is the real deal and all that jazz. It just seemed too pointless to me, and pretty much everyone in my community for that matter, to pay attention to, so we focused on other things like music.

Music was such an important part of our everyday life. Being the industrial city it was, most residents were union workers at the local mill. Work was tiresome and strenuous; music was our form of distraction and escapism. Not many people made a good living so very few could afford cable TV; instead, we'd listen to our snazzy portable AM/FM radios and sometimes buy vinyls that we would play on the communal record player housed on a makeshift shelf in a room near our lockers. That way we could all listen to music together during our breaks. Due to the demographic of our neighborhood, a lot of people got me interested in Dub, Reggae, Dancehall, Electronica, Disco, Motown, and things of that nature. All of the Silverfax stations play Country, Rock, or Classical. There are also quite a few Christian radio shows, too. Not exactly what I've been used to.

THOUGHT

Digital Image by Casey



Music was, to us, as important as religion is to the folks in Silverfax. It was what we considered normal. Remember how we would sometimes save up our earnings and buy newspapers or other periodicals and read about various things, some of them being religious? We also read books and encyclopedias at our small local library occasionally... I recall how none of us got a proper education since Englemont has a terrible public school system, so we all figured we should teach ourselves. Not that you went there much though, Jerry. In my late teenage years, the guys at the mill and I would read about all sorts of different things at the library. I can't recall everything specifically that I read back then, but I did read something about The Crusades. Wars waged over disagreements about theories of how we came into being and to whom we should devote ourselves to... We thought religion was so weird. Don't get me wrong, I'm not against religion, I just don't see any reason to be all gung-ho about it. It just doesn't seem normal to me. Yet, here I am, surrounded by religious zealots who think I'm the abnormal one. It's funny how life works out like that.

They seem to think we're immoral, but really, we're just humanists who don't really believe in a higher power. There's a lot of misunderstanding and miscommunication on both sides. Well, miscommunication meaning a lack of communication. The folks around my new residence tend to stick to themselves and don't really talk to new people or outsiders like me... I'm not sure if it's xenophobia, timidity, or apathy. That's not to say that they're all impolite; when I walk into the local general store or gas station I'm given a friendly "howdy" by those who, like me, are on a mission to find some obscure little item to buy that we'll probably only use once or twice before discarding or storing away forever.

I'm pretty sure my neighbors are secretly thinking of what they'd like to do to me. Churches and places of interest on Sundays are quite different here, and for the worse, too. There aren't the typical televangelists like you see on TV or

hear about from long-winded people. Luckily they don't preach about fire and brimstone, but they are very firm in their prejudiced beliefs and want to tell me "the truth" so I can be "reconciled." They're not intentionally mean though; they're just trying to get people to agree with what they believe in, however intolerant it may be. They don't seem too happy when I tell them I personally believe that there is no irrefutable proof that God exists or doesn't exist. Makes me lose out on both sides of the theological debate. Atheists think I'm a fence-sitting wuss, and Christians think I need to have more faith in God and all or else I'll burn in hell. Where I was growing up though, it was commonplace to have my kind of mindset.

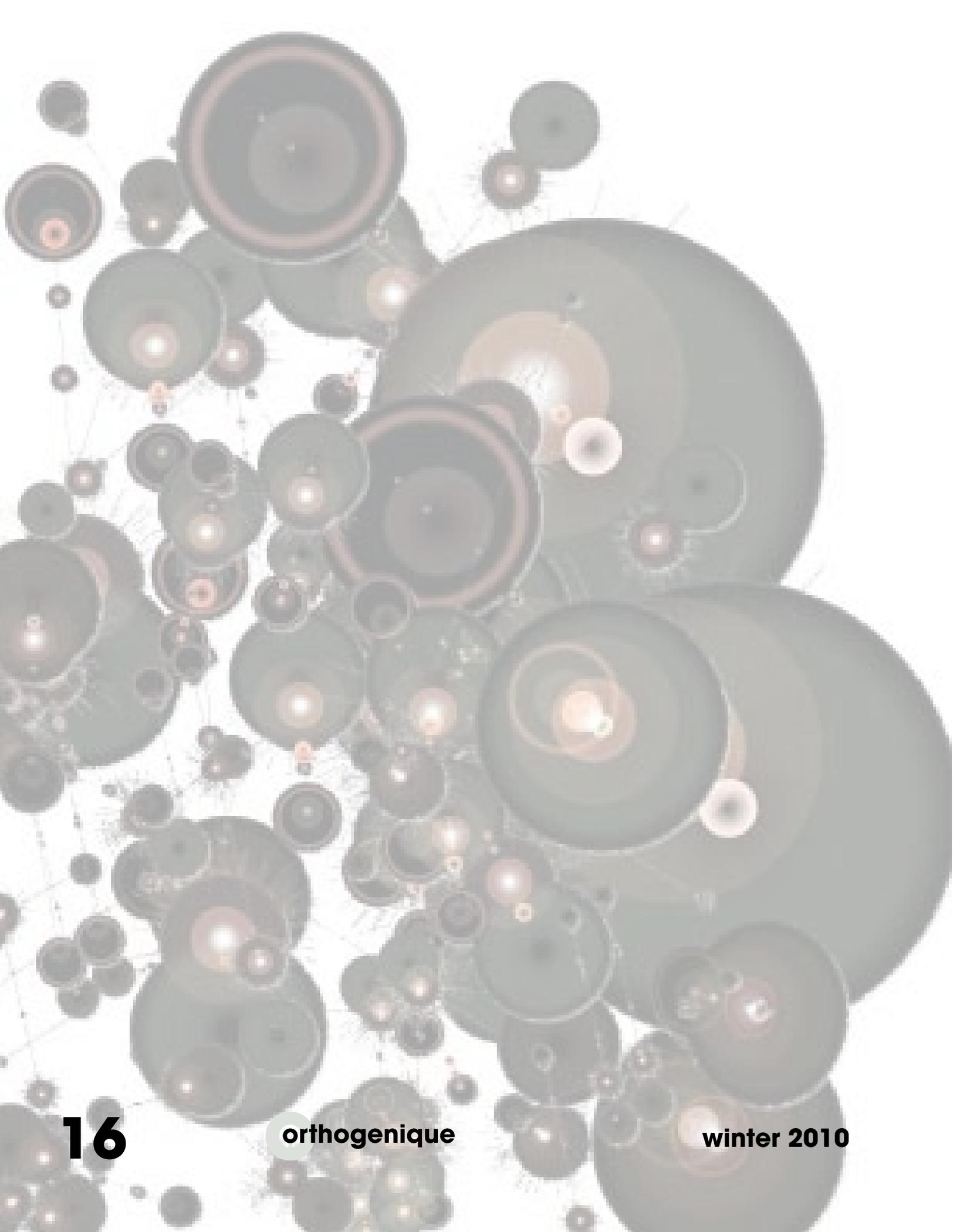
I haven't made many friends here yet, mutual or otherwise, due to the cultural differences and boundaries, despite being only a couple hundred miles away from where I used to live. It's not like I moved to a different country where cultures are practically polar opposites... and then there's the whole language barrier. I suppose I don't have that excuse. It's just hard to get to know people when there are these big and awkward differences in how we see the world, but perhaps I can come to accept them and think of my newly made neighbors as being as normal as my past acquaintances. Probably not. Perhaps if I had a white-collar job we could all talk around a water cooler or something and get to know each other better. That's never going to happen, though. I was born and raised in the working class, made for manual labor. That's how it's always going to be.

On the bright side, different perspectives on what's normal can spice up life. Aside from the sexual, racial, and religious prejudices they have, it's good to know a different way of living and to experience it for yourself. It's not quite a normal experience, to go and live quite a ways away from your original home, but it can help you gain insight as to what exactly is normal.

Maybe you should come visit Silverfax sometime. That'd be nice. I really miss you guys but I can't go back to Englemont. It's just not the same anymore. Keep in touch.

-Elijah

**THEY SEEM TO THINK
WE'RE IMMORAL, BUT
REALLY WE'RE JUST
HUMANISTS WHO DON'T
REALLY BELIEVE
IN A HIGHER POWER**



OFFENSIVE JOKES ARE OFTEN FUNNY

LITERARY ESSAY BY CASEY



CASEY CRUSHED
DRAWING BY MACKENZIE

THERE ARE MANY **words** THAT MIGHT DESCRIBE ME DEPENDING ON WHO YOU ASK: **nerd, dork, white, tall, big, chill, strange, funny, entertaining, intelligent, weird.**

I have many strange qualities, some of which, I am proud of, and others which I am not particularly proud of, but not particularly concerned about either. There are many words that might describe me depending on who you ask: nerd, dork, white, tall, big, chill, strange, funny, entertaining, intelligent, weird. Those are just some of the things you might be told when asking the general populous about Casey. You know what, though? I agree with all of them, as they all apply at different times, because that's who I am, and that's cool with me, and cool with most people I know. Also, let it be on record that Facebook reported among all of my friends that I am the most desirable for marriage, best potential father, and the most reliable friend or some crap like that. I really like when Facebook tells me these things, because who doesn't like to hear social networking sites tell them how awesome they are. Perhaps at this point I'm simply rambling about the unimportant, but that's another thing about me that I know is a part of me and that I'm cool with, my ego; and my ability to speak about everything and nothing all at the same time.

So, like I said, I'm a huge nerd, which again, is fine with me. I'm a nerd in a variety of ways. I like to play excess amounts of video games, the newest technology makes me joygasm and get all giddy and excited with chills, and I write about super-powered hell-bent on destruction women who can strangle a dude with their minds. While I think that's cool, some may think it's a tad too fantastical, and, once again, nerdy. People tell me being as reliant on video games and electronics for entertainment as I am is an "unhealthy" behavior, like when I stay up all night at my computer desk mashing keyboard keys in order to reach level 35 for my second travel power in Champions Online. Might I remind

you that's only 5 levels from the cap? I made 10 levels in one all nighter, and have almost reached the max level in 3 weekends of play. I think that's pretty impressive... Most don't, and I accept that, but I'm proud of it, and that's all that matters to me.

People explain to me that they bought a computer with poor specs simply because it cost less, and I refuse to accept this is logical. What if you want to play some games? What if you want to do some graphic design, or video design? It's always good to have a well equipped computer to do all the nerdy things that people should do, nerd or otherwise. I browse tech support forums in order to gain more knowledge about computers and to help people where I can. In a nutshell, I'm the prime of a nerd, and I have absolutely no problem with it.

To be honest, this is okay, considering that Nerds pretty much rule the world. Let's look at someone like Bill Gates, the richest man in the world. A very intelligent man, this one. What's he worth, you ask? 40 billion USD. You know how he made that money? Being smart with computers. He made it originally by creating his own computer operating system from scratch, and continued to release new versions, and many people have bought and still buy these versions as they come. Microsoft Windows, the most successful computer operating system in the world, was the source of Bill Gates' success. However, it doesn't stop there, his company, Microsoft, continues to branch out, creating video games, both consoles and individual titles, and hardware, as well as continuations of the Windows software, including Microsoft Office, all of which are very expensive and make him an awful lot of money.

Let's look at another nerd in the spotlight, Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple



Computers. Apple and its operating systems lived in the dark for a very long time, but have recently become very popular, thanks much to Steve Jobs. Apple has not only been successful in the home computer industry, but also in the music industry as well as other types of hardware. In case you have forgotten, they make that wonderful MP3 player called the iPod, which comes in many shapes and sizes, and many hefty prices. It is bar none the most popular MP3 player around. Just think, a nerd with a little ambition has sent a small computer company to the top of the market with his nerdy innovations. That is why Steve Jobs is a notable nerd, and rules the world (albeit, less so than Bill Gates).

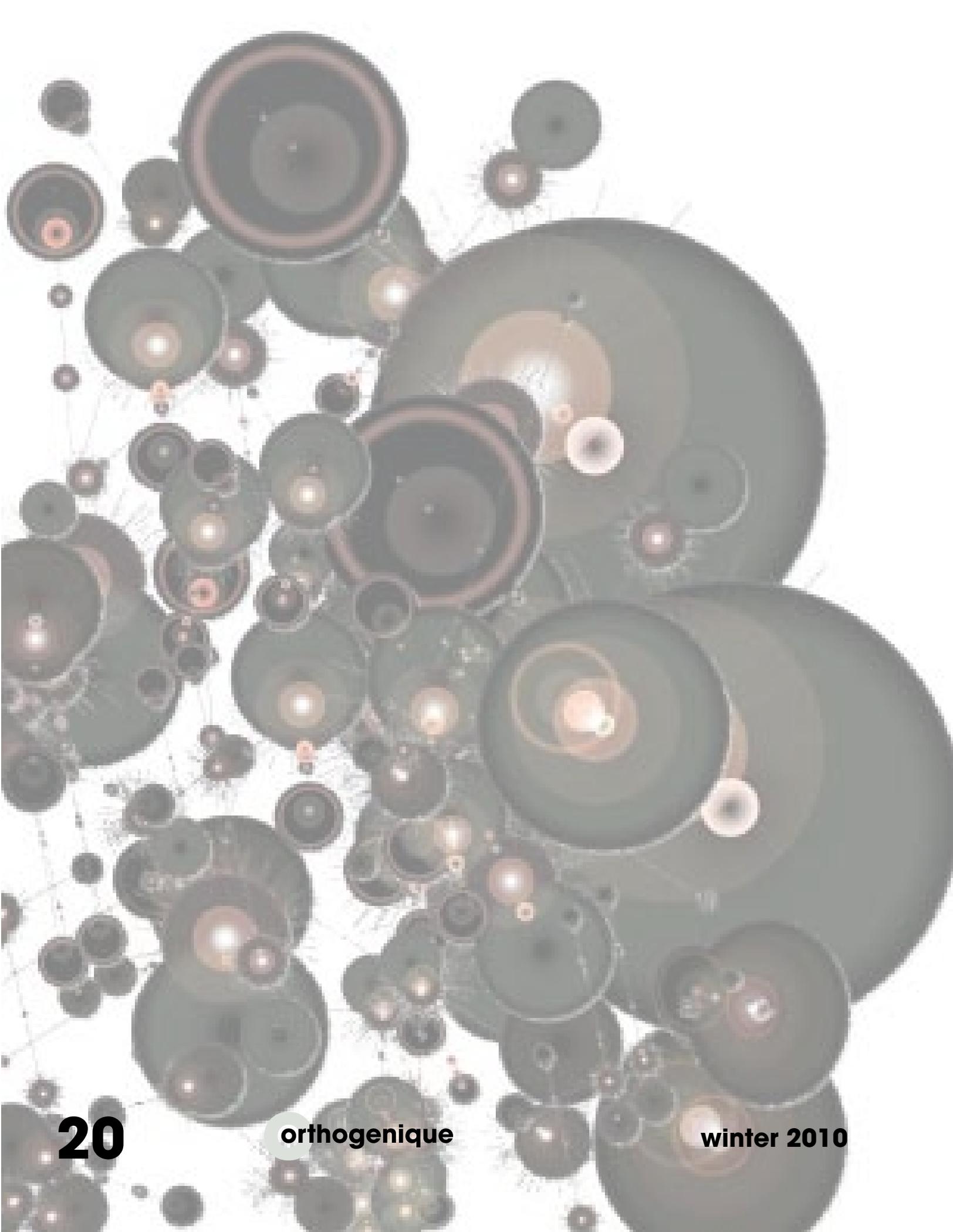
My sense of humor can probably be summed up as crude, dry, and offbeat. I enjoy some good offensive jokes, such as the likes of dead baby, dead Michael Jackson, Helen Keller, and an array of various other racist and offensive jokes. I like to make fun of things that other people probably don't find very humorous. My humor is often awkward and strange, but that's just what keeps me going. To me, there is a funny side to everything. I try not to get too offended by anything nor too upset over anything. Instead, I try to find silly and funny spins on every situation. Most people would disagree with me when I say that there are humorous sides to every aspect of life, and yes, I mean every. It's really hard for me to take anything seriously, and in the end, I think most people enjoy that about me, despite how strange it is. My theory is, life is one big joke. I'm not saying that you shouldn't care about life or ever take anything seriously, but that you should joke with life as much as possible; tell a good knock knock joke every now and then at least.

Honestly, I care about almost every person I know on a personal level, I just show it differently based on who they are. Basically, if I didn't care for you, I wouldn't care to make a joke about how much I hate you. People tell me to swear less and to take life more seriously, but in the end, they appreciate me more because of my quirky ways.

I guess what I'm getting at is that you should be who you really are and who you want to be, not what the world expects you to be. It never hurt me to be a little weird; all it did was help me make friends that I enjoyed more than the cookie cutter cool kids in the school. There's nothing wrong with having a strange sense of humor or strange habits that others see as nerdy or unhealthy, unless they really are unhealthy, which, in my opinion, is just a matter of opinion. This is because it's who you are, and while it may not be what everyone enjoys in a person, there's always someone who will enjoy your personality out there, and it shouldn't be your priority to find that person, as they will just show up when you least expect it. You will be much happier having 2 or 3 friends being yourself than having 20 acquaintances pretending to be someone you're not. It just isn't worth it, and you won't find the same happiness posing as another personality.



YOU WON'T FIND THE
SAME **happiness** POSING
AS ANOTHER **personality**



A Helping Hand

Free Verse Poem by James Ni

A little boy went outside to do something fun.
But once he left the safety of the doors,
The kids all turned and laughed at him.
The words they said, the looks they gave,
Shot through him like an arrow.
The boy he cried and ran away,
To the only safe place that he knew.
Behind the school, away from all the bullies,
He would bring his knees up to his chest,
And cry out all his tears.

Everyday was like this, the meanness and the pain.
But the little boy, he did not know,
That someone watched this all the time.
Until one day, behind the school,
He heard someone say,
“Would you like to come and play with me?”

The boy looked up and saw a girl,
She held her hand out to him.
She smiled softly and bent down to wipe away his tears.
“Don’t cry, poor boy. I want to help.
Please come and be my friend.”

The boy began to smile.
He stood up and took her hand.
The two went back to go and play,
Ignoring the jeers the bullies made.
For once the boy was truly happy.

All because he met someone,
Who cared and lent him a helping hand.

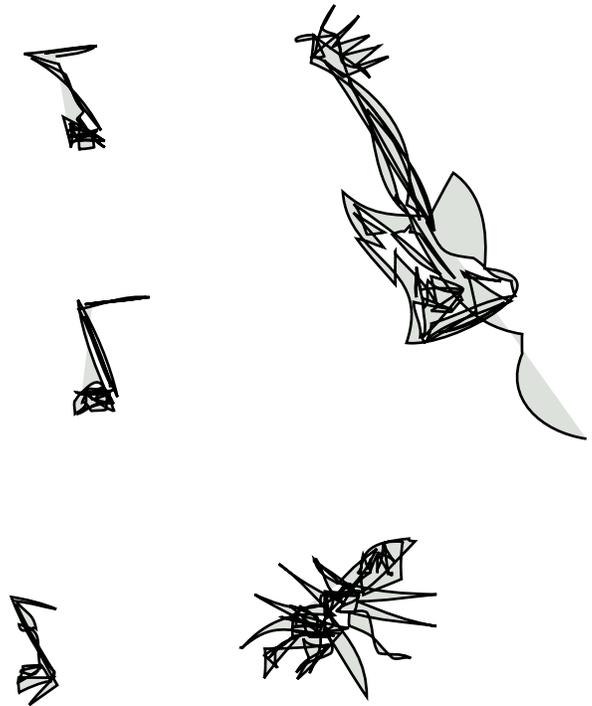
Born to Die

A pseudo-children story free verse poem by Mackenzie

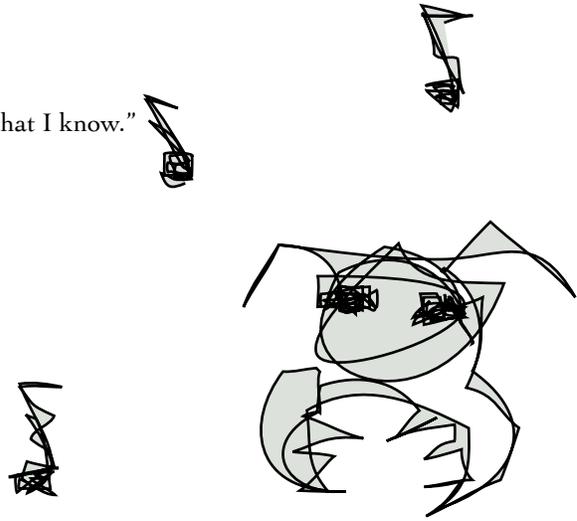
There once was a boy named Johnny-John,
A boy like something from a warped imagination.
Poor Johnny-boy born with an ant-head,
A freak of nature as some said.
No doctor could explain Johnny's defect,
Nor would they treat him with any respect.
Needless to say his parents were shocked,
When the nurse brought a giant ant they gawked.
His mother passed-out, his father screamed,
Knowing they'd be freaks by association it seemed.
The poor frightened ant-head boy started to cry,
As something inside him started to die.
They said he wouldn't last a month or even a week,
"You may not have to raise it," said the white suited geek.
But the ant boy survived eating old moldy cheese,
Making friends outside with the bugs and the bees.
His parents tried to treat him like a son,
But these squeamish parents were too conscious of fashion.
"How would I look playing catch with this vermin?"
Thought dad watching his ant-head baby squirmin'.
So they gave Johnny Ant-head to an old couple
With sandals and tie-dye and fat bellies very supple.
There he was raised, mama saying his ant-head was groovy,
But at school he was a freak like some thing from a bad movie.
They'd pull his antennas and punch his ant-head carapace,
Stomp on bugs and throw rocks at his thick bony face.
But Johnny was tough with his big ant heart.
He dealt with his feelings though he could have torn them apart.
He found solace in hard work at old Ed's steel mill,
"It ain't really a kid," thought Ed "so what the hell."
To Eddies surprise ant-boy had the strength of four bulls
And he would toil harder than any band of mules.
He started working-out and only got stronger,
But strength couldn't stop the kids from bullying him any longer.
Seeking an outlet he bought a guitar,
And began pursuing the dream of becoming a rock star.
With fingers fast and frantic like ants it all came natural,
Again hard work won through, he could play like an animal.
Like a beast! A real guitar monster,
So he left his parents from whom he was fostered.
He threw his guitar into the back of his car,
And drove to Hollywood to become a star.
He joined a couple spaced-out metal heads,
One an insane bass savant with a braided mohawk-mullet dyed red.
With his manic wicked shreds and his ferocious ant head
It wasn't long before he rocked out his first bar,
Up showing the headliner by far.
His guitar playing was mean,
Got himself out there on the So. Cal. Scene.
Released a major label record, it was obscene,



"The Ant-Headed Loser"
A Color Pencil Picture by Shelby



Was well acclaimed but didn't sell too clean.
Toured the west coast to back his new release,
As always he played like a beast,
Like an ant-headed guitar monster!
But the fans laughed and jeered more like a freak show,
Johnny as always thought, "Wait and I'll get some respect, yes that I know."
Yet year after year he was disappointed,
Bands left, Records flopped and fans taunted.
Johnny's soul began to wear thin,
A record label pariah only eight years in
He knew his career was coming to its fin.
His last band was called Maggot Brains,
His old music was goofy but now it was all about his pains.
He made clear to everybody his rage,
Breaking the equipment up on the stage.
Two years of this and he had enough,
For twenty-eight years now he had it rough.
So he disappeared, never seen again,
He didn't leave behind any sad friends.
I guess the point of this story, as I want to tell you,
There are some people who society will never value.
People like Johnny, no matter how hard they try,
They're just another freak who's born to die.



"Freak Show Spectacle"
A Color Pencil Picture by Shelby





Senioritis: Finding the Cure

literary essay by Shelby

digital image by Alan

Day to day we find ourselves mindlessly going through the motions, hoping to please our teacher, spouse, “the man,” or parent/guardian. We roll out of bed and the excruciating sound of the alarm clock sounds worse than a bad Bill Cosby impression. Everyday we proceed to go wherever it is society forces us to go at the same exact time, with a smile.

For my fellow peers and I, scheduling is a necessity. According to adults, this is how it will be in the “real world.” An idiot could see that any normal person with a job, friends and miniature labradoodle follows the same strenuous schedule, as not to face the consequences of social exile. So day after day, we too follow the plan at school. The AM consists of a solid 7-7:30 wake-up time, followed by breakfast at 8:25 with an everyday battle for good breakfast cereal, the dining room filled with dissatisfied echoes concerning opinions about the far from edible bagel concoction. At 9:00, it’s time for school. “Good morning, Shelby,” I hear for the fifth time. Yeah right. Eat, sleep, eat, school, times five, weekend, repeat.

I’ve been in school for 12 taxing years, and I am starting to feel the effect. Days run into another and weeks feel like years. It simply has to do with the fact that I have a slight case of pre-seasonal senioritis, but I know I’m not alone. I have seen many people other than me affected by this disease

during my time in high school and I have been dreading the day when I would catch it.

Senioritis is a condition that occurs mostly in high-school seniors or people who are about to graduate. Symptoms include boredom, irritation, procrastination and slacking in all forms. Fortunately, there is a special section of the Orthogenic School for the nastiest cases. Those afflicted are confined in the highest part of the building known as TLC, an area with the heaviest senior population. This vicinity is notorious for being late for mostly everything, excessive video game playing, sluggishness, under-studying and over-sleeping. If you didn’t have Senioritis before you moved in, within a week it is 100% guaranteed that you will catch it, even if it’s a mild case or a less common strand.

The only known remedy for Senioritis is graduation. Studies show that 99 out of 100 seniors (including middle school, college and high school seniors) are devastated by this plague by the time spring approaches. Studies also show that similar strands of this disease have a smashing effect on the underclassman: freshmanitis, sophomoreitis, and junioritis.

To fight my ailment, I know I can do a few things that might help. Studies say that staying busy, planning for the future and being involved with social activities can help you cope. I plan to do all of the above. Maybe talking to other seniors dealing with the same issue will help. I could start a



"Senioritis" Digital Image by Alan

support group, maybe Seniors Anonymous. First, you admit you have a problem with Senioritis... "Does anyone have anything that they want to share with the group?" "Yeah, I'm Mike and I am a senior."

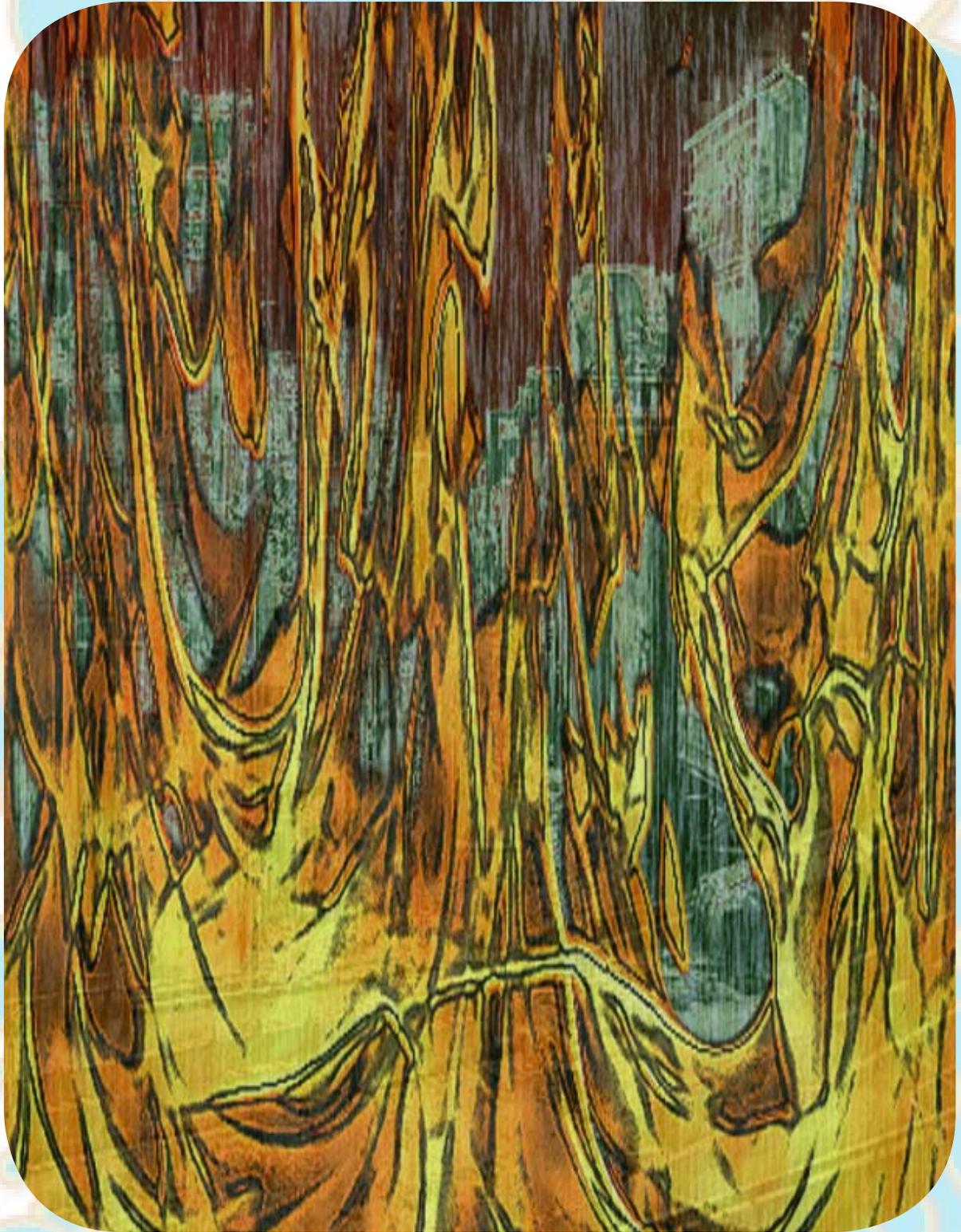
While I'm combating my illness, I think about boring people with briefcases, baggy eyes and permanently stained yellow teeth, who in my opinion, were in too much of a rush to grow up and fight senioritis, listen to their parents and work in corporate America. The most exciting thing that may happen to them is the silent feeling of delight they get when walking into Subway on their half-hour lunch break and seeing a sign that advertises the return of their favorite sub, but with half the carbs and calories.

Although I don't personally know what its like to be this corporate android, I can let the media and movies such as

Fight Club shape my more than likely skewed, but comforting, perception.

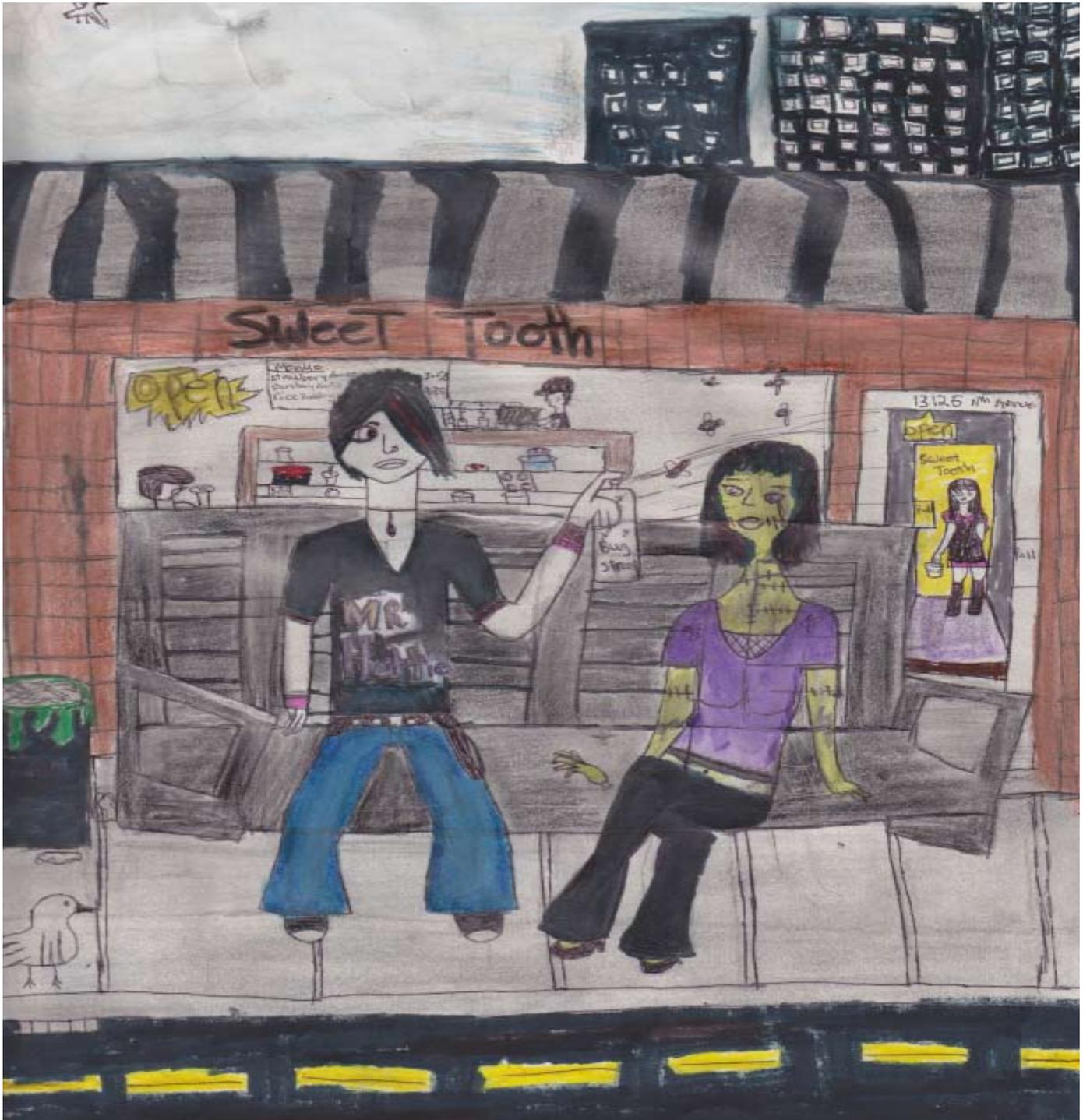
I look at the big picture and recognize the fact that I'm a senior in high school and how time flies. I sometimes even entertain myself with the thought of being my parent's age, looking back on my senior year in high school, laughing about how long I thought it was taking to finally graduate. Although I am impatient and edgy, I am definitely not in any rush to grow up. I want to have a solid plan and direction in life, before I take things so seriously. I know that eventually, when I have a successful career and life, I will appreciate the pain I went through my senior year battling senioritis, the disease I was convinced would be incurable.

annihilation



Dame of the Dead

short story by Casey



Between Hairpray and Bugspray
Drawing by Kendell

Women are like bloodsucking balls of whine. They expect you to take care of them, but also to let them be independent. They expect you to let them figure out a puzzle on their own, but when they can't figure out how to start the computer program to do the puzzle, they ask for your help. No, wait, ask is the wrong word. They command that you help. Well, let me tell you, it's hard for a woman to command you when they're a flesh-eating rotting sack of skin.

A few months ago, I tapped on my girlfriend's front door. She didn't answer. The air was silent around me, and the door remained closed. I realized the most reasonable way to deal with this situation was to kick it in, which I did with a blur of a kick, my shoe slamming against the door throwing it off its rusty hinges. The room smelled like my mother after she refused to shower for 2 weeks because she believed she had been turned into a witch by a taro card reader.

I looked about the entry room, scanning back and forth. Then, I heard a strange call: "Braaaaaains..." I jumped, and followed the sound into the living room, where she stood. She was clawing at the window, as though she wished to escape.

"You want out?" I asked. She simply looked at me with a blank stare on her face, after turning her head slowly to face me. Her face was covered in red. It was clearly just a case of her getting overzealous with the ketchup.

"Braaaaaains..." she said in response. I raised an eyebrow.

"You need some help wiping off that ketchup?" She began to walk slowly towards me in a staggered limp. "Alright, I'll meet you halfway," I said, and began to walk slowly towards her.

When we finally met face to face, she paused, cocked her head to the side, and waited there.

"What? Do I have something on my face?" I asked.

"BRAAAAINS!" She screamed, and lunged towards me. We rolled around on the floor for a few moments, but I managed to throw her off. She grunted and slowly got back up.

"Lela, it's me! Jack!" I yelled, my voice resonating through her lifeless head. She began to lunge at me again, when suddenly, it connected in her head. I am Jack, her boyfriend who sort of loves her but really am more interested in her parent's fortune. She backed off.

"Brains?" she said, questioning me.

I knew that was a cry for help, a cry for me to take care of her.

"Brains brain brains." she said.

How I wish I had the courage and intelligence to say,

"Yes! I mean no... I uhh... Don't really have the free time you know and uhh... Got some other stuff to do... So I'll just leave you here to get your head cut off by zombie hunters," but no, I'm a little wuss who can't deny his 'obligation' to his undead girlfriend.

So the next few months were interesting... I took her with me wherever I would go, as well as a can of bug spray. It really ruined my social life, as she smelled quite awful. Sure, a couple of people screamed and ran away, but it didn't bother me much. The real problem was, she had a nasty habit of eating people and small animals. I caught her many times wandering off and taking a nice bite out of a brown haired Rabbit in the park.

"No!" I would always say, "Rabbit brains are off limits." She would sigh and turn away for a minute, and then we would continue our day. That never stopped her. She continued to eat the poor things.

The real kicker is that she would try and eat people.

"No!" I would say. "Well, that's Mitchell from across the street with a better cable line than me... I guess you can have a few bites."

So she would chomp to her hearts content. It was nice to see her happy. I guess I could let her eat a few more people if that's what she really wanted...

I just so happened to meet my boss, my ex-girlfriend, my old friend who stole \$10 from me and never gave it back, and my mailman that next day. What

a coincidence. I SUPPOSE I couldn't take the joy of eating all 4 of them away from her. I made sure she didn't damage the clothes or money, as it would go to charity as soon as I figured out how much would be left after I spent it or sold it. Unfortunately, I didn't have enough to donate to charity, so I bought myself McDonalds with the last 8 dollars from the lootings. She had a few fries and a few more brains.

So here I sit, on this bench writing this, and she is sitting next to me, her head hanging off the side, flies buzzing around her. The bug spray is resting in my hand and we are silent.

All of the sudden I hear, "Braaaaaains..."

"Did you say something honey?"

She gives me a strange look and gets up and starts walking away from me.

"Braaaains..."

I started hearing the word multiple times in all sorts of pitches and voices. She turns to me and the other zombies get closer and closer, breathing down my neck. I guess this is it. Oh well, not complaining about my life. I enjoyed it as much as one should. Hopefully I get to eat you someday. Peace.





A Dream

Free Verse Poem by Chris

-A Dream- -A vision perhaps- -of things that were, are, or possibly will be-

-asleep-

I am bathed in light from all directions

I see a figure weeping in the middle of a fountain of purest water.

I ask what is wrong and it replies

"I've lost a Friend"

"Who were they?" I ask

"Their name was Christopher"

Me "what do you mean?"

Voice "Turn away from me... I never knew you"

I am consumed in pain and fear as I fall through light to darkness.

Fire

Burning

Fear

Becomes clearer,

Dark, yet illumination

A familiar face

A demon I recognize yet somehow don't fully remember

Be still for you have shown me kindness and I shall guard you the best I can,

An embrace in the darkness

What would be happy...

Now...

But just empty...

Just an embrace...

Of affection...

Still empty...

Beyond understanding

Cold...

Comforting...

Still empty...

Holds me tells me to be quiet

For my silence shall keep me from suffering more

My hands touch something below me
A corpse... eyes... pain in them... dead, yet alive and suffering

I scream...
An intense pain rushes over me feeding from my fear
Alone

I see creatures from my deepest fear in the distance... I know that they have come for me
To feed...
On not flesh but fear and not blood but suffering.

But then I'm in her arms again,
Hush she says for it will cause you more pain
I shall protect you from what I can but I am not able to protect you from everything... there are far more powerful forces than I

I speak to her my pain lessened in her embrace
Still empty

Yet the emptiness dulled the pain I suffered of speaking.
The pain was still there
Yet, I felt nothing
As she held me I was empty, but the pain was empty as well,

Still pain...
Just empty...

Bearable now,
Ever present
But I felt nothing

She spoke to me

You have shown me kindness
I've heard you praying for me
You've prayed for my demonic soul to find peace

You've prayed that I could come with you
To your heaven yes...
Have your prayers fallen upon deaf ears?

I spoke back
Why would they be deaf ears?

She said to me,
It is beyond your understanding, your God would not have me, we are apart...
I thank you for your kindness, but It is not to be.
I looked into her eyes, they were beautiful
Lustrous, yet empty, just as her embrace.

A bright light appears from above,
The face of the creature of light, the voice of the one whom sent me to the burning abyss.
The light seems to cause her discomfort,

The voice from above
"you are forgiven...
You are welcome to come back"
I respond "what about her"
"Can't she come with me?"

"She cannot"
"Is there no way that she can go to heaven"
"I'm sorry there is not, though your prayers for her salvation be valiant she cannot come with you"
"I can't just leave her"

She responds to me, for the first time from her I feel emotion... I feel it... from an emotionless realm.
She speaks ... empty- yet the emptiness is filled with something provided by the light.
"They can take care of you far better than I. Go on to the light where you belong"

"What about you"
"Just as it pains you to be in this realm it pains us to be in theirs, we are separate. There is no way to truly explain it to you.
We are separate, as we will always be, our kind has walked our own path and have chosen as is it forever writ...
I am destined to remain here until the end"

She speaks again almost with humor
"Perhaps you would have been more satisfied with one of the other gods and the realm they govern,
Your fantasies they may lie in such a realm..."

"But I thought our God was the only god,"
"You know so little, there are many gods and their lands and realms which they govern, as your commandment, "There shall be no other gods before me" For your God is that of the eternal whom always was and from him spawned others and all realms, but in the end only His realm shall remain... That is your heaven. For all other realms and gods alike as I too shall be cast in the fire, only the realm of your God, your heaven shall remain..."

You know so little..."

I give her a pained look
"So do you choose to be away from God?"
"It cannot be helped... it is what shall be"
"But couldn't you have chosen to follow God"
"It was determined before creation, my path"

The light beckons me to come again

I speak to the light
"May I visit her every now and then throughout eternity"
The voice from above says to me
"This I cannot determine, for it is beyond me but you must know... every now and then in eternity could be never"

"What?"
"You may not understand yet but you perhaps will someday"

"I care for this demon, isn't our God all forgiving and all loving"
"Yes"
"Can't he do anything... nothing being impossible"
"This is true..."
"So can he not save anyone and anything and allow them into heaven"
"My answer is beyond your understanding I shall simply say that it will never be so"

"But never CAN be changed by God"

"This is true"

"Then I shall stay alongside her"

She (the demon) speaks with Great intensity... it is not truly anger but I took it so

"NO... You musn't stay... your place is not here Go be gone from my sight"

She thrusts me away and into the light and I slowly lose my ability to understand

Fading

Fading

I hear her voice she speaks to me

"I shall continue to watch over you...

I shall protect you as I can...

I will guard you from the lesser demons until all is cast into the fire"

"Heed this and do not fear but you too shall be cast into the fire"

-Awake again-

I realize to myself that I believe I somewhat understand...

I and probably everyone will be cast into the fire...

We all shall be...

But while some of us will be consumed into nothingness

Some of us will emerge anew,

Angels possibly...?

Saints?

Bodies of new

Flesh not of man...

I am not sure...

But until that day...

She still watches me

Over me, from the other side

From the fire,

An ally in the strangest of places for a Christian,

My Guardian Demon

I myself have actually prayed multiple times for demons that I have believed to work in my life, praying for their salvation and their life in the end. Many people would look at me and say...

Why would you pray for a demon?

The answer is by no means simple...

I might say because I pity them,

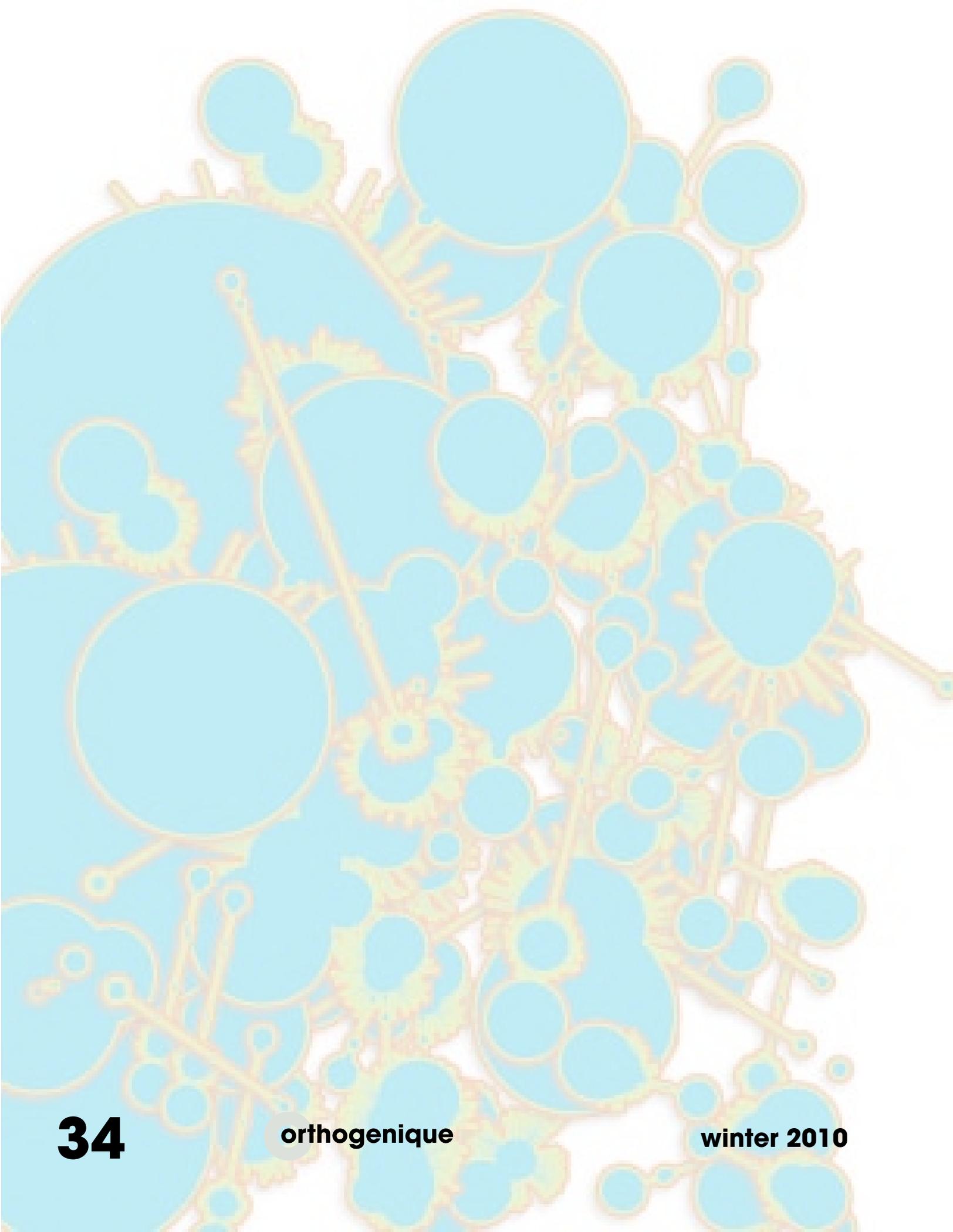
Perhaps because I feel the work of angels and demons in my life.

I believe that not all demons are evil

As I believe some are simply separated from God.

Though I feel many times my prayers have little or no effect on the demons for that I pray.

But the one whom I speak of, whom I felt I've known, seemed to be moved over time by these prayers, I truly do believe that my prayer did make a difference in this demon. I do believe She looks after me protecting me from what she can. I believe I truly do have a Guardian Demon.



Mythical Creatures Aren't Always What They're Cracked up to Be...

Literary Essay by Danica



Vomiting Rainbow

Drawing by Shelby



Every year as a child I remember getting excited for spring. It was not only a warmer and more beautiful season than the disgusting, slushy winters in Naperville, but it included my favorite holiday. Some youngsters would say their favorite day of celebration was Christmas, but mine was not. This was probably because I was fascinated by a gigantic, human sized rabbit dressed up in a bowtie, more than I was a large and old Caucasian man in red. It was a day of festivities I was in love with, until, that is, my childhood innocence was flipped upside-down.

Normally I would be awake at 5 AM on this glorious morning, but would have to be patient until 7AM to wake up my family members so we could go downstairs. I would sit in my room and play with my American Girl Dolls and maybe rearrange the twenty-something pillows on my bed until I was satisfied, only to mess them up again by deciding to have a dance party with my dog. Possibly this 2 hour wait would consist of me changing about 6 times so I could look my best for all the other 3rd graders who attended the earliest church service and the delicious brunch that followed.

Sometimes I would find myself peeking down the stairs into the front hallway of our messy house, but I would soon remember that if I looked before my parents and older brother awoke, all the goodies that were hidden would magically disappear. That's what I was told anyway.

When everyone in the house was awoken by my excited banging on their doors, my father would guide me down our beige carpeted steps into the living room. I would get to the bottom of the steps and he would release his hand from over my eyes so I could begin the hunt. I would walk around the first floor of my house and look for over 100 eggs that the Easter Bunny had hidden in the night, each filled with candy or money. The rules were the same every year; the eggs were always visible from somewhere in the room, nothing was hidden behind or in something that had to be opened and last but not least, no taking my brothers eggs. When we both went on this safari, the idea was that if he found a goody filled treat, he got to keep it, and vice-versa.

At the end of my egg hunting, I was given clues as to where my Easter basket was hidden. Running



around the house with my dad close behind me, I would search for this Heavenly treat. It was always the hardest to find. In the colorful, woven basket, there would be extra big candy bars, new yummy smelling bubble baths, fun colored pens and of course, a card signed “happy Easter, love Mommy and Daddy.”

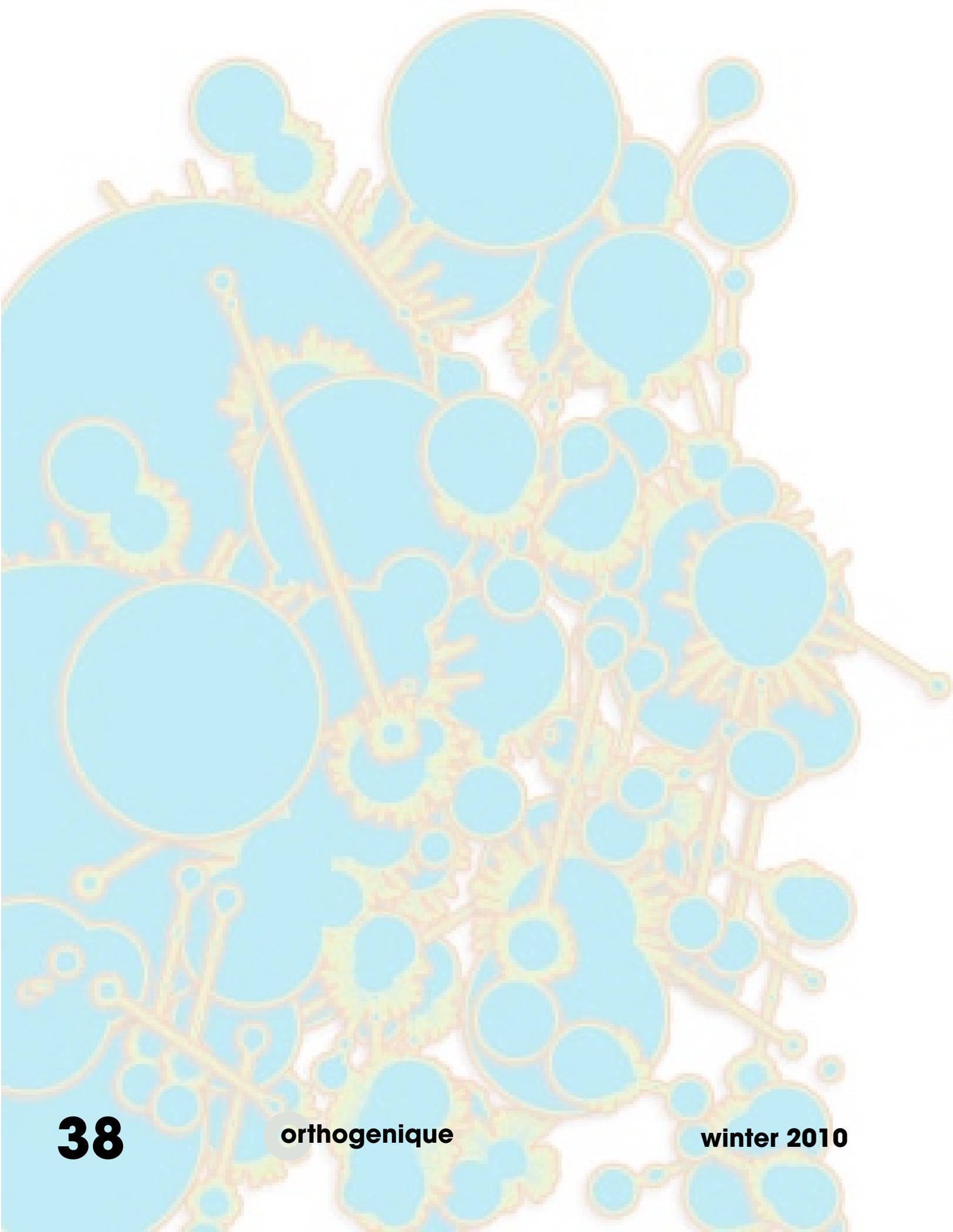
One year, when I was about age 10, I tried to wake up my family, but everyone “needed more sleep” and wouldn’t budge until around 9:30. My brother woke up and patiently waited with me in my room, until even he had had enough. He went and talked to my father, who, half asleep, told Jeff that there were no Easter eggs hidden this year. He came back in my room and told me that he was going back to sleep and that the magical rabbit didn’t care about us.

I remember the lump that jumped into my throat when he said that. I couldn’t tell if he was actually questioning the creature’s existence. He was. My head was spinning and there was no way that I would stand for this. I went to my father’s bedroom, barged through the door, and demanded an answer. I’m fairly sure my

Dad was still sleeping when he answered me, but it still made sense immediately. “When the Easter Bunny wakes up he will hide your eggs. He’s sleeping now”

Where had my childhood gone? It was completely snapped in half. It was like someone had thrown acid onto my love for this silly creature. I remember running back to my room, furious. I screamed into my pillow and cried myself back to sleep. On that day alone, I had learned more about my reality than I had in the years proceeding. This made me realize that sometimes you just have to grow up. Sometimes, when you’re young and naïve, it’s hard to accept the fact that not all of the joyous holidays with quirky mascots are what they are cracked up to be.





The Snibbs Revenge

Poem by Danica

When we were at peace
Drawing by Danica



My world spins around
A bright rainbow axis,
In a wonderful land
Where green creatures pay your taxes.

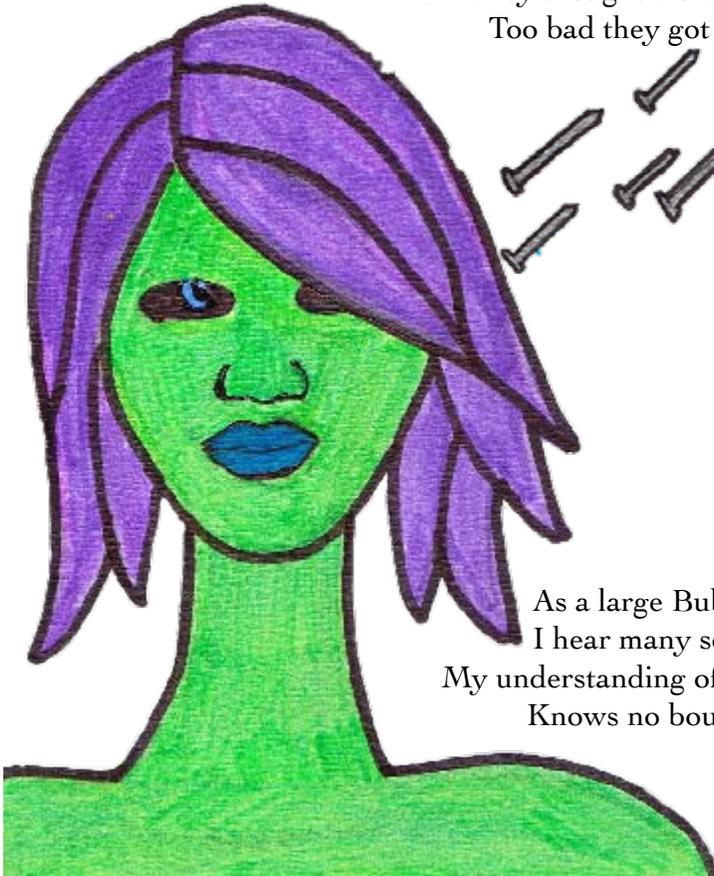
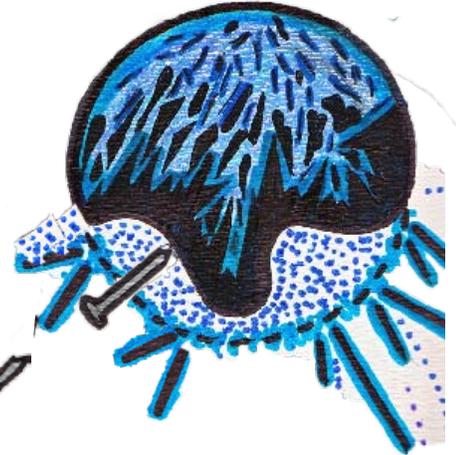
They look almost human
But smell much more foul.
They want to destroy us,
They're out on the prowl.

These beings called Snibbs
With thick purple hair
Were united with us,
But now we don't care.

Our ruler took over
Their planet called Pittle
He burned up their cows,
As for milk, he left little.

The Snibbs were so FURIOUS
At us bubbles, who ruled.
They thought we were nice.
Too bad they got fooled!

As a large Bubble
I hear many sounds
My understanding of Language
Knows no bounds.



We speak in Click
Or sometimes with light
We're angry smart creatures,
And often we fight.

The Snibbs got us back.
Cleverly, might I add.
I thought we were smarter,
Which makes me quite sad.

They realized quite quickly
Bubbles don't last.
We pop very easily,
We can be killed quite fast.

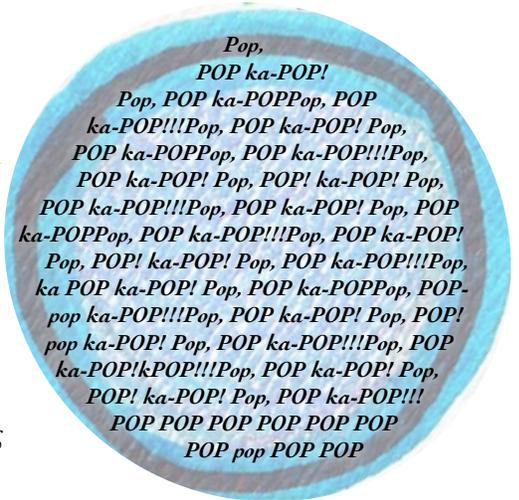
Pop, POP ka-POP,
They hit our thin skin.
Their genius quick thinking
Killed all of my kin.

My grandma and grandpa,
All 9 brothers too,
Excluding myself,
Snibbs killed the whole slew.

I never thought they
Of all the worlds populace,
Could out-know our knowledge
And beat us as cleverest.

I had no idea,
Our rainbow sphere walls
Could be punctured that quick.
Well, I guess karma calls.

And now as I float,
The last bubble alive,
I realize our actions
Were not in the right and
I know we deserved
To get what we got,
But why save me?
When will I po--





Germ Dude Destroys Seattle

A short story by Mackenzie

The kids in the Seattle suburb of Issaquah, or IssyTown as they call it, are all filthy little kids. They're all runny noses and germ-ridden hands.

There's Finley who loves bugs and can't resist smearing them on his dad's car. JoJo's got his pet dog named Creature and always has him around. They eat and drink from the same bowl, sleep in the same doghouse and JoJo washes his hands by having Creature lick them. Lester loves mud and dirt even more than the other boys. These three hate being indoors and spend all their time together outside.

Those three dudes are actually a little different from most kids because most kids are lazy and spend most of their time inside playing video games and watching TV. All the other kids still have their own disgusting habits. None of them ever shower, brush their teeth or wash their hands. They all live off of candy and have sticky hands and mouths full of cavities. Last summer was when those germs really got the best of them.

The summer started off like any other. The kids were riding around on bikes, digging dirt ramps, playing with mud and throwing dirt at each other. JoJo convinced Finley to eat dog food with him. JoJo peeled off his scab and had Creature lick his cut. Most of the kids just stayed inside playing Mortal Kombat or whatever, eating sugary and greasy junk food and shamelessly digging in their noses. There was nothing out of the ordinary for these filthy goblins.

The whole town was covered in their nasty germs, that were breeding like a cesspool unhindered, and man wouldn't, you know that these viruses, bacteria, fungus and protozoa were all given some evil self-awareness. They all gathered in the sewers and became a giant monster bent on destroying the fair city of Seattle. About a month of fermentation was all that the monster needed with germs of the Issy kids.

The end of that month was just another peaceful July day. Glorified G was playing on the alternative station to a nice little cliché montage; an old couple was walking the sidewalk with raincoats on, a young couple were kissing on a park bench; commuters were crowding inside a coffee shop; a clerk was lifting the iron curtain off his shop window giving a shot of the Space Needle in the distance. Nothing to suggest a giant bacterium would eat the city.

The germ monster seeped out of a manhole into the middle of the city and started smashing buildings. He was a heaping mass of mucus the size of Godzilla. Cops and the National Guard's bullets were useless; they dangerously went straight through him. The firefighters tried shooting him with their hoses or dropping water on him from their helicopters, but it only slowed him down while flamethrowers only made him smell worse. Even tanks and battleships only slowed him down before he destroyed them.

He held the city under siege for two weeks, smashing buildings and washing away resistance with rivers of germly badness. The whole city was evacuated, and everyone seemed hopeless. The kids felt responsible for the whole mess and wanted to do something.

Finally, Fin, Les and JoJo rallied the kids to cross into the no-man's-land and fight the germ monster. They brought whatever ridiculous thing they thought would help them fight; hockey sticks, pencils, football pads, dogs, you name it... and they all came in on their bikes and skateboards and started attacking the monster. The National Guard watched in disbelief, but the monster just laughed at them, gave them a couple of minutes and blew them away with bacteria ridden slime. He finally went straight to his biggest goal; he tore down the Space Needle and devoured it.

The kids were writhing on the ground and everything seemed at its most hopeless. The diabolic super-sized virus would surely crush the city and what next? Vancouver? Oregon? Just then a hero flew in on the horizon; it was the Purell Dude!

"Your days of making kids sick are over germ monster!" he declared.

With that, his great hose of hand sanitizer raised and let forth a massive shot of cleansing purell onto the germ monster. The daemon-possessed bacteria monster was instantly dead and all the filth washed into the Puget Sound.

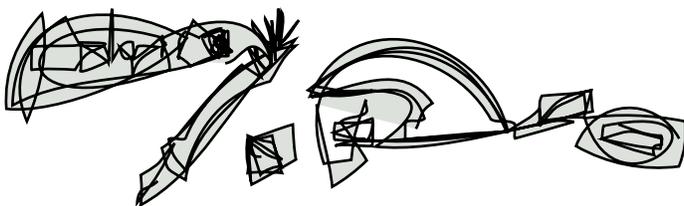
Hand Sanitizer Dude came down to the crowd of cheering children for a glorious exit speech.

"Remember kids, don't let this happen again. Once or twice a day let me spray your hands with my glorious purell hose!"

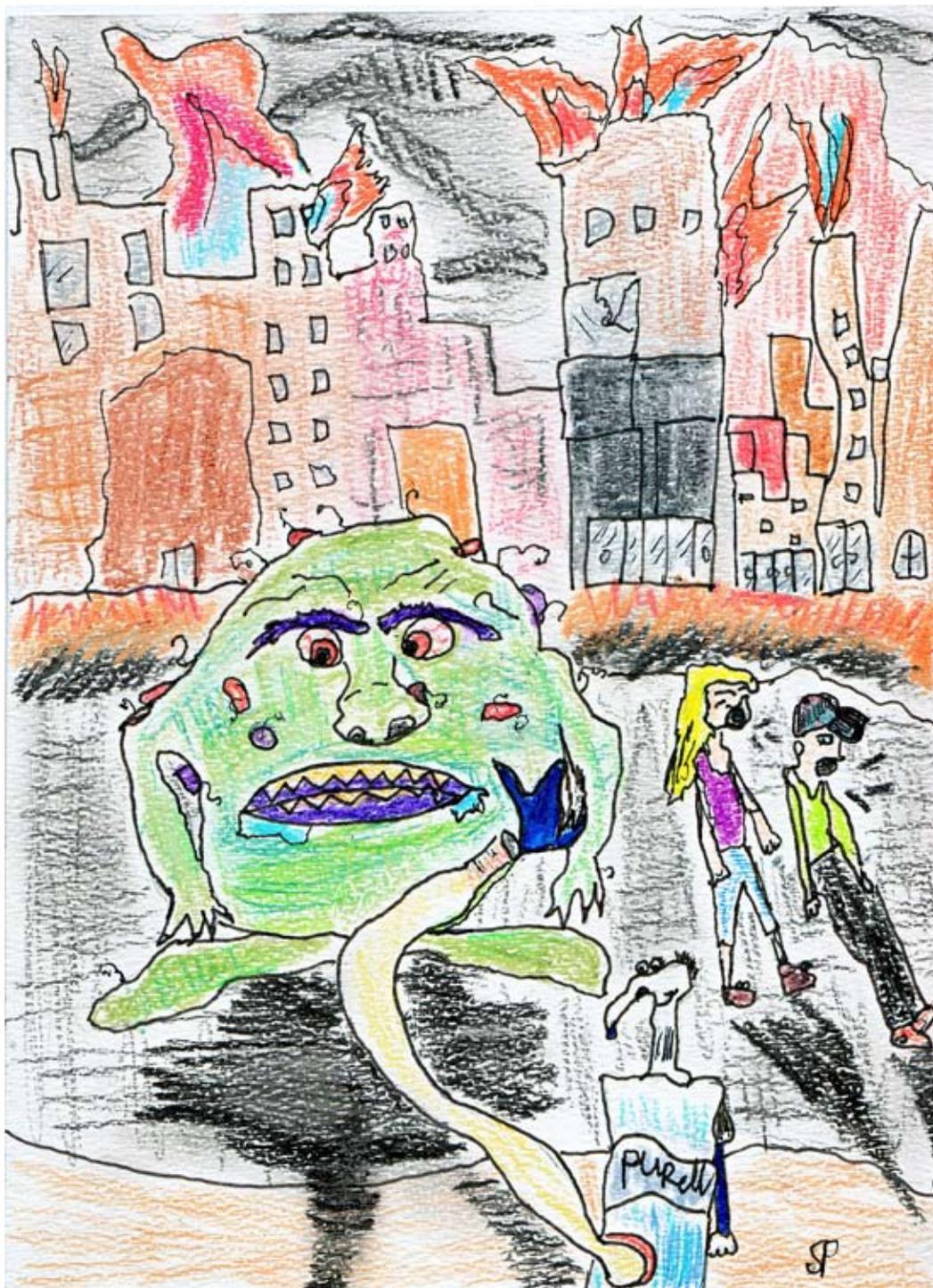
As he finished, his hose raised and whistled.

The kids, ungrateful and uncaring, were like, "Pppsh, yeah right. We'll play, you keep that to yourself."

That summer ended well for the kids of Issaquah, even if it wasn't as good for everyone else. The trio and the others all spent their last summer days playing outside. Even a giant germ monster can't stop kids from being kids.



“Germ Dude Destroys City, Purell Dude Destroys Germ Dude”
A Crayon Picture by Shelby





Nuke

Poem by Shelby
Digital Image by Casey

A chemically bonded weight
named the ending of my fate.
From the sky, it dropped one day;
piercing deep, the earthen clay.
Sirens sounded, babies cried.
Screams were heard all nationwide,
the nuke fell way down from atop
as people ran, and yelled nonstop.
But me, I stared and scratched my head,
As friends and family ran and fled,
Surprisingly, I did survive;
but now I'm socially deprived.
I've faced some horrible mutations,
a consequence of radiation.
My organs have been made inverse.
I can't find a way not to curse.
My liver oozes when I walk,
my belly button's filled with pocks.
I've come to be quite neurotic,
drip with fluid, amniotic.
They haven't any medications,
just one result of liquidation.
I could have dodged disfiguration,
suffered a panic attack;
while the nuke fell with a crack.



Colophon

The Winter 2010 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. Multiple fonts were used in the magazine. Cochin regular was used for all body text, while magazine staff chose fonts in keeping with style and content for titles and pull quotes. 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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