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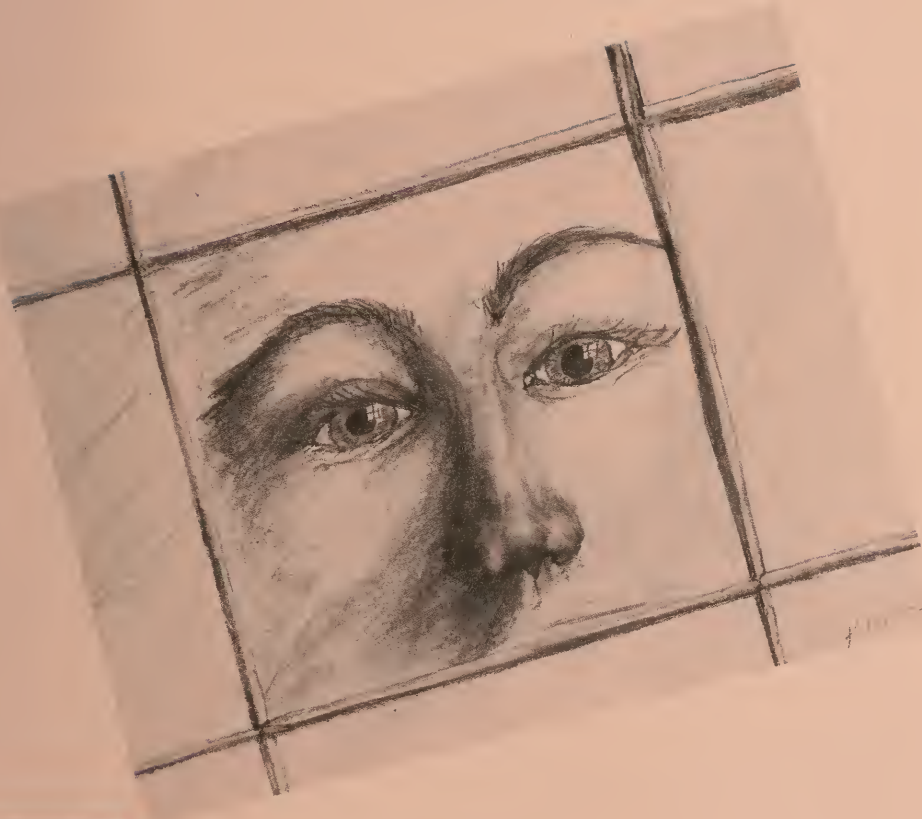
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Legacy
1994



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*Windows to
our hearts.*



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Legacy 1994

Many late nights I sit on my bed with a phone in one hand and my poem book in the other. As the hours creep by, I read to a friend samples of what I have written. It is not my poems I am sharing, though. It is me.

By reading my poems, I am allowing my friend to see into secret chambers of my heart which I save for moments of sheer joy or desperate pain. My poems are indeed windows into my heart.

The poems and stories shared in this *Legacy* are also windows. They are windows into the hearts of Southern College students who wish to share with you a view of who they are.

As you look into these windows, it is my hope that you will be able to share with the authors the feelings they are expressing. And tonight, should you get the urge to pick up the phone and call up a friend, don't forget to leave your poem book within reach. After all, you too may wish to open up some windows.

Lori Pettibone, editor

Contest Judges

Elaine Eggbert

Author

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Chairman Art Department

Jeff Lemon

WSMC Development

Yvette Norcott

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Lynn & Helen Sauls

Chairman Journalism and Communications
& Associate Professor of Education

Legacy Staff

Lori Pettibone, editor

Matthew Brass, art director

Helen Pyke, sponsor

"A writer is working when he is staring out the window."

--Author unknown

Ode to a Manuscript

White, uncaring, full of nothing
Ever feeling none but me.
I will render now my blessing
To your white tranquillity.

Words, quite certain, not of pleasure
From my humble heart do flee,
Through my pen and ink blotch spoken
To your flesh in irony.

Hear my heart and see my passion
Spilling like a blood from me.
Show to all my life undaunted
Through the tears I've spilt on thee.

--Jim Lounsbury



Illusions
images
 d n i g
 a c n
in my mind,
conceived by music.

--Larisa Myers

 You enter-
a million times,
 we are restored . . .
 a k i s s,
a rose,
a joyous hug;
 the
music
.stops.

I open
my eyes

I am

alone.

--Nicole Planter

The boy watches the television
with a blank stare.
A sage, it gives him
all he needs to know.
It gives him a view
of life lived
in half-hour blocks,
and plastic death
on the 6 o'clock news.

--Scott Walker

An Empty Bed to Hold Him

How can she like someone
That grates her nerves?
All he does is call...

call...

call!

Day and night—any time.
It doesn't matter if she's
Tired, sick, or sleeping
She gets so annoyed
That she turns off the phone
So she can't hear the rings
And waits for the caller
To respond to the rude
Answering machine message.

Though,
How can she hate him?
He's just like her—human.
He's just like her—lonely.
He comes home
To an empty apartment,
 an empty living room,
 an empty kitchen,
 an empty bedroom,

an empty bed.

And all he wants is someone to call,
"How was your day?"
Just needs someone to listen,
 to hold his hand,

to hold him.

And he still calls...
 calls...
 calls.

And she still doesn't answer.

--Tanya Cochran

First prize winner, art
Drawing by Matthew Brass



sun

he sweetly
drags his fingers
over my arms,
combing the tiny
hairs that stand
at attention at his
presence.

The heat of his
hand—silent
and still
in it's home—
radiates my skin,
penetrates,
and runs
like honey
through my veins—
slow, thick,
paralyzing.

--Tanya Cochran

The new sun shines on
Crimson spring flowers that grow
near new stone crosses.

--Scott Walker



--Scott Gaptill

Assurance--an earnest statement intended to give confidence

In this life.....

We travel along the edge of the world and almost slip over
the side.

Take my hand and we'll be o.k.

We climb the highest mountains of success and boulders
tumble all around us.

Take my hand and we'll be o.k.

Only fingers of death can overcome us, hand in hand.

Sleep is so sweet as we wait for the Maker to bring us
another life.

When He wakes us, "Take My hand" He'll say, "and We'll
be o.k."

--Jennifer Attaway

They build slowly with suspense
And break
At climax.
The thunder of impact lays on my senses
Like Grandmother throwing three heavy quilts
On top of the two already covering me—
Thick, heavy,
But
Not smothering. No.
I find my peace here—
In the thousands of watery fingers
Playing the shore
Like a grand piano
Running furiously over the keys.
Yet its simple tune is like a symphony.
Rolling, peaking, turning, crashing...
Aaahhh! And resolving...
The experienced hands run up the shore's keyboard
Like a confident, charging cavalry
Then retreat like
A scolded, covered mutt
Only to reengage with fresh strength.
I find my peace here—
Peace within the stormy thunder and crack,
The pounding lull
Of the sea.

--Tonya Cochran



--Geysa Mastrapa



--Scott Guptill

We were each wrapped in loneliness,
two darkened songbirds
refused by the flock.
But now the sad harmony we share.

--Scott Walker

"Help, I think I got on the wrong ride."

By Paul Nevala

If life was one big amusement park, with the food booths being different experiences that you taste, the game booths being the risks you take, and the rides being the things you learn and grow from, then my first experience with love could best be described as a triple-loop roller coaster with loads of twists and turns.

I approached the roller coaster with awe; long ago I had heard of the many thrills it offered. Nobody had told me to be the least bit fearful of love; no one let me know that the turns and loops weren't all fun, so I hurried to get in line with everybody else. It wasn't until I was standing in line, waiting for the ride to begin, that a voice offered certain warning about the ride I was about to embark on. I let the warnings go unheeded, too wrapped up in a sense of euphoria to pay attention to such trivial nuisances.

The first sense I had that maybe everything wasn't going to be as dandy as I had originally thought was when they tightened the lap belts as I sat in the seat. I didn't care for the feeling of restriction, but I told myself that certain things had to be sacrificed in the name of love. My anxiety virtually vanished as the cars began their ascent of the first hill. Things in my relationship were going smoothly, without even a hint of the steep hill I was about to plummet down. I was having fun, and as far as I could tell, it was the best time of my life thus far.

Things all changed when the first of the cars went over the brink of the first hill. As we began to know each other better, hidden emotions and hurt from her past surfaced. Terror built inside of me as I saw what was approaching, and as I felt myself racing downwards, I couldn't help but scream out. I thought things had leveled out a bit after that first misunderstanding, but before I knew it, I was racing through loop after loop, my mind reeling all the while.

Before any of this had happened, I had been a child, so to speak. I had basically no idea of all the pain and suffering in the world. Because I had chosen to participate on this "love ride," soon all the worries and the fear and the pain had become my own. I lived moment by moment, constantly wondering what obstacle I would be faced with next.

Eventually, I could see the station in sight. Fights and arguments had become commonplace, and I knew that the ride was almost over. I couldn't quite make up my mind as to what I wanted. I didn't want to get off, but yet I had no logical reason to stay on.

When the ride finally came to an end, I felt a huge empty void inside. I'd never realized that life's loops and turns weren't as fun as they looked from the ground. I never knew that along with the fun came the trials and fear. As I stood on the ground, in the shadows of the looming roller coaster of love that I'd just been on, I couldn't help but wonder what had gone wrong.

The whole encounter had left me feeling more than a little sick, so I was content to simply wander around the park of life for awhile, without actually taking part in what it had to offer me.

In time, I happened upon another ride that caught my eye. This one looked just as colorful and exciting as the first, but without even a hint of danger. It is said that the best way to know if it's true love or not is to go with your initial feeling, and it was for this reason that I knew getting on the merry-go-round was a good choice.

Almost a year has passed since I got on that merry-go-round, and in all honesty, I couldn't be happier. The ride creaks a little sometimes, but I am so engrossed in the deeper feelings of security and happiness, and in the wonderful music in the background, that I barely notice.



*Drawing by
Geysa Mastrapa*

Window

I used to spend my days
 laughing
 and singing
 and running
 in the sunshine.

I was young and free
 and eager to love
 unaware of the pain that
 love could bring.

Till those who claimed
 they loved me
turned away,
 throwing stones at
 my unprotected heart.

I took the stones
 and used them
 to build a wall around me.

Inside my wall I crouched.
 Afraid to leave,
 Afraid to love,
 Yet afraid I'd never love again.

It was there you found me.
 Gently, you reached out to me
 and
 pulled
 the
 stones
 away,
creating a window for me
 to look through.

Now I spend my days
 gazing out my window.
I feel the warmth of the sunshine
 and hear the children's laughter
and music plays in my heart again.

--Lori Pettibone

Respite

Looking
 in your eyes,
 silence speaks;
ETERNITY
 in one
 short
 moment;
depths of caring
 in shades of brown,
ENFOLDED -
 in a gaze,
sharing a kiss
 from a distance;
 looking away -
the walls are up again.

--Nicole Planter

Umbrellas

I wade through umbrellas
 protected from the elements
 and the workings of your soul.
I hide under the umbrellas
 scared of the water
 and who you really are
Under the cautious protection
 of a thin black mask.

--Thomas Irvin Duerksen

Sweet, mad jesters, one and all
 Fools for thinking
 our small, extra taste
 of freedom
 has made us more free
 A mere distraction
For at our backs, they bind us
 And put another bolt
 On the cage's titan door

--Scott Walker

Acceptance

Hey you
Yes, you
Look at me.
No, don't look around me
Over me
Or by me
Look at me, in my eyes and
See the real me.
Don't try to fit me
Into a category
Or put a title on my head before you
Know who I am.

Hey you
Yes, you
talk with me.
No, don't talk at me
About me
Or for me.
Talk with me, to the person I am and
Discover the real me.
Don't try to stuff me under
A sub-heading
Or put a brand on my name before you
learn the facts.

Hey you
Yes, you
Love me.
No, don't call it love just because you
Like what you see when you
Look at me
Or love who you think you're talking to.
Love me, the person I am and
Accept who I am.
Only then may you
Look in my eyes
Talk to my soul
And truthfully know the real me.

--Jennifer Attaway

Words

We lead astray by words unpredicted,
Words that alone can mislead and dismay,
We wish later on that our tongue was restricted,
From imprinting on minds the words that will stay.

--Jim Lounsbury

Unison

What words do you have
for me
to express
this warm tide of emotion?
Sadness at the thought
of departure
Joy at the thought
of meeting again
Overwhelming love at the thought
of your hand in Christ's.
Though deeper things may never come from
dreams of the moment
Our hearts are two forever bound by a mighty One
Who seeks out His children
Finds them
Holds them
Loves them
Protects them
Allows freedom for them
And sets them in the paths of one another.
May we be forever one in Him.

--Jennifer Attaway

Reunion

"Old friend, you have not
changed one bit," he lies, as he
hugs the new stranger.

--Scott Walker

Photo by Matthew Brass



We walked through the graveyard
laughing,
reading the strange names
without faces

Then we stumbled upon
a pair of stones that were
not so unfamiliar
Motionless, we were drawn
quietly from our cheer.
She began to cry.

“It’s different,” she said,
“When you know them.
It’s different
when you have kissed them.”

--Scott Walker

First prize winner, prose

Breakfast With Dad

By Brian Yensho

Dad and I drove into Shony’s and parked the car. The scuba convention was over, and Dad was driving me to the airport. At 7 a.m. both of us had our minds set on breakfast. The air conditioner was working well that morning. Goose bumps rose on my arms as we opened the door and the blast of cold inside air billowed out through the openings we had created. My goose bumps would rise and fall several more times this morning, but it would not be on account of the cold air.

We asked for the nonsmoking section. The hostess informed us of the special of the day as she handed the already opened menus to us and gave us the name of our waitress. Since my legs were still sweaty, the green vinyl was cold on my skin as I slid across the seat. The plastic on the corner of the menus had begun to curl and crack. We ordered cheese omelets, hash browns, toast and orange juice. We tried to make small talk while the food was being cooked. Something just wasn’t quite right. I had a tight feeling in my chest, and it was hard to swallow. I was nervous eating breakfast with my dad.

Several years had passed since I had been alone with Dad. I had married and had a couple of kids. I had not minded when Mom said she couldn’t get off work and

was thrilled to think, Dad, instead, would take me to the airport. We would have the whole morning together, just the two of us. Then why couldn't I relax and enjoy his company? A few years earlier, we had reached a point of being at each others throat constantly. He would make a rule, and I would break it. Grounding was a common result. When the sentence had been completed, I would immediately break another rule. More grounding. The irony was that I couldn't stand to be around him and yet purposely broke the rules and got grounded. In addition, the two of us spent the whole day together in the house, making the summer of 1973 a long one, indeed.

I fidgeted under the table and tried to cross my legs. I picked one up and could hear the sound of warm skin rubbing vinyl. Dad looked up and smiled. The food had come, and I was surprised at how fast I was gulping it down. My chance to visit with Dad was being inhaled as I shoveled the food faster. Here I was, not having to pay for a long distance call to talk to him, yet I couldn't even chat.

As we ate our food, I watched how the sun played games on the table. The shady spot was cool until the sun hit it. Then it started to warm up. The sun bent up the side of my orange juice glass then crossed over the top. The hash browns had cooled off to a cold slimy mess. I took the left tine of my fork and pulled one tiny piece of potatoes off the side. While we tried to visit, I kept turning the tiny piece of potato from top to bottom on my plate. The oil they cooked it in had mixed with my ketchup and become a yellowish-red smear about the size of a dime. The rest of the plate had yellow splotches from the omelet. A few pieces of cheese had leaked out during cooking and turned crispy brown on the grill. I cut those off and left them on the plate.

Bread crumbs from the toast and empty jelly packets lay on the table beside the plate. I took my napkin and folded it neatly into a triangle. This shape worked well to make a snow plow and push the crumbs around on the table. Still uneasy with my dad, I could make straight clean lines or coarse lines if I lifted up one of the corners gradually while I pushed the makeshift bulldozer around on the table. The waitress filled my milk too full and left a little ring on the table when she took my cup. The pulp from the orange juice was stuck along the side of the glass and some had collected on the

lip. I don't like pulp.

In the background a baby had begun to fuss. It started out slowly and began to crescendo until its mother gave it a bottle. I guess babies need to eat in restaurants as much as anyone else.

Dad paid the tab and we drove pretty much in silence the rest of the way to the Orlando airport. I had so much to say to him, yet I couldn't. We had made our peace with each other via long distance. My mind was spinning so fast that I couldn't sort through my emotions. I wanted to tell him that I loved him. Hurry up. They're starting to pre-board the plane. People scurried around, gathering up all their carry on baggage and looking under the seats for anything they might have forgotten. Oh no, it's last call for this flight. I'd better do it now. With a deep breath and trembling hands, I looked Dad square in the eye and said, "I love you, Dad." With a smile he said he knew and that he and Mom loved me too. I kissed him on the lips and gave him a hug. The last time I could remember doing that was when I was a little kid in Pajamas on my way to bed.

Mom called

Second prize winner, art

about two weeks later—said she had some terrible news. My father had died. The next time I saw Dad, he was in a coffin. I kissed him there and told him good-bye. Only this time it was good-bye...forever.



*Drawing by
Matthew Brass*

The Love in His Hands

You have such kind hands Daddy.

Hands that tenderly hold babies and little children to Your chest.

Hands that gently wipe tears from the faces of Your beloved.

You have such strong hands Daddy.

Hands that hold back crowds and control vast multitudes.

Hands that lift up the afflicted and make them whole once again.

You have such holy hands Daddy.

Hands that feed thousands from five loaves and two little fishes.

Hands that, by a single touch, instantly restore sight to the eyes of one who's blind.

You have such kind hands Daddy.

Is that why you always look for one lost sheep, no matter how long it takes and then joyfully gather it into Your arms when found?

Is that why You allowed them to beat You and spit on You without giving up and destroying them with a single word?

You have such strong hands Daddy.

Is that why there are calluses there, because You worked so hard to help Your father with his carpentry?

Is that why you were able to hang from a cross by mere pegs driven into Your flesh?

You have such holy hands Daddy.

Is that why you can create a human being from dirt?

And is that why there are such rough, nail-like scars in Your palms?

I think Your hands are beautiful Daddy, just beautiful.

--Jennifer Attaway

Memories

By Seth Timmins

The tree groaned wearily in the late autumn breeze. As the wind whistled through its branches, taking the tree's few remaining leaves with it, the tree sadly recalled its youth.

It recalled the jubilation it felt as it burst through dry earth to feel the sun's rays for the first time. But this joy was short-lived, for it grew in a dense forest, filled with trees more powerful than itself. From the start, it struggled for its very life against the more powerful trees, who would just laugh at it every chance they could get. This would happen year after year. Only by sheer force of will did it manage to stay alive.

But by trying so hard to get ahead, it began to treat all trees other than itself as inferior and it wouldn't care how many saplings it killed in order to survive. So, while it grew majestic on the outside, it grew callous inside.

A small light on a nearby hill brought the tree out of its remembrance. As it watched the light and the smoke that drifted skyward from it, the tree recalled a time long past when it had seen a similar light. It had begun during a calm night. The tree had just settled in for the night, when it noticed an odd smell in the air. It didn't think much of it, so the tree fell asleep. Later that night it was awakened by thousands of screams and an intense heat. The screams were from thousands of creatures running away from what looked like a wall of light, and felt like a wall of heat. The creatures were trampling each other in their haste to get away.

Some strange upright creatures, upon seeing the tree, begged it to lower its branches so they might be safe from the heat. But the tree only turned away in disgust. Just then the wall of heat hit the tree, scorching away all its leaves in an instant. It screamed in pain and agony, and then blacked out.

It awoke some time later to find that where the forest had been, was now a desolate wasteland—devoid of anything living except itself. At first, the tree was glad to find that finally it didn't have to compete anymore to stay alive. Then it looked at itself and saw, where once had been a lofty tree with lovely foliage, now there stood a knarled, burnt tree with not a single leaf left.

Now that the tree was alone, it remembered all the

trees and creatures it had scorned as not being worth its time. It regretted killing those young saplings, who like it, were just trying to stay alive. As days turned into years, the tree grew more and more lonely.

As the tree once again ceased its remembrance, it gazed upon the meadow that had gradually replaced the burnt forest over the years, and sighed. It wondered if there was anyone who really cared how lonely it felt. Abandoning this line of thought, it decided to prepare for another long, cold winter.

One day early the next spring, as the tree was feeling lonely again, it saw a boy running across the meadow toward it. As he came closer, the boy noticed that the tree was very depressed. He asked the tree why this was so. So the tree told the boy about its youth and how it now regretted its past life. The tree also told the boy how utterly alone it felt.

The boy then did something that took the tree completely off guard. He walked up to the tree, hugged it, and said that he forgave the tree. The tree was astonished! It tried to tell the boy that it had killed other trees and even creatures like the boy himself, but the boy didn't care. He said he forgave the tree anyway.

For the first time in its long life, the tree actually felt peace, knowing it wasn't alone anymore.

To Be Alone

I sit
with people who
don't even
notice
me.

I talk
to a guy
I don't
even
like.

I flirt
with a girl
I don't even know.
I'm just too scared to be
alone.

--Thomas Irvin Duerksen

Rose of Sharon

Crimson petals of the rose fall softly to an earthly mound below.

Crimson rivulets of Your lifeblood, down Your side doth flow.

Sunshine blossoms the rose and surges life through its tender veins.

Sunshine beats down upon Your thorn-marked brow and reveals Your inflicted shame.

Bowing slightly, the rose closes its blossomed bud for the night.

Bowing Your head, You utter the Father's victory and have thus, given your life.

Dew breath kisses the leaves of the rose in the morning display of affection.

Dew is evident on the boulder that's been removed to prove Your blessed resurrection.

Opening its scarlet face, the rose reaches toward the sun for yet another day of life.

Opening the clouds of glory, You, the Son, will come to retrieve Your children, for whom You have paid the price.

--Jennifer Attaway



--Kim Fenton

Thoughts on Ring Around the Rosy

By Kimberly Fenton

*“Ring around the Rosy
Pocket full of Posies
Ashes, ashes
We all fall down”*

What does this mean? This little verse that we chant as children and never get tired of saying, or doing the little dance that goes along with it. Around in a circle holding hands and skipping, then falling down, all laughing and panting. Where did it start? What keeps us passing it on each generation?

“Ring around the rosy.” Well, I certainly do that every day. In conversations and relationships, in my activities too. Endlessly running in circles, doing things I do, so I can feel good about myself and say that I’m too busy to do things I’d prefer not to do. But what is keeping me from doing these things? Running around the rosy? What is a “rosy” anyway? Someone once said it was a bush, or at least that’s the way I’ve imagined it, and who’s to say what that might symbolize.

“A pocket full of posies.” Posies are flowers I think. Now I don’t always run around with a pocket full of posies, and I don’t see the world through rose colored glasses. But I know people who do, and they always seem to be quite happy. Maybe a pocket full of posies isn’t such a bad idea; you wouldn’t miss the reality that you would through rose colored glasses, but you have something close at hand to remind you of the good and the flavor everything with a scent of—well, posy. Maybe it would mean less stress. Not such a bad idea.

“Ashes, ashes we all fall down.” I thought about this part a lot. Does this mean that eventually everything turns to ashes? Well *“Ashes to ashes and dust to dust.”* I guess everything eventually does fall down. I know I do a lot. I know about the ashes part too, because I crash and burn all too often, it seems. *“What goes up, must come down.”* I guess this is all true.

So does this teach us a harsh reality or a valuable lesson. That even the posies turn to ashes eventually, and some time or another we must *all* fall down; or that everything has a cycle, beginning and ending, rising and falling and rising again, drawing strength from the cycle itself; in the end, I suppose it really doesn’t matter. But I think that the nice thing about the game is that when you fall down, you get right back up and start over again, and you skip in a circle around an imaginary rosy with all pocket full of flowers, and when you fall down, everyone falls down together, not just you. We *all* fall down. And when we do we don’t cry because our bottom hurts, we fall around on the ground and laugh at how funny everyone looks, and then we help each other up and do it again.



The Screw

--Geyesa Mastrapa

I do not stand alone,
He holds me.
Firm between thumb
And index,
He presses me.
I do not resist
His nudge
And feel myself
Break the surface
Of my new stronghold,
My fresh foundation.
Slowly he drives
Me deeper,
Deeper still
Into my destiny.
It is easy,
But with each twist
Of his tool
I lose freedom
 I lose breath.
 I lose life.
I Lose Life.
And I spin
Into my own
Coffin.

--Tanya Cochran

The Price of Popularity

By Rob White

Peter Snickel was a nerd. He was also my friend, which is why I should have done something when he first started making ejaculations about being popular. Pete was skinnier than a maple sapling, with a sickly pallor that reminded me of mayonnaise. His clothes were Brady Bunch hand-me-downs. When a gust of wind caught his extra-wide collars, he looked like a forlorn flightless bird.

Kids can judge other kids pretty well. Pete had no other friends that I knew of. The height of his social life was playing chess against his computer. He wasn't a jock either. I hated to see him struggle in gym class; arms flopping like cables and legs moving like telephone poles, his ribs working like rusty bellows as he ran his laps. It was always during this period that the taunting would become sharper.

"Hey Snickel! Didn't your mama ever teach you how to walk?" someone shouted.

"She tried," said senior Sandy Walker, "But it's hard whey your mama has four legs." The whole gym echoed screams of laughter. Pete acted like he never heard. He just kept on, stumbling a bit now and then.

"Pete, can your mom roll over and play dead?" More hysterical screams. The whole class was getting into it now since they had nothing to do until Pete finished his laps around the gym.

"Where's the Kal-Kan, huh, Pete?"

"Which fire hydrant do you use?"

Panting, nose running, Pete finally straggled back to the rest of the group. Sandy, a boy with coal-dust eyes and hair, dribbled a basketball twice and dunked it. After accepting high-fives from the guys and admiring looks from girls, he strode over to where Pete sat wheezing for air on the gym floor. "Pete," he called whistling, "here boy."

Sandy reached down and patted Pete on the head. Kids crowded around now, laughing and telling Pete to sit up and beg. The coach had stepped out in the hall to talk to another teacher. "Ol' Peter here," began Susan loudly, "is just a mutt. He don't even know who his father is."

Pete Snickel's dad had had a heart attack when Pete was barely two. We had talked about it before; there

were no memories.

Sandy was grinning widely now, conscious of the eyes on him. Quickly Pete stood up. He stared dully at the bully towering over him. "I know who my father is, and I don't see that my family is any of your business," Pete ventured.

Sandy's eyes gleamed and his mouth turned up at the corners like a jaguar closing in for the kill. Almost imperceptibly the crowd shifted back; then pressed closer - forming a tight circle around the two boys. Sandy made another verbal stab. "Everybody knows you can't remember your dad, Pete. You've never seen him, so maybe your bitch of a mama made the whole story up." Pete's jaw tightened as Sandy thrust his blade of cruelty in on to the hilt. "And I guess that would make you a little bastard, wouldn't it?" The boy accented his words by shoving Pete backwards. Someone in the back kicked at him when the crowd parted to let him tumble to the floor.

Silence covered the group like a wet blanket. Everyone waited to see what Pete would do.

He picked up a pencil that had fallen out of his pocket and wiped a smear of ooze and blood that was forming on his lip where he had been kicked. I wanted to help him up but couldn't. Not with all those bloodthirsty kids standing around. I waited until he had picked himself up and started for the door before I followed. From the other hallway, I could hear the coach returning and asking what was going on. I don't think anyone knew.

After that day, Pete was never the same. He had been taunted worse before, but maybe the gym scene was the straw that broke the poor Pete's back. I met him on the bus the next morning. "Hello, Steve," he said, grinning self-consciously. "How'd your date go last night?"

"Fine," I replied, somewhat surprised as I took the seat next to him. Since my luck with girls is on average one hundred percent better than Pete's, I usually take him along if we're going to see a movie or something. But lately, after word got around Hartvill Heights that a date with Steve Billings meant having a sixth toe around (Pete), I told him as nice as I could that maybe it would be better if he didn't go all the time. I don't know if it hurt his feelings or not, but he seldom took an interest in the outcome of my dates.

I asked him why he was feeling so chipper today. "Well, it's like this," he leaned back in exaggerated pride.

“I, Peter Snickel, have formulated a theory that, when properly activated, will propel me into the scholastic season with virtually zero emotional stress factors.” (He calls pranks, bad jokes and fights emotional stress factors.)

“All right, Pete, in plain English please, what the heck are you talking about? He was obviously very satisfied about something. But what? Another day to get beat up? His answer was no help.

“Steve, you’ve always been my bestest buddy, but I can’t even tell you what this is all about until it works. Let’s just say that when I’m finished, no one will ever mess with me again, no sir.” He gulped and blushed as if he’d already said too much.

Later that day in Biology, I was making small talk with a cute new transfer when I overheard a conversation behind me. Two of the coolest seniors in school, Lyle Preston and Don Swerve, were discussing a new rumor they’d heard. Something about how Sandy Walker had dared someone to blow up the gym with homemade bombs, and how that person (I didn’t hear a name) had accepted the challenge. Lyle and Don were scoffing at the likely possibility. Don remarked that he didn’t know anyone stupid or brave enough to do such a thing.

On the bus that afternoon, Pete was full of comments. “I keep telling you, and everybody, that this plan of mine will make me the coolest guy in town. No more nerd for me, no sir. I will be respected, I will be cool enough to...,” he paused, his face flushing crimson with the excitement of the thought. “...to hang out with the varsity basketball team!”

I thought a minute. Maybe, just maybe, if his scheme worked, I could use a little popularity boost, too. But all my pleadings were still to no avail, and I had to get off the bus, unenlightened with the secret of local fame.

While I was still pondering Pete’s secret the next day in school, a much bigger story was on the tip of everyone’s tongues. The whole student body wanted to know who was going to blow up the gym on Friday.

No matter who I talked to, the topic was the same. Who is it? How will they do it? Of course, nobody cared about the gym itself. We’ve needed a new gym anyway. When we had to run laps in PE, however, it was funny to watch everyone glance around uneasily and stay close to the wall. Coach said we had the fastest time our class had

ever had. In fact, he beamed, the whole school seemed to be running faster. I guess he attributed it to his coaching skills. He was in a good mood the rest of the day; we didn't even get penalized with push-ups when Pete came in slow, as usual.

On Friday, I couldn't wait to get to school. I asked Pete on the bus what he thought about the proposed gym bombing. "I dunno, Steve, but whoever is behind all that must be really smart, and—and brave. I agreed. Pete looked like he could have swallowed a building.

I was heading down the hall toward American Lit in seventh hour when I realized my books were still in my locker. As I was pulling them out, a folded piece of note paper floated to the floor. Oh boy, I thought, that blonde in History really does like me. But when I opened it, I recognized Pete's handwriting; neat, between the margins. The letter was dated that morning. It read:

"To my only friend and confidante, Steve:

Sorry I couldn't tell you what my plan was about, but I knew if I told you, you would have tried to stop me. What I am doing is something I have given much thought to, so don't think I'm bungling something up like I usually do." I felt a pang of guilt as I read that sentence. *"...All my life, Steve, I have tried my best to make it in this world. God didn't give me much to work with, but I've tried. And all my life, until now, people have judged me because of what I look like and what I can and can not do. I've tried to bear it, but I just can't take it anymore. I'm leaving, Steve. I'm leaving this place and I won't be back for a long time.*

This last week has been the best week of my life. When I hear people in the halls whispering to each other, or talking in the lunchroom, and I hear them talking about me—ME—even though they don't know that it is me they're talking about—I get a good feeling all over, like someone finally really cares about something I do.

Well, my friend, it's time for me to go. An audience awaits, and I can't let them down. At precisely 2:45 p.m., Steve, I am going to discharge four homemade bombs in the gym. Doubtless you have already heard of this undertaking; but you are the only one who knows the exact time. I can trust you, Steve. By the time you read this note I will have already left this world, and the gym will lie in a pile of rubble.

You have to admit, Steve, this plan made me very

well known. At least, it will after today.

Your friend,

Peter Alfred Snickel

I threw down the note and looked at the clock: 2:43. There was still time. I could still run down to the gym and talk Pete out of this silly.... A low tremor shook the whole school. I heard the blast. My knees trembled, not entirely from the explosion. I had to sit down in the hall. People were running past me now, screaming and shouting. I didn't pay any attention. It didn't matter anymore.

Peter Snickel had paid the ultimate price for popularity.



--Eric Hullquist

"Life has a value only when it has something valuable as its object."

--Hegel

What is Purple?

Purple is violets
 And mayflowers in spring
And lush velvet drapes
 Like the robes of a king.
Purple can be pretty
 As asters in fall,
Or dark and foreboding—
 Rain clouds in a squall.
Eggplants and cabbages
 Can be purple too
And sometimes the mountains
 In a far-off view.
I like all the purple
 I have in my clothes
But not in the cold
 Of my fingers and toes.
There's fragrance in purple
 Of lilacs in May
Each bushful arranged
 Like a giant bouquet.
Sometimes it's exciting
 How purple can taste—
Not much blueberry pie ever
 Goes to waste!
There's purple also in fruit—
 Plums are just fine.
And bunches of grapes
 Hanging fresh on the vine.
Some purple is good for
 Everyday use,
Like the purple I drink
 In a glass of grape juice.
There's also the honor,
 setting some far apart;
The pain and the courage
 In each purple heart.

--Tammera Castleberg

Portrait

If I were to draw a picture
of me
and you,
I would first draw
a hill.
And I would be at the
bottom of the hill
struggling
to get
to the top.
With blisters on my hands
And torn pants
And sweat dripping
from my forehead.
With dirt
mixed with
blood
staining my clothing
from the times
I had tripped
and fallen
then returned to my feet
to try again.
Struggling
every inch of the way
Struggling
And in my picture
You would be at the
top
looking
the other
direction.

--Lori Pettibone

Lover

I am determined,
Focused.
I walk swiftly
Towards my destination.
My muscles
Rhythmically respond
To my brain's
Orders:

 pump, flex, relax;
 pump, flex, relax.

But
Then the wind changes.
I feel it
Slip through my hair.
It's fingers
Lift my chin
Towards the rushing
Atmosphere.
It cools my face.
My thoughts are rent from their
Sequence.

And I smell you.

I have forgotten
Until the air,
Sweet
With your fragrance,
Swallows my senses.

My will vanishes.
My muscles abandon their
commands.

And for an eternal second,

I inhale.

--Tanya Crochran

She, dressed like a clown,
smiles garishly
at the man
who drinks at the bar.
They talk and laugh.
He whispers.
Together they leave
for a room,
She, hoping to finally find
a balm for her
scalded heart,
He, hoping to slip out
before he has
to buy breakfast for
his latest one night jester.

--Scott Walker

*"What we love we shall grow to resemble."
--Bernard of Clairvaux*



--Geysa Mastrapa



--Tissiana Kelley

I Counted

She had lived a full life,
so they said.
She had raised three children,
had seven grandchildren,
and twelve great-grandchildren.
Her bent frame had withstood the
blister of nearly ninety winters.

Yet her once confident stride had been
reduced to an often disoriented, dependent shuffle.
The constant grind of life had slowly but surely dulled
her faculties.
Her husband had died long ago, and most of her other
trophies,
including her memory, had vanished as well.
Her descendants, who dutifully housed, fed and cared for
her,
keeping her from the gates of a nursing home,
coolly justified her irrational behavior
by proclaiming "her mind is gone."
The slow passage of her time seemed to be marked only
by meals,
and her daily riding up and lying down.
Her glazed stare was endlessly directed at the opposing
wall as though watching some unseen television.

I sat and watched her,
and counted the days until my next birthday.

--Brian Arner

You can't walk
In his shoes—
 feel the oozing blisters
 and solid calluses
 from marching to the quarry,

 standing torture,
 carting the sick..
 the wounded...
 the dead
 (friends,
 family,
 children).

But
He can't walk
In his shoes,
 feel the blisters
 or calluses...

He can't march to the quarry.

He can't stand as torture.
He can't cart the bodies.

He can't walk
In his shoes
 because he hangs
 (toes naked and pointed,
 ankles limp,
 heels rested)
 by the rope he smuggled.
Because
He didn't want his shoes.

And
You can't walk
In his shoes
 because you'd have to dig
 through 80,000 to find
Them.

--Tanya Cochran

*Dachau was a Nazi work camp in Germany during World War II.

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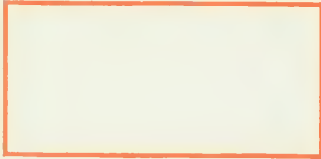
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