

BRICK HOUSE *Review*

SPRING 2011



Art by Joe Olbrych

A creative publication of Springfield Technical Community College





Becoming the reader is the essence of becoming a writer.

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FRONT COVER ART BY JOE OLBRYCH
PHOTOGRAPH: TORTOISE GREY BY ANDREW N. BOWMAN





NICOLE DIEPPA

DREAMING

Close your eyes and
hold on tight.
We'll ride through the day
and out into the night.
Watch out for the shadows,
they claw and bite.
Dance in the darkness;
shout with all your might,
because no one can hear you
when you're dreaming in the night.
Look out for the rising sun
whose rays are hot and bright.
Hide beneath the covers,
hide from the light.
Dreams are forever,
there promises all right.
Because nobody knows you,
and nobody cares.
When you're dreaming
in the night.



UNTITLED



PHOTO BY AMY THRALL





MARK HOLEWA


WAYWARD VETERAN: A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

I grew up the son of a Vietnam Veteran. As a young boy, I would often look at my father's service medals as well as try on his Army Uniform. My father would often recount gripping stories of combat and military service. I never truly understood what my father meant by duty, honor, and country until I enlisted in the Army and wore the same uniform as my father. My service to my country would help me find meaning in life and would bring me closer to my father than I had been prior to my military service. And as my father and I have aged over the years, our military service has given us a commonality that transcends our father son relationship and has brought us closer together.

As in "I am Bearskin," upon being discharged from the military, Bearskin's choices were limited and due to the lack of family support and the feelings of loneliness, alienation and rejection from society. I can sympathize with Bearskin's feelings, as upon being discharged from the Army and completing an over-seas deployment, I too shared these emotions. My opportunities were limited due to a bad economy and thus poor employment opportunities. Upon re-entering civilian life I too struggled and due to the frequent bar fights that I got into, my family decided I needed to find my own way in life.

I can feel his pain in the story as described when Bearskin stated that his own brothers wanted nothing to do with him once he left military service. It is the loneliest feeling in the world, knowing that you are truly alone to face the world. Bearskin would wander the forest in search of a new future and new opportunities. I too was bitten by wanderlust and would travel the northeast in search of a new future.

Our plight is not unlike many veterans from across the country who has served in wartime only to return to civilian life and find they are totally lost. Many would suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder ("PTSD") and



would find adjusting to civilian life extremely difficult. As with many veterans, the readjustment process is often far from seamless. Many veterans find themselves glad to be out of the service but also missing the structure and duties once entrusted to them.

Bearskin would feel the pain of readjusting with civilian life and felt so uncomfortable with himself that he made a deal with the devil to wear a bear skin for a period of seven years to complete his end of the bargain. I too made a deal with the devil to stop drinking and if he could help me stop, I would never touch another drop for the rest of my years.

Bearskin helped out another man who was down on his luck and provided the man with money and support. He was rewarded by being introduced to the man's daughter who agreed to marry him, even though his appearance was bear-like. My turn around happened when I was driving along one day in my car and I observed a man who had a flat tire. I stopped and offered to help. The man ended up being a manager of a large department store and offered me a position in loss prevention. The similarities between these chance meetings in both Bearskins' and my story continue, with me meeting my future wife during the course of my duties as a loss prevention officer.

As described in Bearskin "I have learnt no trade but for that of fighting." I as well searched far and wide to find my true calling. I would float from job to job and was unable to find anything that I truly enjoyed doing. I would lend my hand to different forms of security work and at last I found something that I found interesting. I found in police work what I missed about being in the military; discipline and the esprit-de-corps of belonging to a unit of officers.

Bearskin is described to have a "compassionate heart." I too have a compassionate heart and like Bearskin enjoy helping people in need, as I feel it is the best feeling in the world. My job as a police officer also allows me to help people that cannot help themselves which has given me a great feeling of accomplishment. As I have aged through the years, and so has my father, our relationship has taken on new elements as we are not only father and son but also veterans. This fact has brought us closer together and has given us a commonality that is difficult to match.



DOMINIC DESOUSA

WHAT IF:

You were told it was **wrong** or **evil** to be You?

You were told your Parents were **wrong** or **evil** for whom they were?

You were told **you should die**?

You were told Your **Love** was **wrong**?

You were told You **couldn't be with the person You loved** because others didn't like it?

You were told what You **felt deep** in your **Soul** was **delusion**?

You were told You were a **disease**?

You were told You were a **poison**?

You were told You were **the same** as **rapists, murderers**, and **child molesters**?

You were told You were **worse** than those?

What If:

We changed all those You were tolds to "You were **assaulted** because"

"You were **discriminated** against because"

"You were **killed** because"

"You **killed yourself** because you were told"

What If:

We switched "You were told" with "Your Children were told"

"Your Children were **killed** because"

"Your Children committed **suicide** because they were told"

"Your Children were **killed** because"

Would it matter to you **then**? Would it take **that** for you to understand?



What If:

People who had gone through the same type of **hatred** paid that forward onto **You**, while declaring that their own **oppression** *wasn't* the same as Yours. That their oppression was wrong for a valid reason and that Yours was right!!?

You had to **hide** who You were because people would **Love** *You less*, as if this one thing had made You into a **monster** and irrevocably changed who You were into something **hideous** and **atrocious**?

People used the very thing that was the **cause for Your persecution** as a *fashion statement* and it was considered OK!?!?

Why do we feel the need to **fear** what is different than us? Why do we feel that **prejudice** against **color, sex, race or religion is wrong**; yet **prejudice** against **Love** is OK? Why do we feel that we have the right to define what **Love** is?

Dedicated to all the GLBTGQ Boys, Girls, Women, and Men; who must hide their Love from the fear of **Persecution, Alienation, Physical Harm, or Death**. Who have **taken their lives** because the **Hate** was too much. Who have been **killed** for being who they were. Who **Died** without being unable to be themselves and express their **Love**.

What is it that you really fear? Is it the same-sex relationship? Or is it **Love**?




PATRICIA GUILMETTE

Paralyzed

The asylum was cold and isolated from the public. The walls of the building were covered with moss where the sun could not reach and it was surrounded by an iron gate. Inside, the walls are white like a new canvas waiting for life. My name is Abby Normal or so I'm told. My room is located at the end of the long hallway where the footsteps of visitors and staff resonate. The rooms are void of anything friendly, but I guess this is for my protection. No curtains on the window...no pictures on the walls and no flowers from loved ones are present. I only have my stuffed bear to rely on while I rock back and forth in the corner of my room. I see life passing by as I look outside the glass barriers like I am watching a movie. Car alarms constantly going off, the people going off to work, kids going to school, dogs barking, etc. The noise drives me...well...crazy.

Honk...honk...beep...beep "Hey dickhead...you cut me off Asshole! Go back to driving school!"
I'm confused by the hazy pictures of the chaos.

Come and join me for our daily tea party. It'll be just the two of us again my little shadow, but I hear a special guest is coming. Today, I shall reveal something important to you. You are so loyal and dependable and I know my secret is safe. I loved Brandon and would follow him anywhere. Our love was simple and it had no words that were exchanged. I know we were meant to be together. He accepted me into his world without any restrictions or rules. Now, my true love is gone and only the memories remain. He left me depressed and afraid to trust anyone again, but you are here Teddy. He was the only one who could understand my love. Cobwebs may fill my mind, but we are safe here together with these nice people. Nothing can harm us within these walls.



“Oh, Brandon! So nice to see you again. Welcome to my world. Please join our tea party”. “Abby, my love... be afraid no more. Follow me and I shall free you from this place. I shall shower you with my love and we will entwine our bodies once more. Let me be your protection from any evil.”

Here they come again to ease my burden like programmed robots. The doctors speak to my family members and dictate what I should do and when I should do things. They are so good to me. What do you think of that Teddy?

Abby decided to become a prisoner of her own world as people could enter, but she could not leave. She escaped the pressure and madness of life. The leather bound straps combined with fear and medication left her emotionally and physically paralyzed.

“Abby...Time to take your medicine!”

“Abby...It’s exercise time!”

“Abby...It’s time to eat!”

I see them whispering to each other about me.

“Be careful...she’s crazy.”

“She’s just weird...maybe she’s possessed.”

“I heard that she’s contagious.”

“I hear her real name is Abby Normal! Let’s sedate her again.”

I still cling to Brandon’s picture in the hopes of being reunited someday. I made a mistake of giving him my love and am filled with doubt yet I still continue on my journey into the unknown.





THEODORE BLANNER

LIZBETH BORDEN ON HER DEATHBED

“Did you do it?” “Did you
do it, Lizbeth?” You ask
after all this time,
on this day, my last?


Well no surprise. No surprise
at all. I say that
I would know myself,
“Lizbeth, did you do that?”

If “yes” then, if “yes”
then why such a deed?
Against one’s own blood?
Was it rage.. fear.. greed?

“Dearest” mother Abby... blood
I would not relate
her to blood, unless of course
we recall her final state.

Blood she wore, blood she
loved, suck, suck her and her kin
bit by bit, drop by drop
draining Emma, myself and “him.”

Father, I knew “him,” I knew
“him” by name. Miser,
cheapskate, fool, but father?
He knew not *that* state.



Not a thought for us. Not one
thought for us? Not one
did he share? Not one
but for them, ohh.. For them.

Our vacation home. Our farm.
Our memories he would give. To strangers
not blood, no thought there.
Perhaps his mistake! Perhaps a loss of... head?

But that is all the past. The past
better left dead. To what avail
dig up those bones? Remove
those coffin nails?

So I may rest? So I may
rest you say? Ha, I rest.
Easily each night, easier each day
seeing end in sight and fearing less...

“Did you do it Lizbeth?” “Did you
do it Lizbeth?” You ask
after all this time,
on this day, my last?
31 October 2010



TIM CARLSON

AGGRESSOR

this Tension in the air
i feel the Sparks
an Argument
the Wiser avoids

the lesser knew Not
-yet very new
realizes Not
his shortcoming

the neutral continues
the Sparks might Ignite
yet away he walks
engulfed in Anger's Flame

as the others depart
in Fury and Rage
a False victory
the lesser assumes



DAQUAN COOK

OREO ROAD

Night just is overwrought color in light
 Color is just night overwrought in light
 Light in color overwrought is just night
 In light, color is just night overwrought
 Light is just color overwrought in night
 Night overwrought in color is just light
 In color overwrought, night is just light
 Is color overwrought in light just night?
 In overwrought color is just night light
 Color in light is just overwrought night
 Is color overwrought in night just light?
 Night is color overwrought in just light
 Light is color overwrought in just night
 In light color, night is just overwrought
 Night light in color is just overwrought
 Just in overwrought color is night light
 Is color overwrought in light just night?
 In night, overwrought color is just light
 Color overwrought in night light is just
 Color is night just overwrought in light
 In overwrought light just night is color
 Night is just light overwrought in color
 Just color in light overwrought night is
 Is color in light just night overwrought?
 Light in night is just color overwrought
 Overwrought color is just night in light
 In light color night is just overwrought
 In color overwrought light is just night
 Light in color is just overwrought night
 Night is light just overwrought in color
 In light, is color overwrought just night?
 Color just overwrought in night, light is
 Is color overwrought in night light just?
 Color is just light overwrought in night
 Light is just in color, night overwrought





RICHARD JOHNSON

I THINK I THINK TOO MUCH

Why do we regret our women??

Disrespect our women??

We came from women...

Gave pain to the women -- that brought us here!!

Hey... I was just thinkin'!!

What do u think??

As we approach the brink -- Of our extinction??

Again... I was just thinkin'

What ever happened

To the distinction between love and hate??

Was it fate??--

That they would become one and the same??

Was it fate??

That hate-- would bring all this pain??

Was it fate?!??!--

Are we really living in our last days??....

I think!!!

What do you think??

I think I think too much!!



BRIAN KRAWIEC

WINTER THAT WAS

Oh how I wish for, and would like all to end,
With each passing snowstorm, the season does extend.
At least as far as those who are tired of you see,
The cold, ice, and snow, even including me.
This has been a winter that simply did not stop,
And some days when the temperature could really drop.
To chilly arctic levels, to cold to be outside,
By having a thought of the beach at high tide.
When the weather is warmer, often will be hot,
The time of year to plan on, just the right spot.
A lot of memories, some of them bad,
The end of a season, for this many feel glad.
Now looking ahead toward a new season because,
Over is, with a sense of relief, a winter that was.



NICHOLAS COLLURA

STILL-LIFE

I drew a picture of an apple
During my lecture on the Russian Revolution
But it looked more
Like a heart with a stem

So I shaded the upper left-hand corner
Like any desperate artist would
Eagerly cross-hatching to keep the life
Still

The only other option is that I add
A tree that bears hearts
In the background
Turn the branches into veins and ventricles
And the bark into skin and the four types of tissue:
Connective, epithelial, muscle and nervous

And I will have to add that the hearts on the tree beat until they are plucked-
Drawing two small right and left parentheses near each one, indicating that they are in motion-
So you must be careful, tempering with nature
Although the hearts will make a great wine
When they are crushed

And the process of fermentation is another story

To clear up the confusion
I will turn this apple into a
Tart, green, Granny Smith
And call it artist's freedom



LAURA E. BRADFORD

THE GLOW OF STREETS AT NIGHT

The sky is an inky indigo, devoid of stars,
and so the bicyclist stands out: a shadow
wearing a red windbreaker.

But as he nears the intersection (and so do I,
caught by a red light), the lines fill in.
A face overshadowed by worry. Hands, pedals.

The shops and traffic lights shine neon.
The road is clear, dark, open to invitations,
lit by the sometimes glow of white headlights.

He rides on, and my radio station flickers static.
Raindrops spatter onto my windshield,
sparkling, tiny as a child's glitter.



DOMINIC DESOSUA

WAKE UP!

There are too many people who are out for what they can take
They're fake, the poseurs who don't care what they can give
Only what they'll receive
Whether they do something or not
Blowing up your spot
Making it hot
Where you live and sleep and the children play each day
The drugs and violence are intense
The sex sells **TOO** well to bring about peace
So much greed in times of need
No hands to help and lift, uplift each other and assist in the burden of life we live

As I walk the streets and meet the people who inhabit my world
My head turns and my stomach curls
At the ignorance we insist is status-quo
Mistrust, distrust, no confidence in ourselves
Kids growing up apathetic, poetic irony
I see a world of nothing but noise around you and me, he and she, never We

Divided we fall, united we stand, hand in hand
Extend them to help your fellow man understand
Where you come from and for what you stand
To support, not push away and condemn the land to hate and bigotry
We never see, repeating our mistakes endlessly
A cycle we can't seem to break and make a better future for each other
One another working together to better the world around
From town to town, communities uniting



Our values, morals, and standards dyslexic
Backwards
Upside down and inside out
Working hard to tear apart and separate
Not make and bind and band together and stand as one to face the sun
Strive and thrive for excellence
Against greed and oppression, amoral intention grinding us down
Pushing us into molds we're told that have to be so we can stay free
And live in a peace of Heavy Security that is nothing more than a prison for you and me
Our rights and freedoms dashed and crashed, trashed and smashed
By enemies of our own creation
Relations built upon drugs and sex
Media appointed fallacies are truth we're told
They scold and condemn anything different from the rest of them
We're heading for the end
The goal of a permanent lower class, wars just for cash
Instigated by those in the upper class
How long can we last in this society
Driven by drugs and greed, sex and blood
Built on the tears of those who came before, instead of sweat and love

Until we can open up our eyes and see
That it's not them, it's we, you and me who can make a difference in everything we see
The powers that be are hypocrites
They lie and dip they're fingers in our children's future
Crying "Vote for me, I'll set you free!" on their foreheads are stamped bigotry
They write with hate to divide and conquer those they see below them
So we have to show them what we can do
When we look at more than two to a pair
Saying "I don't care, not my problem, it's over there"
That is our future, it always comes back around and through from me to you him to her and every way
in between
What I mean is we're all connected in some way or form
What you do affects the world at large but those in charge blind you with the facts
Tell you how to act, what to wear, what to think, what to love, when to blink





A silver spoon before your mouth is a trap, a coffin meant to contain what remains of your will
Take away control of your life, plunge us into strife
Telling brother to raise the knife against brother or mother, sister or son
Everyone who doesn't act, react against what they're told is real
Eat, sleep, and breathe what we're told is the deal
In reality our fates we seal
In God we trust, they say we must condemn the infidel, but not ourselves
Because "we do no wrong, we are the just, the chosen ones who do HIS will, Righteous!"
Then they go and steal our liberties and rights from us, distracting us with sex appeal
"For your own good!" they cry "your safe now, can't you see? The prisons and walls are what's best
for you, But Not For ME!"
To them we're a danger to their money, which they take so liberally from us
And then when it all falls down we must "Unite and take the blow as one!" They're safe with a golden
parachute, that's equality
Dispose of the evidence; it's of no consequence to us
Whether it's truth or real it's not what we want you to feel
Or hear and taste, the facts are what we state, we'll tell you who to hate
As well as how to cut the cake and how much you can take
Regardless of what you heard or who deserves or needs
It ALL comes down to greed, get on your KNEES to be and plead
Even though my ears are closed, my heart is stone
So cold it cuts to the bone and leaves you there
Feeds on your despair without a care for the world
Or the Welfare and Health of the ones who are coming next
We'll just brainwash with drugs and sex
Instill them with apathy and disregard
Tell them that it's normal to beat them hard
Pass on the conflict, hate and war, that's torn us apart until there's nothing more
But a shell, mindless and blank
Taught to break what they're given instead of make, just take and take
To never give in this life we live
You gotta be hard, keep it real, screw em all
They'd do it to you, mess them up, make them fall
Reinforce the stereotype as right and just
Tell them that they're not safe at night from the black or the white
They're just colors; they're not definitions of self





Or who to be, how to see

It's all just fallacy to pit us against each other instead of being free forever
Then conflict just goes on and on, society saying this is the norm
You're born into this world of violent storm, of drugs and porn
"Don't **EVER** ask if there's something more!"

"Snitches get stitches; keep your nose out my business! It don't affect you if I rob this dude, or talk
lewd and rude or crude, sling sacks on your streets or beat some kid for his money.
But if you try and stop my criminal rise to the top you're against us because you went to the cops!
You just want to hold us down, it's not my fault, you made me this way
Force me to act out and cause the problems
I'm **NOT** responsible, how can you hold me accountable for what you made me do not what I did"

Land of the free, home of the brave, but our soldiers come back in graves
Or traumatized by what they've seen, or heard, or had to do
Fighting for what they're told is true
Behind their backs they're counting stacks
Made from blood and tears, dashed hopes and fears
Guantanamo and Abu Gharib, they torture kids, killing kids
And making bids on whose gonna crack when their kid is dead
And tell what they're told must be said
"Truth or not it's what we want to hear, you've no rights here and no one can hear
Cuz we've closed their eyes against the truth, took their voice and destroyed its use
Taught them how to heel to us and do our will
And build their oppression with their **OWN** two hands
The whole land is under our command
And programmed to stand down when we wave our hands
Those who retaliate are terrorists trying to bring our fate
No freedom of speech or right to impeach the **REAL** dictator trying to reach
And Snatch your soul
Take it from your control and twist your hate making you condemnate
Whoever whatever they deem a threat, better yet
Lethal force against all who want them to fall, who stand tall



TRAIN TRACKS



PHOTO BY BRIANNA SPANO





RICHARD JOHNSON

THE DEFINITION OF HIS TEARS

Treated worse than the dogs that
Attacked our men, women, and kids....
These tears are not just his..... He cries for u to hear
We were sold off on the auction blocks...
Looking at the door, as if freedom would knock
Instead what the emancipation proclamation did
Wasn't what we expected...
We stuck together and protested...
Our mind, body, and spirits were tested...
And out of this nightmare, our king had a dream
Of a promise land, over the mountain tops he'd seen
And single handedly -- we break his crown
And single handedly -- we tear our own kingdom down
Wounds heal, but the healing starts now
Let's turn our-selves around
And shine like the sun,
Together as one.....
And the definition of his tears.... shall be
Defined as nothing more-- than tears of joy...



NICOLE DIEPPA

PETALS

In a field of daises, I lay
thinking of you.
Lazily I pluck one.
He loves me, he loves me not,
He loves me...
Tossing petals high in the air,
I smile to myself.
I pluck another one.
I love him, I love him not,
I love him...
Crushing the petals
close to my heart
I smile again and sigh
as happiness fills me.
I close my eyes
and sleep comes over me.
I dream of a field of daises
and petals falling from the sky.
As I awaken,
I feel the petals
falling on me-my hair,
my eyes, caressing my cheeks
as they slide down my face.
Oddly enough,
they remind me of tears.



BASEBALL DREAMS



PHOTO BY ELLEN SPRITZLER





DAWN GRAY

S.P.I.R.I.T.: FIRESTORM

The darkness was closing in, taking over the night sky as I found myself standing on the dark green, front lawn of an old brick church building. Most of the lights in the building were lit, giving the coming twilight an eerie feeling and I shivered as I glanced around.

The church was set atop a hill, looking over a small town, almost like the one where I had grown up in the mountains of northern Vermont. From where I stood, I could see over the rooftops of the houses just one street below and past the lights of the town. The long covered bridge that crossed over the railroad tracks that split the town was down to my right and the body of water that the place was named after rippled its dark tentacles in the light of the moon.


I had no idea what I was doing there, or how I come to be there to begin with, but as I breathed in the clear air, I picked up a hint of smoke. My black hair blended in with the bleakness that surrounded me, and suddenly I noticed that everything I wore was black, right down to the socks. I shook my head, still completely confused that I had come too over three hundred miles from the place I had fallen sleep.

It was then, as I stood becoming ever more concerned with my lack of memory, that the first explosion rocked the night. Stained glass burst from the building behind me, and instinctively I ducked down. Screams suddenly filled the quiet of the night, and I watched as parishioners scrambled out the doors of the building.

Struck by the sight of the brilliant bright orange and yellow flames that bellowed from the windows where only darkness had been before, I never saw the unruly crowd that came directly at me. Noise and movement filled my senses as the putrid smell of smoke filled my nose and the blinding light of the fire scarred my eyes while my limbs froze in place.

The first grasp I felt shook me from my hypnosis, as the hard grip on my arm made my fingers tingle, but it was the strong arm that wrapped around my waist that shook me from my petrified state. I swung around to face the person behind me, as I was pulled from what looked like a herd of stampeding elephants, into the safety of the few trees that separated the lawn from the house just below.

His eyes were deep brown, reflecting the flames brilliantly as I stared down into them. His hair, just as dark as my own fell down to touch his eyes in the front and seemed clean cut the rest of the way, making the feeling of wanting to reach up and push the unruly locks back to get a better look, but as it was, I couldn't breathe. His



face was elegant, strong and purposeful, as if saving damsels in distress was something he did every night, but I couldn't help but want to caress the thin line of his lips as he looked down at me with scolding eyes.

Only slightly taller, his build was hard and muscular against my own, and I felt soft and pliable pressed so close. His strong arms had yet to let me go, and his eyes never wavered from mine. The cologne he wore seemed intoxicating as I suddenly breathed in deeply, aware of my surroundings and awkwardly aware of my savior. "What are you doing here?" His masculine voice whispered, barely audible over the sound of the panicky crowd behind us, and I shook my head.

"I don't even know where here is." My heart quickened and I pressed my hands against his chest, pushing away from him, but the moment I touched him, I could feel the heat coming from his body. "Let me go!" His eyes turned from stern and commanding to slightly confused and dazed as his fingers wrapped around my wrist, taking my hands from his body. Suddenly, he backed away, seeming just as stunned as I, and he placed his hands on his hips as he looked up at the church. I turned cautiously, unsure of turning my back on the man who had saved me from a good trample and gasped at the sight of the flame-engulfed building.

"What the hell is going on?" I asked quietly, knowing my knight in shining armor could hear me quite clearly. "Come on." He whispered as he placed a hand gently on my waist to push me in the direction the shrinking crowd was going. "We need to get away from here."

I moved, my body on autopilot as my brain still struggled to comprehend all that had happened, and I began to descend the path to the road below. He stayed right behind me, his hand occasionally grazing against my back, or my bottom, just to let me know that he was there. Suddenly my fight or flight instincts kicked in and I stopped, mid-hill, and turned quickly to look at him. The stop was so sudden that the moment I turned I felt his arms circle my waist as he cushioned the blow while he knocked into me, and knocked me into a tree.

I was pressed against the hard bark of the oak, my hands resting on his shoulders as his arms clamped around me. He sighed loudly in my ear as I felt him shake his head, back away and looked me straight in the eye with his eyebrows raised.


"I want to know where I am!" I demanded, and watched as his eyes glanced down on my lips. "And just who the hell are you!"

"Can we just get out of here, and I'll explain everything?" He asked calmly.

"I'm not going anywhere with you! I don't even know what the hell is going on here." I whispered; panic slowly creeping into my tone. I watched him sigh and close his eyes.

"Look, lady, this isn't the safest place to do this."

"My name is not 'lady', its Samantha!" I snapped and pushed him away. He rubbed his forehead and followed me as I walked down the hill once again. Once more, I put on the brakes and felt my rescuer bump into me.



“You do that again, and I’m just going to knock you over!” He growled in my ear, but when he noticed that I hadn’t even made a move to turn around, he glanced over at what I was looking at.

There, down at the bottom of the hill, off a main road in town, five hundred feet into a cornfield was a circle of pressed corn stocks and in the middle, a large red Mack truck complete with flashing light.

“What the hell is that?” I questioned and again heard the man behind me sigh.

His black leather jacket crackled, and a voice boomed from the collar. “Zander, what’s your position?”

“Midway down from ground zero,” he answered, speaking as if he were talking for my ears only, and as he stepped around to look me in the eyes; I could see the expression of worry in his face. “Captain, I think we may have a problem.”

“Get your ass here now, Zander, we’ll figure out your problem when you arrive!” The authoritative voice commanded.

“But Captain…”

“Now, Lieutenant!” The voice barked.

“Yes sir.” He sighed and rubbed his neck. “Come on, I think I can help you with some of your answers.”

Instead of pressing me on, he gently took my hand and guided me along the path, weaving in and out of the alarmed crowd that had gathered at the bottom. I wanted to run away, to get as far away from the scene as possible, but the warm tingle that I felt from the hand that wrapped around mine seemed to make any coherent thoughts disappear.

I stopped when I could barely see the spot in the cornfield and watched as it faded in and out of sight, as if it were a large television screen with bad reception, and I shook my head as Zander leaned close to my ear.

“Come on, Sam, there’s nothing to be afraid of.” He whispered, his warm breath teasing my chilled skin. I nodded, it seemed the only thing I could do, and grasped the wrist of the hand that held mine tightly.

“Zander? Is that your first name or last?” I questioned, suddenly feeling the fear creeping up inside as we moved through the stocks.

“First.” He whispered; a smile in his voice, probably glad that I wasn’t yelling at him anymore. “Lieutenant Zander Smith.”

“Samantha Ricketts.” I replied, and watched as he paused and turned to look at me. I waited for him to say something, ‘nice to meet you’ or ‘how wonderful for you’ but he said nothing, just stared. “I’m afraid.”

“There’s nothing to worry about.” He whispered, his voice calming but at the same time full of fire. “I won’t let anything happen to you.”

He reached out and pushed a disheveled strand of my hair out of my face and it seemed at that moment, from that small gesture, I knew that he really wouldn’t, that I was safe with him. I nodded, unable to speak, and he turned, continuing towards the strange lights in the field.



UNTITLED



PHOTO BY JOE OLBRYCH





BREEZE


(BREEANNA COOMBS)

I REFUSE

Silently I question,
Non-verbal's reflect inner emotions
I voluntarily need to disguise.
I cringe at abusive tongue.
Get disgusted by the lack of regard
For thy neighbor.

Attached with an unbreakable
Invisible bond is...
My soul, spirit, heart and mind.
One single factor
Is incapable of functioning,
Without hindering the Love of another.

I refuse to ignore
What I can control.
Ignore
What I think is B.S.
I take everything in... period.



An inner post-it note,
A reference to your demeanor,
Your knowledge,
Their life experiences or intuition.

I refuse to ignore
My personal weaknesses,
Deny my faults, mistakes,
Or bad decisions.
I refuse to silently place blame,
Due or undue blame.
All the unrighteous faults that
Need criticism.

I refuse to feel
Uncomfortable in my environment.
I refuse to ignore what
Ignore what...
I can control.
I acknowledge what I can not
Control.

Become aware of coincidences
The possibility of karma.
Sickness and diseases.
So I refuse
I repeat



I refuse to ignore what,
What I can control.

Sweet melodies calm
My restless heart.
Vast untainted beauty,
Seduces my soul.
Public displays of affection
(Appropriately),
Heat my spirit.
The dexterity I possess,
Fuels my mind with the desire,
To aide others to do the same.

I refuse to ignore
What I can control,
Accept what I cannot control.

I Refuse.





MIKE BOUCHER

SO TOUGH

When I'm out there
I look across
I see my opponent
Standing there
In my throat
I feel boom-boom, boom-boom
Beating faster and faster
The mats surround me like a cage
I feel the spotlight on me
The sweat beading down my face
I can't let them down
Either win or go home
There's no in between
WRESTLING



JAMES TAKYI

COLOR BLIND

Do you think your existence is more important than
mine,
when you use words of hate to define my race,
where culture and color are mixed because nothing truly
different exists,
and still your hate persists, yet you wonder why I raise
my fist
Your words sting and I cry but I don't wish you to die,
So I laugh as you try to pry my hate from inside
because you find at the bottom of this depth is where
love truly lies, inside no disguise besides its time for our
difference to subside and you see me as someone alive

COMPOSITION OF DEATH

Death I spoke as my last breath fled my body,
Ashes to ashes, words through my optic passes as I
lived,
Ashes to ashes,
to bones as skin decompose,
A body without spirit, as spirits mourning a soul,
who will follow my footsteps and mistakes correct,
to correct the human imperfect defect.



DERMOND CLAYTON

MARY JANE

No substitute for an impression,
A good memory with a strong recollection.
Hardened by, pardoned why?
I'm sure I'll never know.
Yes, the spurious conviction,
The meager truth,
Without admonition.
I'll try, and what a surprise!
Though canst thou
Surlily entertain?
Amuse yourself with words,
Seconds, and discords.
Oh boy! The happy joy,
Yet we all feel strange-
What was her name?



GABRIELA RUIZ FLORES

UNTITLED

Wicked was the green witch,
Blonde was the good witch.
This I saw last night.
I saw how a green young woman
Trying to be good
Yet wickedness was thrust upon her

I saw a guy trying to be
Someone he was not and fall
In love with the wicked girl
While trying to be perfect
To others

To be popular, and not that girl
Is to be wonderful and sentimental
Is to be wicked and not be mourned
Is that no good deed will be for good
And as the finale shows

Wicked is the way to be.



UNTITLED



PHOTO BY MAX SYCHEV






IRINA MAKUCHA

ENGLISH AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE UNITED STATES


America is one of the most important and powerful countries in the world. It is known as a country, where all dreams come true, a country with a lot of possibilities to achieve goals for a better life. People come to the USA to improve their life conditions for them and their families. It has always been a country of immigrants, a melting pot. All the people who live in America have something in common: territory of living and a common language, English. According to Robert D. King, “Many issues intersect in the controversy over Official English: immigration (above all), the rights of minorities (Spanish-speaking minorities in particular), the pros and cons of bilingual education, tolerance, how best educate the children of immigrants, and the place of cultural diversity in school curricula and in American society in general.” If there is a question of making English official, there are many other issues that appear. It is not only the question of immigrants learning English of the country, but many other spheres that it will influence. America should legislate English as the official language because it would ease communication and racial conflicts, it would simplify and expedite matters in education, government, and business, and it would unite the country. People communicate through English; they succeed through English. Speaking the language of the USA is essential for being a citizen of this country. American means a citizen of the United States who must speak English.

When I came to America, I could speak English, but it was very hard for me at the beginning. Even with a good knowledge I had a language barrier. I was afraid to speak to people only because of one reason: I have an accent. In the years to come it will diminish, but it will never disappear because I was not raised in America. I got through many challenges. I have been treated as a poorly



educated person because of my accent; I have been treated as another illegal immigrant, and people were impatient with me, when they could not understand me right away. I used to feel unwelcome when I got attitude for my accent. I laugh at myself for one amusing thing: when I sense somebody listening to my accent, I hear my accent to be rougher. I was told that my accent sounds attractive, interesting, makes me noticeable and memorable. I am Russian because that is my nationality, but I am American because I am a citizen of the United States, and I speak English. I am very glad that I know the language, no matter what people think of my accent, and I am proud of being Russian, because I am a carrier of my culture. English language makes all the people who come to America understand others. There is no opposition of having cultural roots from another country and accepting English as being American. It is not a secret that there are many racial conflicts in America. It is sad that people have conflicts over skin color or nationality. The English language is not a language that belongs to white people or black people; it is the language that is spoken all over the country for hundreds of years.

English should be the official language of America because it would be easier to conduct many social affairs. People still can teach their children another language and speak any language they prefer; it would have no effect on everyday life. But they would be forced to learn English as a language of the country. Legislating English would stop the costly and complicated time-consuming tendency of government to function in multilingualism. I see only one good reason of government documents to be translated into multiple languages. As Allan Allport and John E. Ferguson Jr. illustrate, “The IRS, for example, finds that it makes financial sense to provide tax information in Spanish; that way, Spanish speakers have no excuse for not filing their 1040s in a timely and accurate way.” Enormous money goes into translation services and bilingual education. Yes, it is an easier and better environment for immigrants to be able to speak their native language, but bilingual education should be focused mostly on the fastest way of learning English. Immigrants who learn English are better educated and better equipped to enter job market. In her article “English First” published in the *Washington Post*, Amanda Carpenter says that “A group seeking to uphold English as the official language of the United



States says poor English language skills cost the nation \$65 billion in wages annually.” Non-English-speaking workers earn less than English-speaking peers. On the other side, As Allan Allport and John E. Ferguson Jr. point out, “an Official language law . . . , the application of capricious inequality makes it un-American.” Well, America is a country of freedom. If English is the official language, it does not mean people are forbidden to use their native language. An official language is mainly for education, government, and business purposes. It is necessary though to keep multilingualism for medical services.

There are fifty states in America with different nationalities in each one of them. Some nationalities live in communities, where they speak mostly their native language. If English was an official language, there would be fewer communities but one united country. Not having an official language will keep the nation divided. The United States is a nation of immigrants. I understand immigrants bring their culture, different view, their life style. This is all enriching for American culture, for example, Italian and Chinese cuisine, and Brazilian music. Diversity of the country is in all the nationalities living here, but the unity is in the language. James M. Inhofe and Celia Munoz point out that, “YES English is the official language of 51 nations and 27 states in the United States. Last year, a Zogby International Poll found that 85 percent of Americans supported making English the official language of all government operations.” Without one official language the United States is divided by race, religion and language.

When I lived in Kazakhstan, highly educated people spoke English. English was used everywhere: in advertisements on TV, in newspapers, and magazines. “Made in China” was on every other product selling in Kazakhstan and could be pronounced by old people, who never heard of English. English is the language of America. More than that, it is an international language. With the increase in immigrants coming into the country each year, without an official language people cannot ensure to continue building a well-educated future for the country. An official language would ensure that all children are learning the English language properly, so that someday they can become productive citizens and can have a good life for them and their families.



UNTITLED

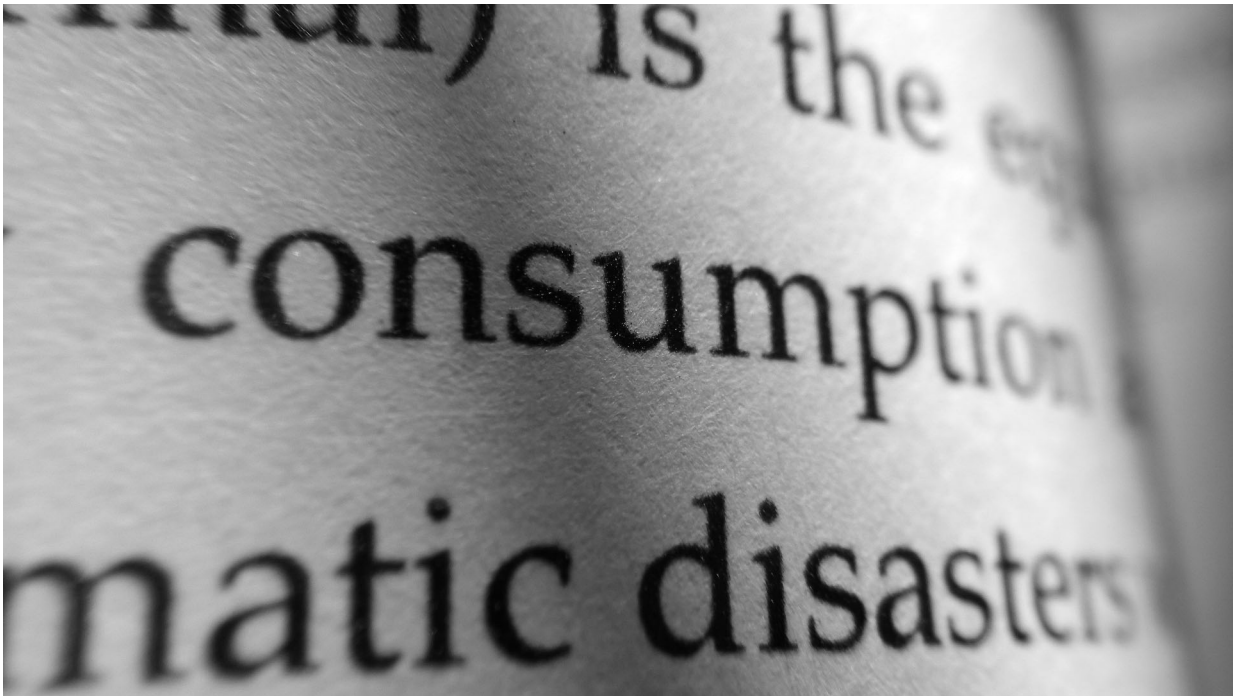


PHOTO BY JOE OLBYCH





TIM CARLSON

THE PHANTOM GHOST

Assume – for now – that We are Monsters
Monsters through and through
Assume – again – that we are All
though All is but a Dream


and so if the norm is what We See
in All days of life
then Weird is what We never see
nor dealt with once before

then if the norm be filled with Monsters
for all we See's Us
then what – i ask – is to become
of the old Phantom ghost?

the Phantom ghost is the ancient Soul
of a Wisened man
His Wisdom unprecedented
Through all our place in Time

what Would you do, Ignorant monster,
if He called to you
to Give you a heartfelt offer,
exalted Plea to Help

He Speaks to you in his ancient tongue
his Words of Wisdom
of the Terror Times yet to come
of Hate and bitterness



you listen with utter Fearfulness
for He's not the Norm
and so All you Hear while he talks
is Not of what He Speaks

you hear from him, that desp'rate soul:
Young man, i implore
please Stop the days that are to come
a Hateful Bitter world

what you perceive from the phantom:
Young man, y'asked for it
i'm here to Stop your days to come
Bitter – I Hate the world

Unfortunate to all, it is now
the Phantom must Go
Time has Expired – clock struck twelve
His Message has been brought

Though Nothing will be done – you don't Hear
Words – Misunderstood
Your Time, sure to come – End of Days
All of your Restless Souls

Now i, so hard i pray for you
pray so Long and hard
that all He had said was:
Beware your inner Beast



ANDREW N. BOWMAN

HOPE ANEW

Everybody likes Star Wars (right?). And there's nothing wrong with that. The problem is that, from an objective standpoint, it's not really very good. Don't get me wrong. It's one of my favorite movies, and it caused a revolution in the industry. But its detractors will say things like "the acting was terrible," "George Lucas can't write dialogue to save his life," and "it's a total knockoff of Dune." Unfortunately, these things are all true, and they really detract from the overall enjoyability of the film. Here is my idea: What if Star Wars didn't suck? What if George Lucas, in addition to being a brilliant filmmaker and marketer, could also write? What if all the characters made sense and acted like real people? Wouldn't that be great? I don't write screenplays, but I do write. So here's how I envision that story might begin. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoy writing it.


One day. Just one day. She'd been in possession of that damned eccentric lump of scrap metal for one blasted day, and now, mostly due to her own negligence, it had run off. She supposed it could be worse. It could have been stolen outright. In regards to where she knew it had gone, it may as well have been. When a little trashcan-shaped robot wanders into the Jundland Wastes, it's going to get nabbed by Tusken. It had happened before, but this would be the last time. She would see to that.

This would be the last time one of her mechs "wandered off" into the dessert and was "found" by those filthy Sandies. The absolute nerve of those people. She was furious. It's not like she didn't know where to find them. It wasn't so much the theft itself that bothered her (though the resultant lectures and shouting matches with her uncle did) as the brazenness of it. They knew she could find them, knew that she knew they had taken the little bot. And they knew her. While they could be violent, it was hardly ever that the Sandies set upon someone for little or no reason.

She was already going to catch hell from Uncle Owen about the little thing missing its first day's work, and for chasing after it on her own. Damned if she was going to let this happen ever again. It was time someone stood up to those thieving bastards, and Leia Skywalker would be the one to do it.

In her fury, she had lost herself. Glancing down at her dunerunner's dusty instrument panel, she noticed that she was just a kilometer out from the Tusken's camp.

She had her lightsaber (properly her father's lightsaber, given to her by Ben Kenobi a year ago, when they had first met) hooked to her right hip and her blaster pistol strapped to her left. Being a Tatooine farm girl of seventeen, she had plenty of experience with the blaster and didn't doubt her ability to wield it in battle (though she had never done before). The blade, Ben had taught her. He had been reluctant at first, but she had eventually worn the old man down until he finally relented.



Leia had every confidence that she would leave a smoking pile of sand people bits in the camp when she left.

As her dunespeeder hovered nearer the camp, the Tuskens took notice. There was no alarm. They recognized her vehicle and knew her well. They had no reason to expect anything but the usual whining child that had visited them so many times in the past, insisting (rightly) that they had stolen some piece of her uncle's property and demanding its return. Sometimes they had complied, but usually not. She was, after all, just a child.

"Not anymore," Leia whispered to herself. After today, when Sandies saw her beat-up old dunespeeder on the horizon, they wouldn't laugh. After today, they would be afraid.


She pulled into the middle of the camp. It was early in the day. The sun was just over the horizon and several of the creatures were tending a dying fire, no doubt cooking breakfast for the rest of the camp. Several of them were milling about, busying themselves with various tasks. Some were just waking, emerging from their little tents. Many of the sand people noticed her. One of them, with whom she had previously dealt, waved to her and called out a decidedly disparaging greeting. She couldn't speak their grunting gargle language, but she understood enough to know when she was being taunted.

She slammed the controls out of alignment, tossed her goggled sun hat into the storage bin beside her and launched herself over the side of the vehicle. She stood at least two heads shorter than the shortest of the Sandies and had been afraid of them for as long as she (or they) could remember. But not today.

The one who had waved at Leia continued to call out and beckon her, amused at her arrival. He stood about forty meters from her. Hand at her belt, she stalked toward him, as her dunespeeder fluttered noisily to the ground. Her slitted eyes and slightly down-turned mouth spelled death. By now, several of the other Tuskens were watching the little farm girl approach her antagonist.

She stopped twenty meters from him, working herself up. She began to breathe heavy as the dessert creature continued to crow away at her. Her eyes narrowed further, her hands balled into fists. She committed herself. This has to be done. These parasites can't keep leeching off the farmers. It's not right. Someone has to stop them.

Leia quieted her mind, entering the battle state that Ben had taught her. Time slowed. She became less aware of the fact that her visual world was made up of colliding colors and more aware of the movement of those colors. Here, a spot of red fluttered in the harsh dessert wind. There, a stroke of brown walked out of her line of sight. In this state of other awareness, she always took a moment, not only to adjust to the different rate of time, but also to marvel at her own ability to make it happen. In that briefest of moments, Leia Skywalker blinked and allowed herself a slight grin at the thought of her own magnificence.



She opened her eyes, re-acquiring her target. He was still standing there, in almost the same position he had been before she had taken that brief moment of revelry. Drawing the sword from her belt and activating it, she advanced quickly toward him. She saw the raider's eyes. She saw them grow instantly wide, even as his mocking gesture was only half-finished. Then, just as she was upon him, Leia saw his eyes flicker to her left. Time resumed its normal course as her blade struck. And froze, seemingly in mid-air.

Unable to mask her shock, the girl let out a cry. The tall man she had intended to strike fell backward and scrabbled away. Her blade hummed and crackled in the air. It took a moment for enough of her rage and shock to drain away before she realized what exactly had happened.

In the instant after she saw her prey's eyes flick away from her, another shimmering energy blade had thrust itself in front of hers. She whipped her head up and saw a grey-haired, almost old man, dressed in the sandy brown tunic common on Tatooine and a darker brown, heavy, hooded cloak. His eyes blazed with, not rage, but anger. The man swung his blade up in front of her, creating a space for his body to step into. She took half a step backwards, more surprised than perturbed, assuming a low guard. They faced each other, matching blue blades of light whirring in the swirling sand.


"Ben?" She almost didn't believe it. How did he get here so quickly? How did he know to get here at all? "But..." She stammered, dropping her guard.

Obi-Wan Kenobi, his morning thoroughly spoiled, glared down the blade of his lightsaber at the girl. "Skywalker," he growled her name. Her father's name. To the old master, all of this was too familiar. He had felt her, in the Force, an hour ago. He knew it was her, not because he had felt her presence before, but because his first instinct was that he was dreaming. Dreaming of the day Anakin Skywalker had butchered a camp full of Tusken: men, women and children. Even across star systems, he had felt that Skywalker's anguish clearly.

Now, with no worlds between them, he had felt her rage instantly and, as soon as he realized that he was indeed awake, had immediately despaired. He had jumped on the repulsor bike Leia had left at his home (to keep it hidden from her uncle) and sped off in the direction of the disturbance. As he approached the Tusken camp, Obi-Wan had seen her jump out of her vehicle, had seen the tall man-beast taunting her, and willed the bike to go faster. It obliged.

Just as Obi-Wan felt young Leia enter the battle trance, he leapt from the bike, its momentum carrying him nearly the full distance. Just as she swung her weapon downward, he took a single step and thrust his own blade in front of it.

Now they stood, teacher and student (he had never considered Leia his apprentice), facing each other with weapons drawn. For a moment, they just stared at each other. For that long moment, Obi-Wan could feel the rage building in her again. Once again, he felt despair.



With a scream that would curdle the blood of a Krayt Dragon, the young Skywalker rushed at her teacher with a swinging blade. His despair subsided as he easily deflected her wild attack. While she was skilled with the weapon, Leia was attacking him, not with the lightsaber, but with her rage. He could outlast that. He could probably do it without injuring her, though he was prepared to kill her if it became necessary. He wouldn't repeat the same mistake he had made with Anakin: he had allowed that Skywalker to live.

The duel (if it is fair to call it that) lasted the better part of a half-hour. They traded blows, back and forth, Leia attacking furiously out of anger, Obi-Wan intentionally bashing against her guard to tire her.

"Enough of this," Leia muttered to herself. She no longer saw Ben Kenobi, her friend and teacher. She only saw the man with the other lightsaber, standing in her way. She paused for a moment, focusing herself. She made a wild, feinting swing followed by a forceful lunge.

The old man easily saw it coming. raising his sword above his head, he stepped back from her swing, spun away from her lunge, continued to whirl in a full circle. He closed his eyes as he brought his weapon down on the girl's hand to sever it from her arm, and shoved his leg sternly into her mid-section.

He heard her shriek in pain for an instant before his knee slammed the breath from her, heard her weapon sputter to its death, heard her strike the hard sand a meter or two away. With a rising sadness, the old man sensed that the fight was almost over. Almost.

Almost before she even knew she had pulled the trigger, his blade returned her blaster bolt to her left ear. Unable to scream properly, the wind still knocked out of her, she made a hideous retching sound as she writhed on the ground. Moments later, she was back on her feet, coughing, but in a perfect shooting stance (perfect for someone who's shooting at small animals, but less perfect for someone at whom others are pointing their blasters), still pointing her gun at him.

"You... Missed," she managed, between labored breaths.


"Do you believe that?" For half a moment, she looked crestfallen (in addition to looking breathless and bloody), as she realized he hadn't. That he hadn't meant to kill her. He had only meant to dissuade her from continuing the battle. He decided at that moment that the next shot would end her life.

"Leia," he growled at the child. "Have I taught you nothing?" She grimaced briefly, obviously confused.

"You said . . . Jedi . . . guardians of . . . peace . . . And . . . lightsaber . . . weapon of . . ."

"OF JUSTICE!!!" he shouted at the very summit of his lungs, cutting her off as he whirled around to face her. "Not revenge!"

Only now did Obi-Wan realize that he had not injured her. Hadn't removed her hand, at any



rate. Half of her father's lightsaber lay, sliced clean, on the ground at his feet. The other half lay covered in blood at hers. Only now did he sense the wheels in her head finally beginning to turn for the first time since his arrival. Her face said she was momentarily disarmed. He turned away. He could make the kill. She was worn out. He could have his blade in her before she could blink. But he sensed something else.

Rather, it was what he did not sense that gave him pause. When he had felt Anakin's rage when he had butchered the sand people, and again when they had battled on Mustafar, there was something else. An additional component that he was only now able to recognize as an addition to rage, rather than a part of it. He was still not sure he could identify it, but it gave him the mildest hope that perhaps this Skywalker was not yet beyond salvation.

Just as he had made the decision not to kill her, his hand was forced.

"Ben . . ." she managed to whimper. He felt Leia's left foot lurch forward, felt the blaster jolt in her hand behind him. Eyes closed in resignation, with only the merest of thoughts, with no conscious effort, he twitched his blade behind his back to deflect the bolt of light. His eyes flashed open.

He spun around swiftly, in shock. The girl still stood, bulky pistol shaking in her small hand, the consternation on her face replaced by an absolute horror. She had not fired. She had only stumbled. But she had seen the flick of his weapon, and knew what it meant. Knew what would have happened, had her finger twitched a hair more than it had.

In half an instant, Obi-Wan extinguished his blade and returned it to his belt. Before Leia's eyes could process that his weapon had been deactivated, hers was sailing through the air thirty meters away, swatted from her hand by Ben's use of Force, and he was upon her, wrapping her in the heavy brown cloak he had dropped during the fight.

Part of Obi-Wan was still used to space. Even after seventeen years of life on this scorched dessert world, part of his mind still ran to dead space and cold Coruscant. He knew that, in a cold environment such as a starship, if someone's ear was burned off, body heat would rush out of the wound. If the injured was also sweating profusely from half an hour of single combat, keeping them from getting cold was supremely important.

"Ben," she croaked again, once he had lifted her into his arms. "I'm sorry." There it was. That was the missing component to her rage. Leia was capable of remorse. Anakin had slaughtered younglings and butchered Tusken Raiders because he thought it was right. It may be that he found these things hard to do, but he felt no shame in doing them. Leia's intended rampage had no such conception of righteousness. She knew she had been wrong, and she was sorry. She was genuinely sorry. Ben considered his response to the child's heartfelt regret.

"We'll talk about that later," he decided to say. "Right now, let's see about that little robot."



HORSESHOES



PHOTO BY ANDREW N. BOWMAN





DAQUAN COOK

ON THREE IMAGES OF PERFECTED ART

Marble madams of measureless beauty
And composure to your composers eyes
As they steadily render and apprise
An authentic impression of life free
From an affliction to wars that may soar
Leaving faces with anguish and much more
Away from exhaustive labor that can
Reverse grace to the end of its life span
How wondrous the skill of being a view
Immersed in a view sharing equal form
As the existing harmonies are warm

Though three lovely hues nature must construe
In days that come bearing weather askew
These uplifting arts are beauty anew

A TRAGIC LOVE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE WORLD

A tragic love on both sides of the world
Was shown briefly by the others pale light
Though with its depth these thin expressions whirled
Over the others yearning sense despite
Of the notion there angelic hues rove
In different eras with novel heights
Yet with their melodies they cheered and wove
Alongside what of the eternal lights
Set by beauties blaze they could imagine
Aimlessly as love was their existence
And so blind to this sun they never made
A wave of protection to this fashion
Of complex living as from a distance
Beheld end by a profoundly wise shade



NICHOLAS COLLURA

WINTER

Today, the icicles are nature's proudest moment,
Holding onto dead branches and tin gutters,
Like a lone chandelier in an abandoned apartment complex

And the brittle, double-jointed twigs
Quiver together, an orchestra of children,
The conductor disrupted by the wind

Tomorrow, when the eldest tree dies
All others will bend and shriek in grief
Its trunk just lay there, saying
"Standing up was fun,
But I'm tired,
And I think I'll lay a while"

As the fungus and spores,
Natures little whores,
Reproduce and decompose with no concept of love or space,
Like Freud's Id.

Letting their actions speak for themselves-
Thinking, but not actually verbalizing:
"The aim of all life is death"



Springfield Technical
Community College

A publication of Springfield Technical Community College

TORTOISE GREY



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