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ANGLE'S HOME GROWN AWARDS

READERS' CHOICE

FIRST PLACE NEVER GOOD ENOUGH.....Erin Dorney
SECOND PLACE MIDNIGHT DRIVE.....Megan Webb
THIRD PLACE HER NEXT VICTIM.....Robin Buda
EDITORS' PICK UNTITLED....Jonathan Howard

FACULTY AWARD FR. JOSEPH DORSEY:
CHARACTER PROFILE IN MEMORIAM.....Dee Dee Hogan

ART PICKS

ART AWARD Chase Hannon

KERRY MEAGHER
I'd seen him eyeing me. The boy with the pimples halfway to manhood. He had picked me up a few times, hefting my weight from hand to hand. Aiming me at imaginary robbers intent on breaking into the house.

I thought of the first time he saw me. After a thorough cleaning, his father had laid me on the counter, where I teetered and spun. Three beeps, short-short-long, and he was gone, rushing off to save someone's life, momentarily forgetting the lives of his own. A young girl stumbled into the kitchen, tears raining from her eyes. Her brother followed soon after, slipping in the salty puddle. He reached above her head to the counter beyond, picking me up in awe. His eyes widened like two bright flashes of light as he turned to face her. Stunned, she twisted away and ran from the room. He placed me back onto the counter as if laying me in a bed of feathers, but I could see the newfound longing in his eyes. I thought of his parents. Every game he pitched in Little League could have been better. Every grade he brought home should have been higher. I could hear them at night, from the comfort of a shoebox set on the top shelf of their closet.

Once, he took me into the front hall, to the etched mirror, and held me up to his reflection. He started talking. Why can't they ever accept that my best is all that I can offer? he said. Why do they always insist upon more than what I can give? I can't take it anymore, I can't do this.

A deafening blast rang through the house as I exploded into his forehead and fell to the ground still clutched in his sweaty palm.
The absence of sounds is what
I hear
No honking horns or
Outdoor activities

I feel my nose drip as the
Warm summer air turns to fall
The joggers running in shorts are
Now in fleece jackets and headbands

The snow route signs are more evident
Along with apartment number 54 and 56
For sale and for rent

The streetlights turn on at 7 p.m.
As the deli shop owner pulls the
Outdoor chairs in and
The ice cream parlors close
For the season

The dogs still bark and the
Homeless man still pushes his
Shopping cart
But the heat now blasts into my car
Instead of the air conditioning

The intersections usually packed with
Annoying cars are now empty and
The stoplight I sit at for 10 minutes now
Turns green before I even stare at it

The gravel still crunches beneath the
Passing tires
But the screeching ones have come to a halt

The overhanging trees that blossom in
Our front yard now dance to the chill
Of the wind
It would be much too dangerous to think about Crazy Helen. Even more so to look at her, but you can’t help it. Your eyes just sort of drift in her direction every time she walks up those steps, every time she breathes. She gets on the stop after me, and for her half hour ride I can’t help but stare.

You can hear her coming before you actually see her. Her heels make this clinking noise as she slowly makes her way up the three rubber coated stairs. The bracelets on her wrists jingle-jangle as she moves them from side to side as she walks. Her acrylic hooker red nails scrape against the railing as she hoists herself onto the bus. Then, she appears.

Her white socks puff out from her black high heels. She wears knee-highs underneath them, one of which has rolled down to her ankle. She wears a long, flowing brown skirt that falls half-way between her ankle and knee. Her white blouse is unevenly buttoned and un-tucked on one side. She wears a red cardigan that has begun to fray at the edges. Her bright pink lipstick is smeared across her lips and onto her cheek. Her painted on face is accentuated with bright blue eye shadow and fake eyelashes. Her hair is all over the place, but hidden under a plastic rain hat. Rain or shine, she always wears that hat. It is tied neatly under her chin.

She takes her usual seat behind Bobby, the bus driver, and she begins her usual routine. She goes around and stares at each person on the bus until they acknowledge her and return her smile. I wait, anticipating her stare. I can feel her eyes look me up and down and then rest on my face.

I try to fight it but my eyes aren’t under my control. My eyes float up and meet hers. Against my will, a smile creeps across my face. Satisfied, she moves on.
JONATHAN HOWARD

UNTITLED

Because you saw the world as it is and now you must write about how it may be.
DEE DEE HOGAN

FR. JOSEPH DORSEY: CHARACTER PROFILE IN MEMORIAM

In this tale of veneration
Meet a man of inspiration
Whose dedication
And appreciation
Of humanity
Made him unique
Able to speak
In language
We all understood.

He was a hero
A man for all seasons
His memory spoken
His chain unbroken
A father, a brother
A mentor, a priest
Who, when one least
Expected it,
Was there
With infinite care
And patience for all
Making us feel
Like part of a
Magnificent Whole.

Such a teacher,
Such a force
On a heavenly course
But oh, such a modest fellow.
We will always remember him.
His goodness, his discipline
His knowledge
The heart of our college
The cornerstone
Of our dreams.
EMILY RYAN

SOMWHERE BEYOND

Somewhere beyond Jerry Springer,
Sex in the City and the Bachelor

A woman is punished to death by stoning
For bearing a child out of marriage

Somewhere beyond baby showers,
Maternity leave and the cute little clothes

Religious men will pull the child
Just weaned from her arms

Somewhere beyond the business woman,
Education, the ability to read

A mother still rich with milk
Will be placed into the ground

Somewhere beyond the rules of government,
The protection of police, the right to live without fear

Religious men will surround the mother
Armed with rocks named in god

Somewhere beyond the right to fight,
The strength to speak, the power to scream

A newly made mother will die knowing
The hands emptied at her demise will lift her crying child.
MATTHEW MUSZAK

UNTITLED

From the outside looking in,
Through your eyes, through your skin,
Yet from the inside looking out,
I am none of you, hence your doubt.
Pebbles throw I've walked a toss,
Falling below from above,
What is now only but a loss,
Seen all but a must,
Your eyes, your skin and love,
All of this, but young lust.
Tantrums there, angry everywhere,
Give me a line to recite,
A note to pluck, a note to play,
With you I just might,
Close my eyes and lay tonight.
Blind I am, truth you were,
Curtains pulled, vision a blur,
Darkness fallen with a stir,
Who are you, not I, but her.
The color had drained out of the ends of her fingers, painlessly and into some invisible, uncharted air of a prickling, noticeably draftier September morning—the sort of morning senses thrive in. As she stepped out of the passenger side of a squatty Volvo onto a crumbling sidewalk, a gust of scarf-weather wind stabbed at the patch of exposed skin just above her shirt collar. There was a rapid movement of her hand racing with her zipper up her torso and a slight wince embedded in the curve of her mouth. Then nothing stirred, save a fluctuation of air in her stomach.

In vain, she wrung her white fists like a dish rag, unfolded them and, for warmth, laid them across her neck underneath her still-damp, shoulder-length hair. Everything about her shimmered with the fervor of a few dozen Adamant knitters just before the Christmas season. She was as miserable as she was cold.

Somewhere to her right, a few feet and about a million molecules of animation behind her, sauntered the nonspecific, blue-eyed twenty-something object of affection. He called himself ‘the boyfriend’ and encouraged the title ‘Lovey,’ among other such atrocities. He opened doors for her, refused to let her pay, and took ‘care’ of her in every traditional nice-guy sense of the word; he even insisted on smearing Rain-X on her windshield twice a month. Occasionally, he ventured into the sensitive territory of what fork to use with certain foods, especially in the presence of his overstuffed grandmother, with the flawless tornado of white hair, pinned up so tightly it pulled her character, or lack thereof, out her nostrils.

But today, Boyfriend was quiet, breaking his silent streak only once to comment on the prestige and grandiose serving proportions of the unquestionably perfect, unreasonably small Sneakers Bistro & Cafe.

“I’ve wanted to take you here to eat for weeks, Lovey,” he said with an intensely annoying bulge of both his eyeballs. “It’s a good thing there’s no line yet; Sunday mornings are usually quite hellish.”

Roughly three yards from the car, the mismatched pair passed and acknowledged a blaze orange sign hung from inside the window of a paint-peeled front door, proclaiming in all its grandeur that the eatery was indeed “OPEN.” A rectangular card table with a harvest theme was set up outside the building, offering several containers of hot drinks to the anticipated line that never formed.

Upon entrance, she glanced down at her watch, noticing the leftover water bubbles careening above the seven, the three, and the zero scrawled on the electric green of her timepiece. Afterwards, she groaned something untranslatable to the please-wait-to-be-seated sign in front of her.

“I really do have to hit the road soon, Jonathan,” she offered with a politely detached glance to the mud streaked wooden floor. “I have hours of work waiting for me in Rochester and I’ve got to write that paper I told you about. Really, I can’t stay long.”

His attention, however, was elsewhere.

“Lovey, the food here is amazing, I swear! It’s right up your little Liberal alley; they even serve tofu home fries!”

His arm, adorned with an obnoxious button up work shirt (like he worked, ever) cuffed over a wool sweater, gestured to the freshly set table by the corner window.

“We’ll sit over there,” he told, not asked, the hostess, as the young woman beside him boiled over with disappointment. Silently irate, ‘Lovey’ watched a pair of adorable rotating stools at the counter pass her by while the two of them took a short, chaotic dance across a tight space of strewn, people-filled wooden chairs and food-filled table tops.

She was stuffed into a corner directly between her own dignity and her capacity for twisted, self-defeating situational irony. Somehow, amidst all that, she convinced herself it wouldn’t be so bad as long as the sun kept falling through the frosted windows, neighboring tables continued clinking dishes together, and the concentration involved in her inactivity kept her actively distracted from his big, trumpy, lackluster face.

“We’ll both have coffee and water,” he sang to the waitress before she even had a chance to whisper a ‘good morning, folks.’ She soon disappeared and returned with his demand.

As her lips parted again to ask what the two desired for breakfast, Jonathan broke out an order splitting the waitress’ sentence in half, forcing the better part of it into extinction.
"I hear you have fat-sliced bacon, is that right? (No pause for a reply) I'll have that, two eggs over easy, sourdough toast, and could you get me another set of silverware? This spoon looks like it has leprosy."

The waitress, who had just been exposed to such an earful of arrogance—she'd nearly gone deaf, nodded obediently and turned to the corner piece on display for her order.

As three rather stringy words left Lovey's mouth, she glanced down at the art-deco menu.

"I would like... um... that cinnamon granola and strawberry yogurt, with the fruit on top, please. And thank you, for..." an implied but unspoken fragment of "putting up with his self-important bullshit" sailed out of her eyes, but "everything," was all she said.

"So Lovey, let's get that map out and plot how you're going to get home," Jonathan interrupted a perfectly good silence yet again.

A few paper rustlings and pen clickings later, it was a "You know dear, I've been thinking," statement that required him to clear his throat. "Burlington to Rochester is too much driving for you in one weekend. It's too much driving in general. You should just transfer up here. I've already looked into your major, and you'd love it up here in the winter—all those snowflakes. Heck, pumpkin, we could even go to breakfast here every Sunday!"

She thought it was funny how the conversation began with plans to escape him and climaxed with plans to be adhered to his love handles and impressive beer gut for the remainder of her college career.

"You know I can't do that, Jonathan," she waved away his intrusion.

As he went into another rant of why it was more practical for her to uproot herself and be committed to this relationship fully, she drifted into the mindless routine of watching clouds puff up in her coffee, and mentally plucked herself out of his vicinity and onto a cliff she'd stood at a month earlier, overlooking the Colorado River as it cut deeper and deeper into the Grand Canyon. She was as far West as she could get by car from him, and she still felt trapped.

Her red pen inked a frail line from VT 30 to Route 87 South, then to 90 West.

"I'll be fine, Jonathan, stop worrying about me. I know how to get home," she retorted across a desert of paper napkins, ketchup bottles, and maple syrup-scented air.

For once, he had nothing to say.

Still staring blankly at the road atlas, she was startled by a brief downpour of porcelain upon the table surface. She noticed first, the circles shifting in her coffee cup, then the strong, but soft hands presenting the food. They did not belong to the waitress. Her eyes traveled further up the arm of the man holding her breakfast (and interest) in his fingers, stopping at his strikingly familiar face and puddle-colored eyes.

Mind you, Jonathan continued to blabber about black-hole circumstances and impracticalities. All the while, and quite brilliantly, she managed to cater to his conversation while having a rather racy out-of-body experience with this figure hovering over their table.

"This granola's gonna make your karma bubble, you just wait," the server teased with a pretentious grin.

Jonathan cut his blank stare in Lovey's direction, rotated his pompous melon ninety degrees to the right, and silenced whatever dubious comment he was about to emit.

The server, feeling as if he interrupted something terribly important, excused himself, set down the side of fat-sliced bacon, and returned to the kitchen.

Lovey, dumbfounded and completely drowning in an uncultivated lust, thought to herself that this last sentence was still floating in the hot air pockets somewhere under the diner's ceiling. She's also considered leaving her chair, and Jonathan, to discover the creature behind the counter capable of such description of granola's impact on the human psyche.

The two bodies at the table in the corner of Sneakers Bistro & Café located at 36 Maine St. in Winooski, VT, finished their meals in flat silence. The waitress returned with the bill, he paid it, as usual, with his Visa, refusing to let Lovey even pitch in for the tip. She never got out of her chair, except to leave, Jonathan managed to clear his throat and complain about the service all in one, hot, short, foul-smelling breath on his way out the door.

She glanced at her watch and repeated the unwritten script of "I really have to get going now," exchanging no emotional embrace before pulling away (in her own car now) from the curb at exactly 8:03 a.m.

Only a small piece of paper, with certain numbers and letters, ripped off a map, remained on the corner table at the diner. It was addressed to 'Karma Bubbler." She drove home feeling terribly brave, rather dishonest, and blissfully giddy.
The whir of the fan and the
tin hopelessness in Rufus’ voice are
all that keep me company
Certain words, certain places make
me twitch, make me cringe with a feeling
I’ve never before known
It’s a feeling I will never understand or accept

I used to think I knew the
sensation, but all the holes ripped into my soul
before that day now feel like trivial pores
I can’t play Monopoly anymore
I can’t golf at Cardinal Hills
I can’t look your mother in the eye
I can’t walk to your grave

All the memories swirl above me
Step by step. I’m dampened by this cloud
You were a ray of light so blinding, so perfect
And now I get patches of sunset or sunrise
Now I see that bright light only you possessed
in pictures tacked to a board
your life in a display case
your life in a satin-lined box

The rain falls
through my window screen
bleeding magazines blister and pucker
from the angels’ tears
And I, like you, have lost my footing

I’m falling now
Fifty feet, one hundred, one fifty
Here I am, lying broken and empty
The tin voice changed to
Adam Duritz of the Counting Crows
the fan still buzzing angrily
I’m still here
Following a Tragedy A New Person Is Born

Following a tragedy a new person is born,
Your character changed by ways of new flight,
While the image of what was lost remains torn.

Losing a part of yourself, beginning to mourn,
Through all troubles dark, you develop your light,
Following a tragedy a new person is born.

Nostalgic dreams of the future you will adorn.
Treasures past, blind your parallel being out of sight,
While the image of what was lost remains torn.

Broken and shattered, both will feel the scorn,
Once and always, you’ll be tortured by old delight,
Following a tragedy a new person is born.

Engulfed by Misery, her welcome has worn.
Fight her resistance with all of your might,
While the image of what was lost remains torn.

Harvester of sorrow, to great lengths you will mourn,
Your slipping character, with their craving grip so tight.
Following a tragedy a new person is born,
While the image of what was lost remains torn.
DRAWING "AYO"  LISA STEVENS BROTZ
ART GALLERY

PHOTOGRAPH  CHIRON BROWN

PHOTOGRAPH  KERRY MEAGHER

PHOTOGRAPH  SARAH GUARNERE
ART GALLERY

PHOTOGRAPH

CHIRON BROWN

WENDY JOHNSON

PAINTING

JUSTIN MILLER
ART GALLERY

PHOTOGRAPH

STEPHANIE METZ
The condom shape sticks out against the sleek, shiny black color of the car. No signs of rust, no hints of dents, just smooth curves. If the bumper sticker hadn't been readable, this car would have been going at least 20 miles over the speed limit. It was racing while just sitting still.

This car pleasures tunnels whenever it drives through. No wonder it is telling people to be safe. The tinted windows hint that this car is used for more than just driving around. Some college student's "shaggin' wagon"? Quite possibly so. Does the driver practice what he preaches?

The window is open; you reach inside and now the door is unlocked. It won't hurt if you just take a quick peek inside. The door is opened and a strong burst of Aspen cologne almost knocks you back onto the pavement. You take the seat behind the wheel and a small wisp of vanilla touches your nose hairs. Another smell is drifting up from the back seat. It's unclear, until you look back and notice opened condom wrappers sprinkled around. The third smell was that pungent aroma known as sex. So, that's what that smells like.

With the soft seats and the smooth leather, you find it hard to blame him for using the car as his bed. The bottle of Aspen cologne is slowly draining from a small crack onto the front seat. Hmm... why is there a purse next to it? Maybe it's his girl-friend's.

Uh-oh. She's coming back now with his keys to get her purse. She looks like she's in a hurry. Her short blonde hair is being swept back by the wind while the same gust puffs out her peasant top. You're out of the car and standing beside it now. She's almost standing next to you.

"Hey, do you like my car?" she asks you with a wide grin.

"Yeah, your car is awesome," you reply, confused by your encounter.
A kiss is just a kiss
but it’s never “just” to me
a love is just a love
for all the world to tease.
There’s heaven in your eyes
and hell is in your soul
you’re begging me to stay
as you plead for me to go.
I’m falling for your smile
and drowning in your pain
screaming for your answer
though it’s never mine to gain.
Waiting for that lover
though I’m hoping it’d be you
I’m addicted to your everything
and the everything you do.
A love is just a love
but it’s never left to be
your kiss is just a kiss
one that’s killing me.
February and
the snow's worn out everywhere
stained by dogs, exhaust

the glint of menacing fangs
these lengthening icicles

harden, heart braces
for an arrow's stab. wear it
on your sleeve just once

still, the empty crystal vase
waits for a single flower
touched tonight only
by the moon's unflattering
light, an old scarecrow

bows to the west wind. Tracking
his master's scent, a black dog

a wind-blown red leaf
pressed against the pane—his kiss
on her perfumed wrist

leaving a wet circle on
the white tablecloth, a glass

intact amid the
rubble of one more façade—
a small miracle

just one step, she said, a slow
stroll from this world into that

other one, see the
strange I's. Take two steps: beware
sun's glare on new skin

under a cool white nightie,
like a sliver of moon, thinned

to soft gauze over
her elbows, remembering
a catalogue of
lines—and contours defining
the body's shape: lobes, lips, nipples...

an old trick, counting
toes and fingers, waiting for
the eleventh hour

in the stalled duplicity
of cells splitting and binding

I was dreaming—what
was I dreaming, tell me, when
the blue curtains yawned?

A black horse, her fast canter
trampling the raw grass, tender
crocuses blooming—
by slow degrees they turn to
drink in clear sunlight

pools of heat, closer now: oh
spring, can we start to believe?

MICHELLE BOPP

NAKED

Desperately I clamber for what remains,
I find myself too late.

Lost in violence and tears,
no final call for help.

"Try to live without me!"
Words throb; fists curl.

My face lit by the moon,
vulnerable and exposed.

Unforgiving darkness bites, slaps,
only fear exasperates.

Silent pleading goes unnoticed.
Anguish gropes.
Bleeding, beating, pumping, pounding
The sound of the heart is so astounding.
It maintains life,
Yet in times of strife,
It aches and yearns for the suicide knife.

The heart is the vessel,
That contains all our love.
A love so special,
It must come from above.
The heart-love connection,
Sweet veins of confection.
The core of our being,
Is love’s great affection.

We search for that person,
The most perfect mate.
The one who understands us,
With whom we can relate.

Not knowing love is a deep hole in the heart,
To know love will fill that dark chasm inside.
To lose love will hurt; it will break you apart,
In the heart is where human duality resides.
The joy of the heart.
The pain of the heart.
When you had me, you didn’t want me, so you just let me go
Now, here you are standing, waiting patiently at my door
What made you think I would come back running?
After all you did and said, you want to act like it’s nothing
But your past has brought us to this future, with nowhere else to go
So while you fuss and you fight, I’m walking you back to the door
Don’t come here acting like you loved back then
Because I know better and your love was for them
It was them you spent the night with instead of me in our bed
It was them who got all of your attention and affection instead
So no I don’t want you back, actually I rather you just leave
Because while you were ripping and running, I was making myself busy
Busy making changes for the better in my life
Busy taking care of me, so I don’t end up with your type
This is goodbye and it is permanent with no erasing
This is goodbye and I am not hesitating
I loved you once and I will never do that again
This is goodbye love, this is how we end.
LORI DABBAGH

THE UNSAID EULOGY
FOR DEBRA KANG DEAN

Your aunts were beaten
for dating haoles
so they married natives.
You married Brad
and your father nearly disowned you
yet ten years later
the Korean and Okinawan parents
and the non-Hawaiian parents
met over roast pig and lomilomi salmon
and a beer called Primo.

You signed your own enlistment papers
because of your Air Force-bound friend Annette
and disgraced the family name
yet you were the one they called upon
to deliver your grandmother’s eulogy
in your newscaster English
because you’d lost the pidgin of your childhood.

My grandmother
doesn’t even know where I live.
She might be dead
for all I know,
and if she isn’t
she is blessed not to remember
the one who stooped so low
as to make her a great-grandmother
with an Arab who bows to Mecca.

Olive skin and all—
my mother has cousins darker than him.
Ph.D. and all—
he still dwells in the family’s mind-slums
as the keffiyeh-wearing, camel-riding
sand nigger
even though Damascus,
the seat of commerce and culture,
the world’s oldest capital,
is a thousand miles from the Arabian desert.
Thanksgiving 2001
fell during Ramadan
and the temple pillars fell
when turkey waited until sunset at 5 p.m.

Dad came in worn out jeans,
baggy sweatshirt and holey slippers,
dressed worse than any homeless person we’d seen
haunting the Paris train stations.
He came for the grandkids
yet the seven-year-old cried
when he heard all the yelling,
and the three-year-old,
wide-eyed on the couch,
whispered, “Grandpa said a bad word!”

Over his dead body and Mom’s
will I ever say my grandmother’s eulogy,
unless she outlives them both.

Maybe by then I’ll be fifty,
with a proud head of silver for birds to nest in,
like Maxine Hong Kingston,
and I’ll have harnessed my chi.
Because right now,
with the few gray hairs like yours
on the eve of your thirty-fifth birthday,
I seethe and boil over
and scald everything I touch.
Christopher Ouimet

Homework Help

School had been over for more than an hour, but Annabelle Stevens did not want to go home. The fact was she had a crush on her AP English teacher, and she wanted to give him a lesson of his own. His butt looked so cute in those new Dockers khakis he wore that day, and she was wondering if it was just as cute out of the khakis. She knew he wanted her too; he was always staring at her chest during class.

Annabelle went downstairs to the English office, and pushed open the door without knocking. She was just in time; it looked like he was packing up to leave.

"Hey John, where ya going?" she asked.

"Annabelle, I told you. Please call me Mr. Gates. What are you doing here?" he said.

"What do you think I'm doing, hehe?" she said. She locked the door behind her, and threw her books on the floor. "I need help with my homework."

"What do you mean—oh..." he said.

Annabelle climbed up on his desk on all fours, then tore off her jacket, mistakenly ripping a button. My grades haven't been so good, John, and I need some after school help."

"It's Mr. Gates!" he said. "And you can't use that pouty face forever to get your way!"

"Oh yes I can. I'm going to have my way right now." She always gets her way. Between her chest, her blonde hair, and that pouty face, how can she not get her way?"

"My wife wouldn't approve, you know..."

"—Shut up, I know you're not married, John. Don't worry, honey. I'm almost 18, and some of my friends say I look 21."

"Please...call me...Mr...Gates," he said. She could tell he was staring at her black lace bra underneath her sexy low-cut shirt. She picked it out just for him. It was so obvious that he wanted her. The look on her face was just the same as all the others. Who needs college when you can use sex to get what you want?

"No," he said. "You need to leave right now. Before something bad happens."

"What's that supposed to mean, Johnnie?" she said as she unbuttoned the last button on her see-through white shirt. Now she was kneeling, topless, on his desk. "I'm not a bad girl, am I?"

"That's not a way to achieve grades in my class, young lady! You have to earn them, like everyone else! I am a good teacher, and I will not fall for your games!"

Oh yes he will, she thought. She saw the bulge in his pants.

"You need to leave," he said as he handed her her clothes and collected her books from the floor.

"But Mr. Gates!" she said, pouty face and all.

"Leave!" he said.

She stormed out, slamming the door, and sat alone in the hallway with her back against the wall. She wondered why he acted the way he did. None of her mother's boyfriends ever turned her down. She'll get her way, she thought. She always gets her way.
The branches hover above me like parents lovingly watching over their child. I sit nestled in the crook of the arm of my favorite tree, my red boots swinging as if I’m pumping myself up higher and higher. Aimlessly stripping the leaves from the branches most near me, I stare up the hill. Just beyond lies my house: my security, my toys, my loved ones, and at the moment, a chaotic mess. A gust of wind comfortingly pats my face, and I smile in agreement.

Here there is no conflict, no yelling, no loudmouth little brothers. Only the silence of the wind, the bullfrogs singing, and the dimming sunset of the memories.
Easel in hand, I set out for a hill, wishing to paint the fall of day. tonight the heavens are ablaze, in gallant orange and reds. A battle for the cerulean sky is fought between two legions “Our homeland is being invaded!” says day, and as the darkness puts to death beams of light, the two sides coalesce, creating the hours of darkness, inseparable in their rancor. My brush captures all this strife, blending color to mix hues. While once the dark side argued, “When will the world rest but without a blanket of shadows? Let us each share half of earthen time.” Now, all reason lost, they tussle above the highest mountains. Just like the irrational humans, day and night cannot settle their conflict with words, but lower themselves to violence. Soon, you cannot tell one of the grappling, sweaty, raucous brutes from his enemy. My stomach, now a tight-knitted coil, tells me

Lovers of beauty admire sunset, relishing this feigning glory, but beauty so fickle betrays mine eyes, and so I smear my painting.
PRAISE FOR THE AUTHORS

“A Waste of Paint” by Justin Miller is simply paint-a-ripc!
   —Kerry Meagher, Layout Editor

Jonathan Howard takes a step beyond what we normally expect from poetry; he brings something new to this edition.
   —Emily Ryan, Editor

In “Midnight Drive” by Megan Webb, we are taken on a vivid afterhours journey.
   —Jason Cotugno, Layout Editor

Erin Dorney throws you into her piece “Burhooks” - I smile in agreement.
   —Jason Northrup, Submission Review Committee

We are thoughtfully introduced to the person behind the name in “Father Joseph Dorsey: Character Profile In Memoriam” by Professor Dee Dee Hogan.
   —Matthew Cotugno, Account Manager

Instead of writing about aspects of nature, “Homework Help” by Christopher Ouimet, offers a humorous look at education.
   —John Karbowskii, Web Designer