

Bayosphere

Fall 2009

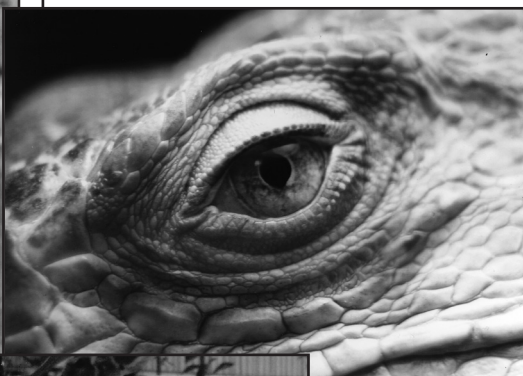


Cover Art:
Flowers No.1
by Mary Start

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Antiquated

by Laurie Perez

Editor's note

This magazine has been produced annually since 1978. Submissions roll in and the students conduct blind evaluations on the material. After the evaluations, the final pieces are chosen for the magazine.

Looking back, the pieces chosen give each magazine its own individual style. The style is reflective of the distinct makeup of editors, designers and staff. After looking at the pieces chosen for this issue, we decided on a clean, modern design. Each photograph, poem and short story is a beautiful piece of art. With the turn of each page, the artwork evokes emotions and thought.

The smallest thing can affect someone's life. My time spent as editor for the Fall 2009 issue of Bayosphere will influence forever how I look at literary art as something more than its face value.

Sincerely,
Amy Garcia
Editor



Foreword

Good Things, the Collapse of Good Things, Good Things

I'm a Words Guy. Still, when I got my first quick look at *Bayousphere* for Fall 2009, I thought, "Whoa, the pictures have it!" And indeed our photography, digitally metamorphosed or straight, this time, as so often in *Bayouspheres* of yore, is a team with a notably Deep Bench. Plenty of credible prize winners – though I, like the judges, am transfixed by the eye of Mr. De La Garza's Cosmic Reptile. The tensile physicality in Laurie Perez' work! It's a good thing we don't, by and large, look like her people or life would be All Sex and No Algebra and Cyber-Industrial Civilization would collapse. More on the images later.

Oh Words Guys and [I'm afraid the parallel term is "Gals"] Words Women, we've dodged a pair of bullets! After all if there's just one short story, it pretty much has to win the Fiction Prize. If there's just one essay ... BUT Mr. Vasquez' story is fabulous. Mr. Everts' memoir is fabulous. Such a good life in "Sophie's Music." Then everything collapses, semi-recovers, collapses again. The succeeding good thing is the story itself, its elegant curlicues of structure as engaging as the nature forms in Barbara Ellis' tree, William Humbird's plank (or piling or whatever it is) (Words Guy) (But see? I told you I'd get back to the images.)

Words Guy, having grown up in Aurora, Illinois, can attest that Mr. Everts is spot on when it comes to the sociology of Midwestern factory towns. He's spot on about America too, our democratic institutions, our assertive individualism, our push toward "more perfect union," simultaneously empowering and thwarting the come-one-come-all Humane Unity we've made our promise to the nations. The good thing is the friendship. The friendship collapses. The good thing is the tale.

Ms. Wangler's subtle poem, with its subtle title and play with personification (Words Guy's poetry students will be on him like a pack of weasels for praising personification in a 21st C. poem, but he takes nothing back), shows a similar delicacy of notation. Deft meditation everywhere among the poems, thematic richness too – unmingled beauty, the tangle of identity, shrewd metaphysics, political warning, hope riding the thermals of irony.

Back to Images! Petals! Petals, as students of haiku know are Always Good – most definitely so when Ms. Start showers them upon us. A wonderful cover for a very positive issue. Editor Amy Garcia and her crew (her posse? her peeps? Words Guy loses track of the Lingo of the Young) have done well – and done well to choose the "clean, modern design" that makes the whole operation pop with the immediacy of Kimberly Olivarez' beaded hibiscus. Let us, like the forthright child in Clare Kemp's photograph, Enter the Gates of *Bayousphere* Fall 2009! Congratulations to the Staff, to the Artists, to all of us Lucky Reader/Viewers – and to the storm-battered but ever-radiant Taleen Washington, the Moving Cause (Words Guy likes Aristotle) and Aminatrix of *Bayouspheres* now and onward into a Future of Good Things.

Dr. John Lorman
Literature Adviser

Poetry

Photography

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Digital Media

Flowers No. 1 (On the Cover)

by Mary Start

Online Digital Media

Online Edition at www.uhcl.edu/bayousphere

Floral Babe

by Barbara J. Ellis

Logan and the Fiddlers

by Barbara J. Ellis

Princess Falcon

by Barbara J. Ellis

Best of Show

Digital Media

Flowers No.1

by Mary Start

Fiction

Sophie's Music

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Kingston Greens Iniquity

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Photography

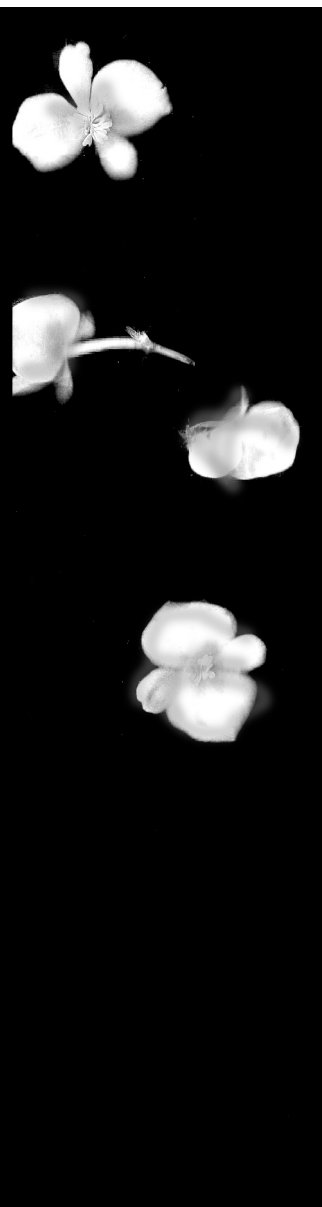
Eye of the Beholder

by Jorge De La Garza

Poetry

Raze

by Rachel Wangler

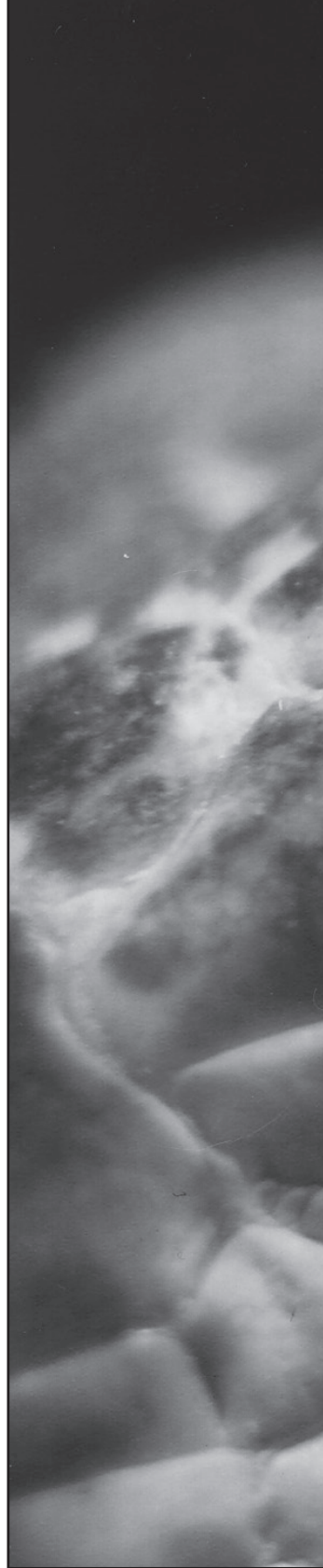


Serenity

by Jeane Knight

The pond lies tranquilly
Enfolded by graceful trees,
Auras of green changing
With the quicksilver light.
A path encircles the pond
Until it jumps a tiny inlet
Beside the small copse of trees.
I rest in the swing,
Watch a blue heron
Glide to a tall cypress,
Perch securely until deciding
To swoop down, landing
On low bending branches
Of a nearby willow
When a pair of white herons

Swiftly descend on the cypress.
Yellow butterflies float
From flower to flower
On aerial currents
Next to fat bumblebees.
Sunbeams dance on,
Green reflections.
Turtle heads pop up,
Disappear again under water.
Small alligators lazily
Crawl onto the grass.
Within this shady green world
Containing untold activity
There is stillness.





Eye of the Beholder
by Jorge De La Garza

"Dear diary, Saint Christopher, pray for me – I can't do this anymore!"

Sophie's Music

by Rafael Vasquez

It was the melody of windchimes, scored and performed by Sophie, spring and sentiment. And those were her spoons, wired by Crazy Henry, hung from the balcony for their harmonic effect as they swayed in autumn breeze – but no more.

Oh, the windchimes still play and all. But Sophie no longer hugged herself, rocking, listening as the windchimes sang for her. Two decades had passed since I last sat on these steps. The bottle of Jack Daniel's I held in my hand looked exactly like the one I'd held years earlier when I'd finally admitted, "You're gonna die. Keep this up and some way, some how, you're gonna die."

Without hesitation, my mother agreed to take our baby and the woodside cottage. Three days later, I found myself in freezing-ass Virginia learning how to be an Officer and a Gentleman.

Twenty years, fourteen medals, two fighter crashes, and one war

later, I came home. To the other war.

Flight jacket opened to November rain, my thoughts traveled, carried away on the ping, ting, twing of Sophie's music.

She loved Willie Nelson. She loved tying our hair back in matching bandanas, piling atop our Harley-Davidson and rumbling west to Red's Cove just above the dam at Medina Lake. Flannel and Levis, that was my Sophie. Slow-dancing on the little cement patio overlooking the lake's shimmering capture of a setting sun. **Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain**. That was my Sophie.

"Do you love me?" she asked, arms encircling drawn-up knees.

I looked around, scratched my chin. "Well, I do bathe your cat."

Sophie shot me a look, her eyes expectant. I ran my fingers through her hair. "Yeah. Yeah, I do."

The blue in her eyes was brilliant. "You damn well better,"

she said, her smile growing. "I'm pregnant."

Ping, ting, twing went the chimes.

"What? What?" I said, flapping my arms in protest. I scooped our child high into the air. "Look! My daughter's clean and dry!"

Sophie looked at us, her mouth agape. "Stay right there," she said, rushing out of the room.

"Mommy's lost her brain again, huh, Crystal?" I said, rubbing noses with the baby.

My wife swept back into the room, camera in hand.

"See, honey?" I said to Crystal. "Mommy doesn't think ten photo albums are enough."

"Put the baby down."

"Oh, I see," I said, slipping the baby back onto the couch. "Mommy wants a picture of me this time. So, including my driver's license, we'll have two."

Sophie giggled as she looked through the lens. "Smile for me. I've never seen you more

handsome."

Flashclick

"You're covered in baby powder," she said.

Ping, ting, twing went the chimes.

"Oooh. Can we have this one?" she asked, delight and excitement shining on her face. Sophie snuggled next to me, squeezing my arm, her eyes not leaving the huge Douglas Fir.

"No," I said, releasing the price tag. "We have a baby to pay for."

Sophie stomped a boot. "Oh, honey. But it's beautiful."

I made my way down the line toward the smaller, more reasonably priced Christmas trees. Willie Nelson's *Pretty Paper* wheezed across a cheap outdoor PA system as kaleidoscope snow fell in gentle flurries dancing, whirling, changing hues to match the colored lights it passed in the clear night.

When I turned, Sophie was standing right where I'd left her. The knit ball atop her ski cap rolled over as she cocked her head to one side, mouthed the words "Please? It's our daughter's first."

I moved my head left to right.

She played her trump: out came the lower lip.

"Oh, Jesus," I muttered, tossing my hands in the air.

The salesman smiled at my surrender on his way over.

"See that pretty lady over there clapping her little mittens together, talking to that tree?" I asked.

"Yessir."

"Give her whatever she wants."

"Yessir."

I placed a gloved hand on the man's shoulder, turned him toward the parking lot. "That Volvo station wagon over there? I'll be

undoing the cargo straps."

"I'll have my boys bring over the tree, sir. And merry ..."

"Four months ago that was a twenty-six thousand dollar Harley," I said, shaking my head.

"Yessir."

"Bring the tree. I have cash. If she even looks like she's gonna pull out another credit card ... flee."

"I understand."

I moved my face close to his. "Do you? Do you understand?"

"Oh yeah," he said, pulling out a small flask of whiskey.

"I had your same look in my eyes ten years and three kids ago." The man handed me the flask. "Still do, sir."

In April of our third year, a drunk driver crossed Sophie's path. I do not recall my wife's last words to me, but I know the prayers I've whispered into dark and empty night. I know starvation. I know what "failure to thrive" means.

I know Death's wish.

At the end of my drive, a small blue Nissan turned onto wet grass, the windshield wipers sounding their slow thump, thump, thump. The young woman inside studied me, then picked several white sacks off the passenger seat as her door swung open.

"Hey daddy! I got Chinese!" she said, a smile so like her mother's that it captured my heart. At the bottom of the steps, my wife's smile twisted into Crystal's scorn. "Daddy, you're sitting in the rain. Your jacket's wide open and it's forty degrees!"

I tried to smile, reached to touch her hair.

Crystal moved past me into the

cabin. I heard the rustling of paper sacks being put on the table, her boots making a soft thud across the woodpanel floor as she returned. The screen door swung open.

"Let's go, Commander!" she said, pulling at the epaulet on my jacket. "Come inside. You're not going to do this to yourself. Mother wouldn't want it, and I won't allow it."

"Give me a moment, honey. I was just listening to ..."

Crystal hopped down in front of me, held me at arm's length. "Daddy, we still have us. There's still you and me! Are you listening?"

Ping, ting, twing went the chimes.

November 16, 2005

Dear diary,

It's been many years since I've slept in my father's cabin. Out here, all one can hear is the sound of wind whooshing through pinecones, and the ping, ping, tinkling of an old Waterford and silver windchime that hangs from the front porch. When I arrived last night, I found Papi sitting on the steps, drinking, smoking cigarettes to the nub, almost oblivious to my presence. Despite the freezing rain, he wore no shirt under that beat-up old flight jacket of his, and he was slumped, staring across the frozen wasteland I cannot see, listening, listening, for some sound I cannot hear. My mother's voice, I think.

Today, while he slept on the couch, I crept through his bedroom, trying to get some sense of what it is he struggles with. Sometimes concern overrides privacy.

In a top drawer of his dresser,

I found a curious collection of things, snippets of a life he rarely speaks about. There were bits of a broken Christmas tree ornament, a pair of gold naval aviator's wings, and an old Willie Nelson cassette tape. And there were pictures of Mami and I, memories captured when I was a baby, shortly before she was killed by that drunk driver. But death did not do them part. Death did not end their relationship.

So, I am here. For my Papi, Desert Storm was one war. But he is now locked in seclusion, engaged in something unconventional, something perilous to navigate. And I cannot say that he has won, or that he is winning.

– Crystal Ann.

January 7, 2006

Dear diary,

Saint Christopher, pray for me – I can't do this anymore! I am The Worthless Child, the Disrespectful Daughter my Mami never intended. I am an embarrassment to my parents' name. Today, I yelled at my Papi, my father, my hero. I threw his cup of coffee in the sink, slammed a plate down on the table, food spilling onto the floor, because he doesn't eat, he doesn't sleep, he doesn't do a goddamned thing but sit out there and stare and stare and stare at the treeline across the way.

And he listens. He sits on the steps, pulls his knees to his chest and rocks side to side, listening to the windchimes. He won't tell me what he hears, what they're saying, what it all means. But the thing ... that scares me ... the most ...

He's stopped smoking.

– Crystal Ann.

April 14, 2006

Jesucristo, en obsequio de mi padre, perdona sus pecados. Forgive him his sin.

It is over. My father's war has ended. When I stepped out of my car, I knew he was gone. There was no wind, so I heard the silence immediately. He was seated on the patio rocking chair, a pressed shirt under his flight jacket. In one pocket I found a picture of him and me when I was just a few months old. He had me proudly cradled in his arms, baby powder on his face.

There was a half-empty bottle of Jack Daniel's by his feet and an empty bottle of pills in his bedroom. I

kissed him goodbye.

Papi knew this day would come. He bid his time till I finished law school, put his finances in order, and even filed his own application for the permit to be buried on private property, next to his wife. His lawyer called me.

And so they rest, my inseparable parents, in the little garden on the eastern side of the valley. The slope is blanketed by bluebonnets, and there's a dirt path nearby, the one Papi used to follow when he wanted to fish the river. They can watch the western sunset as it slides behind the stand of pines trailing moss from their limbs, those long, soft, wavy things that invites them to the shade. Tall ghosts, sentinels over their resting place.

They can hold hands and listen, in quiet eve. I have taken the patio windchime and hung it from one of the trees nearest to the garden. Nostalgic melody, a precious transport to marry past and present. I can hear it even now, at my Papi's desk, the ping, ping, tinkling of silver touching crystal.

– Crystal Ann.



Sweet Rain

by Kimberly Olivarez

Unsaid

by Kenneth Milton

What can be said when we are gone
that all our sins were unatoned
that we, insane, lived this life
in evil, in hatred, replete with strife
that the anguish in our minds so deep
in expiring, we should keep
that we were beings who had no feelings
whose savage hearts had needed healing
whose eyes were closed, who could not see
whose selflessness ceased to be
that we were sick, already gone
unconscious of the things we'd done
so derided the Maker with amoral decisions
thus, expedited our final mission or
that we were good in every way
purged and ready for our day
each our moral virtues pure

each our earthly tasks endured
hearts so kind, lives so true
worthy of all praises due
the devoted parent, the loving spouse
and welcomed to the Maker's house
given harp, angelic wings
all the gifts that Heaven brings
a personal chariot, the softest cloud
every honor said aloud
content with this, our final wish
to thrive in God's eternal bliss or
will we just be laid down low
emulating life's ornate glow
bouquets scented with Nature's spray
carefully adorned where we lay
embellished in our Sunday best
supine, preserved, statuesque
eulogized for all to see
our existence, but a memory?

Then the words became scarce
and each soul sighs and cries
but the mindful heart cannot say
good-bye ...



Turning Leaves

by Patricia Dixon

The pages of the books and I are one
I lose myself in the flipping of the pages
I lose myself in the turning of the leaves
I lose myself in the expectations of others

Who am I?

The pages of the book have no story
I am trapped in the abyss of my own mind
I am trapped in the dungeon of my fears
I am trapped in the pit of my success

Who am I?

I look in the mirror and see no one there
I look in the mirror of time and do not care
I look at the face in the mirror and see

The description of myself:

The sister, the friend, the lover

But who am I?

The turning of the pages of my life
The turning of the days of my life
The turning in the ways of myself
The forgotten image in the mirror is me.

Play Days

by Laurie Perez





Can You Jump
by Laurie Perez



Twisted

by Barbara J. Ellis



Grand Canyon Fountain
by Barbara J. Ellis

If Water Falls

by Kenneth Milton

If tears cleared like an eyedrop
And could help the blind to see
Each living soul on this great Earth
Should come cry along with me!

If they could conquer sorrow
And heal each sickening pain
Each eye would be red and puffy
Never to be dry again!

If tears could help the needy
To stand up on their own

Then there would be no danger
Of them ever falling down!

If they could spare Creation
Just deliver it from its fate
Then the world would never doubt again
Its Creator is so great!

If tears were love epitomized
And all hatreds rendered still
There would be no limitations
To what humanity could fulfill!

If they were the lost solution
That could all life uplift
Then our world would be a better place
Just by the shedding of this gift.

"It's hard to
know who
was more
ashamed of
whom."

Kingston Greens Iniquity

by William Everts

Danville, Illinois, in 1969 was a small town with 42,000 "citizens." As far as my memory allowed, I had always lived there. In fact, I'd always been there and nowhere else. Danville was all I knew.

As stereotypes go, Danville was the model for small, mid-western towns in the late sixties, too far south of Chicago to be thought of as a suburb or city, and yet too much "industry" to still be thought of as the farming community it had surely been.

Everybody seemed to know everybody and their business, but that was just an illusion, as I was soon to find out. I grew up on the north side of town. Not the far north side where the important, REALLY rich people live, but far enough north that the junior high school I went to was not yet integrated.

East Park Jr. High is where all the "hoods" went to school – lots of leather jackets and wallets on chains. South Side Jr. High was

where the blacks went to school until busing took some of them, against their will I think, to East Park.

We'd always hear of clashes between the hoods and "niggers," and without any detail and with no personal involvement, we'd secretly celebrate hood victories and denounce any rumored hood losses.

When it came to my time to go to Danville High School in my sophomore year (junior high was 7-9), I was a little scared. I had rarely, if ever, been any closer to a real black person than the television images of the race riots in Detroit. Hood victories hadn't been heard of in some time, and now it seemed all of us "North Ridge" rich kids were going to be fresh meat, untrained for what was to come.

I hadn't really thought of myself as a rich kid. In fact, the group I hung out with called the really rich kids "P.A.s" for Perfect Angels. They could do no wrong and nobody dared mess

with them. Like the stop sign protocol, if you and a P.A. got to the cafeteria or bathroom at the same time, you'd have to yield the right-of-way and let the P.A. go first. If you didn't, you'd be "messing" with him or her, and there would be trouble of some kind; probably a butt whipping at home.

Somebody was always the kid of your Dad's boss or his friend, and he'd threaten to tell his dad of your disrespect; his Dad would fire your Dad, and your Dad would beat your ass as soon as he got home. At least, that was our idea of what would happen, so we never messed with the P.A.s.

The effect of it all is that I was now in limbo at DHS, purgatory: rich enough that I didn't fit in with the hoods (no protection there) and yet poor enough that I wasn't an untouchable P.A. (no one in his right mind would ever hit a P.A.). I wasn't exactly alone, but if anybody else was as scared as I was, they never told

me. So, I kept quiet, too.

Surprisingly, I was more scared of these kids than I was of my Dad's belt. Just the mental image of him reaching for the buckle of his belt makes my heart pound like crazy today, even though he's been dead for over 17 years. Can you imagine my relief then, when I went to DHS and discovered that the "hoods" and "niggers" all treated me like a P.A.?

I came from North Ridge. I was dressed like the P.A.s – at least they thought I was. I could tell the P.A.s were better dressed than me, but to those other kids, we all looked alike. I was camouflaged! I didn't question anything other than how I was supposed to act. Was I supposed to act like a P.A., expecting special treatment and privileges, or would they sense I was faking it? If I didn't fake it, would that give me away?

I couldn't decide, so I did the only thing I knew how to do well. I was me. Maybe I was just me because that's who I was and pretending to be something else never really entered my head. The thing is, that's who I was when I met Larry.

Larry Crawley was in my Geometry class. I couldn't help but notice him. He was the only black guy in there. You could tell how dumb he was just by looking at him and listening to him. He had a funny – not ha-ha-funny, but weird funny – way of moving his hands and face as he talked. Every once in a while he'd ask a question, and we'd all snicker because it was a dumb question. It had to be dumb if Larry asked it. Sometimes he'd ask a question and, even though I had the same question, I'd still snicker with the others. After all,

I could either be associated with dumb ol' Larry or everybody else. Who would you pick?

Then it hit me like a proverbial ton of bricks. What if I asked a question, and dumb ol' Larry said, "I have the same question!" It's just the kind of thing he'd be dumb enough to say. Everybody would snicker, but it would be at me, not him.

I couldn't let everybody find out I had the same questions as dumb ol' Larry! He went to South Side Jr. High, for God's sake. I went to NORTH RIDGE! I had to know more than him. We had the good teachers. Everybody knew that. So, I quit asking questions. After all, if Larry was dumb enough to ask them, why should I bother?

Inevitably, we took our first exam, and when we got our papers back, I had an A. Not a 100, but an A. Of course, I always got A's. I secretly wondered what dumb ol' Larry got. Just because he had the same questions I did didn't mean he understood the teacher's answers. Funny thing how teachers have to answer questions no matter how dumb they are.

Anyway, I wanted to peek at Larry's paper to see what he got. Why? I don't know for sure. I think I just wanted to confirm what I already knew to be true: I was smarter than him. Still, I couldn't be obvious about it. I mean, who really cares what dumb ol' Larry got anyway? As it turns out, I didn't need to be Napoleon Solo, the man from U.N.C.L.E., to find out. When he got his paper he sucked in his breath loudly, sounding kind of like a backwards elephant trumpet whoop, bugged out his eyes and shouted in dramatic

fashion, "A 100? I got a 100?"

How dumb can you get? You're never supposed to tell what you got if you got a 100! You're supposed to wait until someone asks you what you got. If nobody asks, then you ask someone, "What did you get?" Then when they tell you what they got, they have to ask what you got. Then you say, "I was really worried, but I got lucky and got a 100." You never shout it out to the whole room the way dumb ol' Larry just did. I mean, how dumb can you get? Even the kids at South Side should know that, especially black ones.

One day I stayed after school because there were tryouts for the talent show. I was waiting outside the auditorium, sitting on the floor and playing my Yamaha guitar. I was a big James Taylor and Cat Stevens fan. Well, along came dumb ol' Larry. He listened for a minute and then joined in singing with me.

He sang good harmony, but it still seemed weird. Still, I couldn't just stop playing. An artist doesn't just stop in the middle of a song. It isn't professional. By the time we got finished, there was a group of kids standing around us, watching and listening. I don't even remember what song it was, but when I finished Nancy Berg asked, "Are you guys trying out for the talent show?" Just like that. As if it was the most natural question in the world. All of sudden, Larry and I were "you guys." How did that happen? I'm not "you guys." He's him and I'm me; it isn't we! Before I could even fathom what was happening, dumb ol' Larry said, "Yeah! We're going for it!" I was flubbergasted (that's so flabbergasted that you don't

“It’s hard to know who was more ashamed of whom.”

even know what to call it.)

As I sat there stunned, Larry said, “Let me see your guitar. Do you know ‘You’ve Got a Friend?’” Before I knew it, he had my guitar and was playing it. He sounded like J.T., for real! Leave it to dumb ol’ Larry to play guitar better than me.

I should have figured it out after he got that 100. Still, I had to learn to play that song the way he played it. For some reason, I started singing harmony with him. Larry and I were destined to be friends. And we did become friends. I had to tell you all this so you’d understand what happened and why I felt the way I did.

My parents divorced when I was 14. My mom moved out and left me with Dad. Two years later, about a month after my 16th birthday, she died. That’s when Dad decided to move out of the only house I’d ever lived in. He couldn’t live there anymore and needed to move on with his life.

We moved into an upscale apartment complex called “Kingston Greens.” It was a little farther north. The nice thing was, there was a swimming pool. I couldn’t wait for the summer! When it finally came, oh, what

joy. I loved to swim.

It was a Thursday that Larry called me. My only plans were to go swimming. I’d have the pool to myself. Everybody else would be at work. It only seemed natural to invite Larry when he called. He could take the bus from the South Side and go to K-Mart with no bus changes. Then, it was a short walk to meet me at the pool.

We had a blast! Cannonballs, can openers and races, man it was great! Larry had to leave at three to catch the bus home, and I went back to my apartment. Friday, Larry couldn’t come, but I was going to the pool anyway. When I got there, the pool was drained and Mr. Jones, the manager of the complex, was scrubbing away at the bottom of the pool dressed in a rubber raincoat, rubber boots and goggles.

I was standing there on the deck for a minute before he noticed me. “Pool’s closed until further notice.” That’s all he said. No explanation. He just went back to work, ignoring me. I couldn’t imagine what the problem would be. The pool had only been open for a couple of weeks. The weekend was

coming. That’s when everybody would want to be swimming. What moron would close it now?

I found out when Dad came home from work. All he said to me was, “You can’t have that boy over to go swimming ever again.” I didn’t have to ask him who, what or why. Everything connected in an instant. I knew, I just knew. Dad couldn’t even look at me in the eye when he said it.

Was he embarrassed about what he was saying or about what I had done? At once, we both knew there was a difference between us. Still, he was letting me be me as much as he could. I had to live in their world, by their rules.

Could they actually think the pool and the water were somehow infected just because dumb ol’ Larry had been swimming in it? Heck, all those little white kids peed in it when they swam and nobody drained and scrubbed the pool over that!

We didn’t live at Kingston Greens much longer after that. Dad just couldn’t stand being labeled as the father of a “nigger loving boy.” It’s hard to know who was more ashamed of whom.

Raze

by Rachel Wangler

A An array of colors

Bleed into the cracks

Pooling, mixing, overflowing

Beckoning to be heard

Angry rust colored puddles

Begin to dry

Congealing into concentrate

Crying out to be found

Abandoned black matter

Swallows inspiration

Stealing what could not be given

Begging for gifted life

Oil slick lakes

Dictate all functionality

Replacing all but desperation

Convincing this to be normality

Snapshot of a Snapshot

by William Humbird





Entering an Imagination
by Clare Kemp

Risk

by Dennis Forrest

Quirks of fate sometimes decide life's little treasures — but despite what you might have read — there's a serious risk of psychosis in trying to visit heaven without crossing over. Listen to the future in tongues from the lips of children at the Jesus camp, letting everything go except the paddle. Decoding mysteries provides time to make a difference —

it's simple math — a simple choice as long as there's a miracle somewhere. The serious questions still need to be answered — get the facts and then repeat the procedure to clean your re-clogged mind. There's never been a better time to donate than now — but please seek only the sustainable. You'll never be alone — yet the more you pay, the fewer seats at the table. Life goes on, then it doesn't.

Downtown Houston

by Clare Kemp





Intertwined
by Laurie Perez

Fruitfully

by Kenneth Milton

If you, a plum, hung from a tree
I'd pluck you from your stem
To satisfy my craving
To gratify my whim

I'd squeeze you just a tiny bit
To see if you were ripe
Or perhaps to see if I should try
Some fruit of another type

Then I'd caress you gently in my palm
Tender to my touch
And contemplate if what's inside
Will fill me up as much

Content, then I'd seek teeth and tongue
Into your outer skin
And let your juices ooze outside
And taste what lies within

Satiated, full of you
So that sleep must come around
I'd give thanks to Creation
For the fruit that I had found.

US

by Joe A. Trevino

I killed another man today,
and even though
I've never seen his face
Or heard a single word
He's ever had to say,
What a misfortune
That it had to be his fate.

I know I wasn't there
To hear him pray,
Nor was I there
To hear him whine.
I didn't have to see him
Spit up in his plate
While waiting for his time.

Yeah,
Some people say
That I am wrong,
But more have said
That I am right,
So this makes him lose
And makes me strong
When it all comes to the light.

I heard
He took some money
And some lives.
Yes,
He also poisoned little minds.
He said some things
That weren't in line.
Hell,
I'm sure he felt
His ways were fine.

I also heard
He fought back once or twice
In Germany
And I think in Waco too.
No, it wasn't nice:
Plumes of smoke
Across the waves.

Yet I know for sure
If he were here
and I were there
Strapped down dressed in white
With hemlock vapors
In the air,
Would you care
If I was right
Or wrong.

Soulful

by Laurie Perez



Contributors

Jorge De La Garza – a UHCL graduate student. He received his B.A. in communication and plans on completing his M.S. in instructional technology; most important, he loves God with all his heart.

Patricia Dixon – a UHCL graduate student pursuing a degree in professional writing. She is originally from New Orleans, but relocated to Houston following Hurricane Katrina.

Barbara J. Ellis – a UHCL graduate student pursuing a M.A. in digital media studies. She has found herself, at 40-something, starting a new career after an on-the-job injury ended her career as a paramedic for NASA. “I find this is a blessing from God. I am now able to follow my passion and use the talent and abilities that God has given me.”

William Everts – a UHCL undergraduate student studying behavioral science and finding out who he is late in life.

Dennis Forrest – a UHCL alumnus whose work has appeared previously in Bayosphere. Reading and writing poetry is what keeps him sane in an insane environment.

William Humbird – a UHCL undergraduate student studying communication.

Clare Kemp – a UHCL undergraduate student studying communication.

Jeane Knight – a resident of Clear Lake who has for years taken courses, attended plays and roamed the beautiful natural areas of the university’s lovely campus.

Kenneth Milton – a UHCL alumnus who enjoys writing because it allows him to contemplate and delve deeply into his imagination for artistic creations.

Kimberly Olivarez – a UHCL undergraduate student studying communication. She enjoys taking pictures of family and friends.

Laurie Perez – a UHCL undergraduate student studying communication. She is a native Houstonian who stumbled into photography after an unfortunate house fire. Recently, she opened a studio in the Bellaire area. Although she loves photography, secretly she wants to be a ninja.

Mary Start – a UHCL undergraduate student studying fine arts. She has exhibited her artwork in the UHCL Gallery as well as The Arts Alliance Center at Clear Lake, and has had photos published in the Baytown Sun and the Houston Chronicle. Photography is not only a job, but a love.

Joe A. Trevino – a UHCL alumnus whose hope was to become a published poet. That hope has now been realized.

Rafael Vasquez – a UHCL undergraduate student currently studying behavioral science. He hopes to attend law school one day and says writing is an excellent form of therapy – if you happen to need that sort of thing.

Rachel Wangler – a student at Norman High School in Norman, Okla. She enjoys creative writing and has been published in her school’s publication “Soupstone.”

Editorial Policy and Submission Guidelines

The University Of Houston-Clear Lake publishes Bayousphere annually to provide an outlet for creativity in the community. It is produced by students enrolled in the magazine publication class. Each entry is “blind reviewed” by the students, and a certificate is awarded to the highest scoring work in each category. Bayousphere accepts submissions in the areas of fiction, nonfiction, art, photography, poetry and digital media from students, faculty, former students and members of the community.

All material accepted is subject to cropping or editing by the Bayousphere editorial staff as they deem necessary. Materials should be submitted as follows:

- Submit copies of written work, not originals.
- Fiction, nonfiction and poetry must be typed, double-spaced, and no longer than 2,000 words. Include a text-formatted disk with submitted copy.
- Photos must be black and white, no smaller than 5 x 7 inches.
- Original artwork must be suitable for magazine publication. Pastels, water colors and light pencil drawings do not reproduce well. Artwork must not exceed 11 x 16 inches. No framed work. Black and White photographs of sculpture and other three-dimensional artwork can also be included in the category.
- Digital media consists of computer generated works of art. Works can be still or animated, i.e. moving images. Still artwork for digital media can include color, but if chosen it will appear solely in the online edition. All animated digital media will appear solely in the online edition. Digital Media can include, but is not limited to, any of the following forms: Flash, Macromedia Director, digital video, 3D animation, and Quick Time Virtual Reality. Submissions must be five minutes or less.

Complete submission guidelines are included with the entry forms. Bayousphere entry forms may be picked up in the Student Publications Office, or downloaded online at www.uhcl.edu/bayousphere.

Submissions for Bayousphere 2010 may be sent to: Bayousphere, UH-Clear Lake, 2700 Bay Area Blvd., Box 456, Houston, TX 77058, or delivered to the Student Publications Office, Room 1239 of the Bayou Building. Entries are accepted year round; any work not received by Feb. 15, 2010, will automatically be saved for the following year.

Direct inquires may be made to the address above or by telephoning 281-283-2571. The Student Publications Office is officially closed in June and July; however, entries may still be mailed during that period.

Colophon

Paper:

Euroart Plus Dull Cover 100 lb
Euroart Plus Dull Book 80 lb.

Binding:

Saddle Stitch

Font:

Avant Garde
Franklin Gothic
Futura
Texas Hero

Paper:

Black Ink
Aqueous Coating on Cover

Software:

Adobe InDesign CS3
Adobe Photoshop CS3
Microsoft Word 2004

