You are holding in your hands a historic first: the very first issue of an all-new magazine, brought to you by the same folks who produce your campus newspaper, the GlimmerGlass.

The magazine has its origins in the small literary magazine “Anthology,” which for a number of years was produced by Dr. Larry Finger, formerly of the ONU English Department and now teaching at Point Loma Nazarene College in California. When Dr. Finger left it was felt that the publication should continue in some way. Using the facilities available in the GlimmerGlass office, the editors and their faculty advisor put their heads together and designed this new incarnation.

Since this is the very first issue, I’d like to take just a moment to thank some people responsible for bringing this to you.

Dr. Gary Streit, Chairman of Olivet’s English Department, played a large role in allowing us to produce this magazine under a new format and we wish to thank him for the opportunity. In addition, we doff our hats in thanks to the members of the English Department; not only have they been patrons of the old “Anthology” for years, but this year they have each stepped forward with financial support for this new endeavor. Without their generosity, we would never have gotten this far.

To the GlimmerGlass staff who worked long hours with me on this project I offer a special thanks... these folks (whose names you’ll find in the staff box at the left of this page) are not only hard workers, but they’re also good friends.

To those of you whose work appears in these pages, I can only say that none of this would have been possible without you.

Kudos to Professor William Greiner and the ONU Art Department for providing the illustrations that grace these pages. Prof. Greiner was excited about the project from day one and I think it shows.

And a very special mucho gracias to Mr. Sean Kipling Robisch for coming up with the new title and the cover illustration.

All of us connected with Tygr hope that you, the reader, like what you see.

We’d like to dedicate this premiere issue to Dr. Larry Finger, in the sincere hope of continuing the fine tradition which he started years ago.

John Small, Editorial Director

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TOMORROW'S YESTERDAY

BY CHERYL DENISE HARRIS

The little boy slid cautiously down the embankment. He looked around furtively, afraid that he would be seen. He felt a sort of delicious tingle from disobeying his mother and going to the one place she told him not to go. Indeed, there were NO TRESPASSING signs plastered over all possible entrances to the creek. But there were no signs leading from the highway down to the water, John reasoned. If there were no signs, then it was okay.

Upon sliding to a stop near the muddy shore of the creek, John forgot all his rationalizations in the sheer beauty of this glorious forgotten place. He was struck with the remoteness and the silence, although the highway was stretched over the gentle ravine; the hum of occasional passing cars blended with the quiet buzz of the bees hovering about some wildflowers a few feet away.

John decided that the creek was perfect. Why would anyone want to forbid this luscious beauty to the public? The water practically sang as it gurgled joyously down to the river. He saw that it was shallow enough to see to the very bottom, with rocks strewn at various intervals. He thought it would be fun to leap from stone to stone to the other side of the stream. Maybe he could attempt to shimmy up the steep cliff walls on the other side.

Carefully, because he didn’t want his mother to know he had been there, John took off his shoes and socks and neatly placed them far out of the reach of the water. After making sure that they would be safe, he turned and waded into the water.

It only took him a few steps to realize that this water was no ordinary water. The frigid wetness contained an almost-electrical spark, reminiscent of the time the priest had touched holy water to John’s forehead in a prayer of healing. A pleasing warmth had spread through his body, and he sensed—rather than knew—that God’s hand was upon him and that he was going to be healed. Through the coolness of the water John once again felt the warmth course through his body, and he smiled. He felt as one with nature and with God.

He was halfway across the creek when he saw it. It was just a glint, a golden gleam, but he saw it. He splashed to investigate and found that it was a golden orb, small enough to fit comfortably in his hand. He picked it up and examined it from all angles, noticing without noticing that it was growing warm to his touch and humming almost imperceptibly.

Suddenly his body flashed with warmth. He looked at the orb in surprise and saw figures moving in it—small at first, but then growing and growing and becoming more real, more frantic. He stood, unknowing in the stream, oblivious to things around him when the images came.

A cry of panic and despair. “Run! Run, you must run or the Slevites will get you and imprison you!” The trucks were flashing by, covered with the dust and grime of the Qualani world. Nothing was good anymore—people are running to the hills because in the hills there is safety. “Repent for
your wicked ways, Telstani! There is time yet to repent!"

John’s vision flashed to a room in which a couple was kissing passionately, seeking refuge and peace in things that they had always done. An air of terrible evil and foreboding filled the house. An old man was working desperately at a holographic computer, trying to invent a device to warn others. “We must get out of here! The Slevites come to destroy...hear their armies’ transports now!”

An escape to the hills, to watch in the distance a beautiful city in flames. An overpowering flash—dreadful silence—a cloud where no cloud had been. Men screaming—women crying—children in pain. “Fools!” the old man spat. John recognized a man of power. “They are destroying their world, too! Why, oh, why did we not heed the warnings, the transports that came in peace hiding troops of war? We wanted no evil!” He looked at the orb and entreated, “learn from our lives, friend! Let not this happen to you, also!” Lifting a prayer to God, he flashed the orb up into the heavens. Then the shock-waves hit, and the images were no more.

John came to his senses slowly, numb and unfeeling. He was kneeling in the water, his hands cradled around the now-cool orb as if to protect its inhabitants. Instinctively he knew that he had just witnessed the destruction of an entire planet, and felt the emptiness of helplessness. Then it struck him that this was why the creek was forbidden.

Suddenly, he was very scared and very cold. He was scared, because he recognized that there had been something very different from anyone else. He felt a sense of urgency—he should tell someone that could understand what that man had been trying to say. He was cold, because the water had lost all its warmth and he was drenched to the bone. He dropped the orb and struggled to his feet; upon reaching the muddy shore, he paused only to put his shoes and socks back on. Struggling up the embankment, he reached the highway just as a huge truck was bearing around the corner. Squinting at the evening twilight, it was not until it was almost upon him that John saw what it was: an army-green truck, with foreign writing on the side.

Everything swirled around him and then went black.

“Is it backsliding if you catch yourself humming the tune from a beer commercial...?”

---Jennifer Isch

"Once Again"
A little teardrop fell
A little girl cried
A little heart was broken
A little girl once again tuned to her Lord

---Kristie Miracle
Life Progression

Starting point
Life begins
I'm on my own

Friends come
peer pressure
My plot thickens

Drugs, alcohol,
Altered reality
I'm in a constant stupor

Nice night
Pretty girl
My compromise continues

Cold steel
Hot blood
I nearly killed that man

Dazed, confused,
Trouble piles up
I lose everyone's respect

All alone
Darkness surrounds
"Does anyone love me?"

Broken spirit
Silent prayer
I cry for help

Warm hand
Soft voice
I hear, "I'm with you"

Sudden lift!
Spirit mended!
I feel Jesus' love!

He cares!
He loves!
I feel His arms around me

New chance
New Life!
I live in the Joy of the Lord

--Jeffrey A. Horsman

A Legend In
Her Time

I opened the door and slowly
peered inside. There was a dim light
coming from the window that faced
the street. For the past two months my
grandmother had been staying with us
in the musty attic my parents had
converted into a bedroom. She was a
novelist, with two of her books being
best-sellers. I walked up the stairs with
every step creaking under my feet.
The only light in the room was coming
from the window, where my grand­
mother sat. She was sitting in a rocker
gleaming out the window; she was
clinching the sword of her life, wait­
ing to put something into writing. I
quickly crept back down the stairs in
order to not disturb her solitude.

--Steve Brown

What Price Love?

Affections display themselves
in the most tranquil and inadvertent
gestures. I can't help but identify with
the sappy, goo-goo eyed fellas who
follow the protocol of modern boy­
friends. From a former relationship
I've grown knowledgeable of court­
ing mannerisms. Really, it doesn't
take a rocket scientist to observe an
affair burgeoning with serious intent.

I recollect a time when I'd find
myself strolling alongside my (now­
estranged) mate, complimenting her
every move. There are cues that hint to
the onlooker that he or she is being
entertained by a public exhibition of
mutual adoration.

At the thought of having been
driven to such an emotional state as
holding hands in public myself, I
cringe. In a near-simultaneous fashion
I feel remorse, reincarnate jubilation
and horrifying afterthoughts about the
mixed-up, misfortunate situation that
this chap had gotten himself into with
his ring-seeking female.

--Mark E. Swearegene
Take Off!

This
Taking of notes and
Taking of tests and
Taking of time and
Taking of risks and
Taking of chances is
Taking its toll
So
I'm taking a break.

--Steve Sykes

The Game

Trials by night force the actions.
Unpleasant deeds arouse the captor's mind.
Justice is a game.
No winners, only survivors.
Surviving isn't winning.
Winning is losing in this game, the game of life.

--Marvin Adams

Hi! My name is Alfred. I live in the deep dark tunnels that my family make. Would you like to take a walk with me today? I'll tell you all about my world and what I do to survive. Please, be careful not to squash me under your "tennies."

Today I must gather food for my family. I'm not the only one; there are many of us. If we're lucky, we'll find part of a dead worm. It would take about five of us to carry that back. Wouldn't that be great? Or maybe, just maybe, we'll find part of a half-eaten sucker! They taste so good. Most of the time, they are too heavy to carry. We have to get the clan and bring them to dinner instead of bringing dinner home. I guess it is like eating at what you folks call a restaurant.

Stop! Wait! Don't walk so fast! It makes me seasick when the earth jolts. Thank you. That is much better. I guess it would be hard for you to understand. While we're on the subject of not understanding things, think about this: how would you like it if a huge giant, twenty stories high, stepped on your house? Let me tell you, it isn't much fun building it back up.

Let me climb over your foot. I think my feelers tell me there is a picnic in progress. Yes, I can see it! All right! Come on, let's go. Picnics are always so much fun. I have my daily duties out of the way. Now I'll be able to play all afternoon! Now, let me see...Here we go, a nice greasy piece of fried chicken skin. Will you carry it for me? I'd hate to have to walk all the way back to get the others to help me. Thanks. I knew I could count on you. Don't eat it before we get back. I know it looks delicious.

I've never been so brave before but...uhh...would you carry me, too? I'll try not to tickle your hand. We'll get there a hundred times faster if you will carry me. Oh. wonderful! You are just too kind.

Well, here we are. Just open your hand, put it on the ground and I'll walk out. Simple as that. Oh! Don't forget my food! You can put it right here beside me. It sure has been fun talking to you. Maybe we could do it again soon. This weekend I'll be busy rebuilding after your dad mows the lawn. How about next week? Don't forget my address. It is: Alfred, Ant Hill #2, Back Yard.

--Angie Ball
Burt: Morning, Erma.
Erma: Morning, Burt.
Burt: How'd ya sleep?
Erma: Like a rock. Slept like a rock.
Burt: Did ya hear the neighbors?
Erma: What neighbors?
Burt: Fred and Helen. They were making a ruckus last night around three.
Erma: 'Bout what?
Burt: Don't know. I could just hear them hollering.
Erma: Hmmmm. What do ya want for breakfast?
Burt: Well, what do ya got?
Erma: Depends on what you want.
Burt: How 'bout eggs. Ya got any scrambled eggs and bacon?
Erma: As fer as I know we do.
Burt: Is the paper here yet?
Erma: Don't know. Haven't looked.
Burt: If that paperboy had any better aim, our paper would land in Fred and Helen's birdbath.
Erma: They got a birdbath?
Burt: Yep, been there since the McCoys lived there in '68.
Erma: Oh, I never noticed.
Burt: Ya never noticed a birdbath right next door?

Erma: Nope.
Burt: Heck, it done been there for 20 years.
Erma: Well, I've been busy. Ain't got time for every birdbath in the neighborhood...
Buffy: Yoo-hoo, Mitzy. over here.
Mitzy: Buffy darling, it is so good to see you.
Buffy: Thanks dear. You look simply stunning today.
Mitzy: Thank you Buffy. You know, it took me three hours to find the right earrings for this skirt.
Buffy: No, tell me it's not true!
Mitzy: Yes. And wait 'til you hear this. You will die, D-I-E, die.
Buffy: Oh, do tell.
Mitzy: Gucci is having a preferred customers' sale.
Buffy: No! When?
Mitzy: It's this weekend.
Buffy: Oh, that's beautiful. I was getting so sick of my clothes. I've worn everything at least once.
Mitzy: No!
Buffy: I know, I can't believe it either. But Mom has been tight with the plastic money.
Mitzy: Oh, parents are such a kill!
Buffy: Talk to me. Last night my dad bored me with stories about the new kid.

ART BY VANESSA KENDALL & KIM TYSSE
Mitzi: What new kid?

Buffy: The guy from homeroom.

Mitzi: We have a new guy in homeroom?

Buffy: Yes, and he is supposed to live right next door to you.

Mitzy: Moi?

Buffy: Yes. Darling, have you not noticed the boy?

Mitzy: Well...

Buffy: We've only been in school for three months, Mitzy.

Mitzy: Buffy, dear, you know how busy I am. I don't have time for everyone...

Thorn: Good morning, Rose. How are you?

Rose: I'm not feeling very well today.


Rose: I'm not quite sure what's wrong.

Thorn: You've been complaining for the past month that you don't feel good.

Rose: I'm sorry if my not feeling well is bothering you. I was only telling you how I felt. I didn't think I was complaining.

Thorn: You can't possibly be sick. There has been plenty of rain this summer, and the sun has been kind to us.

Rose: Yes, I know we have been fortunate to have good weather this summer.

Thorn: And the people even come and pull the weeds from around us.

Rose: Yes, they do pull the weeds.

Thorn: What more do you want?

Rose: Thorn, have you ever wondered what those people are thinking when they pull the weeds?

Thorn: Not really.

Rose: Don't you ever wonder if they ever want to stop pulling the weeds, sit down and—

Thorn: Hey, if the people stopped pulling the weeds we would be choked out by them.

Rose: Have you ever wondered if they want to sit down, look at our petals, feel their silky texture, and take a deep breath...

Thorn: Ugh! I'd be sick if people were always bothering me like that.

Rose: Well, Thorn, I don't think you have to worry about getting sick. It's been at least a month since the people have paid attention to us.

---

The Captive

There's a secret that twitches in my soul. It longs to escape the endless darkness in which it's locked, and ponder all the miracles of young love. It longs to taste the honey-sweet nectar of romance and feel the velvet touch of a gentle hand. It longs to sway in the misty vibrant winter air and dance until the midnight blue smears up the gentle blanket of black that breathes when the sun goes down. It longs to live, to make itself known, but it cannot; for then my secret would be no secret at all, and she might laugh at the things I hold dear. And we certainly couldn't have that, or...no, we certainly couldn't.

--Jeremy Childs
The Unforgettable Down

BY SCOTT WILLIAMS

The excitement had grown close to maximum intensity. The capacity crowd was cheering as the game began. Everyone was playing great—that is, everyone but me. It was the fourth down, and that was when the problems began.

Fourth downs terrorized me throughout the entire game. I was in the first round of the Illinois High School Association playoffs. My team had only appeared in the playoffs one other year in the school's career. Our regular punter had quit the team earlier in the season, so we struggled throughout the year with different punters. The coach decided to try a new punter for the last game, and for some reason I was the chosen one.

Chuck Ealey, my long snapper, and I had gone to the field in order to practice a little before the game. The punts I kicked averaged about forty yards, which was not too bad for a first-timer. I practiced for about fifteen minutes, but I could still feel the "butterflies" in my stomach flying wild. I returned to the locker room as soon as warm-ups were over in order to prepare for the game. I thought I was ready when the whistle blew.

Being prepared, I entered the game and attempted my first punt. It was beautiful! I kicked a forty-five yard spiral punt with a hang time of about five seconds. It was a shame that the wind was blowing across the field, because that pushed the ball into the stands about six rows back. The officials marked it as an eighteen-yarder, and the coach just shook his head seventy yards or so...straight up. The officials marked me for a whopping twelve yards; the coach just shook his head again.

Something had to be done, so the coach decided to try the punter from the last game while I went and drank some water. He did a better job than I did. His punt went seventeen yards. Well, I was back in. The game was coming close to an end when I heard the coach say, "Williams, punt."

Fear entered my body as I tried to jog onto the field with gallantry. I knew I was in trouble as soon as I let a four-lettered word slip out of my mouth for all to hear; "Hike" rattled violently throughout the stadium. The ball was hurled back into my hands. Time had now stopped. I slowly released the ball towards my kicking foot. It dropped so gently and rolled away the same way. I had barely kicked the end of the ball, and it went seven yards down the field. The coach just shook his head.

At the end of the game I decided to terminate my punting career forever. I realized it was not for me when the fans began to laugh. I told the coach I was finished and he shook his head, but this time up and down.
"You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead man's bones and everything unclean."

The hot desert air stilled for a moment, quieted by something more powerful than Nature itself. The lone white figure stood silently for a moment and then cried out, revealing the agony of its soul with a cry that rocked the entire universe with despair.

"Repent!"

The congregation trembled for a moment, expecting the skies of Q'Ataar to open at any moment and pour fire and brimstone down upon them. Then the wind returned, released from its momentary bondage, to carry the words of the Evangelist to faithful ears. The crowd shielded their eyes from the glittering white of his garments and the dust stirring around them, and tried to get a closer look at the man of the Lord.

"Repent, ye wicked and perverse generation," the Evangelist cried, stirring up a chorus of amens from the crowd. He paused for a moment to wipe the dust from his moist brow.

"Repent, for the Lord is coming to judge the iniquities of the universe!"

"Repent, for the Lord will cast out His enemies on Earth, on Canis Minor, on Q'Ataar!"

"Turn from thine evil practices, expunge the sins that blot thy soul! Let the Lord wash your soul until it sparkles white!"

"Repent of thy sins before thou art cast into the darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth!"

The crowd was whipped into a frenzy by the words of the Evangelist. Many cried, made aware of their sinfulness by his words and fearing the swift judgement of the Lord. Hands were raised, amens were shouted over the murmur of the crowd, and some even fell to their knees in submission.

"The light of the Lord is coming," the Evangelist shouted. "Repent of the deeds done in darkness, before His revealing light finds you out...!"

The room was dark, the only light coming from the glass door to the balcony that looked out over the desert of Q'Ataar. The Evangelist sat by the door in a large, overstuffed chair, looking at the vast desert wasteland before him. In contrast with the fiery preacher of the service, this man looked old and tired. The desert sunset, with its fading glory, seemed to enhance this effect with the light it cast upon his face. He heard a noise, and hurriedly tried to conceal the drink he held in his right hand.

"Relax," he said calmly. "I have been sent by Q'Vena to serve you while you are here. I am called Q'Aman."

The Evangelist eased, brought his glass back into view and took a
gulp. "Why has my old friend sent you?" he asked. "I am no stranger to Q'Ataar."

"He thought it would be best, since you are still an alien here," the man replied.

"I am an alien everywhere," the Evangelist said cryptically. He paused for a moment. "I thought for a moment that one of my flock had wandered up here," he said, "and it would not be good for him to find his shepherd sampling the local grapes of wrath."

Both laughed for a moment, the Evangelist somewhat uneasily. Q'Aman noticed this and paused before commenting.

"It is not very easy to live a lie, is it?" he asked with a slight tone of mockery.

The Evangelist turned away, looking past the desert through time and space, deep into his own past. "It was not always like this," he said slowly. "When I was young, I was truly Christ's champion in the universe. The Holy Spirit flowed through my veins, and none of the powers of evil could stand against me. Vast multitudes, here and on Earth and all the colonies, would come to hear my preaching. I could set them all on the path to redemption."

Q'Aman could see a tear forming in the man's right eye; a Bible verse came unbidden to his mind, which in the native version read, "If your right eye betrays you, get rid of it."

"But it is not so now," Q'Aman said. The Evangelist shook his head slowly. "What happened to your faith?"

"I fell into despair," the older man replied. "For every one I saved, it seemed that ten were lost. I soon realized I was fighting a losing war. I was up against things greater than myself, and I could not handle it. And so I gave up trying to win the lost."

"But you still preach."

"Yes, but it is only for survival. I was a preacher for too long to do anything else, and a traveling evangelist gets paid well. So now I preach faith without having any of my own."

Both fell silent. They looked out over the landscape, watching the small desert animals scurry to and fro in the twilight, trying to escape the approaching darkness.

Farther out in the distance, on the edge of the horizon, the Evangelist spied a man—or, rather, a figure that seemed to be humanoid. He could not tell, because of the being's thick, dark robe. He squinted for a closer look.

"Do you see that man out there, Q'Aman?"

"I see nothing," the servant replied.

The figure moved in closer now. It was dressed in a long robe with a hood so that its face could not be seen. It slowly beckoned to the Evangelist.

"He wants me to come out there and meet him," the Evangelist said.

"I still do not see him," Q'Aman replied. "Could he be one of your 'flock'?"

"I have never seen anyone like that in my services," the Evangelist answered. "Besides, most people would die of heatstroke in a robe that thick."

"Probably one of the old lunatics who live out in the desert," Q'Aman surmised. "Ignore him."

"No," the Evangelist said. "No, I must find out what he wants..."

The desert shimmered underneath the scorching sun. Still in the distance, still urging them on, the dark figure moved just on the edge of the Evangelist's vision. He struggled on, compelled by something from within that he did not understand.

"We have been out here for half a day," Q'Aman complained. "We have lost sight of the city. It is long past time to return."

"No," the Evangelist replied through a jaw clenched to keep the sweat and the sand out of his mouth. "I must find out what he wants."

"You act like a man obsessed, or a crazy man," Q'Aman retorted. "Have all your lies driven you insane?"

"Perhaps," was all the Evangelist said in response. The two lone figures plodded through the immense wasteland, parched from the heat and from lack of water. The figure ahead of them refused to slow down, still hov-
ering on the horizon while the sun climbed the sky to its apex.

Finally, one figure stopped.

“This is lunacy,” Q’Aman yelled. “You are chasing a shadow! We will die out here!”

“Come on,” the Evangelist responded impatiently.

“We must continue!”

“No,” Q’Aman shrieked. “I am going back to the city, where there is food and water. I am going to tell them all that you are a madman who has lost his mind to guilt and the desert sun.”

The Evangelist’s eyes grew wide. “You will tell no one anything!” he commanded.

“I am not one of your pitiful flock,” Q’Aman replied, nearly laughing. He spat at the Evangelist. “You cannot stop me!”

The Evangelist brought his right hand back, paused for a moment and struck Q’Aman square across the face. The servant, already weak from hunger and exhaustion, fell limp to the ground and lay perfectly still; he was not dead, not yet, but he soon would be.

Dazed, the Evangelist looked down at the body of his companion, not seeming to comprehend the possibility that he might have killed him. He then turned to continue his quest.

The mountain was huge, seeming to reach up into Heaven itself through the sky of Q’Ataar. Many meters up a steep cliff was a plateau; here the dark figure sat, patiently watching the one who sought after him. Below him the Evangelist slowly ascended, grasping the rocks for his very life.

The Evangelist’s white raiment was now dark from sand and dust and torn in many places, making it virtually unrecognizable as the garment that had gleamed so white the night before. His skin was cracked and dry, through which dark blood could be seen coming up through places.

He lost his grip for a moment, his right hand slipping and grazing the cliff. Pain shot through his palm like someone had driven a spike through it. He swore lightly and looked at the palm; it was cut open, his own blood mingling with the dried blood of Q’Aman.

Gradually he neared his goal; when he finally brought himself up onto the plateau he saw the dark figure standing on a rock platform, so as to seem above him. The Evangelist did not continue forward, but stood where he was.

“Who are you?” he cried out. “What do you want?”

In one swift motion the dark figure cast off its robe, emitting a white radiance that seemed to cause the sun of Q’Ataar to pale. The Evangelist could not look directly at the figure, so bright was the light coming from it. He slowly fell, sobbing, to his knees.

The hot desert air stilled for a moment, quieted by something more powerful than Nature itself. The lone white figure stood silently for a moment and then cried out, revealing the agony of its soul with a cry that rocked the entire universe with despair.

“Repent!”

---

Dreamer

I drive through the city
Surrounded by the loneliness;
The wind is cold,
The rain is falling—
But it’s only in my mind.
Not that anyone cares...
They say I’m a nobody.
But when nighttime comes
And I lay down to sleep,
I’ve become someone important!
Still, it’s only in my mind.
But I don’t care...
Now I’m a somebody.

I’m just a dreamer—
Night-time warrior in a fantasyland.
Slaying dragons
And fighting for the Princess’ hand.
I don’t live my life
Until I turn out the light,
And the images come to my mind...
When I face the real world
Unhappiness abounds.
The future loses all its promise
And it’s not just in my mind...
But who will listen to me?
I’m just a dreamer.

A jury stands before me,
And they say I’ve lost my mind.
But when I try to tell them
That’s it’s all their fault
They all just turn away.
They tell me that I’m nobody...
Well, maybe they are right.
But in my dreams, I’m the hero!
And if facing reality means forcing myself
Into a mold they’ve made for me,
I’d rather dream my life away...
My dreams are better than
Their reality any day.

--John Allen Small

PAGE 13/TYGR/SPRING, 1989
As we started out the door heading for the beige Topaz, I examined everyone to see if we matched; Dad had on his Army dress blues, Mom her black skirt and blouse, and me my grey suit. I guess I was the oddball. But once we got there I knew I wouldn’t be the one that stuck out, the one everyone was paying attention to.

No one said anything for a long time. We just drove on down the road, hitting potholes every other fence post. Finally, Dad broke the ice.

“This countryside sure brings back memories. See that old farmhouse over there? When we were kids we used to say the old lady who lived there was a witch. She was my dad’s cousin...”

We drove a little more. “Yeah, I remember coming in with my brothers and sisters from picking cotton all day and asking Mom what was for dinner. She always said, ‘It’s a surprise’.”

It was always the same. He said some more things, but I didn’t hear another word. The things Dad had said made me remember visiting Grandma’s. I wanted to say out loud, “Yeah, Dad, I know what you mean. I have lots of memories, too.” But I said it to myself instead; it didn’t take long before I was reliving precious memories.

The pork chops, corn pudding and preserved figs were delicious, but they weren’t what made visiting her house so special. It was the creak in the floor between the kitchen and dining room, the one that told when Grandma was up taking her 2, 4 or 6 a.m. pill. It was Grandma’s freezer with the blue glass dish on it full of candy. Peppermints. Banana chews. Sour balls. Butterscotch. The way the glass dish was cut on the side made the candy look like big pieces, but when the lid came off they were just normal size. Small and sweet and good.

And Grandma’s piano. The one that went out of tune with the first astronauts’ landing on the moon. The enamel had broken off some of the keys, and one key was even missing. The C above middle C. Grandma’s piano never played anything worth remembering but it housed many memories, framed and arranged across its top. Grandma and Grandpa’a wedding day. Uncle Gerald, in his senior year of high school. Dad in his uniform. Aunt Elizabeth with Toby, Lassie’s look-alike.

Grandma’s den smelled of cedar or moth balls, or maybe old dust. Mom said it wasn’t polite to ask what the smell was, and Dad said it was like that when he was little. I didn’t ask; I decided I liked the smell, or at least didn’t hate it.

The rug in the den was fun to walk on with bare feet. When I stepped down with my heel the sand washed away; when the ball of my foot came forward it was back on sand. It was like being at the beach, except the beach doesn’t smell like moth balls.

But of all the things at Grandma’s, my favorite was the bed I slept in. I liked the feeling of being in the middle of a cloud, a cotton ball, because the mattress sunk in. The feather pillow and the bedspread wrapped around me: safe, warm, comfortable.

That’s how I felt at Grandma’s.

We hit another pothole, and I was brought back to the present. Dad wasn’t saying anything—indeed, no one was.

When we got there I just wanted to stay in the car until it was over, but I knew I couldn’t be the baby today. We went inside where we were ushered to our seats at the front with the rest of the family—all except Dad. He was going to be up front on the platform, with the tall scrawny preacher and the fat little organist whose hair flopped in his eyes every time he reached for low G.

Pretty soon I could tell this was it. The sanctuary was full; the platform people took their places. My cousins carried Grandma in and put her right down in front for everyone to
The preacher had been saying things but I don't know what. What did he know, anyway? He never knew Grandma. When Dad got up to speak I felt better. Out of all the thirteen children it was my Dad they chose to speak; Grandma had always told me that Dad was the best-behaved of the bunch, the most loving, caring, compassionate. So it seemed right he was going to say something for her.

“Ruby was a wonderful wife and mother...”
I knew he meant every word.
“...never said a coarse word...”

I wanted to run up to the platform and give him a hug and tell him it was going to be okay. But I let him go on. He said some more things that made people around me snuffle loudly and cry silently; even the organist was having a hard time wiping his tears and playing at the same time. But what Dad said at the end is what I remember the most. It made him cry.

He told a story of a water bug that lived in a little country pond all its life, doing what it knew to do. Then one day something happened to the little bug. It began to change—the lowly water bug had been given wings and he flew up away from the pond, up and away into the sky. The water bug was gone forever, and so was Grandma. I cried.

It was a short distance but a long drive back to Grandma’s house. Like before no one said anything, but this time it didn’t seem to matter. Somehow we all understood that to say anything would be invading someone else’s thoughts. I wondered if I would be able to understand what sad happiness or joyful pain meant. It was great that Grandma was in Heaven, but I’d rather have her here with us.

I guess now I’ll just have to remember when.

“DAWN”

It is a nightmare in itself, but one of reality.

As I roll over to the glare reflecting into my still-closed eyelids, a stuffy breeze covers my clammy body. I feel like cursing the moment, but I can’t because a piercing pain cracks the sound of my throat. Indecision to rise from my coffin fills me, so I remain horizontally calm; the thought of opening my eyes to the new day passes right through my head and into my featherly pillow.

How I love the time before I actually fall into unconsciousness. Everything fades away...but as I drift off again in solitude, a screeching blast bounces from wall to wall, hitting me in-between. I think I can stifle the noise, but my short reach misses the peace-button on the top of the mechanical enemy.

It is now time to awaken, my body and my surroundings tell me, so I sit up.

The dawn of a fresh day seems to be torture, but as I hear the joyful sounds of the melodie birds outside my window, things become better for me. I stay in my disastrous-looking bed and concentrate on the walk across the room. It’s like a journey for me each morning, and the destination is the door on the other side. My trembling legs start me going, and my watered eyes blur my walk.

Then I grab the knob the same way a mountaineer would hold onto the top rock at the summit of a peak. Yet, a new thought erases the traveled journey, and I lunge across my previous carpetprints back towards my mattress, where my eyes again shut.

And my nightmare becomes a perfect dream.

—Neal Leatherman
A SILENT SONG WITHIN MY SOUL

Silhouettes are dancing,
The song is slow and sweet.
The air is moist with laughter,
yet my joy is not complete.
For within my heart breathes music,
as note by note goes by.
Its rhythm yet untameable
and within my soul I cry—to release it from its bondage;
(How its pulsing spirit drives!)
I find no rest or solitude
by keeping it inside.
So burst forth, o song of joy complete—
escape and now be free.
The haunting melody within—
no longer a part of me!

--Cindy Langdon

"WHAT LIFE?"

Talia is an average girl. She grew up in a conservative home, was given all her opinions, and was conditioned how to act and feel in every situation. Talia believes in blacks and whites; there is no room in her life for greys. She has no tolerance for people who do, and her point of view is always the right one.

Talia came to college this way and now, four years later, is leaving the same way. She never questions, "Why am I a Nazarene? Is there a God? Is divorce wrong? Why am I on student council? Are all people created equal? Why am I in college? Am I prejudiced? Should I always listen to my parents? What is sin? What am I living for?"

Talia is a molded clay figure with hollow insides. She walks, she talks, she does what she is told, she exists.

Talia is dead. Actually, she was never born. She's never felt the pain that comes with truth, with self-realization, with confusion, with living. She's never experienced pride or joy or deep love. Talia won't shake off her sugar-coated shell to see her soul.

She doesn't want to. She might see something that will destroy her world, something that would "ruin her life."

Ruin what life?
"The unexamined life is not worth living." —Socrates.

--Christina Woodcock
I stood staring at my mother. She had no expression on her face. She would not say a word. I could not say anything either. My eyes began to burn and I knew that I had to turn to leave. I did not want to cry in front of her. I loved her, but I was angry that she was leaving. In a way, she had already left. I needed her now, but it was time for her to go.

As I walked away, I felt as though I was leaving her. I came to an abrupt halt when I saw my brother holding my sister as she sobbed. The two had always fought before, cutting each other down with nasty words. I had never seen them hug, or show in any way that they cared for each other. Now I began to sob, losing control of my emotions.

I turned around, hoping to see Mom watching them, but she could not watch. I needed to talk to her and tell her of our pain, but she would not listen.

I fell into the chair as I became increasingly unable to control my sobbing.

Sue, my cousin, was suddenly next to me with her arm around my shoulder. Not saying a word, but eyes filled with tears, she offered me a tissue. After what seemed an hour, when I had gotten myself under control, Sue began talking to me. She told me that I was Mom's "little angel," her "miracle." I knew what she meant. Mom had told me that she'd had four miscarriages before I was born, and two after. My parents had adopted Andrea and Jeff when they realized she could not carry a child to the full term.

"Your mother was so happy to have a baby of her very own," Sue said. "She told me that you were her angel sent from God. She never wanted anything to happen to you. She wanted you to be happy."

My mind wandered. I realized I wasn't happy now that Mom was gone. I felt as though she had walked out of my life forever. No one would be there to listen to me now.

I then looked over and saw my dad in deep thought. I knew that he was fighting back tears. I was happy that he hurt. He always fought with Mom, and seeing him hurt proved to me that he still cared for her. She hated to fight and I often told Dad to stop upsetting her because I knew she would leave soon. However, I did not expect her to leave so soon.

The Hurst Funeral Home was soon full of people who came to say their final goodbyes to a best friend or a loving relative. As Pastor Fortado spoke of my mother's love and God's love for her, tears ran down my face. I could see my mother in her "final resting place" from my seat. I begged God to bring her back. "If I was a miracle, make her a miracle. Bring her back!" I realized then that Mommy was gone for good now. But her love would always be in my heart.

As everyone was leaving, the funeral director asked us if we wanted to pay our last respects to the one we loved.

As I walked to my mother with Sue, tears began to fill my eyes once again. "I never told her I loved her," I said to Sue.

"Tell her now," Sue said. "I know she can hear you."

As Sue walked to the back of the room, I touched my mother's hand. She felt so cold. "I love you Mommy," I whispered. She did not respond. I knew that if she didn't hear me, God would whisper my words to her.

"I love you," I sobbed. "Bye Mommy, I'll miss you."

---Janas Meyer

Friendship is like a flower. It requires sunshine to feel the warmth, which is caressed in the shadow of darkness. A shower of rain from the clouds above give it enough moisture to have that soft special touch. The need for fresh air each day causes the pedals to open wide so that it can breathe and be allowed space in order to grow. A rainbow from the sky reaches down to earth to surround it with color, so that it may reflect its beautiful appearance. It must be planted in good soil for a firm foundation that will help it blossom and develop into maturity. The roots which are engraved in the ground strengthen it to have the courage to stand up when overcome by a storm. Its sensation of being noticed once in a while suddenly overflows with a sweet fragrance that fills the air to let others know it has been properly treated and has been given much care.

---Janas Meyer
A Sunrise in January
A sunrise in January
Is one of Nature’s greatest contradictions
A hot, blazing, explosive sun
Rising over the icy coldness of snow.

The sun, which we complained
Was so hot last summer,
Now does little to warm our skin
But still leaves us snowblind.

The snow, which flutters quietly down,
Covers everything in a soft white blanket
Transporting us by the sight of it
To a place where the sun is never hot.

For as we watch a sunrise in January
We only sense the icy coldness of the snow
Not the comforting warmth of the sun
For now, the snow lords over the sun.

--Matt Ulmen

My Imaginary Study

There is a fog of light creeping from the crack under my door to my study. Study is the right word for it. Mine smacks of pipes and moustaches and murder after a party, velvet and fireplace and oak. The light is always there, whether or not I am. Sometimes it is dawn-gold; sometimes it is jungle-moon blue. Tonight it is green—the magical activity light of Celtic faeries, the cobbler’s elves that ribbon my typewriter, stoke the fire and make tea while I sleep.

The door hinges harmonize and the light springs out in fans. I hear scurrying feet and jingling noises at the mouseholes. A miniature paisley jester dashes up the flume on the pop of an ember. The room is a stuffed cube, exploding with carven shelves of children’s stories and fantasies: Dickens, Milne, Grimm, Silverstein. Disney prints and animation cels. A mammoth volume of Poe on an old cask for an easel. Persian carpet, spiced tea-scents from a cauldron over the fire. Knick-knacks from New England and the Orient, an oak desk with a green leather top that is visible only in patches beneath the paper towers of work and the Bibles. A cracked patina bust of Neptune, brass-cornered travel trunks quilted with peeling stickers. A dragon on the mantel pinning Shakespeare against a grey skull. Heavy lionpaw wingback chairs and ridiculous Napoleonic wallpaper. A clear plastic bag of crawling ribbons, Christmas paper and balloons. A patchwork of macabre and innocence.

Finally, in the eye of the maelstrom I write in hazy bliss, dancing to the cadence of the keys until purple sparks jump into my tea mug and hiss softly, while the clutter rages around me. Every page I pluck from the typewriter glitters and zig-zags slowly to the floor on a crackling trail, to fall among trinkets and newspapers and land in the clapping hands of giggling word-elves. A sip of tea while the elves read and I start again, snapping out another tune over the sound of their paper-buzzing whispers. The fire plays along and the painting of Alexander behind me cocks to the right to read over my shoulder. A pixie blows out one of the candles on the hutch and flees through the window and away on the breeze.

When I finish for tonight, the fire breathes the slow breath of sleep and closes its ashen eyes, and I collect the scattered papers and take them someplace else to edit. Not here. This is the room of life. The Study. Editing is dry and cold—the work of wilderness exile. The elves live here, and will restore the energy to the study while sleep restores me.

When I shut the door, the foggy light under the crack is amber red. The elves are curled up on the hearth in a stolen page until midnight. And I will start again in the morning, wondering if the same things will decorate the room tomorrow.

--Sean Kipling Robisch
Change
Is...

Change is so hard,
I don’t like to think about it.

Change is confusing,
I get so frustrated when I try to understand.

Change is a mystery,
What will come of all this?

Change comes quickly,
Everything seems to be happening so fast.

Change is a thief,
It tries to take away precious treasures.

Change is reality,
I must face it and believe it.

Change plays with emotions.
It makes me want to be angry when I shouldn’t.

Change is sad.
Right now I would like to cry.

I can overcome change.
There is a good side if I am willing to look.

But I can’t help wondering
why change must come.
Why can’t things stay the same?

---Janet Willett

The Hanger

Does anybody ever stop to consider the importance of the hanger? This common household item is so often taken for granted, abused, and shoved into a dark hole for hours at a time, yet, despite the cruel treatment, the hanger has become a major necessity. Without the hanger, man would become one giant wrinkle.

One cannot begin to fathom the lifestyle of the hanger. Suspended in mid-air like a pendulum, the hanger must sway back and forth, occasionally producing a high-pitched sound by bumping into another hanger.

Without the ability to communicate or defend itself, the hanger is often stepped on, misplaced, and hauled from one destination to another. The only form of rebellion the hanger has is the ability to frustrate its master by twisting and entangling its body into the most outrageous positions, or attaching itself to a group of hangers. This makes the task of picking one up nearly impossible. These childish mannerisms are often successful. However, one tends to forget the generosity and dependable character of the hanger, the giving of itself for mankind.

Hangers come in a variety of colors and styles. The more common hangers are constructed of plastic or wire. Some have clamps for skirts or dress pants. Children’s hangers fit smaller articles of clothing, and wood hangers are designed to support such items as heavy winter coats.

The composition of the hanger is simplistic. It is simply a line, which has been bent into the shape of a triangle. The hanger has three main parts, with the most important being the hook. This special part curves around an object and is the supporting structure of the hanger. The second part are the shoulders, which provide a comfortable resting place for sweaters or dress shirts. A person must be careful what type of shirt he places on a hanger; some shirts appear to have shoulders of their own when taken off the hanger. The third part of the hanger is the crossbar. One may place a variety of items on this part. Slacks are among the most popular. With age the crossbar may become weak and sag, forming a pot belly. If circumstances become too severe, the hanger may lose its shape entirely. The overall design is sleek and unornamented, without sharp edges or points. The hanger holds itself in its triangular form by encircling the free end around its neck several times. The internal cavity is hollow and transparent, leaving nothing to one’s imagination.

The hanger is inexpensive, easy to find, and works for free. The main purpose of its existence is to provide a safe resting place for one’s wardrobe, which is a great responsibility. Despite the stressful situations it is placed in daily, the hanger will always be willing to serve its master.

The time for proper recognition of the hanger’s usefulness and industrial assets is long overdue. It is time to bring the hanger out of the closet and realize its great importance in our lives.

---Debi Snyder
The Lake

One short week. Just seven days, that’s all we had. In that one week we accomplished more than many people do in a lifetime. We became close to and comfortable with fifteen total strangers. We shared hard times and joys; first loves and embarrassing moments; private thoughts and secret dreams. It all ended on a peaceful Saturday at the lake.

It started like any other day at camp. We got up, fought for warm showers and went to breakfast, but we knew it would be our last day together. Today we would all be going our separate ways, possibly never to meet again. We had one last meeting to wrap up all the loose ends from the week and say goodbye.

We met at our usual meeting place, under a tree by the lake. This time nobody else was around, it was just us. We were all subdued with the thought of going home and leaving these new-found friends. We did not want to talk for fear of sobbing uncontrollably, so we silently got up and walked to the lake. It was so peaceful, calm and comfortable, just like our group.

As we were watching, two turtles started to play. They dipped in and out of the tranquil water. We came out of our somber mood, in awe at the breathtaking scene before us. The pines across the lake reflected in the glass-like water as the warm breeze ruffled the edges. More turtles joined our friends and they began their playful chases, fleeting in and out of sight. We watched, entranced at their graceful movements.

It seemed that time stood still as we stood there, bonded by the beauty of nature. Unfortunately it had to come to an end. Suddenly we realized that we were out of time. We had to leave. We did not say “goodbye,” we said “see you later.” My fondest memories of these friends are our last moments at the lake.

--Carrie Grizzle

The Study Battle

Tonight, this night I simply cannot study
Too much is going on in my mind.
My mind is a battleground
For opposing thoughts, ideas, and situations.
I keep reading the same material,
The same sentence,
The same paragraph
Over and over again.
As I desperately attempt to struggle
Through all of this test material,
My mind keeps sorting the other information

--Jennifer M. Pennock

At the same time,
Making it nearly impossible to get
The study material into my mind.
I keep trying to shut out
These unrelated thoughts
But to no avail.
Each time they only come flooding back
In stronger and stronger waves.
Over and over they repeat themselves
Like a skipping record.

How long can he feed him baloney?
As long as he's not SAVED, and his soul is closed to the Word.
Christians

The view is good from in the loft;  
People are unaware.  
They don’t realize someone sees  
Their tired, lifeless stares.

Idols sitting within the pew  
Clad in Sunday suits so fine.  
Mumbling mouths move, oh so slow,  
Praising God with hymns divine.

Fathers, mothers, children too,  
Aligned in rigid rows.  
Expressionless eyes tell the truth;  
They had nowhere else to go.

The preacher speaks marshmallowy tones,  
Heavy heads nod to the side.  
Longtime believers have heard it all before.  
Their lives are comfortable, satisfied.

No friendly glances pass between,  
No smiles, no laughs, no “amen” heard.  
No indication of comprehension or desire  
As they open to read God’s Word.

Where is the love they claim to have?  
Sweet joy and happiness true?  
Oh Lord, please, tell me now...  
Am I this kind of Christian too??

--Lesley Quill

Paint Your Masterpiece

The colors have not been laid down.  
The canvas is still all-white.  
But I know beauty stands alone  
as the strength of all sight.

Down here in this basement  
darkness is all we see,  
But the colors will be brighter than bright  
When I paint my masterpiece.

Poor man stands alone on the corner,  
Rich man drives his car.  
I think about the people crushed  
To get his feet that far...

‘Cause it doesn’t take much to sell a soul  
After you received it for free—  
But there will be no pricetag hanging  
Upon my masterpiece.

The circus man has everyone  
Inside his colored tent;  
fat lady sits motionless  
Inside her chair that’s bent.

The children’s eyes get bug-like  
When the clown’s face they see,  
But nobody knows the man like the man  
Until he paints his masterpiece.

For all the sinners in the world  
There are saints there, too;  
For all the love that has fallen,  
There is a love that’s true.

For all the narrow-minded people  
There is a world to be free,  
But the curtains will always be closed  
Until you paint your masterpiece.

--Phil Hudson
I used to smile. I didn’t just grin, I smiled. My whole face used to shine expressing joy, but now it is expressionless. Except my eyes. My eyes display a sadness within the soul, at times expressing anger.

I often ask myself why I’m such an angry young woman. What brought me down from that bright, smiling face to a cynical scowl?

I’m not as naive as I once was. I’ve seen and felt a lot of things—confidence, trust, betrayal, hurt. It’s a shame that we have to grow up.

When I was younger, I used to trust everyone. I trusted my girlfriend. We used to exchange secrets, such as liking the blond guy who sits in the back of the class and the day my dad got laid off from the job he had held for 23 years. I had never told anyone about who I liked before, or about family problems, especially financial ones. But we were close.

Or so I thought.

It wasn’t until the day when I found out from a couple of other people that she’d told the blond guy I liked him and the time I overheard her telling some of the girls in the dorm about my father that I knew I could never completely trust her again. I didn’t care if she was trying to help, or was telling a prayer group about my problems. I didn’t care that she was tired of hearing me complain. She should have told me that she didn’t want to hear me whine. She should have been honest and she should have been quiet.

I once trusted my pastor. I came to him on a few occasions asking advice or suggesting ideas. He listened to me and respected me. However, when my mom stopped teaching Sunday School and my dad was laid off, the pastor began to deliver some cutting remarks to my family. I was never there. I was away at school. My parents wouldn’t lie. It wasn’t until I came home from school that I noticed that I was the only member of the family that received a handshake from the pastor. He wouldn’t even look at my mother.

My parents soon came to the point where they didn’t enjoy church. They began to “sleep in” during Sunday School and often missed the worship service as well. They were discouraged, but my mom kept telling my brother and me that we shouldn’t get mad at God when we disagree with the pastor and the rest of the congregation. She tried to instill in us that it wasn’t God’s fault...it was the people who claim to be his children causing the hurt.

I had been raised in that church. I had gone there ever since I could remember. I was saved and sanctified at that altar, and had testified at the various pews. I felt God in that place and in the people whom I loved dearly. Yet on my recent visits to the church, I have not felt God. I don’t feel love; instead I feel the stares of the people I was once close to. They look at me as my family’s last hope. They look either with condemnation or condescension. There is no love or concern in their eyes. I look yet I don’t find. My heart breaks, surely my eyes convey the hurt. Maybe not. Perhaps they see hate. Maybe they see nothing at all. They are probably ignorant to my family’s and my feelings. I had confi-
dence in them. I trusted them. They betrayed my family, thus they betrayed me. I hurt—for me, my family, for them. For them, I also pity.

I once trusted myself. I trusted myself to do the right things—ethically and morally. I had confidence in myself—my talents, my future. Sometimes I feel like I’ve betrayed myself. I feel like I have trusted and held confidence in the wrong things. I had always been looking to people. I find that this was a mistake. I must look within myself for the answers. I realize I have strayed from what Christians claim as the only answer; I have looked to others, instead of to God. I have leaned on blind faith and have found myself falling. I have gone so far away from God that it seems impossible to reach Him, yet He is the only one that I have had confidence and trust in who has not failed me.

But I find it so difficult to let Him into my life. I quit trusting Him. I find it will be more difficult than before to accept Him. I’ve seen people who have claimed to love me reject me. When I was at a public school, things were different. I knew who the good people and the bad people were. But at a Christian school or a church, I assumed everyone was who they said they were. Some, I believe, were sincere but were ignorant to others’ feelings, while others were caught up in the social gatherings and in church politics.

My heart has been hardened for some time. I often wonder if it could ever be tender again. There is a void in my life, a blackness.

No wonder I’m not smiling.

---

The Old Soldier

At the point on campus where time stands still, a stalwart soldier stands. He keeps an eternal vigil in memory of a man. Encompassed by a footing of brick, he never leaves his watch; through rain and snow, and sleet and hail, he is unyielding in his stance. Steel and concrete are his limbs. With strength in firm command, he towers nearly forty feet above all those who pass.

Strategically located on the axis of the campus, he faces three directions simultaneously. To the east lies Chalfant Auditorium; to the southeast is the Larsen Fine Arts center; towards the northwest lies the Burke Administration Building. He stands at the crossroads of these points, where his demeanor can be seen by all. Yet, when one looks upon his countenance, there is something that intrigues.

His faces three are naught but clocks which have been frozen and stopped by time. They broke their habit at half past eleven, ending their designated routine. Through the years, the hands have slipped; they no longer read as one.

Walking past, one can look close and see the stuccoed pillars that hold the clocks up high. The structure is cast of cement with steel reinforcement rods. Pinned with iron to one side is a placard of aluminum; the inscription reads, “Tom walked these paths on his way to Heaven.”

The clock tower was dedicated to the memory of a student, Thomas H. Milby, who died of leukemia in 1956. The memorial was erected on the site where Tom’s parents were informed of his disease. As the clock tower keeps watch over the campus of Olivet, it is a symbol of the dedication of a man.

--John O’Brien
"How Can I Help?"

By Beth Wilsberg

It was late afternoon and I was slowly walking down a dirty, dusty path trying to overcome the smell of sewage. The odor came from the river in the South American west coast village of Borbon, Ecuador. I had been in Borbon for a few days. I was out walking trying to seek the Lord’s answer to the burden I felt for these people, so I asked the Lord, “Show me how I can help?”

I noticed the poverty in the open homes, but I wouldn’t call them homes because the specific shack I was centering in on had 20 people living in an area the size of a dorm room with a dirt floor. It was really just a roof over their heads with deteriorated old wood. The floor was their bed. A missionary sharing with me about their sleeping conditions said that one young boy only wished that cockroaches wouldn’t crawl in his ears at night. This touched my heart, so I again asked, “Lord, how can I help?”

Suddenly, I stopped for fear of running into the noise I heard coming from the ground in front of my feet. There were two young boys, about seven or eight years old, wrestling on the dirty pathway. One boy was albino with blue eyes, blond hair and black and white blotchy skin. I could tell the boys had nothing to do except pick on each other, because the only children who attended school were the rich and the few who could afford uniforms.

Further down the road were some older boys, chasing chickens down the road with sticks. I wondered, “Will these children ever have a chance to do something with their lives besides chasing chickens with sticks? They can’t afford their clothes; how can they afford a uniform for an education?”

Then the reeking smell of the river recaptured my attention. I noticed the water looked more liked mud—and at one end of the river I saw women washing their clothes in it. I thought of all the garbage and sewage that drained right into the river, and I wanted to tell them that they were only making their clothes dirtier. If only I could give them my laundry soap or, better yet, if I could wash their clothes for them. But I couldn’t wash out the rips and the holes, and I couldn’t buy them all new clothes. If only they had running water to keep the clothes they did have clean.

As I continued observing my surroundings, it struck me that they live with the same necessities Jesus did. Jesus didn’t have running water. Jesus used rivers for many purposes. He wore simple clothes and sandals. Also, Jesus was an evangelist who traveled from place to place, not having a specific home. According to Matthew 8:20b, “The Son of man has no place to lay his head down,” which relates to there who are homeless or have just a shack for a home. I again asked the Lord, pleading this time, “How can I help?”

Further down the river I noticed some people bathing. I centered in on one small boy as he bent over as if touching his toes. I saw his bottom as it came out of the water facing me, and saw that it was covered with open sores colored red with blood. I stood there for a moment, and God gave me a burden for that boy that answered my question “How can I help?”

That moment changed my life, because I saw through that toddler’s sores the way I could show all the people in the village of Borbon the way to escape from that stinky river. They have no way of escaping except to look up. God would show His answer through a nurse like me. I would tend their medical needs with medication, while explaining God’s wonders and healing powers. Healing would give them hope and belief in God. They will learn through my teaching that God is The Escape. It will give them a purpose for living. They will continually strive for their mansions in Heaven someday. God is the wonderful escape I want to share.

Thank you, Lord, for showing me how I can help.
Road To Tomorrow

By Dana Ingram

The day had finally arrived. Through twelve years of public school, through all the weekends I stayed at home instead of going out with my friends, through all the report cards and term papers, through it all I had dreamed of this day. It was finally here—the day I would leave for college and start a brand new life, the day I would grow up.

I will never forget the emotions that raced through me when the alarm clock went off that fateful Tuesday morning. Both dread and excitement washed over me in a succession of waves that rapidly increased in force until I was almost drowning in them. Surely I had only entered my room a few minutes ago to sleep in my bed for the last time. Now I had to get up and face this day, whether I wanted to or not.

Breakfast was the hardest meal I'd ever had to swallow. Even though I pleaded that I could not possibly eat a bite, my mother insisted that I needed a good breakfast as this was going to be a long day. My mother's home-cooked breakfasts are the best in the world but, on that day, everything tasted like cardboard. The eggs and hash browns on my plate turned into a mountain I had to climb. It seemed an eternity before I finally ate enough to satisfy my parents.

As I climbed the stairs to go to my room and get the last of my luggage, I thought about all the times I had climbed those stairs before, sometimes laughing, sometimes crying. It seemed at that moment that all of the emotional times in my life could be remembered by my feelings on those stairs. It was hard to believe that this was my final walk up to my room. I slowed my pace so I could lock the moment into my memory forever.

As I walked into my room, I was surprised to find I was walking into the room of a complete stranger. This was not the room I'd spent the last seventeen years of my life in! This room was bare and empty, void of all memories of a happy past. I realized at that moment that things would never be the same. I would leave and return, and even though this would always be my home I would soon grow out of it. Soon I would begin a home of my own.

Turning my back on the past, I walked down the stairs and out the door. Turning once, I looked back at the treasure chest that held all my fondest memories. This was my home, and I was leaving it and walking down the road to tomorrow. Whatever happened, this day would always be engraved in my mind. This was the day I started a brand new life. This was the day I grew up.

Changes

The first time you open your eyes focus on a pineapple;
It is very attractive with its different colors and shapes,
But appears to be unappealing to eat.
You explore to find that it is soft and juicy.
You think it is great until you reach the middle,
To find that it is hard and prickly.
You have mixed feelings about pineapples.
The sudden change made it take on a different meaning.
Now you are a little more careful when eating pineapples.

--Leonard Avera Jr.
My world has four walls.
Funny, I used to like them.
Now they're more of the same boring and depressing

Why is it—when you're sick—
Everyone else is cheerful?

(Stupid question: I'm sick!)

(Lie, lie, I'm dying!)

(Of course you do—
you're afraid you'll get it too.)
Perhaps I'm being cynical
or negative
or paranoid
or I'm delirious.

That's probably it.
Someone has moved the bathroom...
way...
down...
the...
hall.

They do that to you to get you "up and around" sooner.
There are 132 blocks in the ceiling.
I wonder if my roommate knows that?
There goes that bell again!

Dong! Dong! Dong!
Dong! Dong! Dong!
Dong! Dong!

I hate that thing.
Why do we need a bell?
I have a clock
My roommate has a clock
Everyone on this floor has a clock
Some one tell me why we need that bell!

To annoy me.
They all want that.
"Get her when she's down."

Why can't I sleep at night
and can't stay awake during the day????
I want my mommy!
I want to be six again,
And have stories read to me,
And sleep on the couch,
And watch color TV.
That was the life.
You never know what you have
until it's gone.
I want to get better.
Maybe someday.

Good night.

—Teri Cline
"And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?"

--William Blake, "THE TYGER" (1794)