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.....Tattoo You

A tattoo is an expression, an extension if you will,
An unnatural addition lingering until your heart grows still.

Your choice of color and design, it becomes unique,
Imagination running wild, a personal critique.

Placement takes careful thought, on a curve or in a fold,
Keeping it discreet, or bearing it bold.

Does it tell a story or do you have to explain,
Are you open to questions, or do you refrain.

Did it come from your soul or a juvenile dare,
Did you go in solo or part of a pair?

Is it the high of something different and new,
Will you regret it in years so few.

The first on's a little scary, a decision you can't reverse,
Some go back for more; they say the ink is a curse.

Could the message be obscene, a cartoon, or an expression of
Love,
Does it cover small or large areas, is it below the waist
Or above?

Tattoos carry a stigma, observers hold a grudge, but
If you only look, how can you judge?

Tattoo me and I'll tattoo you. Impressions aren't always in
ink,
Come spend a little time with me and tell what you think.

AnnMarie Hooste

My eyes keep coming back to the garden.
The place Mom and I talked.
She loved her garden, spent much time there,
Touched each flower as we walked.

It was in that garden that I learned from Mom,
'Bout birds and bees and life.
From little things, great lessons learned
On how to cope with strife.

I smile as I step off the porch
Past tall holly hock plants.
Small mounds of dirt bring back to mind
The time I sat on fire ants.

Memories are made to be relived
Time passes by so fast.
Now, face to face with the garden Mom loved
I thank god for my past.

My steps to car are briskly made.
Know what I have to do.
Spend time, leave memories in my wake,
Give back the love I knew.

I want memories as golden as this.
For sharing with my small son.
Just simple pleasures to enjoy,
Like TIME to play and run.

Erma Kahle

.....Remember When

Remember when we were in kindergarten and shared the
same toys,
When we talked in class, then had to be separated,
When we played tag on the slide during lunch hour in the
playground,
The times we had slumber parties and stayed up until
morning,
When we had substitute teachers and made them raise holy
hell,
When we talked about the hottest boys on the phone past
"lights out,"
The day we got our licenses and our parents prayed to God,
When we went to dances and partied the night away,
When we threw our caps up and realized this was it,
Remember when we were always together, now we are going
to different colleges,
And the only things to keep us close are the letters and
an occasional phone call.

Christina Thompson

.....Time

Measurement of a day
Divided by seconds, minutes, and hours.
The same each passing day,
Some seem slower than others.

An age of the past,
Leaving remnants of yesterday.
A guide to the future,
For generations to follow.

Not to be wasted in the present,
As it is an hourglass of our lives.
Each piece of sand as a moment,
Precious, always to be cherished.

Christina Thompson

.....The Non-Smoker

Lately, Robin's life was like the weak infield pop-up he hit to end yesterday's neighborhood stickball game. As he woke up this humid July morning, things appeared to be pretty much unchanged. He got out of bed, walked across the living room of his mother's apartment, and entered the kitchen to fix breakfast and plan that day's adventure.

Over a bowl of Special K and a peanut butter sandwich, robin decided to take the bus to the park and find his group of friends, whom, for all he knew, lived in the park. He finished his meal and glanced at the small magnet calendar on the refrigerator on his way out the door. It reminded him that in six weeks he would be starting the 10th grade. This was an unbearable situation in itself, not to mention the fact that Robin would be going to a new school because of some rezoning ordinance. It didn't make much sense to robin.

Robin boarded the crowded bus and searched for a seat. As he walked down the aisle, he spotted two possibilities. One seat was next to a fat man, another spot was next to a sharply dressed woman. Not much choice here, Robin thought. He sat down next to the woman as the bus took off.

The woman was young, around 30, Robin figured. She was wearing a navy blazer and skirt and she continuously glanced up at Robin and then quickly back down at her newspaper. Robin noticed that nearly everyone on the bus was reading a newspaper and he wondered for a moment if he had missed some major event in the world. he quickly realized, however, that if that were the case, he would hear about it from his friends in the park.

The bus had traveled a couple of blocks when Robin began to wonder if his friends would still be at the picnic table where they met every day.

"What time is it?" Robin asked the woman.

"Can you say please?"

"Please."

"Ten-thirty."

"Are you sure? Cause it was twenty-five after when I was at the bus stop."

"Kid, this is a \$300 watch, it keeps the correct time."

The fat guy laughed and the woman turned around and

smiled at him. Robin did not appreciate being the object of their humor.

Robin jumped off the bus at the park and began walking to the picnic table. When he got there, only Pat was waiting. Pat was Robin's age, but he was very short and looked much younger. Pat looked so young that he could still ride the bus for half price. Kids over 11 were not allowed in the petting zoo in the park and Pat could even go in there.

"Where's everyone else?" robin asked.

"They took off to go to a movie."

"Why didn't you go?"

"No money."

"I kind of wish they had waited for me."

"They were going to, but you never have any money either."

Great, Robin thought, a whole day with Pat and his cigarettes. Along with the rest of Robin's friends, Pat had begun smoking this summer. Robin had tried it, but the ashes kept burning holes in his homemade T-shirts.

Robin and Pat leaned against the picnic table and watched as people walked by. Robin wondered where all these people could possibly be going. He thought of the park as being more of a place you came to and stayed, instead of passed through on the way to someplace else.

"School will be starting soon," Pat said. "At least that will give us something to do. End the boredom for a while."

"Shit, I'd rather be bored. I'm quitting after this term anyway," Robin said.

"Yeah, but what are you going to do then?"

"I don't know. I was thinking about going down to city hall and see if I can get a job with the Parks Department. You know, mowing the grass and painting fences."

"They don't hire kids for those jobs," Pat said. "You've got to be old -- at least 30. so you can forget that."

Robin sighed. Being stuck with Pat all day was not a good thing. The boys decided to walk to the hot dog stand on the other side of the pond in hopes of talking someone into buying them something to eat. On their way, they stopped at a table which sold maps of the park for a dime. They knew the kid working at the table. His name was Carlos and he was asleep. Robin pounded his fist on the

times before.

They walked past the insurance building where Pat's mother worked. They had all gone in there one day because her office was giving her a party and there was free food. Robin didn't remember much about it except that Pat had gotten dressed up. Robin was hoping Pat would stop in and see his mother.

"I don't know if I should live with my mom or my dad this year," Pat blurted. "What do you think?"

Aggravated that Pat had not left, Robin snapped, "I couldn't care less, man."

"I just thought that since you picked your mom--"

"I didn't pick anyone Pat. My mom took me 'cause my old man wanted to make my room an office. Do you have to ask me about everything you do?"

"No, man. Sorry."

"Jesus, Pat, the other day you asked me if you should wear jeans or shorts to the park. If you really want my opinion about something, ask me about those damn cigarettes."

They continued to walk block after block, each in their own world.

"You don't need any money to go in there, let's try it," Pat said.

Robin, a little surprised Pat was still with him, nodded. They walked up the marble stairs and entered the art museum. The only other time Robin had been there was on a field trip in fourth grade. He didn't remember anything about it, however, because he had been made to sit in the lobby after not staying in line.

Once inside, the air-conditioner offered immediate relief. No one in the museum seemed to pay any attention to the two sweaty teenagers.

"I need to find a drinking fountain," Robin said.

"There's one just down this hall and to the left."

"How do you know - you come here?"

"Sometimes, when it rains or no one is in the park."

They headed down the hall to the drinking fountain. Robin felt strange being the only person with no apparent interest in the art on the walls. Bothered by this, he stopped in front of a painting to appear interested.

"This is one of my favorites," Pat said.

Robin looked up to see a picture of a man sitting in a

prairie. It looked strange to him, and he stared at it longer than he wanted to.

"The artist painted some objects in great detail and others can barely be recognized," Pat explained.

"I knew there was something different about it, I just couldn't figure out what."

"Neither could I at first, but they have brochures and pamphlets here to explain the paintings."

Robin never reached the drinking fountain. As he and Pat walked down the hall, they stopped and looked at nearly every piece of art. Pat told Robin what he knew about some pieces, Robin read the description of others from the pamphlet he picked up. The two walked around the museum in their own world.

"Almost closing time boys," a man dressed in a uniform said. "If there's one thing in particular you want to see, you might want to do it now."

"That's all right, we have to be leaving anyway," Robin said. The man smiled and nodded.

Robin and Pat walked outside into the early evening. The humidity was not nearly as bad anymore. It was time for each to go home and find some dinner. As they walked, they talked about the museum.

"You ever think about buying a painting?" Robin asked.

"No, I don't ever have any money."

"But if you did, you would want to buy one, wouldn't you?"

"Sure."

When each of them had to turn different ways, Robin suggested they meet at the museum tomorrow instead of the park.

"How are we going to get a hold of everyone else?" Pat said.

"I don't want to tell them, just me and you."

"What about Carlos?"

"Well, I might not need that job. I'll just have to see. You said we don't belong to the park anyway."

"True. Maybe we can go to the park after we see the museum tomorrow, when there will be more kids."

"No, the park isn't safe at night. That's why we go in the day."

"Oh yeah, good point."

"So let's just plan on the museum," Robin said.

"You liked it there didn't you?"
"I'm not sure why, really," Robin said. "Maybe just because it's free."
"Yeah, it is free; too bad they don't allow smoking."

Jon Ray

.....The Word Of Life

. M oments etched
E ternally in
M y mind.
O ld faces and places
R emembered in kind,
I ncredibly able to
E ndure any
S pan of distance and time.

Daniel A. Ryan IV

Snow

Nobody saw the snowflake that fell outside just under the window sill. There was too much going on inside for anybody to realize that the first snowflake of the season had fallen, especially in this household.

The TV was alive with vague memories of Saturday morning cartoons and late night horror movies, along with the stark realities of the evening news of twenty five years.

On top of the TV, a film of house dust was growing, the kind that comes back an hour after you last wiped it off. Except this time it had been an eternity since anybody had touched it. Inside, the picture tube had been cooling for three days. There were fingerprints on the knobs, most of them from nights of popcorn and movies.

Outside, the second snowflake of the season fell just beneath the mailbox. It took its time, unaware of its role in the snowflake sequence, and nearly an eternity passed before it came to rest beneath the home made mailbox at the end of the driveway.

The homemade barn mailbox sat at the end of the driveway and told everybody going by that the people inside were a well adjusted group of individuals.

Back inside the house, a plant continued its existence for everybody to look at, and to keep up its life-giving oxygen production. It roared quietly to itself as it carried on this process, converting the very light of day into raw energy, while at the same time, it efficiently stored more of this energy in vast storehouses beneath the soil.

Next to the plant, an empty space on the rug existed. The empty space took the shape of a beautiful yellow lounge seat that was now in storage, waiting for a decision on a divorce case. It was loved so much that there were no stains here and there where lemonade had been spilled or a hot summer day, or a water ring might have been left from a cup of punch on a New Year's neighborhood celebration.

But now it was just a space. The only person who knew that the space existed was the man who now began to sneeze loudly from the last bedroom down the hall on the left. At this moment, he could care less that the empty space on the floor next to the plant had no idea that it used to be a sofa.

He also didn't care that the second snowflake of the season year had just fallen. He just wanted to get some sleep, C

he wanted to sleep. But the room wouldn't stop moving. He covered his eyes, but he could still feel the room spinning. This had never happened.

The third snowflake of the season fell. This time it was on a country road somewhere out of town. It landed with a crash loud enough to scare the dickens out of anybody, but it didn't because there was nobody close enough to hear it. The flake sat there on the road and sighed. This one melted, it was happy that its life was over.

The man in the house didn't hear the third snowflake either. Not only was his world moving, but his ears were also buzzing so loud that he had no idea that he was snoring as he lay there, awake. What he did know was that he couldn't sleep because of the buzzing in his ears, and because the world wouldn't stop spinning. He wanted somebody to hang onto. God, he wanted somebody to hang onto. Where was everybody? This had never happened before.

The fourth and fifth snowflakes of the season fell at exactly the same time, which is hard to do, and anonymously set a new world record. This hadn't been done before. Of course, nobody knew that they had done this, and nobody even knew that it hadn't been done before. They fell apart from each other, on different sides of town, so even the snowflakes themselves didn't know that they had done this.

Back inside the house with the homemade barn mailbox, a disturbance of giant proportions was taking place. It started somewhere in a small box on the wall. Inside the box, a drop of mercury had contracted just enough to break an electrical circuit. It wasn't long after this before the furnace went on and started pumping out warm air.

The house could hear this happening, but the man in the bed down the hall had no idea that the central heating was kicking on. All he knew was that it was getting unbearably hot in the room. He kicked off the covers and lay in his underwear, sweating. God, he wished he could sleep. The damned buzzing in the room was getting louder. It had increased to a quiet roar that he knew was in his head.

The kids were away at school, that's right. What was happening to him? This had never happened before.

The plant was painfully aware of the heater. It was roasting over a vent where it had been placed by movers weeks ago. They had been trying to get it out of the way so

they could take the loveseat. The plant didn't remember this, but then again, it was too busy living to notice.

The man tried to remember what it was he was supposed to be doing. Working somewhere, that's it. Where? God, his ears were roaring. What was the matter? This had never happened before.

A distant sound came in behind the roaring in his ears. It was to his left. Now his ears were ringing. No, they weren't ringing. It was the phone. He opened his eyes and he rolled towards the nightstand. The room lurched to the left with his movement, then the phone came briefly into focus. Something blocked part of his view of the phone. He couldn't focus on the object, it was too close and he couldn't get his eyes to stop the thing from swaying back and forth.

It rang again, this time it sounded closer. He reached for the phone. His hand collided with the object in front of the phone. It crashed over on the stand. It was a bottle. How did that get there?

"Dad?" the voice on the phone said, "Dad? Hello? Dad, are you there? What's going on? Dad?" He couldn't say anything. He blinked at the receiver on top of the nightstand. It was so far away. It must his son. The receiver went in and out of focus. What was wrong? This had never happened before.

He tried to hang it up. He couldn't move. Something was wrong. His arm wouldn't move. He couldn't move anything. He couldn't even blink.

There was a dial tone now. Whoever it was had hung up. He hung up the phone. Something was wrong this time. He could move. He was a husband and a father of three boys. This had never happened. This didn't happen to husbands and fathers. It was impossible. It couldn't happen. He brought his knees up to his chest and hugged them.

The buzzing was back in his head, the room lurched faster. Was it going to stop? This never happened. God, this never happened. After the fourth and fifth flakes, the snow came down with increasing magnitude, and it wasn't long before the first snowflake of the season had stuck to number three hundred seventy-six trillion, nine hundred twenty-eight billion, two hundred twelve million five hundred seventy thousand, one hundred twenty.

In the house with the homemade barn mailbox, the TV continued to remember Saturday morning cartoons and late

night horror movie popcorn parties gone by. The plant continued to live, oblivious to everything around it, except for the heater vent it was sitting on and roasting it. The empty space on the floor continued to be an empty space on the floor where a yellow loveseat had once been. The snow continue to fall and increase in magnitude outside. And the man in be down the hall on the left continued to hug his knees and wonder what happened.

David H. Nelson

I saw a man all dressed in gray,
Walking down the street
He yelled at me, "What a beautiful!"
Then jumped and clapped his feet.
He went along his merry way,
Heading for a bar
He yelled again, "What a beautiful day!"
And then got hit by a car.

Michael J. Taylor

It's Getting Dark

Plucking the pigskin out of the dry autumn air, Paul Swoboda lands with the grace of a gymnast, brushes off a diving tackle from the slower defender and scoots down the field.

"He's at the fifty. The forty. The thirty. . . The ten. Touchdown! Haaaaagh! The crowd goes wild!" Paul announces as Jerry, Phil and Dave run to the end of the park to congratulate him.

"9-8. Losers walk," Paul boasts. "First one to ten drinks for free."

* * *

Jim Storin pours the last ounce of bourbon into the yellow Tupperware cup and turns on the 6 o'clock news.

("...Leroy Hudson, a native of Chicago, is suspected of killing the 56-year-old Lipinski. He is being held...")

"Niggers," Storin mumbles with hate.

After sucking back the shot, Storin grabs the Cat hat and ring of keys from the coffee table and heads for the garage.

He opens the door of his tan Chevy Malibu and checks his back pocket for his wallet. Feeling the lump, he gets in the car and drives off to the liquor store.

Inside the store, Storin picks up a bottle of Jack Daniels and a 12-pack of Budweiser. The cashier is watching the Bulls-Pistons game on a little black and white television behind the counter.

"I didn't know the bulls were on," Storin says.

"Yeah, it was a 3:30 start," the cashier replies.

"Who's winning?"

"Bulls are up by five with about two minutes to go. Jordan has 33."

"My boy. He's a classy brother."

Storin walks out the automated doors to his car.

Sitting in his car, Storin opens the bottle of whiskey and takes a deep swig and wipes his chin. After taking a second gulp, he starts the engine. Throwing the Chevy into reverse, Storin nearly runs into the lamppost and pulls away, leaving tire tracks and the smell of burnt rubber in his wake.

Turning left onto the highway, he cuts off a silver foreign sports car carrying a miscegenous couple. The black

male driver lays on the horn, swerves around storin, giving him the finger as he drives off.

"Half-breeds!," Storin shouts and presses harder on the accelerator.

* * *

Keith Phelps tucks the ball under his right arm and slaps Paul away with his left. Running through the grass along the sidewalk which makes up the sideline, Keith passes the orange cone and spikes the ball.

"You have to win by two," Keith confidently shouts.

"C'mon, it's getting dark. We could be here for hours," Phil argues.

"We always play 'you have to win by two.' Fair's fair," Keith answers back. "Let's be cool about it, huh?"

"OK, but only for a few more possessions. I'm getting tired," agrees Paul.

* * *

The two cars come barreling around the corner into the middle class, suburban subdivision -- the Chevy gains on the sports car.

A white Volvo station wagon backs out of its driveway and the sports car maneuvers around the obstacle, momentarily leaving Storin behind.

Pounding on the leather grip steering wheel with his left hand, Storin cusses in anger, grabs the bottle from between his legs, chokes back a shot and presses down on the accelerator.

Noticing the sports car turning right at the end of the block, Storin takes a short cut down a side street to head the couple off. Darting down the tree-lined parkway, the needle on the speedometer rounds the top of the dial and hangs in limbo between the 50 and 60 until Storin hits the brakes to make the next turn.

* * *

Making the turn, Storin eyes the silver sports car cautiously driving by the opposite end of the park.

"Come to Jimmy you half-breeds," Storin mutters mania-

cally.

Hitting a long straightaway, Storin steps on the gas.

Keith sets the ball on the orange nylon tee and takes six steps back.

"Kick it deep this time," says a teammate.

"No, I'll kick it on the ground so they can't return it," Keith says.

"Kick it deep, then they have to go farther to score."

"Yeah, kick it deep."

Keith focuses on the upright football and approaches the tee. Leveling his foot into it, he gets under the ball too much and shanks it into the street. Running out into the street, Keith freezes as he sees the speeding chevy heading his way.

Storin is approaching speed of 70 m.p.h. when he sees the teenager paralyzed in his path. He jerks the wheel to the left to avoid hitting the young man.

Hitting the curb, the front left wheel blows out and the car flips and rolls twice, coming to a crashing halt at the base of a street lamp. Storin lays there with his partially decapitated head caught in the shattered windshield.

Tom Long

.....Alcoholic Father

Everyday he clocks out at three,
But doesn't come home until eight.

In between he spends his time
With a barmaid and a bottle.

Mary Colleen Krause

.....To A Feminist

I am happy
My husband loves me
My children need me
And oh, yes
I take this night class
For myself.

You are crazy
Without a man
No maternal instincts
And what about
All those selfish plans
For yourself.

I am a wife
Who are you?
I am a mother
Who are you?
A woman?
Are you lonely?

Carolyn Kolovitz

All Amy could think about was jumping into a hot shower. "Why do I keep this disgusting job," she thought, as she reflected on how much she disliked working in the hospital dishroom. "I should find something clerical." While punching out her time card, her spirits began to rise. "I'm out of this place and later I'm gonna get lost in margaritaville! Yeeha!"

The speed limit didn't seem to matter to Amy as she sang along with Madonna and watched the setting sun splash pink streaks across the sky. She was about five minutes from home and decided to get some cash for the evening. There was automatic teller on the way and it wouldn't take but a minute. Turning into the now deserted parking lot, Amy rummaged through the glove box for her money card. "Good," she thought, "no waiting in line." Completing her transaction, a blue car came from an adjoining parking lot and drove by the teller machine. It stopped at the curb waiting to turn onto the street. Thinking nothing of it, Amy took the cash and her card and got back into her car. The driver of the blue car seemed busy and she didn't want to wait, so she headed for the other exit. Turning onto the street, Amy looked into her rearview mirror and saw the blue car pull out in front of another car. "That guy needs to wake up," she thought.

While switching stations Amy was deciding what to wear out. "My jeans skirt, no that's dirty. Shorts, nah, I'd have to iron them. My black skirt's clean, yeah, I'll wear it with my pink half shirt." Breaking for a stoplight, she was startled as the blue car slammed on its breaks and almost hit her. "Gees, is that guy on drugs or something?" She kept an eye on him as she proceeded home.

Remembering she was out of tequila, Amy made one more stop. Embarrassed about being in her uniform, she was in and out of Osco in a flash. Only a few blocks from her apartment, she was surprised to see the blue car behind her again. "That's creepy." Coming to the last stop before entering her driveway, she turned left, watching what the blue car would do. It turned left and slowed down. Starting to get butterflies in her stomach, she wondered if he might be following her. The thought of some stranger following her home scared her, since she lived with only one

other female and didn't know any of the other tenants.

Amy decided to drive past her apartment. She turned right, then left, eventually working her way back to a main road, but she still had not shaken the blue car. "This is silly," she thought, "I'm probably being paranoid over nothing." She made several more random turns just to make sure, then was going to head back home. To her dismay, the blue car was still behind her. Becoming increasingly nervous, Amy started thinking about all those horrible stories on the news about young girls that mysteriously disappear, some to be found later, dead. Others never found at all. She began to panic, thinking no one would even miss her for several hours. "Just relax," she thought, "he can't hurt you if you stay in the car. I could drive to Trent's work. No, I can't sit around there for an hour. He'd tell me I'm over reacting anyway."

Breathing heavily now, her hands were wet and trembling on the wheel. She could barely keep her eyes off the rearview mirror. "Think, think," she told herself. "What can I do?" Staying on the main roads, she soon came to another stoplight. The blue car was one car behind her. As soon as she stopped, she locked all the doors. "This is ridiculous! I'm a prisoner in my own car. Why is this man following me? What did I do? What does he want? Whew, take a deep breath pull yourself together and be rational." Waiting until the last moment to turn her headlights on, she hoped she could lose him in traffic. "I could pull into a gas station and just ask him what he wants. No, I don't think I really want to know. This is so eerie. He's not trying to flag me down or signal me in any way, he's just following me!" Brimming on hysteria, she turned off the radio and tears were burning behind her eyes. Looking down at her gas gauge, a pang of terror swept through her. The needle was on the second to last red mark. Turning a corner, Amy saw a police car in the other lane. "Oh! If I can just get his attention." Too flustered, Amy could only think to blow her horn. With a sinking feeling she watched as he continued on his way without a glance in her direction. The blue car was steadily tailing her.

Suddenly like a light at the end of the tunnel she had an idea. "This will teach him," she thought as she was beginning to regain a little confidence. "See if he ever follows me again." With a specific destination in mind, her fear

turned to anger for this strange man in the blue car. He had prevented her from feeling safe to go home and had harassed her without any verbal communication whatsoever. Soon this game would turn in her favor. "Now," she thought, "get a little closer." Amy purposely slowed down. Her destination was approaching. She didn't signal, but made a quick turn into the well lighted police parking lot. The blue car sped past the entrance getting close enough so as Amy could read his plates. Thinking she would never forget those numbers, she wrote them down just to be safe. Relief swept over her as she parked the car and scurried up the steps.

Inside she found an officer reading the paper behind a counter. Out of breath, she began to tell her story. The officer watched her with an unchanging expression. When she had finished, he asked what she wanted him to do. "Well, I have his license plate number. Can't you find out who he is and give him a warning or something? I've been driving around for an hour not knowing what to do because I didn't want this weirdo to see where I live."

"Uh, miss, we can't give some guy a warning because he was driving around. Did he threaten you or make any obscene gestures?"

"No, but why would someone I don't know follow me unless he intended to do something bad? I don't want you to arrest him, just ask him why, or find out what he was doing."

"I'm sorry miss, but unless we have something substantial about this guy's conduct to incriminate him, we can't do anything."

"So are you saying you aren't going to help me at all, you're gonna let this guy keep following people, scaring them out of their minds?"

"You have to understand, it's not that we don't care, but this guy you said was following you hasn't broken any laws, and until he does we can't get involved. I'm sorry. I suggest you go home and make sure your doors are locked, and you'll be fine."

Feeling let down because she had been sure this was the right thing to do, she turned on her heel and was out the door with a bang. Back in her car, she was thinking about all the things she could do if she were attacked. Kicking and screaming were all she could come up with. "I wish I

up and saw her, his mouth dropped. "Oh, you still recognize me," Amy said sarcastically.

"Have you been to a hospital, miss?"

"No, I'm not seriously hurt. I just want to file a complaint."

The officer led Trent and Amy down the hall to a small room. He left them with some forms to fill out and said another officer would be with them in a minute. Trying to lighten the mood, Trent jokingly said, "Well I guess we're not going out tonight. We could order in pizza and get a movie."

"Is my eye purple yet?"

"No, it's kind of green."

Another officer came into the room. "Miss, I'm Sergeant Blake. I'm going to ask you to give me a full account of what happened tonight. I understand you were in here earlier this evening. Please include those details. Who is this young man with you?"

"This is my boyfriend, Trent. He interrupted my attack-er." The officer eyed Trent suspiciously. Amy launched into her story for the third time. The officer sat quietly, waiting for her to finish, taking several notes.

"Amy, can you give a description of the man?"

"No, it was dark and he had a cloth over my face."

"Trent, can you identify the man?"

"Um, no, just that he was kind of stocky and not real tall."

"Do you remember his hair color?"

"No, it was dark and he started to run away when I got out of my car."

"Amy, you said you heard him say something. Was there anything significant in his voice?"

"Not really, it was just low and gruff. I couldn't always tell what he was saying, he mumbled mostly. I guess if Trent had come later, I could tell you a lot more about the man."

"Calm down, Amy. I don't want to make this difficult for you, but if you can't give us anything to start with, we can't help you much."

"I gave you the license plate, go find that guy and see if he has a bruise on his chest."

"We're running a check on those plates and that man will be questioned as to his whereabouts this evening." The officer didn't have the heart to tell her the car had been

stolen. He wanted her to have some sleep and they could tell her in the morning.

Feeling let down once again, the fear Amy had felt while being followed was returning. Even being with Trent did not help because she knew he would not always be there. Leaving the police station, Amy was quiet as they drove home. Trent was trying to ease the pressure with idle conversation. "What are you thinking about, Amy? You haven't said a word."

"I was just thinking. You know, Trent, I realize they're probably never going to find out who followed me and who attacked me. So, I've decided to take some precautions myself."

"Amy, please don't do anything stupid."

"I'm going to do what I have to."

"I'm afraid to ask what that is."

"Tomorrow I'm going to buy a knife."

AnneMarie Hooste

.....A Woman's Fear

You taught me to be afraid
Not only as I walked down the street
Where you may be out there
Stalking me in the night

Or when I am in my car
You may be in the backseat,
Hiding

Or when I am home
You may hunt me down

But you may also be in my father's eyes
My brother's jokes
My lover's hands

I do not know
Safe

Carolyn Kolovitz

.....A Childhood Secret

Each morning at seven he'd come to my door
To take me to the place that I most abhor.

I'd cling to my mom never wanting to go
Though not a word could I speak to tell her so.

On the surface he seemed innocent and kind
Though I knew in my heart he had a sick mind.

I tried to behave believing I was bad,
I dared not take the chance of making him mad.

When it was nap time I would tremble in fear
As his wife's footsteps faded and his drew near.

I would lie in the bed with tears in my eyes

Looking up into the face that I despised.

I was frightened but not a word did I say.
He told me my parents would send me away.

I thought it was wrong but I didn't understand
Why mommy and daddy were friends with this ma

So I've kept it a secret for eighteen years
To spare my family the truth and the tears.

It's so hard being a child alone and confuse
Only four years old and sexually abused.

Mary Colleen Krause

.....Wrapped In Security

If you could talk, what tales would you tell,
Do you like where you live, do you sneak out
At night to explore? I've caught you staring
At my parakeet.

You intrigue me with your slow, silent movements,
The way you sense things with your tiny tongue.
You always appear calm and in control.

Have you forgotten your life before you came here,
As a baby, timid and shy, gripping tightly to the
Security of my fingers? Now you are confident,
Beautifully colored with perfect patterns.

Touching you is pleasing, smooth and cool, when
You touch me, my heart beats faster, you must trust
Me as I trust you, or could I be a fool?

I wonder if you sense I'm female like you or if
It's the warmth of my body you crave. People
Who know us take it in stride, others, like my
Mother, are uneasy.

You're my protector, I am yours. You will never
Be a belt, a purse, or a pair of boots, and who
Would bother me with you wrapped around my neck?

AnnMarie Hooste

Dresses

Gazing at the dresses that clutter my wardrobe, vivid colors
striking chords of memory. The mauve taffeta prom dress
mom made with care, the red Christmas sweater dress with
sequins on the sleeves, oh yes, and the black one I wore to a
funeral last summer.

Remembering, I have some good feelings, some sad. A few
worn regularly, others waiting their turn.

There is one dress missing from my wardrobe.

Thinking of it I see the future and choices I must make.
Changes it brings are exciting, yet I have reservations of
sorts. Along with the dress come responsibilities, sharing
and sacrifices of time.

Working toward a goal in my life, would this dress change
everything I've earned? A flowing trail, lace and pearls, a
veil, a hat, I don't know.

Preparation and honesty are important I feel, leaving few
things to surprise. I want to know him well and express
myself before I wear that dress.

AnnMarie Hooste

.....Weight Watcher

I exercise
and diet
Every Monday
of the week.
Why is it
that on Saturday
My clothes
fit so tight?

Erma Kahle

.....Innocent Victim

Whether made out of love, hate, or habit,
I was a part of life
Ripped from the place that kept me safe and warm.

My parents paid a price to get rid of me,
Yet it was I who paid the final price.
It wasn't my fault.

Mary Colleen Krause

.....Statement

In a world where physical pain is nonexistent,
Emotional wounds
Can kill.

Daniel A. Ryan IV

.....Mother

The foundation of my identity
As a woman.
We are women, the same.
What I know of being a woman-
What I hope to be, or not, what I can do,
Nobody understands me
Like mom, nobody can.
Love, respect, friendship, yes.
But let's talk about anger.
For who else can show me
The limits of womanhood
You are my living symbol of womankind.
Your defeats are billboard signs:
"Attention, we are women"
This is the way it is.
who let me be this way,
Who let parts of this world
Be shut off to people of our kind.
Who took
What we get
And then softly complained
To me later
Mom, it is with you I can share
These things, and wonder and cry
You are ma and when I realized this
I felt frustrated
And sometimes proud
But mostly determined

Carolyn Kolovitz

.....He Sees Her Coming And Going

Everyone walking behind him
wore her footsteps.

He let the phone ring
 for three days,
then, answering, felt her breath.

Fourteen cars passed him at the stoplight.
She drove all of them.

He stayed alone, emptying bottles,
smoking cigarettes, and watching MTV.

Once there was a knock on the door;
he just knew it had to be her.

Another time he saw her in his sleep
and wished that he would never wake up.

Then he realized
his life could return to normal

but only if she were dead.

Mary Colleen Krause

.....The News Of The Death Of Brian

I walked into the dorm late that day,
Mark was almost cryin'.
He said that terrible news had come:
The news of the death of Brian.

I sat there with my mouth agape,
Then asked what had occurred.
Mark retold the gruesome story,
I hung on every word.

Coming back from holiday break,
Brian felt no aggression.
In fact, he tried to call up Tom,
To reveal his hidden depression.

Tom wasn't home this Sunday night,
All knew it wasn't his fault.
Brian ran out of patience soon,
And began his self assault.

His body was found under a bridge,
Swinging on a rope.
What problem was so very huge,
That Brian could not cope?

Barely believable I found this story.
Suddenly I was cryin'.
I'd never heard anything like
The news of the death of Brian.

I had met Brian just weeks before.
His pals were Tom and Mark.
A light-hearted man, this Brian was,
What made his heart turn dark?

Brian had seemed such a happy guy,
Who didn't have a care on his mind.
We can't figure out why he chose death;
There was no note left behind.

Were Brian's worries common to us?
Could other friends have them, too?
We could not tell that Brian would leave;
He left not one single clue.

Brian was just a normal person,
The same as all my friends.
But wouldn't these others talk to me,
Before they'd meet their ends.

How can I tell who's hurting or not?
Brian might not be alone.
What if my best friend's name would be
The next one written in stone?

Scared to death, this last thought leaves me;
Paranoid, I'm not lyin',
'Cause mortal facts didn't exist until
The news of the death of Brian.

Bill Bowman

.....A Happy Man

In days of old,
When men were bold,
There lived a coward named Zeke.
He tried his best
To compete with the rest,
But his ineptness was quite unique.

"Scrawny" and "short,"
"A face liké a wart."
These were insults that followed him 'round.
He'd try to act cool,
But just look like a fool,
And the insults would still abound.

Zeke thought he had a knack
For the sport they call track,
And decided to go out for the team.
The guys told him to suck it,
The coach said grab a bucket,
And make sure the shotput is clean.

Zeke hung up his shorts,
Said good-bye to sports,
And decided to join a club.
He tried for admission
To many commissions,
But each one just gave him the rub.

Zeke then turned his fancy
To a girl named Nancy,
Whom we had liked over the years.
To add to his disgrace,
She laughed in his face
When he brought her a present from Sears.

"Leave me alone,
You sick little drone,"
Nancy said as she walked away.
"Polka dot panties
Are made for grannies,
And not for the girls of today."

.....Lonely

I lied to my grandmother,
Stole from my mother.
I didn't shower for weeks,
Sold most of my stuff for drug money.
I would have killed if I had to,
Even went to jail.
I betrayed my friends,
No longer have them.
I didn't know why I did
All of those irrational things.
I lived a lie,
Fooled and betrayed by a fatal attraction.
I depended on chemicals,
Overdosed on heroin.
I died an ugly death,
Now I'm six feet under.
It's so lonely
When you don't even know yourself.

Daniel A. Ryan IV

.....The Future

I've always liked the idea of living
Day to Day;
It's always been my way.

It's frightening now,
I'm past one day at a time.
I'm looking to the future.

Looking is not frightening.
What is,
I do not see the future . . .

S. A. Zmolek

"Crips" Daniel A Ryan IV

.....Memorium

Roaming down the winding rough road
I think about my life.
The future lies in the path ahead,
Behind lies pain and strife.

Close behind me is violence,
Achieved by knife and gun,
As the pain and the death of my brothers
Ended the gang and the "fun."

had a knife or some mace. Oh, here I go again! The officer was probably right, even if that guy was following me, he's probably just some jerk getting his kicks and nothing more. After all, he didn't try to flag me down."

Trying to get her mind on something else, Amy turned on the radio. It seemed like commercials were on every station. Glancing at her watch, she was surprised to see how late it had gotten. "Trent is going to think I went out and left him. I'll call him as soon as I get home." The thought of calling Trent and having him come over was a little comforting. Amy realized how nervous she still was as her hands were trembling on the wheel. "A hot shower will do me good. It's not going to get any better if I keep looking over my shoulder." Turning into her parking lot, she wished it had more lights, "Oh well, if anything ever happens to me, somebody inside will hear me scream."

Turning off the engine, headlights, and radio, she gathered her belongings in her arms. Juggling her things, she managed to get the car door locked. Walking up to her apartment, she heard footsteps behind her. Before Amy turned around, she was tackled to the ground. Falling in the grass, she wasn't hurt, she just got the wind knocked out of her. When she tried to lift her head, her attacker put a cloth over her face and held it tight. The terror of what was happening began to creep over her. She tried to struggle, but the man seemed huge and his grip was firm as he tried to drag her into the shadows. The man was talking in a low harsh voice; it seemed like threats to Amy, but she couldn't make out what he was saying or why he would want to hurt her. During the struggle Amy got a foot free. She kicked as hard as she could. Eyes closed and barely able to breathe, she couldn't aim, but she hoped she'd done a little damage. Her foot struck him hard in the chest, knocking him backward, loosening his grip. Amy started screaming and scrambled to her feet. The man was on her again. This time he hit her in the face, sending a piercing pain through her body as her neck lashed backwards.

Amy was trying to pull herself together, but she couldn't make sense of anything. If she got away, she wasn't even sure which way to run. The man was shaking her now, mumbling something about teaching her a lesson. Amy's head was spinning now and she was feeling sick to her stomach. "Oh God, please let this end. Why is

this happening?" Lights, did she see lights? Thrown down by the man again, she hit the side of the building. Voices she knew she heard other voices. "Where was the man now Is he going to hurt me any more?"

"Oh my God! Amy, what's happened?" A familiar voice, she was almost relieved. "Let me help you. Are you hurt bad? Amy can you talk to me? Do you know who that man was?"

"No, I'm not hurt. I feel numb and I feel like throwing up."

"Let me take you inside. Do you want to go to the hospital? How long have you been out here?"

"I don't want to go to the hospital. Nothing is broken and I don't think I'm bleeding anywhere. I just want some ice on my face."

"I should call the police. Where's your phone book? Oh God, Amy, look at your face. Let me take you to the hospital. Please."

"No, Trent. I'm glad you showed up when you did, but I'm not going to see a doctor for five minutes, get some Tylenol, and then get a seventy-five dollar bill in the mail. I think this ice will do the trick."

"Okay, no hospital, but I'm insisting on the police. That guy needs to be off the streets. I didn't get a look at his face."

"Well, neither did I, so what the hell are we going to tell them, to take finger prints from my face?"

"Hey babe, I'm sorry. It's okay now, I'm here."

"It's not your fault. You don't know the half of it. I've already been to the police station once tonight."

"What, wh--, why, what's going on?"

"It's a long story. I'll tell you on the way to the police station. I don't want them coming here. What made you decide to come over anyway?"

"It was getting late and you hadn't called, so I figured you were running late. I got some beer. I thought we could have few before we went out."

On their way to the police station, Amy told Trent about how the guy had followed her all over town, and how she ended up at the police station, and how they told her they couldn't do anything. "Well, they'll have to do something now," Trent said. Going into the police station again, Amy saw the same officer behind the counter. When he looked

With the death of each and every brother
The pain inside me built.
I felt the weight of twenty deaths
Yet swallowed the pain and guilt.

Heavy on my shoulders was the
Guilt I felt for their fates.
I was mentioned in their last words,
So I remember their dates.

As I held my dead brother's hand
And looked into his face,
I wished that I could save his brief young life,
But his eyes stared into space.

Although his road came to an end,
My road has to go on.
I'll long for my friends often,
But they'll always be gone.

The road ahead is a mystery,
But I can't live in the past.
So I continue down my road,
Haunted by memories that last.

Daniel A. Ryan IV

.....My Garden

I worry about things no worry could possibly change
My stomach churns, my appetite disappears.
I ask myself, "Why am I so upset?"
I look inside myself and then I see
I stew and fret of things outside of me.
To get fresh air, I look outside the window.
The beautiful perennial garden greets my eye.
My shoulders relax as I turn to go out
To be among the flowers that I love.
As I move among the blossoms, I know
My god will speak to me as I walk, saying,
"Come with me and listen and I will share
The wisdom and peace to be found among your plan
Tall hollyhocks growing in the very back row
Are flat on the ground from winds that blew last night
It brings to mind the lesson that God gave me
About a house built on sand, its foundation weak.
A sign to me that prayer time was needed.
The cannas, red and yellow, burst into bloom,
Their huge green leaves unrolled in perfect precision
I remember God's words to me in the book of Psalms.
"Man's mind plans his way, the Lord directs his steps.
I humbly bow my head and seek direction.
The globe thistle blossoms should have been picked.
Their round blue heads have faded to pale blue.
A reminder that I had failed to be aware
Of opportunities to share my faith.
Was I too busy to show others his love
Or did the daily tapestry of their lives
Differ too much from mine to even try?
God said, "In as much as you have done it
to the least of these, you have done to me."
I see hen and chickens nestled close together.
St. Luke quoted Christ, "How often would I
Have gathered your children together as a hen gathers
Her brood under her wings, and you would not."
Thoughts of a wayward Godchild flooded my mind.
His temper was destroying everything in his path.
His friendship with drugs was flirting with disaster.
He needed the protection of the almighty's wings.
The amaranthus plant, so red and regal,

Stood with faded blossoms loaded with seed
 To share with all. Passing on its beauty
 Reminds me of how God's love multiplies
 If we remember to always pass it on.
 I see the larkspur with its delicate blossoms
 All branching, as family, from the same stem.
 Isn't this God's plan to bring us all to Him?
 The tiger lilies, orange as harvest moon,
 Bring to mind the words, "Harvest is plentiful
 But laborers are few." "Use me, Lord," is
 My promise, but "Equip me," is my prayer.
 The Dusty Miller, silvery and grey
 Grows close to and supports the tall, dark phlox.
 When will people with colors that are different
 Stand side by side and share each other's burdens?
 The row of pink petunias bloomed profusely
 Because I had pruned them well. The words of the Lord,
 "All things work together for good to those
 Who love God," caused thought of times in my life
 When pruning had strengthened, given me character.
 Painful as it seemed at the time, I always knew
 God's plan for my life would be better than mine.
 I think a minute, then with joy in my heart
 I leave the garden filled with peace to pass on
 For the seeds God sows as I walk in my garden,
 Must be passed to others to season their lives.
 I walk back to the house past the marigolds.
 Common and ordinary though they are,
 They share their bright beauty all summer long.
 The promise of God, "He gives power to the faint,
 To him who has no might, he increases strength,"
 Gives me confidence to tread my path with ease
 He is with me, calls me by name, I'm His!

Erma Kahle

.....Window of Life

A window
 Made of glass so strong
 Protecting all within its care
 Keeping out harsh winds
 Freezing snow
 Pouring rain.
 While allowing good to shine through,
 Warmth of sun
 Faint laughter of children playing.
 If only each life could have its own window
 A window to shelter them.
 To keep out cruel remarks
 Rejection
 Failures
 All that hurts.
 Yet all good be allowed through,
 Laughter
 Kindness
 Love.

Tisha Lounsberry

.....Burn Out

I'm so bored with school.
Classroom time is dull.
It's no longer interesting.
College has become a hull.

I used to like my studies.
I used to want a career.
I guess I'm suffering burnout.
So why do I stay here?

I'd rather play my guitar.
I'd rather go fishing.
I'd rather pursue other interests
Instead of always studying.

I want to be a professional.
I don't want to make a wage.
But every time I open a book,
My body tenses in rage.

It's a matter of self-esteem.
Finishing tests my ego.
All I want is my degree.
I no longer want to know.

I can't drop out now.
I can't just get up and quit.
There's a lot of money invested
And my parents are paying for it.

My parents would be disappointed
If I quit school now.
My father would be angry.
My mother would have a cow.

Finishing school won't happen
If I continue at this pace.
I won't pursue my field.
I won't run the rat race.

I used to get good grades.
I used to do my best.
But now I skip my classes.
My God, I need a rest!
S. A. Zmolek

.....Class

God we're bored, we can't believe,
How long this man can talk.
It makes us want to get up and leave,
And take a little walk.

He thinks that we just love his voice,
And how it rattles on.
We know that we're all not here by choice,
But rules make us stay on.

It's just too bright outside for notes,
And making pencils roam.
We know that if we took a vote,
We'd all vote to go home.

Anonymous

.....Spooked

A decaying old tree
Stood in the eerie moonlight.
Fine, foggy mist
Rose from the surface of the bog.
The jet black night
Was deathly silent.
Suddenly, a dry snap,
Like an exposed bone cracking.
Finally, a horrendously loud "plop,"
As a bullfrog went for a swim.

Daniel A. Ryan IV

The Game

"Hood ornaments" the game as we often refer to it,
My roommate and I decided they deserved to be hit.

The "they" are all the college students who walk on the
street,
And cause us drivers to stop every five feet.

College students have become the objects of our game,
Little do they know they'll never be the same.

Twenty-five points the driver adds to his score,
As the student walks with traffic, the driver screams for
more.

One-hundred is gained when the student is on the opposite
side,
And the driver yells, "I'm gonna get his hide."

For those who bicycle in the middle of the street,
All that will be left is a cold and empty seat.

These brave riders are worth one-hundred twenty-five and
more,
Depending on location, we can hit them with our door.

We know, at times, we have been objects of this game,
But equality for all, everyone is treated the same.

Of course, these wandering students won't be hit by us,
Because, come to think of it, it would cause a fuss.

Christina Thompson

.....The World Today

"Tell me, dear sir, what do you know
About the world today?
To feed, and flee, and fight, and fuck,
Dear sir, please show the way."

Now what do we have here right now,
A lad not half my size.
I'll tell you things you need to know,
And none of them are lies.

"Oh, thank you, sir, so very much.
I don't know what to say.
I will believe your every word,
Just don't lead me astray."

As far as feeding is concerned,
Just think about yourself.
You don't have funds, supplies, or means
To fill another's shelf.

"But what if I have extra food,
Or cash I do not need.
There must be people without food
Who I could easily feed."

No, no, dear boy. You are all wrong.
You must not think like this.
When everything you give is gone,
Think of the wealth you'll miss.

"OK, dear sir, I've got it straight.
I know just what to do.
I'll have a house, a horse, a yacht,
Maybe a sports car, too."

All right, dear boy, to flee is next;
Avoid what may harm you.
Remember you are number one.
Who cares who's number two?

"This can't be true for every dime.
Some cases aren't so mild.
What if there is someone out there
Who wants to kill their child."

Exceptions aren't allowed, my boy.
the mother must come first.
To spend nine months to save a child,
Would have to be the worst.

"I understand; just run away.
It will not take a toll.
Abortion even could be used
Just for birth control."

You're catching on, my little friend.
You see it's not so hard.
To fight, just know who was born where,
And you'll know who to guard.

"Now let me get this fighting straight.
My enemy I'll know
Just 'cause he's born a Viet Kong,
And I'm born G. I. Joe."

It's even easier than that,
'Cause Uncle Sam will say
To drop a bomb on Viet Nam,
And you'll reply, "OK."

"The concept is a simple one;
It all depends on fate.
It doesn't matter who I like,
They'll tell me who to hate."

We only have one lesson left.
You know it's sex, my boy.
And for this one I have three words:
Enjoy, enjoy, enjoy.

"Ah, yes, I think it would be fun
To get to know some maids.
But everywhere I go today,
I hear the threat of AIDS."

Yes, AIDS can kill, I will not lie,
But sex is part of life.
You've got to get some riding in
Before you rope a wife.

"Experience is good to have,
I will admit to that.
I have learned much that I will use.
Sir, thank you for this chat."

Bill Bowman

.....Take Time To Care

I pass an
old friend
In the hurry
of life.
Her eyes
seem troubled,
Her voice
unsure.
Should I
turn back?
Reach out
with love?
Lend a
listening ear?
I'm late
but then . . .
Steps slow,
turn back.
A friend's
in need.
Show her
I care.

Erma Kahle

.....Dreamer

There I am, hair blowing in the wind,
Me in my brand new Beemer.
With me my husband, a lawyer and model,
He's young and is quite the dreamer.

With us our little dog "Schnuckombs,"
A beautiful and very rare breed.
Our house sits at the top of that hill
A view of the city at our feet.

My gown is made of the finest silk,
My honey's tux is only the best.
We love each other more each day,
Our love has passed time's test.

As we relax on our black leather sofa,
The maid call us for our dinner.
We exit the room hand-in-hand
And inhale that which does simmer.

As I wake from this wonderful dream,
I look all around me in despair.
I tumble off the brown plaid couch
And look at what I do wear.

With blue jeans faded and torn,
And a beat-up Nova in the lot,
A TV dinner awaits in the freezer,
And I can't recall what I last bought.

My dog I left at my parent's home,
He's a mutt and Gizmo's his name.
My house's an old student rental,
And even for a rental it's lame.

I'm quite a long way from being married,
My boyfriend and I just broke-up.
But some day I know I'll have it all
From my Beemer to the pup.

Tisha Lounsberry

.....The Kielbasa Encounter

Vegetables, meats and frozen foods
Lining the white-tiled aisle
Sarah Lee and Betty Crocker
Would always make me smile

I push the wire cart through produce
Past corn and cabbage
"Squeeze melons to check for ripeness"
Is the shopper's adage

A sign hangs above the deli
"Kielbasa for sample"
The daily special and it's lean
I hope it's ample

Sausage is everyone's favorite
And stock quickly ran low
The shelves are easily emptied
One Polish left to show

She reaches for the last Slotkowski
Meets my hand cold and bare
The sausage means a lot to her
She shows by tugging my hair

Both of us grope for the tube steak
Knocking it to the ground
She does not give in easily
Scrambling for the last pound

The fight for the meat is dirty
She is out of my league
She gouges my eyes and grabs the meat
I proceed to bleed

Injured, I concede the prize
Leave for the breakfast aisle
Our hands meet once more at the Kix
She backs off with a smile

She sat at the window of the country home
Looking into the haze of the early dawn.
Sleep had left her, she got up to read.
The Book lay open to pages of Luke,
"How often I'd have gathered your children
As a hen gathers her brood under her wings,
And you would not."
A good boy, he was the last of three sons.
They had been such good friends . . . until now.
He's so independent, impulsive, too.
She longed to gather him under her wings
Protect him as she did not so long ago.
Yet wasn't this what she had tried to teach,
To make decisions, to reach for the sky.
But this time, his plans seemed far, far too high.
Suddenly her thoughts were interrupted
For there in the approaching dawn she saw
A herd of deer moving across the field.
She stood and watched. Moved by their beauty.
Huge buck was moving apart from the herd,
Pausing, and looking this way and that,
Searching out dangers that might lurk ahead.
A fence in their path, he clears it with ease.
One by one deer gracefully follow,
Except a small fawn that is left behind.
It paces back and forth along the fence line
Nervous about the decision to be made.
Then a doe leaves the herd, comes back to the fence.
She stands near by as if giving support,
Small fawn stops pacing and looks at her,
Moves back from the fence and in one great leap
Clears it with only a hoof brushing wire.
Together they trot to join the waiting herd.
She stands watching long after the deer are gone.
Was God sending a message through the deer?
Should protecting wings not be held too tight,
Just give support and be there when needed?
Hadn't the Leaps in her life given her growth?
Weren't the falls what had helped her to be strong?
Dare she deny him this chance to mature?
Red sky was vibrant, night turning to day.
She starts for his room, she must wake him now.
Listen as he eagerly shares his plans.
Together they'll watch the sun clear the horizon.
He'll know she's there in case of a fall.

Erma Kahle

.....Emotion

Love is like a wild dove,
Quite splendid to behold.
But when you near, it flies away,
Leaving you in the cold.

Daniel A. Ryan IV