



the **Tau**
*the literary and
visual art journal
of Lourdes College*

2011

Cover Art:

Dandy - *by Amanda Hasenfratz*



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Literati

Orbis Ars

When St. Francis of Assisi adopted the cross-shaped symbol of the tau as a sign of his conversion, he followed in a tradition of meaning that extends from Hebrew Scriptures through Christian history. Franciscans today use the tau cross to express their personal response to God's love and faithfulness. This journal, The Tau, likewise builds upon a tradition in the Lourdes community, a tradition of encouraging and celebrating the love of literary and visual arts evident in the Franciscan Sisters' founding of the institution. The contributions of current Lourdes students, faculty, staff, and friends in this volume continue that tradition of deep appreciation for the creativity of the human spirit. The Language and Literature Department thanks all who submitted literary work to The Tau. We congratulate Ruthi Mitchell for her Best of Show poem, "A Legacy of Change," and all whose works were selected for publication.

Associate Professor Kate Beutel
Chairperson, Department of Language and Literature

This time of year is always wonderful. It provides us with an opportunity to see the creativity in so many on our campus through their submissions in The Tau. This journal helps us to realize how art affects and is a part of everyone, no matter what their discipline or chosen career. Creating is a process that can help us all find, beauty, comfort, understanding or even peace. A gift, if we care to utilize it.

Congratulations to all who have worked on pieces as part of this process.

Associate Professor Erin Palmer Szavuly
Chairperson, Department of Art

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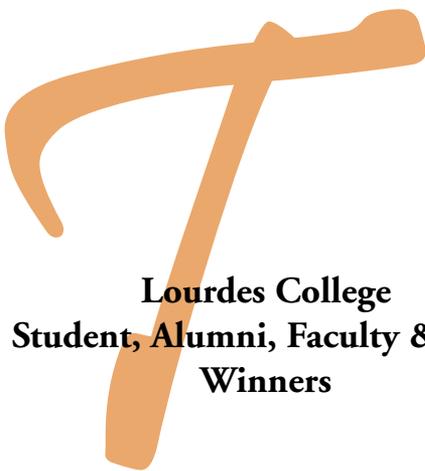
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**Lourdes College
Student, Alumni, Faculty & Staff
Winners**

A Legacy of Change

by Ruthi Mitchell

“Best of Show”

Slave song, mournful wail, remembers lush coastline, sandy beach and Mama.
Months at sea, hunger, sickness, sweat and blood pouring from every crevice.
This is their legacy: Beaten, branded, chained like animals,
sold at auction to the highest bidder –
renamed,
remade,
but never released.

White song, triumphant cry, bellows, “A new crop has arrived!”
Pushing, shoving, jockeying for position in the hot dust of a summer
afternoon.
This is my legacy: Landowner, slave lord, marketer of flesh,
plunking down money for sable hides –
beating,
belittling,
but never benevolent.

Freedom is a strange word, one not understood by he who is not free.
Bondage is a casual word, one that means nothing to he who is not bound.
This is our legacy:
Free and bound.
White and black.
Owner and owned.
Lines etched in stone and forged with steel –
chaining,
chafing,
but never changing.

Emancipation is a slow word, one whose price is high and paid in blood.
Brothers killing brothers, families torn apart, leaving a nation cast asunder.
A legacy of smoking battlefields, baking bodies, a shot that rang through a
century –
reconstructing,
repairing,
but never repenting.

Conversion is a stubborn word, one that balks and hunkers down, unwilling to relinquish its legacy of lynchings, battle royals, smokers, the stripping of black flesh for sport.

Segregation, abomination, isolation, tribulation, broken nation –
suppressed,
suffering,
but never surrendering.

Transformation is a painful word, one that labors hard while giving birth to church bombs, race riots, white hoods, burning crosses, the slaughter of innocents.

Another shot, a dreamer dies, leaving a gaping hole in a world –
devastated,
demoralized,
but never defeated.

Hope is a tentative word, one used grudgingly by the hopeless.
It breaks free and gathers energy, rising like incense to the heavens,
touching the nostrils of those who died for it, and they breathe in
victory,
vindication,
but never violence.

Change is a momentous word, one that speaks but once every few centuries.
A nation heals and begins to realize the debt it owes the slave song.
“Yes we can,” he says, and we do – *together*, creating our new legacy –
Penitence,
Pardon,
Peace.

The Swing

by Anshea Christian

The best part of childhood is The Swing.
When you learn that a couple chain links and
a blue seat can take you away,
you kick your legs faster,
harder,
just to get higher.
Your hands clench tightly to the rusty lines that
carry you towards your Heaven.
All your friends give up, but you can't see them
from above the clouds.
Each time,
You're so much closer, but
gravity won't let you have your feathers.
You fight to reach that place you know is up there
The Place that makes everything all right & everything okay.
You hear your friends as you swing down to Earth again.
You ignore them, you know recess is over but
You're almost there,
one more try & you're free.
You see it now, so close, and you reach too much,
falling
from
your
chariot
you see cold Earth.
Gravity is laughing at your mistake
Then
silence
only the noise of wind.
You pass the clouds that hugged you,
you see your swing, bucking and confused
without its master.
The ground is hungry for you
it opens wide and you sink into its throat.
You taste funny, so it spits you out onto
the playground's cracked concrete

Lying there, broken, you look to the sky you
once flew in.
The clouds make the shapes of your freedom
forming strong hands, they reach for you.
They are too far away
so they send the rain down to heal
the marked places
You lie still on the hard Earth &
close your shattered eyes
the rain slides over you, whispers The Love & The Healing
It stays with you until you feel like trying to
Reach Again.



Untitled #3 ~ by Ashley Cappelletty

To Be Buried

by Amanda Griffin

She sat in her chemistry class, staring out the window at the blinding snow. A crack in the sill was letting in a small amount of the cold February air. It was just enough to cool her flushed cheeks. The sound of chatter and a radio filtered through her thoughts, but she paid it no mind. Her attention was fixated on a stray little leaf just outside the glass, a leaf partly buried in the snow.

It reminded her remotely of herself, stranded and alone in an environment completely wrong for its survival, with the way it struggled desperately to stay above the snow, to push through its bindings and feel the warmth of the sun.

Her eyes slid to her abandoned work on the desk in front of her and an inaudible sigh escaped her slightly parted lips. She knew what she should be doing, but her mind just wouldn't stay focused long enough to recall to determine the presence of nitrate in her solution based on the results of her litmus paper. Too much was raving in her mind and she wished she could just run and leave her thoughts with the loud class and the mocking test tubes.

What other option did she have really? Everything was just too much, and she wasn't confident anymore on how much she could withstand. She had been dealt more cards than she could possibly play and now too many problems were on her shoulders.

She wasn't sure if she should scream in frustration or cry in confusion.

Her thoughts went back to the leaf. Sneaking another look out the window, she watched as it tried to use the wind to wiggle free of the snow's vise grip, but no matter how big a fight it gave, the snow wouldn't loosen. The poor leaf was stuck and defenseless, its stem frozen to the ground, rooted in place. It would never be free. It was never meant to escape the shadows and feel the warm sun on its crisp surface.

She blinked hard, pushing back the hot tears that suddenly sprung into the corners of her eyes for reasons she could not verify. With one last long look at the leaf, she turned away sadly.

Tonight there was to be a snow storm. By morning the leaf would be buried under seven inches of the white powder that imprisons it now, forever hidden in the shadows, never even to see the sun again.

She was scared.

She did not want to be the leaf.



Ice Tree ~ by Michele Ross

List of Demands

By Jackie Koch

I've been kidnapped, abducted
taken hostage, subdued, disrupted.
I'm being held in a darkened room
with soft pillows, a mattress,
blankets, a teddy bear, too.
If you ever want to see my face again,
I suggest you pay close attention.
This is the list of demands.

I want men who don't know me
to stop calling me "Honey."
I want life to be more
about love than money.

I want folks to stop judging
how smart someone is
by how much schooling they've had.
Some of the wisest didn't see college
but they know how to live,
and you can't beat that knowledge.

I want to eat chocolate and not gain a pound.
I want less small talk, more conversations profound.
I want to work thirty hours instead of forty.
I want joy and fulfillment replacing boredom.
I want love and tolerance, and my kitchen sink fixed.
I want weekly massages and great shoes that fit.
I want Christmas music to start Thanksgiving Day,
not a moment before, to let thanks take first place.
And speaking of Christmas,
I want more meaning, less shopping,
more loving, less plopping
in front of TV, after gifting and gorging,
less rampant consumption,
more awareness of fortune.

I want those who feel lucky to help those who are down.
I want those who are happy to spread cheer around.
I want good friends who understand,
I want my sons to be happy; I want a good man.
I want more sunshine, I want less rain,
I want some immediate emotional first aid.

I'd like to come out, but my keeper is still
holding me here, but I have free will -
I can truthfully say I like this warm cave.
So starting now I declare myself free
Of having to venture out, having to be
required to deal with the trials of life.
Just leave food at the door; I'll be all right.
And though I know I'll be sorely missed -
unless you deliver the goods on this list,
I'm here for the long haul. Give my love to the kids.



Lady in Blue ~ by Denise Keeran

Bikinis

by Kate Beutel

It was quietly discouraged.
But every spring, they came
from the girls' dorm next door,
with Coppertone and radios
to the hillside cemetery of the Marianist Brothers.
Even the markers lay flat,
nothing to block the sun
from the greening grass
or their winter white skin.
I joined them only once
quietly
seeking absolution from the strong sun
and the celibate dead.



Mystique ~ *by Denise Keeran*

Essence of the Feminine

by Lawrence Moore

She walks through the fields
in the Springtime of the world
and even the Sun knows reverent wonder
as her children, the flowers
turn to watch her pass.

She dances by the Sea
eyes that sparkle, so much like the waves
which caress her feet.
She has walked this beach
for a thousand years, changeless...
it has always been her friend.

She sleeps in the clouds
playing tag with the birds,
friends of the air which can almost reach her here.
The stars above and earth below
sing her songs, older than either
and her laughter is the sky itself.

She loves in the flames...
burning nothing, consuming all.
In this bright world she is eternal,
wrapped in a cloak of fire.
“Love me if you dare to know thyself!” she cries
and continues her dance in the Sun.

God Is...

by Theresa Holup

God is like
 a magnet,
Our hearts,
 the steel.
A constant,
 unseen force,
Attracting souls
 with love unceasing.

God is like
 a river,
A source
 of life,
To all who
 come to its banks.

God is like
 the silence,
Overcoming
 the chaos
And bringing
 peace.

God is like
 the wind,
Able to catch
 and carry us
To a better
 place.

God is like
 the music,
Able to calm
 the most
Restless soul.

God is like
 the mirror,
Reflecting
 all that
Is virtuous
 and good.

God is like
 the sun,
The source
 of light
And love
 to each
And everyone.



Tulips ~ by Sarah Stephens

Skydiving

by Jill Scribner

The scent of melting fuel oozed its way through my nostrils as the summer breeze floated by. Aroma of daffodils and corn stalks lingered, as well as the pungent, frigid sweat sliding down my greasy back. Anticipation grew within my stomach, feeling like tiny worms swimming around as the airplane above came soaring down swiftly. A quick glance towards the sky left me squinting for a moment against the sun. Blurry dots were floating down gracefully, thousands of feet up, and soon I would be one of them. Very soon I would be a tiny speck painted on the blue canvas known as the sky. Very soon the experience of the highest high known to man would be obtained. Very soon, I could declare myself a skydiver.

A quick tug on my jumpsuit startled me back into reality as my eyes shifted suddenly from the sky to my jump instructor. He smiled as he adjusted my straps and made sure all the equipment embracing me was secure. Dark sunglasses covered his eyes, but I knew he was watching me. He knew I was excited; he knew I could do this. A look at his sunglasses left me with my reflection staring back at me. I smiled back and soon the tiny worms devouring my stomach subsided and the confidence came creeping back.

“Lets boogie,” I said as we both walked in unison towards the lounging plane. A wave of hot fuel surrounded me which made my blood come to a rapid boil, yet my confidence didn’t decline. The stair railing was smooth and cool against my sweat soaked palm. I finally climbed into the plane and miles and miles of thought expanded within my mind.

I slipped back into reality as the plane began to take off towards the sky. My instructor asked to look at the open cock pit, and I also leaned forward with my childlike curiosity. The pilot was young and blond with determined eyes as he steered the plane towards a wall of sheer blue. My jump instructor took a grasp on my hips and guided me to stand up for a better look.

The plane’s ceiling was very low, so I was scrunched up like a hunchback as I examined all the dials and toggles within the open cock pit.

“That’s amazing!” I shouted over the blaring of the plane’s engine.

“You haven’t seen nothing yet!” my instructor replied.

Suddenly, I glanced out the window again and saw the cornfield I had been standing on become a yellow square. The huge lake I crossed to get to the field an hour ago was now an awkward swirl of deep blues and murky green.

Seconds later, my instructor again tugged at my straps and made sure everything was secure as the door of the plane swiftly opened and the earth below was completely exposed. Vast masses of white dwelled below me and I realized that these pure looking masses were clouds. Looking thick and fluffy, the clouds reminded me of childhood for a split second as I suddenly was clipped to my instructor. He placed bright red goggles over my eyes gingerly and gave me an enlightening thumbs up. I smiled, he smiled, and he shouted that on the count of three, we’d both jump towards the enormous world below.

One. My pulse tensed. Two. My stomach sunk and melted to the floor. Three. I dove headfirst into the technicolor swirls of yellow, green, and blue known as Earth. To scream would ignite sound, but the hundreds of mile per hour winds engulfed my screams and my mouth went dry in an instant. As though I’ve been chewing on sand for years, my mouth was completely deprived of saliva. The world below was nearly three miles away but it felt more like thousands as I quickly free fell to Pink Floyd’s ‘Learning to Fly’ repeating itself in my head. The red goggles were quickly filled with tears and the adrenaline coursing through my veins reminded me of the way a machine is oiled down. I felt like a foreign, oiled up machine plummeting towards Earth from another galaxy.

With my hair all wild, I gazed upon the horizon and was convinced for a moment that the world was indeed flat. I tried to make out the vast colors of sunshine yellow and rich blues into masses of land and sea, but they only looked like puzzle pieces from my perspective. The sunshine welcomed me with streaks of neon oranges and anti-freeze green and bold purples as it dwelled near the space where earth and sky embrace.

Shortly, my instructor and I were upside down, and I saw the other skydivers joining me. Glancing down at the world upside down left me feeling closer to God. My blood was cruising towards my brain, and suddenly I was upright again. The taste of cloud lingered on my tongue like a succulent meal as I began to admire all the beauty around me.

My instructor pulled the parachute and a heavy jerk across my chest left me bruised and winded for a moment. All of a sudden I found myself struggling to hold back spontaneous tears from the sight of Earth's beauty. The puzzle pieces that were below me were becoming more visible. The yellow squares appeared again as well as the lake, as I slowly floated towards the ground. Feeling like a bird, I stretched my arms out as far as possible and admired the silence of drifting.

My heart beat faster as my jump instructor handed me the reigns of the parachute. I tugged right, and we'd twist; I tugged left, we'd twist again. He told me to tug both of them at the same time, and I found myself doing a complete flip with the parachute still intact. The amazing joy of flying crammed itself deep down into my memory, and the feeling of the ground has never felt the same.

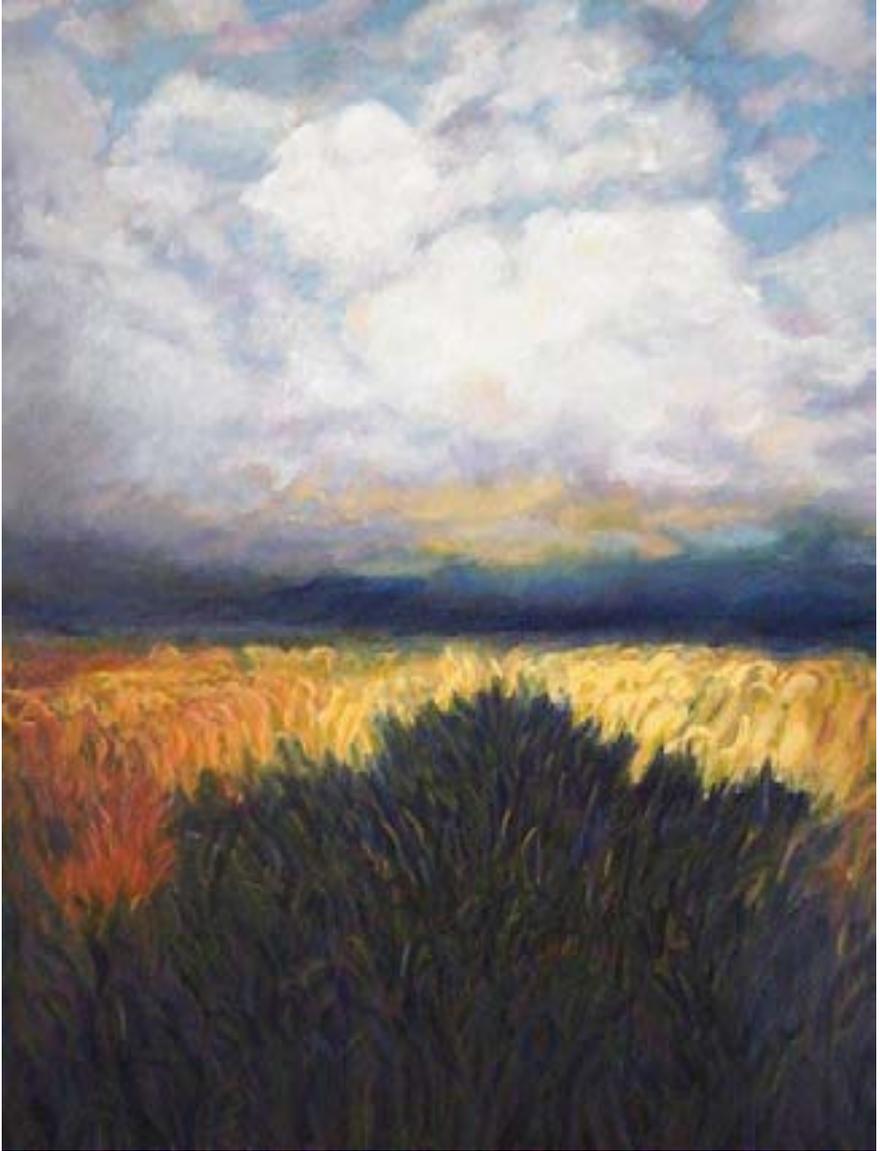
As my feet hit the ground and the scent of fuel, daffodils and corn stalks welcomed me back to the world, a sense of power coursed through my veins and slumbered in my bones. My instructor grabbed me and held me tight within his grip and the thump, thump, thump of his heart beat collided with mine. I felt enlightened; I felt energized.

"You did great, kiddo," my instructor exclaimed as we came to a slow and graceful stop against the soil. I found myself nestling back on his chest, smiling and feeling the highest high I have ever felt.

"You want to bungee jump into a volcano next?" I giggled.

"Yeah, dude, let's boogie," he replied with a quirky grin.

I slept that night feeling a spark growing inside me. The warm glow of an adrenaline-lit fire. I had accomplished skydiving and the sense of dominating a challenge and soaking in a wild adventure kept me wanting more. Skydiving gave me a full dose of adrenaline that activities on bare soil cannot. I was born a free bird and I will die as a free bird and that's that.



Sundance 02 ~ *by Annette Fink*

Canning Up

by Amanda May

In bygone days, we had
a moment alone,
a moment to reflect on other moments,
to savor that filet mignon moment,
to crumble that feta moment into something
our grain-of-salt senses can comprehend –

Cell phones stuck to palms like roux,
like overly moist dough,
the endless buzzing timer
summoning us from the coagulation that can only occur
in a refrigerator
or a dark and empty pantry, damp
because thoughts will dry out otherwise
and prune up

those darn things do just about everything these days but chop the onions!
for a good, long cry, text 66466

instead, those moments go
to endless hours glued to screens,
striking senseless, insipid keys
that, in the end, don't seem to mean that much of anything,
no more than a moment alone,
one moment canned up inside yourself without a buzz or a bleep...
maybe some oil and seasoning, but you're the only sardine in the can...

so can up for a moment. defy the corkscrew of communication. come
unplugged.
the recipe's not that hard t –

Hello?



House on Allen Road ~ *by Michele Ross*

Journey

by Savannah Frelin

This pain is so real and is here to stay
Feeling like a jagged knife, ripping at every muscle on its way
To my heart that is broken, bleeding profusely,
Tearing out of my chest, as if trying to elude
The pain that suffocates and takes my breath to its tomb.
Frigid air running through my veins
Feeling ice cold as it makes its way to the pain
That paralyzes my body, numbing uncontrollably,
Freezing any memories, as if they'd go away
Coldness that consumes and inhibits this day.
Overwhelming sadness I can't overcome
Feeling choking despair, knowing I can't run
To a safe haven, drudging my feet through the mud
Moving slowly, as if headed somewhere in sight
Pain disgustingly rejoices as I succumb to its plight.



Untitled ~ by Sarah Stephens

The Soldier
by Ruthi Mitchell

He lies in the shadow of a cliff, his blood cutting red rivers across the white sand.
The blackberry sky twinkles like his mother's favorite sequined dress,
reminding him that half a world separates them.

In the distance, the whirl of helicopter blades chops through the night, and
he briefly wonders if they'll arrive in time.

He feels no pain but the pain of memory – a soft *click*, a loud roar then
nothing –
except a cloud of blessed haze.

Nineteen years on earth deserves more than this –
dying alone in the bloody sand on the other side of the world.

He has been a good son, a good brother, a good soldier.

Chopper blades, nearer now, their *tut-tut-tut* keeps rhythm with his racing
heart.

Yankee voices break through the cloud, bathing him in the sweet sound of home.
“Hang on, Buddy,” the voices croon, “you’re going to be okay.”

Then, quiet as a breath but unmistakable, “Jesus.”

A needle prick and the cloud swallows him whole.

Taps in the distance, a mother cries.

Goodnight, sweet son.

random order

by Patricia Nelson

a split second in time
an unanticipated moment
a creeping awareness of the finale
to this ultimate dance
life

mortality becomes reality

still more powerful even than this
the speculation of whether it matters at all

my inspirational flash
an uninvited revelation
reared its ugly head today
ending the weeks of uneasiness
knowing i could do nothing
to stop the impending arrival

my birthday

“life’s messy: clean it up”
ancient commercial idiom
holds within its formula
the simple, profound suggestion
that we actually could

a philosophical fancy
rooted in a hunger to escape the untidiness of life

colorless, bone chilling
november drizzle
dull and comfortless
how could fifty novembers have come and gone
as though i only blinked

without warning
here i am
my inner child shocked at the reflection gazing back

a winding path along the river
silent in the season's cool
not so quiet really
rustling, crooning, chatter,
thudding footsteps on autumn's blanket
encircled by near naked branches
twisted trunks
nature's debris
tossed and dropped about
a random, haphazard sight
the heady leafy aroma
carried on a crisp puff of air

intrinsic beauty within an apparent mess
far out shines clean, manicured lawns on either side

perhaps true beauty in life
comes not from cleaning up the disarray
but from appreciating the chaotic order
of an inborn design
within the moment we're given

faith, belief, love, life
disorganized
jumbled
excruciating
exquisite

maybe a cookie-cutter
fit the mold
clean it up
idea of faith...and God
come from our careless lust
to straighten up
random beauty

...as if somehow we could

The Enchanter

by Andrea Szymkowiak

Tired hummingbird,
wonder if you've heard,
of the cross town enchanter,
the one the boys are after.
They say she has grace,
she can't be erased.
Her skin's lily white,
her eyes pure sunlight.

Lowly hummingbird,
spread your wings to fly,
sympathy in your words,
sing it in your lullaby.
Tell me of the time,
I once thought he was mine.
Happily ever after,
man and the enchanter.

They say she settled down
before I was around,
stole a good man's heart,
never returned, torn apart.
He's an empty cage,
the star on her stage.
She ruled his yesterdays,
oh, the games she plays.

Lowly hummingbird,
spread your wings to fly,
sympathy in your words,
sing it in your lullaby.
Tell me of the time,
I once thought he was mine.
Happily ever after,
man and the enchanter.

Tired hummingbird,
wonder if you've heard,
the heartless man's misery,
now it all belongs to me.
They say it's hopeless
he'll never confess.
She still owns his heart,
never returned, torn apart.



Reclining Figure - *by Ani Copti*



Untitled #2 - by Ashley Cappelletty

Inside

by Ashley Cappelletty

Cut me open and what will you find?
Veins full of paint and vibrant color
That color my world with wonderfully beautiful and silly things...
Muscles that are deliciously obedient
Bones that are like ivory,
Bent and mended,
Open my mind and what will you find?
Nonsensical words, themes, words, images, and ideas that no one else could
connect:
Why is a raven like a writing desk?
For the same reason I am as mad as a hatter!
The things that others would not do...I would.
The things others dare not say....I say.
The things that others would not think of...I do.
I go against the grain, living in my own world,
Full of color, love, and brilliant things that inspire!
I have been one color inside for many years...gray.
Not quite black and not quite white.
Through others eyes...not quite right.
But I am tired of looking at the world through gray tones!
I want to live in a world full of color
Full of life
And full of awe!
I want to see and breathe the colors of the world
And with those colors I want to show the world
What it means to be the change you want to see.
See my world...see my colors?
Don't copy mine but create your own!
And follow the subtle longings of your heart!
Open up my heart and what will you find?
You and I reflecting each other
Together for all times.
Let's create a beautiful world even if it is one color at a time.

Rocks Speak

by Ashley Cappelletty

The rocks speak to me
And I long to feel their stories
as I touch the ancients
They tell me what they have seen.
Bestowing their ancient wisdom
They grow weary in holding their stories to themselves;
They ask me to share what they have seen.

Blood spilled because of a filthy need for power.
Tears shed because of a gross want for land.
Tell other souls there is no beauty in war
That the materials they accumulate will
return to Earth and become one of us...Dust.
That the hostility they feed in an argument
will cause great wars.
Speak softly because a risen voice hurts our ears.
Speak truthfully because Truth will set you free.
Walk softly upon the Earth, she feeds and nourishes you.
The emptiness you feel inside comes from
greed and fear that plagues your people.
Respect others and be mindful of how you treat them.
Respect runs dry as a desert among your people.
Without it, people will turn into animals
And will turn against you.
The rivers of love and kindness
Do not flow as deep and abundantly
As they once did among your civilizations.
People no longer come together in the bond of brotherhood
But band together in the bond of greed and hatred.
By the overflowing of this greed and hatred
have we been weathered, though not by waters once pure.
We are silent to those who do not wish to listen
And will not hear our words.
Who am I to share this wisdom, I ask?
How am I to express this when I see words may fall upon deaf ears?
It is not you who speaks beloved

The words you seek will come in time.
As you gain wisdom,
You will learn who wishes to listen,
Who will understand that you alone do not speak
But Great Mystery speaks through you,
Yet only when they are ready will they listen.
Do not force any to listen, it only builds walls.
Share with others when they come to you thirsty
And then you will quench that thirst for Spirit.
Go forth and tell these stories, Guardian of Spirit.
Great Mystery will guide you.



Leaving the Past Behind - by *Cindy Meadows-Clark*

If Trees Could Talk, We Wouldn't Write On Paper

by Anshea Christian

The wind teases the willow
Like your little brother
Weaving in and out
Escaping the retaliation of a branch.
The whisper of the willow
Invites you in for your embrace.
Her hold is light but
Filled with leaves.
Work & worry cease their torment
She allows you to unwind the scarf
wrapped tightly around your neck
Baring your vulnerability, her trunk supports you.
she only smiles as you talk
she only listens.
I watch the willow,
she gives all of herself
but
even with her smile
So bright and body so comforting
Her eyes aren't the same as the rest of her.
Her beauty hides bent over branches
Weighted by patience.
Her thin leaves yearn for more clothing
To keep the cold she feels away.
She's not stiff like the others;
She bends when the wind fights her,
No longer rebellious but now too tolerant.
She is tired of giving good words
She waits for everyone to leave
her canopy
their shelter, not hers
Then,
right before the world
Wakes again
the willow weeps.



Untitled 2 - *by Tom Palmer*

Golden

by Erica Lockard

You're golden – I get it.
“Nothing gold can stay.”
But maybe if I try real hard,
You'll be mine for one whole day.
But probably not, you're always gone.
There's hardly a reason for me to hold on.
I will, though, you know.
I just can't let go.
I'll try, and I'll fail.
It's like telling a hammer not to hit a nail.
It's magnetism - I'm drawn to you.
We're north and south.
Harmony and melody.
“Opposites attract.”
If you're gold, then I'm silver,
I'll be around so much longer.
But what's the point of my lasting
If you're gone and golden?
I wish you would stay.
Just for today.
But you're golden. I get it.
“Nothing gold can stay.”



Floral - by Laura Ott

paradox

by Patricia Nelson

i remember being so in love with life
with the music of sight
the art of breathing
the dance of a beating heart
and the poetry of belief

until i grew up and knew better
then put away the impractical thoughts of youth

...to discover the ironic pleasure from the scent of decay
that escapes the dying leaf in fall
and ambles through the soul in winter
awaiting spring

i've been clean, yet felt dirty
felt beautiful and looked stupid
i've been lonely, lost in a crowd
and imprisoned by myself

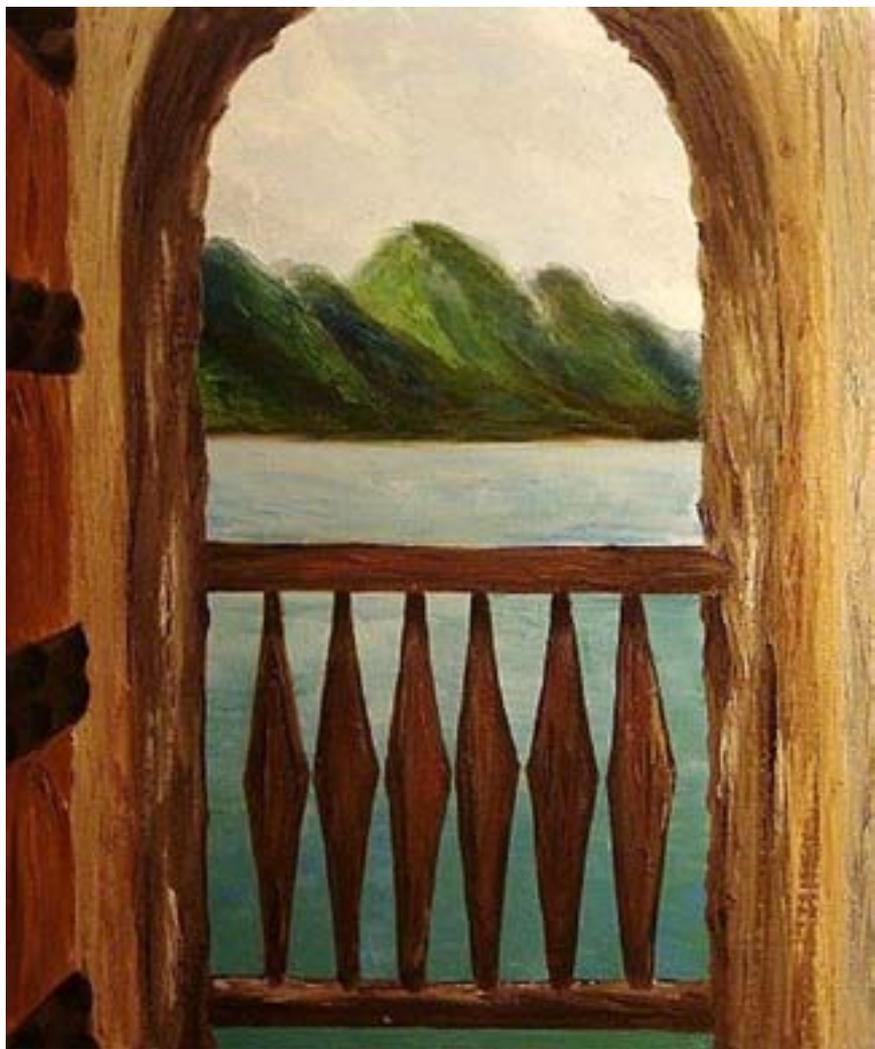
i've been petrified by the intense vastness of a barely known God
and thoroughly overwhelmed by His absence

the older and wiser i become
the more i realize how little i've learned

now i long to find the ancient path that returns
to the long put away childishness of faith

sometimes beauty still makes me cry
so does pain

the paradox is in letting go to finally gain



A Dungeon View - *by Alexis Lyman*

Leave-taking

by Amanda May

The leave-taking happens
without our knowing it.
One day, it's there.
We let it stay, forever for granted.
Only when it's gone do we remember it,
but when we try to reconcile, we only find absence in its place.

Absence makes the heart shrink and the eye water.

It doesn't wait, the fickle thing.
Like a cat, it chooses the right moment, and if you don't have time for it, well...

That's Your Problem.

It leaves if it's not welcome,
leaves you drowning in the desert
without a deluge, without a sun,
without a clue.

When it's gone, it's gone for good.

You can't call it back, no matter how hard you try.
It doesn't have an e-mail address,
doesn't have a cell phone or a Facebook page.
It doesn't Twitter. It likes things wireless,
not Simple. Because it is seldom simple.
So, when it picks up and leaves town, and you feel
that empty pang in your chest,
when you speak into the empty room only to hear yourself answer,
you'll wish you had pinned it down when you could.

It has no ties except to you.

Neglected, it flees.
With no remorse, it just picks up and goes.
Who knows if or when it will come back,
or if it was even there at all?
You may forget it by the end of the day or remember it for a lifetime,
And if you try to find it again, you'll find instead
a curt missive scrawled in your own hand.



Figure Study - by *Nicholas Furlong*

Klavier*

by Charity Anderson

The rain has come today. Gray and cold visitors hover and then find it necessary to rudely tap me on my shoulder as I try to walk in solitude. Maybe I should partake in an expedition. A sailing trip would be nice. A voyage. Something, anything to get away from here.

I bought a piano awhile ago. It sits and waits for me on my hardwood floor. I have not touched it. I only let it sit. It intimidates me. The beautiful music I once played as a child will not flow through these hands into that monstrous mistake. It is an ivory and useless arbitrator.

Perhaps I have gone too far on my walk. If I turn back now, I will be out of the rain sooner. If I continue, I will be out of the rain later. Either way, I am wet now. There is nothing but gray coldness for me out here, but the wooden elephant waits for me at home. Best to keep walking.

There are puddles along the sidewalk. The rude visitors have pooled together to form a collective force of moisture. There is a reflection of the sky on their surface. An infinity of murkiness stares into grayness until they are lost within themselves.

When will I turn back? My socks are now wet due to my shoes' inadequacies. They were built for walking, not for enduring the elements. I am alone in this weather. There is light but it is filtered through heaven's heavy curtains. Even angels cannot be found in this mess.

There is a backdoor to someone's home to my left. I decide to get out of the rain. I walk across the street and casually let myself into this unfamiliar house. I am welcomed by the kitchen. There is an aroma of cabbage or some sort of leafiness in the air. No voices.

I make my way through the first room and examine the objects on display. Some are for decoration, some are memorandums, some are for nostalgia's sake. There is a distinct connection that links the house's first few rooms. They belong together.

* German word for piano.

The living rooms are carpeted. And from the corner of my eye, I see that I am not alone. I approach her cautiously. She sits quietly. She sits prettily. I bend down. I know she does not see me but I wonder if she feels my heart racing. I press my fingers lightly against her leg.

She is dead to the world. Dare I probe her? Yes, I dare. I sit and quietly remove her covering, her only defense, and there they are: her most precious and delicate parts are exposed for me. Do I have the nerve to touch them? Yes, I do. My hand glides softly across her fair and pale surface.

Never have I touched something so beautiful. My other hand trembles slightly, so I place that one on her, too. The feeling of her, her tangibility, the unique pleasure she gives me, sends me to a state of ecstasy. Where was I before I saw her? Who was I before I saw her?

My fingers stir her. She makes a sound that rings sweetly in my ear. More, my Klavier, my love! My flesh against her creates splendor. More sweetness escapes her. She does not know me, but she is more than compliant to my desire. We move together. For a moment, we become one with each other.

I pass the afternoon with her and she passes it with me. My sweat and oily hands may have sullied her perfect features, but she is just as satisfied as I am. I leave the living room, tired from my efforts, as a reinvigorated person. I turn one last time and let her picture become permanent in my memory.

Outside the rain has stopped. I walk toward home with a renewed pace. A slight smile creeps across my face as I reflect upon my delightful experience. There is my front door, to my right. I enter and climb the stairs. I take off my dirty shoes. My socks are no longer wet.

I follow my hardwood floor to my living room. There it is: the untouched piano that has so patiently waited for my return. For a moment, I stand there with it across the room from me. I decide I no longer want it. My heart is changed and my mind is made. I have found better.

Ere I Saw Her Dancing There

by Robert Russo



Ere I saw her dancing there, my life was a grayish hue.
The brook had run its course, and the harsh realities of winter
had set in.

Ere I saw her dancing there, amidst the naked pines,
life seemed not worth living. Even the geese, so majestic yet so
sublime, flew away in languished poverty.

Ere I saw her dancing there, life seemed quite unfair.
The driving snows had just occurred, and the single set of deer
tracks spoke to me of despair.

Once I saw her standing there, winter turned to
spring. Her raucous laughter spoke to me of her youth, and in
an instant her utter warmth enveloped me. Our eyes met and
I was captivated. She possessed me, yet I was not possessed, of
this I must confess.

**“O’ Mary, Queen of the Most High, protect me
against every evil; free me from disease and strife. Deliver
me from a world whence, ere I saw her dancing there.”**



High School Winners

These poems were selected from entries created by students attending the Diocese of Toledo High schools. Works were written in online creative writing courses. This is the first year the Lourdes College Department of Language and Literature has conducted a poetry contest and featured the winners in The Tau.

Reflections on Sound

*by Stasia Philips
Mansfield, St. Peter's*

Silent things
are the laughter of
goblin jack-o-lanterns,
the breath of daisies
as they grow sweet and strong,
and the sound of my feet
in the long carpet.

Loud things
are children playing ball
in the street,
red shoes with a black dress,
and the darkness
after I turn off my bedside light.

Things that last forever are
God and
Words



Untitled 1 - *by Tom Palmer*

Pablo Picasso “Self-Portrait” (1899-1900)

by Maria Dorski

Sandusky Central Catholic Schools

The dark eyes gaze back at me
in a never-ending stare.
Darkness clouds them over
as I remember my past.
Bleak memories flicker through my mind,
but my face remains unchanging.
I darken the sullen cheeks with black smears.
So long I have stood, masking the feelings
with a stone-cold stare.
But the pain of the past
can no longer penetrate my life.
Determination returns to my gaze.
The hope of the seemingly impossible
is once again in my grasp.
The glint from my eyes I leave white.
It reverberates the success I long for,
and the recognition I deserve.
With this single piece of charcoal
I can write a story of a thousand words
and all who read it will fall silent
to its power and strength.

Haiku

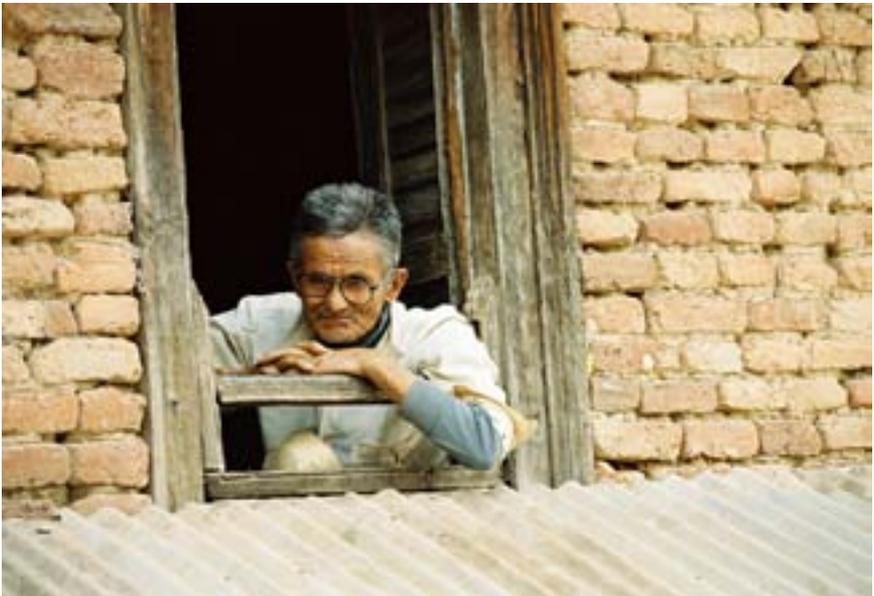
by Cortney Freshwater
Mansfield, St. Peter's

Shiori: Rain pelts the soft earth
and the cycle of seasons
unleashes new life.

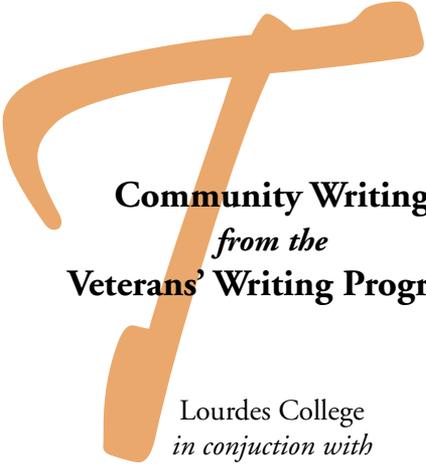
Hosomi: I walk out the door,
with a smile on tired face –
a typical day.

Sabi: The water rocks the boat
back and forth as I ponder
why I am alone.

Wabi: With the stars above,
I am captivated by
overwhelming peace.



People Watching ~ by Denise Keeran



Community Writing
from the
Veterans' Writing Program

Lourdes College
in conjunction with
Toledo-Lucas County Public Library

The Veterans' Writing Program evolved as a result of reading about the close bonds formed between soldiers who serve together. The Workshop has been a wonderful opportunity to forge ties among the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library, Lourdes College, and the community. Most of all, it has been by far the most amazing program I've worked on in my career. My colleague from Lourdes and I have had the privilege to get to know and read about the experiences of 35 veterans from every branch of the military who have served in every conflict from World War II through the Iraq War and during those rare, fleeting moments of "peace" in between these events. We've chosen a few of the essays from the workshop, and they are fine examples of the quality of writing (and the people) involved.

Amy Hartman
Librarian, Sylvania Branch
Toledo Lucas County Public Library

Sergeant Garcia

by Mel Honig

As a youth I was not a loner, having many friends. I enjoyed their company which was reciprocated. Having had many painful experiences after I left home to go to college, I started to isolate myself from others, preferring self-containment to companionship. This change did not happen overnight but was an evolution.

By the time I got to Vietnam I was not interested in making friends or being “buddy, buddy.” I just wanted to do my job and survive with my honor intact. Honestly, I can’t remember the first name of any of my fellow soldiers from that year at war. The last names I remember I can count on my fingers.

After a while all the missions in Vietnam became something of a blur. I will never forget my first mission, or my last, but all those in between are just shadows in the fog. Exact dates and locations became lost in my memory. Strangely, at the same time I have many, many vivid memories of events, locations, and people. It’s the details surrounding these events that don’t seem important now.

It was during one of those early operations when I actually took the time to talk with one of the platoon sergeants of the infantry unit I was attached to. The mission was the usual: looking for Charlie in the countryside. Each night we would establish a defensive perimeter. As forward observer, my job was to go out and register the artillery batteries supporting us. One of the rules of Vietnam was that we were never out of artillery range. What I liked about the registration process is that it was just my corporal, Corporal Thomas, and I out there beyond the perimeter. You didn’t have to look into any eyes, eyes which were either troubled or critical, but mostly troubled as we all carried a heavy burden in the field. As we went out to register, the two men manning each observation post (O.P.) would remind us that we were heading out into no man’s land, but I never worried: I left that up to Corporal Thomas.

When we were through registering, Corporal Thomas and I dug our little sleeping hole in the ground, got a bite to eat, and then checked in for the evening’s activities; i.e. find out when it was my turn at command watch.

We all shared this duty because someone in the command post had to be up to keep in radio contact with the O.P.s. Usually by now you are dog tired, or if it is the rainy season, dog tired, soaking wet, smelly, and dirty. But before retiring, we would have our evening's command meeting to discuss 'tactics' and tomorrow's plans.

That night, after the mandatory routine, Sergeant Garcia and I struck up a conversation.

"How's it going?" I asked.

"This is my last operation. I'm going home next wee.k"

"Where is home?"

"Alaska."

"Alaska!!! How did someone with the name Garcia wind up living in Alaska?"

"Well, I'm from Texas, but I moved to Alaska with my wife and kids just before I got drafted. It was for the work. There wasn't any in Texas. They're still in Alaska, and I miss them terribly. We didn't even save enough money to meet on R & R."

The rest of the conversation has been lost in time. All that was important was that Sergeant Garcia was going home to see his family next week.

Next morning we were up and moving again. Along about noon we heard a large explosion ahead of us.

"Booby trap," somebody yelled.

"Man down."

Everyone jumped into action. Each member of the company had a job to do and we all did them: putting out a perimeter, checking for more booby traps, attending to the injured man.

"Who is it?" was the question asked.

“Don’t know,” came the answer. “This guy is so badly torn up that we can’t recognize him.”

He got carried off wrapped in his poncho.

Sergeant Garcia went home, but in a box. I never had another personal conversation with anyone again during the remaining ten months I was in Vietnam.

*Mel Honig
2nd 33rd Artillery
Liasion Officer
2nd 28th Infantry
First Infantry Division
Lai Khe, Vietnam*



Spies - by Ani Copti

Veterans Day 2007

By Joe Walter

As a veteran I have always had trouble trying to figure out what I should do to observe Veterans Day. Every year I struggle with the question. It's like Memorial Day, but it isn't. I have gone to several Veterans Day events where long winded elected officials talk about sacrifice. And they call everyone a hero, which is a little over the top as far as I'm concerned.

I remember once I wished fellow vet Tom Kaufman "Happy Veterans Day." Immediately we both knew it didn't feel right because being a veteran can be bittersweet. Tom, by the way is a Purple Heart recipient or as he calls it "the dumb shit award." I call it the wrong place at the wrong time award and grateful I never "earned" one.

My most memorable and meaningful Veterans Day was in 2007. I saw a notice about the 25th anniversary celebration of the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The memorial is constructed of two black granite paneled walls set in a "V" shape. One leg of the V points to the Lincoln Memorial, the other toward the Washington Monument. I had been to the wall several times, but this would be different. A request for volunteers to read the names was made. This would be the third time since the original dedication in 1982 that all the names would be read out loud nonstop. Each volunteer would read thirty names. The names are listed in the chronological order of their death. Reading all 58,267 names would take two and ½ days.

I put in a request, and if possible, to read the name of my high school friend Jack Pearce. In my previous visits to the wall Jack's name had a + (plus) inscribed on the black granite next to his name indicating that he was Missing in Action (MIA), but it was changed to a diamond since he had recently been declared killed in action.

Jack didn't know what he was going to do after high school. He worked in a factory for several months deciding to enlist in the Air Force before he was drafted.

During his first tour of duty in Vietnam Jack was assigned to an AC130 Gunship. The AC130 was the workhorse plane of the Air Force. Most of them carried troops or cargo but some were outfitted with electric Gatling

type guns that could shoot thousands of rounds per minute. It was said that they could place at least one round in every square yard of a football field in 30 seconds. From a distance in the night they were a beautiful thing to watch. Red waving ribbons of tracer rounds rained from the plane to the ground like fire from a dragon. A loud dull roar burr...rrrap erupted from the plane whenever the guns were fired. One night I was on an artillery fire support base in the mountains. Our base was attacked and an AC130 Gunship was called for support. It circled our perimeter once, mapping out our location with radar. Then it rained living hell up and down the side of the hill. It was terrifying; one wondered how anything could survive that destructive force.

On his second tour Jack flew as a gunner in another AC130, but this plane was fitted with an extensive array of electronic monitoring equipment. Their mission was to fly along the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos to locate the enemy. Officially we did not operate in the neutral country, which was one of the worst kept secrets of the war. The plane was shot down by a Russian surface to air missile (SAM) on March 29, 1972 on a night mission. No survivors were located and Jack was officially listed as MIA. It was not until many years after the war that the US Military acknowledged the location of the crash.

His family never gave up hope and was actively involved in the MIA/POW effort for years. This was in large part because his father was a WWII veteran. Ed Pearce was a gunner on a bomber that was shot down over Germany, captured, and a POW in the infamous Stalag 17. Before I went to Washington that weekend I checked out the other 29 names I would be reading. The one thing all thirty had in common was that they all died in the same time period. Several of them, 12 to be exact, were on that same plane with Jack that night. I practiced reading them out loud, not wanting to mispronounce the names.

Descriptions of their death were recorded in unique military jargon. "Hostile, ground casualty, multiple fragmentation wounds," or "Hostile, died while missing, fixed wing – crew air loss, crash on land."

I was scheduled to read at 10 p.m. on November 10th. I checked in that morning and watched and listened as the roll call of the dead proceeded. Mothers, fathers, children, fellow soldiers solemnly speaking the names. A metal stage was set up in front of the vertex of the wall. The podium on the

stage faced away from the wall toward the natural grass amphitheater where family, friends, and the public listened in silent respect.

The official instructions asked that no speeches or personal comments be made. But there was an occasional “my brother”, or “my son”. No one objected. Some of the children of the deceased were too young to have known their fathers. And then there were the parents who suffered the unthinkable, losing a child, publically acknowledging their loss.

I went back later that night to read. The darkness had changed the mood. It seemed more somber to me. Spotlights lit the stage and you could not see anyone in the audience. It felt like I was reading the names to the dead. I recalled the lines from the World War I poem Flanders Fields.

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.*

As I stood in line my leg was shaking and it wasn't because it was a cool night. I said to myself once you get on stage and start reading everything will be all right. There were about four people in front of me when a man came up and asked me if I was reading page 1916. He wanted to know because the sister of one of the fallen would be listening in as he held up his cell phone. She was in California and couldn't make the trip.

I asked him which name? “Richard Halpin.” I recognized him as one of the crew on Jack's plane. He asked me to talk to Halpin's sister after I was finished. My turn came and I walked up the stairs and took seven steps to the podium. I took a deep breath and began... James Glenn Taylor, Miguel Angel Cruz Alicea....., and then the start of names from the crash: Henry Paul Brauner, James Kenneth Caniford,Richard Conroy Halpin.....Edwin Jack Pearce.

When I was finished I talked to Halpin's sister. I tried to maintain my composure as my eyes welled up with tears. Two complete strangers brought together by a tragic event in the distant past. She was only eleven when he died. I told her about Jack and the few details I knew about the crash. It was 35 years ago, but the pain was still very raw and real.

The next day I returned for the official re-dedication. It was a bright, clear autumn day. The amphitheater was filled with graying veterans. Comforted by the presence of the living I listened to General Colin Powell, one of our own, deliver the keynote address.

*Joe Walter
101st Airborne
2/237 Infantry
Vietnam*



The Courtyard ~ by *Erin Palmer Szavuly*

Raid

Bruce C. Dunzweiler

Shortly after arriving in Vietnam, I was assigned to the 334th Armed Helicopter Company armament section and ordered to assist Sergeant Gary Hobson in Quan Loi. Hobson was a legend in the unit, an E-5 buck sergeant from Sweetwater, Texas. Quan Loi was a busy base located in the middle of a large rubber plantation. The hootches were built between the lines of long slender white trunks of rubber trees in an abandoned part of the plantation. Someone showed me where Hobson was staying. I put my stuff down and saw a guy scurrying up one of the paths, coming to meet me. He was a little shorter than I, with thick, black, framed glasses, kind of chunky, sandy hair, and sweaty and out of breath. Hobson didn't look much different from many of the grunts in the other companies, with red dust and mud on his uniform and boots. He hadn't had a haircut in a while, his appearance was in complete disarray, and he could not have been happier.

We had a hootch to ourselves, made of wood with screens and sand bags stacked 4 feet high at the base. Right away I started cleaning. Hobson just threw his stuff around. A stray pop or beer can did not seem to bother him, nor did the cockroaches that crawled on his gear and bed. Hobson had a respect for the cockroaches. As long as they did not crawl on him and stayed out of some of his more prized belongings, he let them have their own space.

When I started to sweep the floor, the cockroaches got a little agitated. I wasn't sure if our floor was concrete or earthen, the dust was so thick. Hobson was not too much help, as he raised concern regarding a greater degree of activity from his little friends, which in reality weren't all that small. The cockroaches were black, some brown, with a few about 2.5" to 3" long. These were not insects; these were well-adapted tiny armor-plated tanks, faster and more mobile than anything I remember back home. Unless they received a direct hit, squashing their guts out, they had numerous lives. They could shake off an otherwise mortal injury and seemed able to regenerate and be ready to stealthily cause havoc another day.

Hobson came unglued when I showed him my recent purchase from the PX. I'd bought enough Raid to kill a human. Hobson had a couple of cans he had used only in absolute self-defense. I had the idea of attack instead. Hobson was concerned that I would really piss the roaches off with the

spray and said they had been known to fly and attack when they were really angry. I could not comprehend how anyone who had been in Vietnam as long as he could be so scared of cockroaches, especially when we possessed Raid, the ultimate weapon.

Over Hobson's protests and pleadings, I was soon ready to start the attack. Gone were the cans, bags, and piles of clothes. I had thrown away all the hiding places that Hobson had indiscriminately left for them. A concrete floor had been found under the dust, dirt and debris. Once those roaches hit the open plains of our recovered concrete floor, they would be goners, either by stomping or by a well-directed shot of Raid. At the last moment Hobson showed compassion as if he felt sorry for me. Hobson lamented that, "No new guy should be maimed or killed so early in his tour." Hobson stood with me back to back in the middle of the floor. It was like Custer's last stand, only this time Custer had more protection (Raid and boots). Hobson took command and told me where to spray first. He knew where their tunnels were, where their doors of escape were.

I picked my targets and so did he. Hobson shouted the command to attack, and we darted to the corners and started spraying. A choking cloud quickly enveloped the interior of the hootch, two cans spraying in an orchestrated attack at diagonal corners. Hobson shouted to cease fire, and we both stepped back to the center as the cloud began to clear. There were some dead bodies from direct bursts of spray and a few from stomping. This was combat at its finest hour. We felt we had taken some of their best, but Hobson was not relieved. After a lull Hobson yelled, "Dunzwhaller, you got-darned fool Yankee, we got them pissed, we will have hell to pay!" All of a sudden we could hear a whirring sound. It was like a fixed wing on the runway outside readying for take-off.

Counterattack came swiftly. Cockroaches flew at us from all directions. They were like kamikazes, their armored bodies coming in for direct hits on their now dancing aggressors. We had to bob and weave. We were both hopping to keep those critters away, fearing they would make it to our packages. Hobson somehow found a fly swatter in the mayhem and did hand-to-hand combat after direct bursts from Raid did not seem to bother these impenetrable flying fortresses. The attacks and counter attacks seemed to last forever. We had been trying to help each other at the same time, with screams of victory as we took a number of their airborne or foot soldiers out of action. We were out of breath from stomping, mashing, whacking, and inhaling the contents of at least two-and-a-half cans of Raid.

The hootch that had been dusted, swept, and moderately picked up was now a battlefield. The stench of death, mainly Raid, could be smelled for days. Dead black and brown armored bodies lay everywhere; some of the wounded, waiting to die, lay on their backs, still wiggling their legs and antennae. Many others had retreated to mend their wounds, mourn their dead, breed, and prepare for another day.

Hobson and I declared victory for the moment, but he made me promise that I would never ever again get another foolish “got-darned idea like that again.” Hobson wanted to go home alive, and he did not want to chance another battle of that magnitude. We ended the day shaking hands, able to retell the story of our valiant and brave efforts many times. Hobson and I laughed and choked our way through the battle, and I felt as though I had made a friend, until he pulled rank and ordered me to clean up the carnage from all this “gotdarned foolishness.”

Bruce C. Dunzweiler
334 Attack Helicopter Co
3/17th Air Cavalry



Kaboom! ~ by *Nicholas Furlong*



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