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LEGACY 1991

"FREE AT LAST . . . "

LEGACY 1991

The Southern writer's club, renamed Southern Scribblers this year, has traditionally published collections of its members poetry and short prose each year. Although the last issue of the Legacy was published in 1984, this year's club, sponsored by Mrs. Helen Pyke, decided to revive the Legacy in order to stimulate interest in creative writing and to provide a forum for member's works.

In order to gather material for the Legacy, Southern Scribblers sponsored a fall poetry contest and a spring prose contest. Winners in the poetry contest include "Colors" by Sharon Wright, First Place and on page three, and "news" by Laurie Ringer, Second Place and on page eight. In the narrative category of the prose contest the winners were: First Place, Lani Kreitner, for her short description of depression on page ten, and Second Place, Rhoda Gottfried, The Heart of the Beholder on page twenty. In the essay category, Kirstin Chalker won First Place for Defending the Point on page twelve. Lani Kreitner won Second Place for Curse of the Gifted on page fourteen.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Legacy and decide to contribute to it next year.

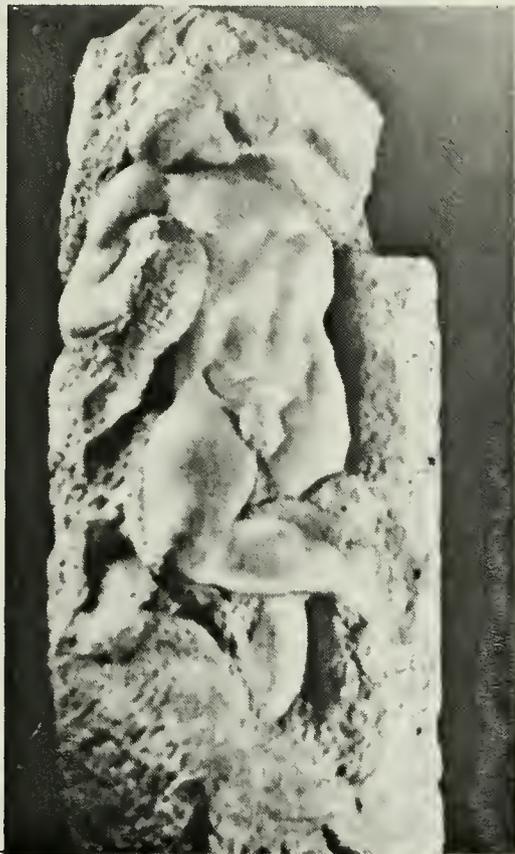
Russ Miller

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SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Helen Pyke, Sponsor
Gari Cruze, Photographer
Tim Burrill, Layout
Eric Rochester, Layout



"Boboli Captive." Michelangelo.

Michelangelo

marble white dungeons, luminous solid indifferent
confine emperors, warriors, deity, commoners,
beasts.

watermoving robes, twisted laurel leaf strands,
arms flexed hanging ready for battle, hooves
straining to gallop, fangs bared whitesharp,
pinions folded soft--

in irons seconds, minutes, days, years, centuries, forever--
until the chisel-bearing emancipator walks by whistling
"free at last . . ."

--Laurie Ringer

Colors...

Colors on the Artist's palette

Red and yellow, golden brown--
Painting trees in autumn clothing,
Giving each a glorious crown.

Finished product--what a sight!

Green world now in bright earth-hues.
Perfect is God's work of art,
Offset by the fall sky's blues.

When their costumes are complete,

Trees begin to shed their crowns,
Choosing not to wear their colors,
But before Him cast them down.

Better is their choice of standing

Naked in the winds that blow,
Trusting, never once complaining,
Till they're dressed in pure white snow.

May I choose like trees of autumn,

Though I'm painted colors bright,
Not to wear them--just return them
To the Artist for His white.

--Sharon Wright

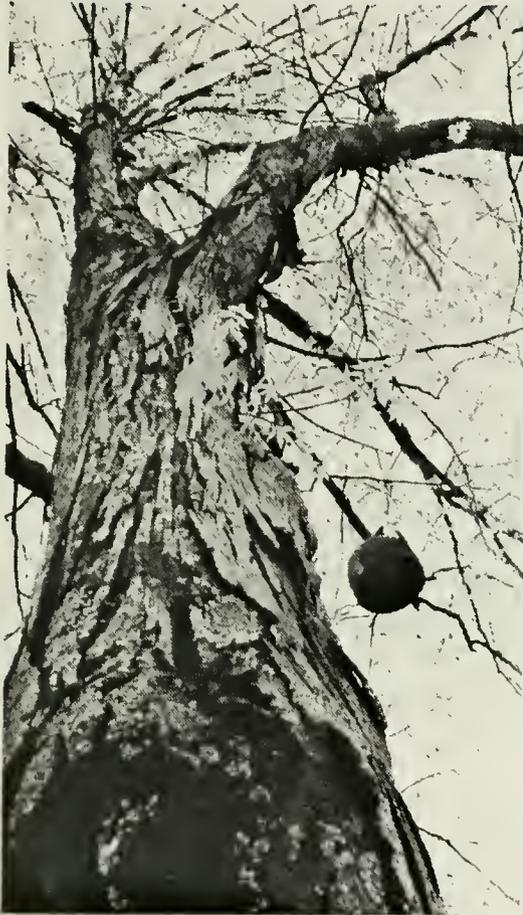


Photo by Gari Cruze

TIME

Time, crippled,
Knelt by his wheelchair
Pulled up on his bootstraps
And marched away

--Randy Burks



Photo by Gari Cruze

A little sparrow--

Its beauty was never praised by man, nor envied by birds. Small and brown, with no outstanding voice to speak of, it sits on an endless stretch of telephone wire--the throne of the plain. Its small brown feet tightly grip the dark cord which sways a bit in the wind. Its onyx eyes glitter in the sun. Head tilted, it listens to the sounds below, and then bursts into song--for no one--appreciated by none. Yet still it sings.

A young boy--

He is perfect in form, a wonder to behold. Golden skin, golden hair, golden eyes. He creeps softly through the dewy grass, as he has seen his father do in the rushes by the cool blue lake. His eyes are searching, searching. In his small hand he tightly grips his prize possession, feeling the cool metal against his warm skin.

The little sparrow--

Hears nothing but its own lonely song. Oblivious to the sound of metal striking metal, the proud sparrow tightens its grip on the wire and sings . . .

The young boy--

Distracted by a flashy bird of red, turns his back to the dull brown form. And doesn't hear its last, lonely note, nor see its rigid body plunge towards the grey pavement.

--Deana Abdel-Malek

LIFE'S DARE

Bristles, quills, and thorns,
 Explore the beauty,
 Not the scorn.
 So tempting to touch,
 Curiosity compels stimulation,
 But fear restrains . . .

--Julia Kim

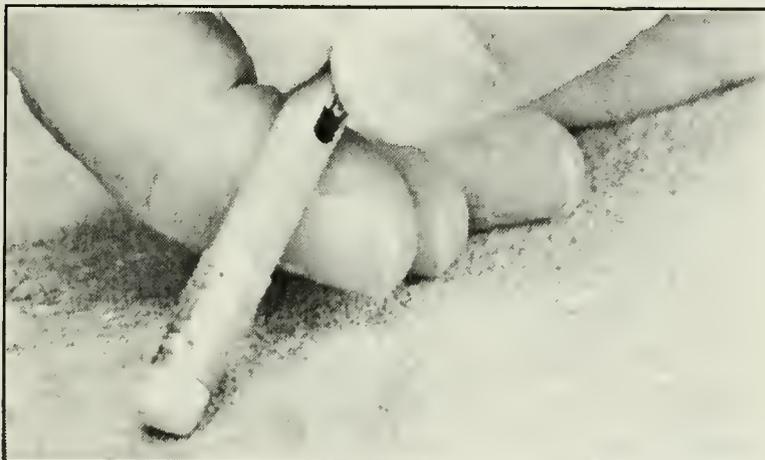


Photo by Gari Cruze

He ate a lot
 And I esteemed him nothing.
 He just came along
 And worked for free.
 He faced my problems,
 Ate my mistakes . . .
 Though innocent.
 Got worn out
 For nothing.
 And what he took
 Will never come back;
 Replaced by something
 Not much better.
 When he was gone I threw him away.
 He ate a lot
 And I esteemed him nothing.

--Randy Burks

Portrait of Evening

“It’s really nice out, tonight.” She looked at him expectantly, obviously hoping he’d say more. He did. “It really wouldn’t have to be that nice out for it to be nice. I-I mean, the nicest part is that you’re here, and you’re all it would take to make this evening beautiful anyway.”

“Thank you.” She blushed but not much. Her eyes shifted to the floor beneath the porch swing.

“You shouldn’t thank someone for being honest.” She looked up at him as he said this. Her eyes felt strange against his skin, and his face, too, flushed with blood.

The stars were coming out now. Beyond the protective shelter of the porch, the blue deepened, and tiny points of light shone through the dark like a candle through an old tin lantern. To the west, however, twilight’s muted glow lingered on. She looked deep into his eyes, caught and held his gaze. His skin became warm as the blood rushed to fill his facial capillaries, compelling her eyes back to the floor. Her face attempted to match his in color. She couldn’t look up. He couldn’t look away.

“I don’t think you should be here.” The knot in his stomach told him the same thing, sort of. He wasn’t quite sure what to feel. He started to shift his gaze, to avoid further turmoil. But finally, her eyes met his again, large luminous, there. Still, he hesitated, unsure now only of her feelings. She grasped his hand, and twilight faded to night.

--Monte Mitzlefeld

news

bleak urban morning in comfy houses crunching
cornflakes over morning news sacklunchproduction
8 o'clock schoolhustle . . . "Hurricane hit south-
eastern coast . . . Charleston virtually leveled . . .
story at 11"

scattering toastcrumbs

a swallow of black coffee and the world watched--
far away

rushhurried noonhour in chrome officetowers gobbling
stale ham sandwiches over midday reports sticky
yellow(callmr.jones)post it notes green computer faces ". . .26
children . . . killed or injured . . . when a drunk
driver hit . . . a school bus head on . . . the driver . . . treated
for minor injuries . . . in police custody."

dribbling mayo

a gulp of coke and the world watched--
far away

late frozen dinner in comfy houses slicing
microwave tenderloin over tv evening news "johnny don't
tease your sister" flipchannel combat . . . "Just in . . .
earthquake . . . central California . . . Interstate collapse
. . . rescue workers search for survivors."

swirling gravy

a sip of milk and the world watched--
far away

--Laurie Ringer



"Portrait of Miss Bowles with her dog." Joshua Reynolds.

Out of the Blue

How can I know?
If clouds are really white.
If sky is truly blue.

How can I know?
If girls are for pink
And boys are for blue.

Who can tell me?
If red is for courage
Why strong steel is blue.

Who can tell me?
Why oranges are orange
And flat notes are blue.

How can I know?
Why aren't lemons "yellows"
Or limes, "greens"; when I am blue?

--Randy Burks



"SELF PORTRAIT" VAN GOGH.

You're not the same person after it gets you. You're just a shadow of yourself. It shatters you into pieces so tiny that you can never hope to put them back together again. And when it goes, it doesn't leave you completely. It stays behind to taunt you.

You're not in control.

Your will to fight is all but gone.

Your desire to even eat is no more.

It takes the very essence of who you are. It kills you and leaves behind a stranger. You can gradually put some of the pieces together, but they don't fit as well as they did before but somehow you make them fit, at least for a while.

Coming out of it is more frightening than actually being in it at its worst. You are always afraid you'll fall back into it again. And once you fall back, you know it will only be worse.

To survive it you have to tell yourself that you are all right at least fifty times a day.

Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess about what is seen during a moment.

--Carl Sandburg: *Ten Definitions of Poetry*

There should always be an enigma in poetry.

--Jules Huret: *Enquete sur L'evolution litteraire*

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds.

--Percy Bysshe Shelley: *A Defence of Poetry*

Poetry is at bottom a criticism of life.

--Matthew Arnold: *Essays in Criticism*

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity.

--William Wordsworth: Preface to *The Lyrical Ballads*



**True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.**

--Alexander Pope: *An Essay on Criticism II*

The desire to write grows with writing.

--Erasmus: *Adagia*

**Every fine story must leave in the mind of the
sensitive reader an intangible residuum of
pleasure, a cadence, a quality of voice that is
exclusively the writer's own, individual,
unique.**

--Willa Cather: *Not Under Forty*

**The great art of writing is the art of
making poeple real to themselves.**

--Logan Pearsall Smith: *Afterthoughts*

**No man but a blockhead ever wrote except
for money.**

--Samuel Johnson: in *Boswell's Life*

Sometimes all you can do is sit on your knees and pray to God that he relieves you of it.

You have to occupy your mind with other things at all times because if it finds you alone it will destroy you. In a way it is always there, circling like a hawk waiting for its prey to give up. But you can't give up. You've got to keep going because stopping is unthinkable. You stop, you die.

Each time it comes and goes it changes you. The person you woke up being in the morning is not the same person you go to bed as. The interiors of your mind become more cluttered and your thoughts more confused. You die a little every day that it is with you.

You see yourself as if from a distance. You feel like an actor being forced to play a role. It makes you cry for no reason and the pleasures you once enjoyed become uninteresting to you.

This is what it feels like to have depression. It is more than just being down in the dumps or having a bad day. It is life altering.

Every time it comes you wonder if this time it won't ever go away. That is the most terrifying thing about it.

--Lani Kreitner

POWERLESS EXCUSES

Clumps of unwanted residue hang from my weary limbs,
Some days I fight its accumulation,
Other days I forget.
Too much time is needed,
Not enough time is allotted.
Every passing day,
The truck of inevitability
Dumps its contents upon the body of its bearer,
Me.
And the imprint it leaves,
Creates further disfigurement.
Until finally, my worn body bag is dragged
To the place where all perishables go,
Home.

--Julia Kim



Civil War photo by Matthew Brady.

DEFENDING THE POINT

The sky is overcast, and a haze rests on the green foliated mountain. A quiet calm is bonded with the mist, broken only by the laughter of a child. As I enter the park through the stone fence arch, my eyes are riveted to the cannons. Silent and useless now, they stand facing the valley, immortal sentinels of a war long lost. A sleepy grove of trees lounges in the center of the park, their trunks dressed in bright, mossy polka dots of green; a bird trills softly from a hidden nest. The quiet, misty afternoon is only an illusion of peace. I hear distant rumbling.

My head throbbed with each low-bellied earthquake of sound exploding from the cannons. No longer serene guardians, they were manned with a fury known only to a desperate cause. The haze was thicker, but it wasn't a cooling mist. The air was a swirling vortex of choking rifle smoke which issued from a thousand splaying guns. Choking haze dipped and whirled in dizzying circles through the woods.

Through the twisting clouds of smoke I saw a tree. It was wide at the base with roots stretching out like mighty legs. A long, protective arm offered comfort. I stumbled toward it, but just as I was about to grasp the firm trunk, I saw him.

He sat with his back to the leering smirk of the canyon. I first noticed his leg. It afforded the only brightness in the murky afternoon dim. Just above his knee there spread a patch of deep bluish red. The brilliance devoured his gray uniform like a ravenous beast. At first I thought he was dead; he didn't even flinch when the cannon balls screamed past. He just sat, an empty, mindless wrinkle of gray and red. He had lost his cap, and his brown hair was dusted a gritty blond from the grime of battle. His cheeks were fuzzed over with a young beard, probably his first because he was still a boy. The gray of horror in his youthful cheeks suggested that this was his first battle. His vacant eyes, which mirrored the surrounding carnage, proved it. His arms hung down among the roots of the sheltering tree. His legs were sprawled in front of him as if he had carelessly tossed them to the ground before slumping behind them.

It was his tears that showed me he was alive. They began in his hazel eyes and pioneered a white trail past his chiselled Roman nose, around his thin, stone-carved lips and finally formed a delta in the deep cleft of his chin.

It was almost an afterthought that I noticed the crumple of dark blue lying among the sunken roots. One of the Rebel boy's hands rested on the chest of a Yankee soldier. The body was twisted, and there was no life left to fill out the Union uniform. Again, I saw the first boy's tears. Was this his first kill? I asked myself. Yes, this was his first battle and he's just been introduced to what war is all about. With a sick heart I moved to turn away, but a motion stopped me.

The tears that marked the wounded soldier's cheeks began to fall onto the white face of his fallen enemy. They dropped onto lifeless hazel eyes, and carried by their momentum, coursed downward past a finely chiselled Roman nose, over thin lips, lips carved out of stone, and came to rest in a deep cleft in the chin of the dead soldier.

The noxious fumes of gun smoke shielded me at last from the two of them, huddled beneath the tree. I never saw the Rebel again, but I know his eyes always reflected the image of his fallen enemy; the face of his dead twin brother.

Today, a sign stands before the stoic cannons, a mere memento to disturb the tranquility of the park. It reads, "No Union soldier reached the top of Lookout Mountain during the battle at the point . . ." I know differently. I saw the Union soldier who made it to the top, and I saw the Confederate who killed him.

--Kirstin Chalker

THE CURSE OF THE GIFTED

“I won’t use it,” said Domino.

“But you must! You have the gift,” the voice out of the dark insisted.

“It’s not a gift, it’s a curse.”

“You could help so many people.”

“Yes, but in the process destroy myself. I’m sorry, but you know I can’t deal with it.”

“You’ve used it in the past, why have you stopped?”

“It’s become too painful now and the depression it leaves lasts too long.”

“In time you could learn how to deal with it . . .”

“No! It will take over my life and leave me hard and unfeeling. Haven’t I suffered enough already? I’ve been unwell for so long now.”

“You’ve suffered so that you can help others to get through their sufferings. You can feel things that other people are oblivious to. You must face reality,” the voice pleaded.

“Reality? This isn’t reality, it’s a nightmare. My own private hell.”

“You have the gift,” said the voice.

“I won’t use it,” insisted Domino.

* * *

Slowly a pink glow appeared where the ocean meets the sky. Streaks of light orange and pale yellow blended together and soon dark hues of red were burned across the horizon. It was a beautiful sunrise, but then, all Hawaiian sunrises are beautiful.

The water was like a sheet of sparkling blue and green glass. This glass-like effect was shattered by a small school of dolphins playing several yards beyond the quiet shore. Shells dotted the beach and the tide lazily rippled up to Domino’s toes. A coconut thudded to the ground a few feet from her as a man wearing neon shorts jogged down the beach toward her. Briefly she wondered why all runners had the look of total pain on their faces. If they hated running so much why didn’t they swim or do something else less stressful?

The trade winds, carrying the intoxicatingly sweet smell of plumarias, blew the sand into miniature twisters. This day had begun the way travel agents promise potential travelers that paradise is like. So why did her thoughts have to wander back in the far reaches of her mind to bring to the surface that conversation? Was the memory caused by a sense of guilt because she continued to ignore the voice's plea?

The light from the sunrise played on her blond hair, making it appear white. At twenty she was striking to look at with her blond hair and light grey eyes contrasting with her dark tan. But if you looked closely you could see that under the tan were the signs of a long illness. Her once athletic body now looked gaunt and weak. Her recent stay in the hospital had been far from restful and now when she smiled it was hard to tell where the laugh lines ended and where the lines of pain began.

The conversation was always in her dreams but in this morning's dream a new scene had been added. She was walking down a long corridor and at the end there was an open door with light streaming out of it. The room was empty except for a figure resting quietly on the bed. She edged closer and looked down at the figure. The woman was dressed in expensive clothes, was adorned with jewelry and had money clutched in her hand, but where her heart should have been there was just a gaping hole. Domino forced herself to look at the face of the woman. She stumbled backwards when the eyes blankly staring back at her proved to be her own.

She awoke from dreaming with a start, tangled up in her sheets and sweating. The illuminated dials on her clock showed that it was almost 5:30 a.m. She untangled herself and closed her eyes again, but the figure flashed before her eyes just as real and as frightening as it was in her dream. She got up, dressed and went quietly out the back door down to the beach.

And now here she sat, thinking. Thinking that she seemed to be thinking most of the time. She knew the voice was right. She possessed the gift to take away other's pain and even though this wasn't what she wanted, she must accept her reality. Although she was always compassionate towards people, always sticking up for the underdog, this wasn't enough. Her parents were constantly telling her to go into psychiatry or social work. If they only knew what kind of life they'd be banishing her to. That kind of life would destroy any chance she had for peace of mind. To come face to face with hurting lives and lost souls every day would be too much, even for a gifted one. She had always planned to use her gift, but she wasn't prepared to make it her life.

Her best friend, Jackie, had once said that she was an open book with a very complex

plot, and she supposed that was true. Drinking, doing drugs, and living without rules never interested her as it did so many of her age. She was open and talkative, ready to laugh and have a good time, but her friends did notice something different about her that always kept her from getting too close. It was as if they couldn't accept someone who lived by a moral code, someone who couldn't be swayed from it, someone who didn't give in. She was religious but didn't preach. She was simply herself. She knew, with a sense of sadness, she would always be different.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy," Jackie had said with a mock air of superiority. "You can't expect the world to stop doing what it has been doing since the beginning of time just because you don't agree with it."

"Oh, I can too, I'm Domino Maguire," she had replied sarcastically, not wanting to get into this discussion.

"Nobody lives by the golden rule anymore. You need to loosen up and give in to temptation once in a while. You get so wrapped up on trying to be a saint that you lose so many good deals. Like Tom," ventured Jackie.

Tom. Why did that name still hold the potential for so much hurt? "Tom wasn't a good deal," she stated. And then with a laugh said, "He only wanted his cake and to eat it, too; he wanted the whole darn dessert cart! A good deal he wasn't, not for me." Her mouth formed a wry smile and she said softly, "No, not for me."

The happy shouts from a nearby fisherman brought her back to the present. Realizing she had many things to take care of today, Domino grabbed hold of a nearby palm tree and pulled herself up, then walked the short distance back to her house.

* * *

Late in the afternoon Domino arrived at the hospital that was along the secluded beach near her house. This had been the hospital that she had stayed at for a couple of weeks, a little more than a month ago. She hated coming here again because the smells and the sights brought back painful memories. Her gift had made it impossible for her to escape from feeling all the pain and misery the other patients felt and along with her own pain, she had to silently endure theirs' too. The doctors couldn't understand why she didn't seem to be getting any better. She finally convinced them that going home would be the best thing for her. And she had been half right.

She now walked along the familiar hall, knowing exactly which room she was going

to. As she got nearer, the stronger the sense of her aloneness became. The late afternoon sun was streaming through the door and she paused to stand in its warmth.

A figure lay strapped on the bed. The woman was dressed in a white hospital gown with an I.V. grotesquely protruding from one of her veins. Its rhythmic dripping was almost hypnotic.

Domino didn't know the woman lying there, but yet she was vaguely familiar. Reaching to take one of the woman's pale, almost lifeless hands, Domino noticed that both wrists were neatly wrapped with gauze. She gently placed one of the hands over hers. The surge of pain mixed with a sense of guilt crept over her, threatening to engulf her completely. But it wasn't her guilt, it was the woman's. Then the depression came like a huge angry wave crashing down on her and washing her out to the loneliness of the sea. Total hopelessness was all she could feel except for the sour taste of bile creeping into her throat. Suddenly, she was hot and sweat sprang out on her forehead and nose.

"God no, not this. Anything but this!" She fell to her knees. The tears came mixed with the sweat. Countless suffering faces flashed before her tightly closed eyes. She couldn't help them now; she should have helped them then.

A loud clap of thunder rang out and a few seconds later lightening danced across the darkening sky.

A dull ache started to throb in the inside of one of her arms and her wrists felt like someone had taken a thin piece of paper and had slit them open. The nausea was overwhelming.

The woman's face, which had been tensely drawn, now appeared relaxed and peaceful.

Rain started to splatter against the half-opened window. The room became heavy with the smell of the salty air.

With one last look at the woman, Domino left the hospital and walked in the rain along the beach to her house. Taking off her flip-flops, which were covered with wet sand, she sat on the back porch. The rain continued to fall as she just sat there, shivering slightly.

The rain stopped just before dawn and Domino walked with her bare feet squishing in the wet sand, down to the beach to watch another sunrise.

Water dripped off plumaria trees and the flower's sweet fragrance replaced the smell of the sea.

The storm had left broken palm fronds all over the beach and washed-up seaweed lay in clumps along the shoreline. The storm had spent all of its great fury just as Domino



had spent all her emotional fury. And now her emotions, which had spewed forth like lava from a volcano, slowly ebbed away with the morning tide. She felt flat. Neither happy nor sad, just flat. The sunrise came up and reminded her that she was in paradise, but, what's the use of being in paradise if you don't have its peace of mind, she wondered?

The water no longer had the fragile, glass-like effect it had yesterday. Now it looked like broken pieces of green glass, sharp and cruel to the touch.

Domino knew that she would continue to use her gift now in spite of all the pain it caused her. She had the gift that sometimes was a curse.

--Lani Kreitner



photo by Gari Cruze

"Friends"

The Heart of the Beholder

What we see is carried from the outside world through our eyes that pickup electrons from the things around us. Our brain transforms the electric signals from our eyes into images and pictures. When you think of sight in a biological way, you can see that the statement, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," is correct. But, beauty isn't scientific. When defining beauty, we must use our hearts as well as our eyes and brains. Our eyes do not see the beauty of a sunset. They only see the colors. Our brains transform these images into a beautiful picture while our hearts stop at the scene. In this way then maybe we can say that beauty is in the heart of the beholder.

"It's beautiful," I told Melanie as we stood back and admired our work. We turned off all the lights in the house then stood and watched the tiny lights reflect off the red glass bulbs hanging from the evergreen limbs. The red bows and sprigs of baby's breath completed the picture. The beauty of that Christmas tree was almost breathtaking. Last night I got out of my bed and stole to the living room where I wrote a letter by the dim light of the tree. Then I just sat on the couch and looked at it until I fell asleep. I can feel the warmth of my family around me when I look at that tree long enough. Love is the beauty of the tree.

Physical beauty is important in our society. Especially we, the younger generation, place a high value on the outward impressions we have of others and the ones others have of us. We are susceptible to the values of our highly commercialized society that daily tells us that looking good is everything. We often forget to see the beauty in others with our hearts instead of just our eyes.

I heard a story about a man that was in a terrible car accident. He came out of the accident badly burned. He looked so awful that his wife could barely stand to look at him. The monster her husband had become was unlovable to the eye, but not to her heart. Because she really loved her husband before the accident, she loved him no less after it. In fact, their relationship became deeper and stronger through the trials they went through together.

The eyes are unforgiving to the model whose face wrinkles with age, or the body builder who loses muscle tone. Fortunately Christ sees us through his heart that sees the good in our characters. Beauty of character is of high value in heaven. If we value the good character qualities in others, we will build those qualities in ourselves--just as we try to build in ourselves the physical beauty we admire in athletes and models.

Beauty of character is illustrated by the friend that loves you enough to tell you when you're wrong, by the girl who is friendly to you when you're feeling grumpy, and by the "brain wave" that helps you with your basic math problem. Unselfish love--giving to others without thought of ourselves--that's real love. This love is beauty, real beauty. This is the kind of beauty I want to have. This beauty is in the heart of the beholder.

--Rhoda Gottfried

