



# THE SCRIBLERIAN

Spring 2007 Edition

Sponsored by the English Department and the Braithwaite Writing Center, the *Scriblerian* is a publication for students by students. Revived during Fall Semester 2004 after a two-year hiatus, this on-line journal is the result of an essay competition organized by Writing Center tutors for ENGL 1010 and 2010 students. The Spring 2007 contest was planned and supervised by Chair Kellie Jensen with the help of Andria Amodt, Trent Gurney, Chelsea Oaks, and Whitnee Sorenson.

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## Argumentative- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Katie Heckenbach, "Women: Do you Know What's Holding you Back?"  
For Dr. Kurt Harris

The "Glass Ceiling" pushes down upon me, stopping me in my tracks. I can only move so far, and then SMACK! My head is slammed into the invisible barrier above me. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the "Glass Ceiling" refers to "those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management-level positions" ("Glass"). Throughout history, women have been trapped by the "Glass Ceiling" in a variety of work fields; although they have tried to break through the barrier, only a few have succeeded. Even the women that have succeeded face more obstacles once in their leadership positions. When it comes down to it, the main barrier that holds women stagnant in their work fields is traditional gender stereotyping. However, many little barriers exist inside this monumental hindrance.

One barrier is the fact that women are not encouraged to strive for leadership positions by society as a whole. "Society has determined that only males make good leaders; therefore it continues to deny easy access for women seeking leadership roles because they do not fit the norm. Women who seek leadership positions face barriers and many times give up..." (Grove and Montgomery). Rarely do you see a female CEO of a company. Women don't commonly hold a high position in the clergy of a church. The President of the United States has never been a woman, and only "33 women have served in the Senate. Of these, 8 were chosen to fill vacancies caused by their husbands' deaths" ("Facts About"). These are just a few examples. Unfortunately, there are many other jobs that women are not encouraged to strive for.

This problem is especially common in higher education presidency positions. Women are rarely seen as principals of high schools let alone as university presidents. In fact, they are most frequently observed as elementary school principals due to the "female attributes of nurturing, being sensitive, empathetic, intuitive, compromising, caring, cooperative, and accommodative" (Grove and Montgomery). These traits are not commonly expressed by men and therefore women use them to help the younger children in a motherly sense. However, who says that these attributes can't be used to benefit children at the high school level or even for college students? As a college student, I believe that these attributes would make a great university president, one that would enhance campus morale and student-faculty interactions. However, this will not happen because women are seen by many in society as unassertive and unwilling to take the power. I think that females are willing to take a position of power, but they are hindered by a lack of support, traditional stereotypes, and a difference in leadership style between men and women.

Men and women see leadership tasks very differently, causing disequilibrium between the two sexes. Especially in the area of business, one should recognize that one managerial style is not proven better than another even if some people would argue otherwise. For example, some believe that "'female' behaviors –particularly collaborativeness and nurturance– had become more appropriate for managers than the stereotypical male predilections for power and control" (Lipman-Blumen and Robinson). On the other hand, others believe that the original tendency of males to use power and control is better suited for the managerial position because they won't be "soft" in decision-making situations. According to a

study of current male and female managers performed by Jean Lipman-Blumen and Jill L. Robinson, men and women tend to use the same behaviors in leadership. In fact, 6 out of the 9 behaviors that were studied were used equally between men and women. Of the three unequal behaviors, men tended to use the competitive and mentoring skills more often, whereas women tended to master and improve their skills more often. This verifies that there really isn't a difference in men's and women's actual performances as leaders. Nevertheless, a barrier is still created for women due to the traditional ideal of leadership being male.

Women are hampered in society because men were, historically, the first to be leaders; this "manly" leader is still seen as the ideal for the management or administrative world even when women are just as capable as their male counterparts. Many women who are in high leadership positions feel forced to "lead in the manner that is considered the norm; that is, the way that men lead" (Grove and Montgomery). This means they are forced to be more competitive prior to mastering their skills, the opposite of what women tend to prefer, according to the Lipman-Blumen and Robinson study. This is yet another barrier that stops women from moving up the leadership ladder in any field. If the woman is forced by society to act, teach, administrate, and in a sense be male, then females are not as willing to get into these leadership positions. Many will not give up themselves in such a way for a higher position in their line of work, and it is unfair to ask any woman to do so. Everyone should have the chance to be themselves in their work fields, especially women. There truly is no reason for them to convert to "manly" procedures just to receive a higher position; they should be leaders in their work solely because they want to.

In terms of leadership, the President of the United States has the most important role of all; however, this position appears to be most difficult for women to get into due to traditional gender stereotyping. It's hard to believe that in 1870, fifty years before women received the right to vote, Victoria Claflin Woodhull announced herself as a candidate for the 1872 U.S. Presidential election ("After 135"). Since then there have been nine other women who have tried their hands at the Presidential race. That leads us to question why there hasn't been a woman candidate actually on the voting ballot. The answer is simple: in the past, society was not ready for a woman president.

Times appear to have changed: "Ninety-two percent of adults now say they would vote for a woman for president from their political party if she were qualified for the job" ("Ready for"). However, I don't believe people would actually vote for a woman when the time came along. There have been many female candidates in the past, including Carol Moseley Braun, who ran for President in the 2004 election; none of these women were well supported by the nation's voters. Is it that those females weren't "qualified" or "intelligent" enough for voters? Perhaps, but in my past experience, I have seen many people express the fear that a female president would not be respected by other world leaders. This is mainly because many religions and cultures do not believe that women should hold such authority. It is sad to think that our nation has a lack of faith in just the female gender when it comes to positions of power.

One woman has recently gained quite a bit of power in the clergy, and a lot of controversy has occurred since. In June of 2006, for the first time ever, a woman was elected as presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church. Out of seven candidates, Katharine Jefferts Schori was chosen by the Consecration of Bishops Committee to be in this leadership position for the next nine years. However, not everyone is viewing her rise to power as an improvement for the Church as a whole. In fact, her appointment threatens to

tear the Church followers apart, and a possible schism has been discussed. Nevertheless, this division has only been considered by a small section of the Episcopal Church. The most controversy has surrounded the "Seven U.S. conservative dioceses (that) have already rejected her authority and have asked Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, the Anglican spiritual leader, to assign them another national leader" ("A First"). Many of these dioceses disagree with allowing women to even be ordained as bishops and therefore don't support a woman head bishop. Even Jefferts Schori feels that her gender has a lot to do with the controversy: "I think there's a piece of it that has to do with that. I think if a man had been elected to this position at this time things would be not quite so hot" (qtd. in Conlon). Unfortunately, as Jefferts Schori stated, gender is the major barrier that keeps women from succeeding in leadership positions. Although society is trying to fix the gender stereotyping that exists, this kind of oppression is still present, and it stops many women from even trying to gain a position of power.

Women are held down by many barriers as they try to climb the leadership ladder. The one main barrier, however, is the fact that they are women and have had traditional stereotypes held against them for a long time. It is sad that these particular obstacles don't allow women to be equal with men in the work field. Although steps are being made to overcome this huge barrier that exists inside the gender gap, there is still work to be done. Is it fair to have this stereotyping stopping woman's every move as we try to gain power in the work field? I think not. Now is the time for action, not just for women but men as well. The people who can make the biggest difference in changing this traditionally held belief are also our future leaders: male and female college students.

Female college students can easily make a difference in the gender stereotyping, especially since they will be in the work field very soon. They can do this by working hard to force through the small barriers inside it without changing themselves in the process. There is no reason for anyone to modify their nature just to get a better job, particularly when this change will cause them to be unhappy. Nonetheless, it takes hard work, determination, strength, and self-discipline to get into the ranks of any leadership position. It also calls for some sense of a competitive spirit but, as women, we do not have to let that change us. We can be optimistic and tenacious with our own personality without making ourselves into the "manly" leader that tradition seems to hold as ideal. As students, we know what stereotypes have oppressed women in the past; as the future, we can help work against the tradition that has held women back to achieve our goals. If we work aside men, not against them, we can overcome the gender stereotyping.

Male college students can also make a huge impact on closing the gender stereotyping that exists today. Since they will be the next employees alongside females, they can be a substantial influence in the advocacy for female leaders. Men can support women who want to get into the upper-level management positions by being mentors and not pushing the barriers upon them. By being stable mentors, men can help women feel in control of their futures, and by working together they can break apart all of the traditional gender roles that hold women stationary. Men can even ensure that females use their best assets to their advantage in all areas of the working spectrum. Also, if a male is in a high position of leadership and a female is vying for any leadership position below him, he can make sure that gender is not a factor in deciding who is offered the job.

One should recognize that a woman should not be seen as a better choice for a position simply because of her gender either. If this situation occurs, reverse discrimination becomes a problem, where men are suddenly forced into the barriers that currently trap women. The goal is to have males and females

equal in all areas of the work field. This can happen mainly by these two groups working mutually as one. If men and women forget the division of gender, they can easily overcome all of the obstacles before them together. As Henry Ford once said: "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

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2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Tyler Page, "Gravitational Insubordination"  
For Dr. Bryce Christensen

Gravitation is the phenomenon through which all objects attract each other. This basic law of physics is the very source from which many in this day and age draw from to access the most exhilarating natural high one can experience. Gravity-defying stunts can be witnessed in every walk of life. People have come up with many ways to reach this nirvana. Whether it be a near infant who has triumphantly ascended the living room couch and then daringly attempts to dismount, or the insane 2000 ft. climb of the world's best in Zion National Park, the ensuing rush of adrenaline will be the same. Not everyone is fit or willing to experience such thrills, especially my drug of choice: rock climbing. Strength, creativity, and a certain level of craziness are the requirements that quickly weed out the casual climbers from the serious.

Though mental strength is key, physical strength also plays an essential role. The muscles used while scaling a wall of rock are different from almost every other sport, and the beautiful thing is, while a person may be a strong climber, being large in stature or bulky isn't a necessity. On the contrary, the physique of the top climbers is often long, streamlined with muscle tightly wound round the bones. The appearance of the creature is almost pathetic, until leaving the horizontal realm of the average person and, while displaying remarkable strength, surmounts the most unlikely of vertical tasks. To witness this is very gratifying, which is why I choose to tag along with my friends Dave and Jeff whenever they make an excursion to go climbing.

To accompany climbers such as Dave and Jeff is truly an honor. They exemplify two very different yet effective styles of climbers. While climbing virtually horizontally with his back to the cold earth below, Dave will work his way up a boulder. The strain on his forearms is barely visible while he clings, looking for the solution to this problem. Moving his legs constantly along the concave surface, he works carefully and swiftly to move upward while his strength remains. With no more options underneath the rock, he slaps for the more vertical outside surface. To the amazement of all witnessing, his hand sticks to the cold stone. In the motion of the move, his feet slip from their hold, and he is left dangling with only the strength of his arms to clench the rock and prevent the fall. Yelps of anguish are heard by those around as he refocuses his strength. As the grip of his fingers seems to weaken the longer he stays in this Tom Cruise position, he quickly attaches his legs to the rock and continues the ascent. The tightness of his muscles can now be seen as he prepares for the last critical step in the equation. Exerting what strength is left, Dave lunges to the beginning of the end: the hold of all holds. With a firm grip he wastes no time in finishing the task at hand. Nothing short of shear strength could have gotten Dave to the top of that rock. This is quite a contrast from the fluid climbing motion of Jeff.

On a different rock we can find Jeff on a different climb. This one starts off quickly. He moves from the sitting position up and begins scaling across the boulder. As you watch him move, there is an obvious difference between his and Dave's style. His arms are much longer, so his stretch moves across much more territory. Though vertical, he scurries horizontally on the route. It becomes apparent why this route is called "heel way to heaven" as he approaches the end of the climb. The ledge juts out from the main mass, and his route takes him right under the ledge up and around and onto the top. The only thing to support him during all of this is his heel which is wedged in a hole. In this situation you see the

advantages of Jeff's longer, skinnier profile. His arms literally wrap around this whole ledge. While you don't think he can stretch himself any more, he extends higher and higher. Then, when he seemingly reaches the top from underneath the rock with his hands, he releases his heel and while still straining and showing an impressive amount of endurance scurries up to the top. Celebration ensues.

The common thread between these two climbers is their ability to use their individual abilities to get them to the top. Their ability to see what works for them creates two different routes on the same problem. Every serious climber has a serious imagination. This is an important attribute which usually comes standard in the climbing community. The art of looking at a slab of rock and seeing hand-holds, foot-holds as well as a way to get down when you get to the top is absolutely necessary. They notice every indentation and every nub which could potentially propel them a little bit higher. All this is done before they even begin to climb. The most creative work comes as they are on the rock. Oftentimes things look much different from "up there" than they did while on the ground. Fast thinking will prevail among the ideal climbers. Those of us who don't think fast enough will, more often than not, be left falling to the ground pad, or dangling from the safety rope. However, no matter how amazing any climber is, at some point he will fall. This is where that bit of craziness takes place.

No matter what level a climber is, he has two choices: make it to the top or fall. For those seeking a higher destination, ropes are most often used. Therefore, losing his grip means falling or sliding ten or fifteen feet until he hits the end of his safety rope and is left with a rush that can only be felt while falling off a cliff. For a climber of shorter, more difficult routes, the distance of the fall will be lesser; however, no less exhilarating. The ground pad below will hopefully break the fall and at least round off the sharp edges of some of the surrounding rocks. Either way, what kind of person with fatigued muscles, cuts and scratches, and a mind shaken, all from this "near death" experience, will reorient themselves and start again? Only those who thrive off the climbing adrenaline.

Anyone expecting to hang with the model climbers needs to develop the strength, discover the creativity, and unleash that bit of craziness necessary to enter their world. These three things are the defining attributes of the climbing world. They are the key to reaching that high, which is only achieved in defiance of the phenomenon called gravitation.

## Expressive- English 1010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Jade Askeroth, "Friday Morning Baleadas"  
For Professor Toa Tawa

Somewhere in the Honduran jungle:

"Are you ready? Hurry up!"

"Ah man, I don't feel like doing anything. This place scares me."

"Ha ha. Welcome to your new life. You'll get used to it. But come on! It's Friday morning. We can't miss it!"

"What are you so excited about? Are those tacos that important?"

"Trust me. Baleadas will change the way you feel about this place. Give it a shot."

I started my Honduran life at the young age of nineteen. When I arrived in Honduras, I felt really intimidated to enter the poorest country in the western hemisphere. I remember looking down from the airplane into the dense forest landscape when feelings of loneliness and confusion swept over me like a cold breeze. The forest made me feel like I was in the movie *Predator*, but this time Arnold Schwarzenegger wasn't there to save the day. Luckily, I had mentally prepared myself for these situations long before my travel. Because of these mental preparations, I said to myself, "Welcome to your new life. Get used to it."

Adapting to the jungle life wasn't my only challenge. I soon found out that the language was a huge barrier in my quest to find myself at home. How was I going to survive if I couldn't communicate with the locals? Sure, I tried to prepare myself by studying Spanish as much as I could, but the language was nothing like I expected. I found myself tongue-tied. I was afraid to make the smallest mistake. I didn't want the people to laugh at me so I kept my mouth shut. This closed-mouth technique did not help me at all in learning the language. So, once again, I said to myself, "Welcome to your new life. Get used to it."

The most immediate change I felt in Honduras was the climate. The heat and humidity were almost unbearable. I would turn on the fan hoping to find an escape from the extreme temperature, but the fan would just blow more hot air. It didn't help. I was constantly sweating. I never realized that water could come out of my skin so quickly. Although a cold shower was always refreshing, just minutes after drying myself off, I found myself drenched again in sweat. My mind flashed back to a few days before my arrival. I was sitting with my Dad in a sauna as we talked. I remember the big smile on his face as he asked me, "Do you like the sauna?"

"Yeah, it's nice," I replied.

"Well good!" My dad blurted back as he laughed out loud, "Because you're going to be living in one for the next two years!" One day, with the heat and humidity beating down upon my body, I said to myself, "The old fart was right."

I continued to slowly adjust to my new home, but one day I made a breakthrough. It was a Friday morning as my companion and I left the house to eat breakfast when he asked me, "Have you ever eaten baleadas?"

"No. What's that?" I asked.

"They're pretty much like tacos," he said.

I was skeptical to try these new tacos. I figured they would probably be some deep-fried grease bombs like the rest of the native food had been. But I was really sick and tired of having bread and orange juice for breakfast everyday so I decided to give these mysterious tacos a try. As we walked down the street I noticed an old cement house with ugly mint green paint. A small group of people gathered just outside of the house. I said to my companion, "Don't tell me we're going to that nasty green house over there."

He laughed, "Yep. How'd you know?"

As we approached the house, I heard a strange clapping noise as if someone was applauding. *They're probably doing some goofy breakfast dance or something*, I thought. "This country is so weird." My comp and I made our way up to the front of the line where we were greeted by a very large, sweaty Honduran woman.

"How many do you want?" She asked.

I couldn't reply. All my attention was focused on her teeth. She had three gold teeth and the rest were completely black. My companion elbowed me.

"Oh, I want two baleadas," I said still staring. The lady turned around, placed a ball of dough in her hand and started smacking her hands together. After a few loud claps, the dough was in a perfect tortilla formation ready to be cooked. The clapping that I heard was not a goofy breakfast dance at all, but a way of making the famous Honduran tortilla. In just a few minutes, the baleadas were placed in a plastic bag and handed to us. As we walked back to our house, I wasn't sure what to expect of these new taco things.

I worked up a good sweat by the time we got back to the house. I quickly sat down at the table and said to my companion, "Could you pass me some of those baleadas? I'm starving." He handed me two baleadas and I opened one up. Inside the baleada I found the tortilla smothered in refried beans, scrambled eggs and some sort of cheese that looked like white sand. I started to think the bread and orange juice idea would be a little better.

"Just try it," my companion said.

I closed the baleada and took a bite. The soft flour tortilla melted in my mouth as all the ingredients came together in perfect form.

"Wow! This is great!" I exclaimed. My companion nodded his head as he continued eating. I couldn't believe it. This was probably the best food that I had eaten for months. I quickly ate the first baleada and moved on to the next one. I learned that the secret of the baleada was in the tortilla. It was soft and thick, nothing like the cardboard-flavored tortillas I had eaten in the States.

"This is something that I'm glad to get used to," I said quietly.

I continued to adapt to my new environment. My little inconveniences, as I called them, transformed into milestones that paved the path of who I would become. It wasn't easy, but eventually I became accustomed to the hot climate. I had to set aside the easy and comfortable way of speaking to be able to accomplish bigger goals. I realized my only obstacle was myself. The language took practice, and many mistakes, but soon Spanish seemed to flow off of my tongue. I was able to take another step closer to the culture I had learned to love. For the first time, I felt at home. To celebrate, Friday morning baleadas became a tradition. It was a time to kick back and enjoy what life throws at you. On those Friday mornings, I reflected on the wonderful lessons my new culture had taught me. I looked back at all my old struggles and saw how they had made me strong. I became grateful. I became happy. I became a different person.

One extremely hot June, I received a new companion. He came from the United States. Like many Americans, his first day in Honduras was tough. I smiled as I saw sweat drip off his nose like a leaky faucet and I held back my laughter when I saw him struggle for words. Everything was new to him. Everything was different. He looked confused and far from home. I couldn't help but think about myself back when I was in his shoes. My companion didn't realize it in that very moment, but all his current inconveniences would give him the opportunity to become someone greater than he had ever been. I knew it from experience. At the end of his first day, I patted him on his shoulder and said, "Welcome to your new home. You'll get used to it."

He said, "It's so hot. I can't speak Spanish. I feel lost. I'm not sure if I'll ever get used to anything here in this country."

I laughed, "That's how I used to feel. You know, tomorrow is Friday. Have you ever had baleadas?"

"No. What's that?" he asked.

"They're kinda like tacos." I said with a smile, "We'll eat some tomorrow and I promise you'll start to feel more at home."

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Adrienne Gastrich, "Turning Pages"  
For Professor Kristin Brinkerhoff

It had been a rough day in the life of one certain teenager. Indeed that certain teenager was none other than me. I had just arrived home from school thoroughly depressed from the day's events. My friend talked behind my back, my boyfriend emotionally abused me, and my grades were suffering as a result of it all. Not to mention, as soon as I walked in the door of my house, orders were barked at me and questions about my day were asked. The events of the day scrolled through my mind like slides on a movie reel. Tensions between my parents and me were running high, along with marred emotions running freely. I retreated to my room and tried to release stress by cleaning. I looked at the mess on my floor and groaned at the task ahead. I plopped down on my bed and glanced toward my bookshelf instead of accepting the mission I had originally set out to accomplish.

I thought about the time my dad and I went to buy it. On Saturdays, when I was younger, my dad and I would venture to yard sales around the neighborhood. Usually I would find a stuffed animal or rollerblades to buy; however, this time I saw an old, dented, paint-chipped bookcase. I decided that was what I was going to choose this Saturday. My dad thought it was a piece of junk. I, however, had made plans in my head of making it a home next to my bed. My dad agreed that I needed a bookcase, so he went ahead and purchased it for me. When I got home, I painted a fresh coat of white paint on it. It looked brand new and happy as if it was a little girl in a new Sunday dress.

Those were the days when life was simple. Innocence was cherished. Decisions were uncomplicated. Curiosity was encouraged. I thought about how it would feel to feel those feelings again. I decided to delve into the past with full force. The only thing that helped me do that was to scour my collection of novels, looking for something—anything—that I had not by now loved to death, cherished to the point where the text was illegible.

The first book I singled out was a *Nancy Drew* adventure. I began reading the worn pages, expecting a mediocre re-run of a mediocre adventure. I was right; beyond each turn conquered by Nancy, disappointment loomed. The drawn-out mystery and ever-predictable villains resulted only in a groan, seemingly emitting from every uninterested inch of my body.

Dejected as I was by the failure to find stimulating material, I returned to the shelf with all but a portion of my intellect. I once again set out for a decent mind fodder. As I diverted my eyes to the lower shelves, the titles given to books seemingly transformed into more simplistic themes. I glanced past a Matt Christopher collection, and many other classics, until my eyes came to rest upon the smallest book on the shelf: *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*. I removed the tattered copy from its home. As I turned the pages of *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*, I realized that it was more than a mere child's book. The author, C.S. Lewis, addresses important issues through a code. Lewis' allegory is done in the simplistic style of a child's book, yet behind this façade, there are social, political, and philanthropic perspectives littering the pages. Lewis points out to the reader that curiosity is an inherent trait that could lead to great adventures. In the book Lucy discovers a whole new world behind a door. Aslan, the main character in the book, represents a religious figure. Lewis brought to the attention the fact that children are not limited by any of the antagonistic barriers to which the adult world has learned to succumb.

My journey through the incomprehensible vastness of my memories began as a search to relieve tension. It turned out to be quite a bit more meaningful. As I scanned my collection of books, I ventured deeper into myself, beyond the reaches of time and space. I saw different moments of my life as interpreted by artists such as Mark Twain, J.D. Salinger, Alice Sebold and the like. I was enlightened as I remembered how Huck Finn taught me more about growing up than I could have possibly learned from a lifetime of educational films. Holden Caulfield taught me that adults are not always omnipotent, dependable, or compassionate, and sometimes one has to learn from oneself and not from the models that are placed around them. The book *The Lovely Bones* gave me a sense of security and comfort about death. After Susie Salmon is murdered, she tells her story from heaven. Life on Earth moves on without her; however, memories of her are still cherished. I learned that when one loses someone it is okay to feel abandoned but not alone; it is okay to grieve but not dwell; it is okay to ask questions but not expect answers. And most of all, it is okay to move on without them. There are many more life lessons I was reminded of as I flipped through the chapters of my life.

As the battered pages turned, I was confronted head-on by the feelings of my past. There are countless emotions scattered about the pages of an old book: a tear stain there (I felt the pain of Alice in the book *Go Ask Alice*), a crushed noodle from chicken noodle soup (Mom was there when I had a stuffy nose). Everything is a landmark of faint but certainly not forgotten feelings. It is always a book—not a movie, nor a compute game—a book, in which I truly find who I am. The pages of a book are not just ink on pulped trees. They are the souls of the artists who sacrificed themselves, forever lingering, with cardboard covers for cell walls. The moment I realized this, a new world was opened to me in books.

Honorable Mention: Eric Stein, "An Nasiriyah"  
For Professor Alice Kane

It was March 23, 2003, and in two hours the sun was going to peak over the horizon of the dusty landscape. I leaned my head on my rifle in a futile attempt to sleep. I tried to sit as close as I could to the large exhaust pipe of the AAV for warmth. I never thought this country could be so cold. Movies such as *Three Kings* made it look like a toaster oven at all times. The sounds of helicopters and jet aircraft streaked the sky and the loud thunderous booms would echo in the desert followed by orange and yellow beams of light which would expose the area where land meets sky. We crossed the Kuwaiti/Iraqi border in the cover of night, and I couldn't help but think proudly of myself for being one of the few and proud Marines to have the opportunity to invade a hostile country. I felt like a Viking warrior.

The volley of runaway Scud missiles shot across the sky, like shooting stars, only to be intercepted by Patriot missiles from our south. The sun was up now but for some reason the temperature stayed the same. Out of the barren desert a small boxy skyline of a city was defined by the black smoke that could only be caused by burning vehicles and gasoline. Our company was given the name, Task Force Tarawa, to honor the Marines who fought and died on Tarawa during WWII. Many of us felt the name was a bad omen, but I didn't give into the superstition. We sat silently in the belly of the AAV, like Trojans in the infamous wooden horse. Our objective was to take the bridges over Saddam canal and within the city to secure the route northward to Baghdad. What seemed to be hours passed by, and I started to feel frustrated with the time. "What the hell are we waiting for," I screamed. Looking back I cannot imagine being excited to put myself in harms way, but I was. Since there were assortments of rockets and explosives inside the vehicle we all sat on top of the AAV to smoke our cigs and bullshit about what they were going to call this war.

Suddenly the vehicle's squawk box opened up with chatter. The vehicle started rolling forward and we all cheered as if there was no possible way any of us would be killed in the ensuing battle to come. Keeping my rifle in the ready position, I desperately looked for a target. I didn't want to come out of this empty handed. Hell, the war was only going to last a week or so, or so I thought. We neared the first bridge and the thick smoke of a burning T-57 Russian tank choked and blinded me. The three vehicles in front of mine jolted forward, and I could see we were going straight into the city's interior. In an instant the sound of enemy automatic gun fire pierced my ears and turned my temporary excitement into instant fear. The AAV in front of ours without warning exploded into flames and I felt my eyes glaze over with the color of purple from the percussion. I am a twenty-year-old Marine with combat training; I was now a scared seven-year-old kid.

## Argumentative- English 2010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Erin Evans, "Imagery of Resistance"

For Dr. Jessica Tvordi

War and oppression are archetypes for some Middle Eastern cultures in our past and present eras. In his poems "Here We Shall Stay" and "A Million Suns in My Blood," Tawfiq Zayyad uses imagery to express the emotions of the Palestinian people in an earlier and a more recent conflict. The rallying cry of an oppressed group is symbolized in "Here We Shall Stay," while "A Million Suns in My Blood" is the resolute mantra of a single captive. Both poems share the theme of constant resistance to the oppressor. Although this theme could imply the use of force to defy the oppressor, the imagery presented in both poems results in a call for firm, quiet resistance, not violent warfare.

In "Here We Shall Stay" resistance is evident in the images of the mundane daily activities the oppressed people participate in. The oppressed sing songs of defiance and "sweep the sick streets with [their] angry dances" (line 22). Unbeknownst to the oppressors, their captives "snatch a crumb for [their] children" while scrubbing floors (14). Instead of wielding swords or designing bombs, these people are slowly, consistently avoiding complete obliteration by winning everyday battles. Their resistance is unrelenting because they "Keep on making children / One revolutionary generation / After another" (24-26). Even the natural act of reproduction is resistance. This oppressed people do not need hostilities to win their war. They are "living roots [who] hold fast / And - still - reach deep in the earth" (49-50). Resistance is embedded in their souls and the souls of their children. These oppressed people are resisting every day simply by living.

The theme of resistance to oppression is presented in "A Millions Suns in My Blood" as the image of inward defiance instead of physical rebellion. After the oppressors stripped the speaker of food, water, knowledge, love, home, and even "the flowerpots on the balcony" his will to resist is not deterred but amplified (9). He says, "In their chain, my pride / Is fiercer than all arrogant delirium. In my blood a million suns / Defy a multitude of cruelties" (15-18). Instead of lashing out in foolish hostility toward his enemy, he resists inwardly by becoming stronger. After subjugation, his pride becomes stronger than the arrogance of his captors, and his blood thickens enough to withstand further cruelties. In the final stanza the speaker says, "[My] hands are steady and enduring. / The hands of the oppressor / However hard / Tremble!" (27-30). The oppressor, despite his malice, has lost what gives him power over the speaker. As the enemy loses heart and conscience through cruelty, the oppressed man's will to overcome his captor is strengthened.

Zayyad also employs the image of a firm resistance in both "Here We Shall Stay" and "A Million Suns in My Blood" by using resilient objects to represent the oppressed narrators. The mantra of the oppressed residents in Lydda, Ramla, and Galilee is "Here we shall stay / Like a brick wall upon your breast" (3-4). This image, a simile for the Palestinians whose resolve to resist their oppressors, is immovable and suffocating like the brick fortress. The speaker of "A Million Suns in My Blood" explains that he was stripped of everything "Except / A heart / A conscience / And a tongue!" (11-14). These indestructible possessions he is left with are vital in his resistance because no amount of torture can take them away. By using these resilient representations, Zayyad presents real-life images that give substance and meaning to the firm, steady resistance found in both poems.

The images in both of Zyyad's poems call for resistance, but neither poem encourages a bloody battle. Resistance is evident in the daily activities of the oppressed group, and it is apparent in the soul of the captive Palestinian. The oppressed are tough but don't show their strength with hostility; instead, they are constant irritants to their captors "Like a splinter of glass, [or] like spiky cactus" wedged in the body ("Here We Shall Stay", 6). Resistance can manifest itself in many forms, but the imagery in "Here We Shall Stay" and "A Million Suns in My Blood" lends itself to an effective, firm, yet quiet resistance, not warfare.

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2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Elisabeth Day, "Society: Take or Leave it"  
For Dr. Jessica Tvordi

In "The Market Economy" by Marge Piercy and "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula K. Le Guin, the authors offer a critique of society which forces an evaluation of the reader's morals and whether or not he/she is pushed about by society. Although it's impossible to avoid moral dilemmas in society, both pieces of literature effectively portray the corrupt manner in which society controls the population and hides the consequences of those who blindly follow.

"The Market Economy" begins by posing a series of choices to the reader: "Suppose some peddler offered / you can have a color TV / but your baby will be / born with a crooked spine;" (499). Would it be a worthy compromise? The question seems ridiculous at first, but maybe it would be more time-appropriate to ask "Suppose a restaurant offered you convenient and cheap food, but your life will be shortened by a heart attack." Such questions challenge the exchanges average people make for convenience and comfort without thinking of the consequences. In defense of these foolish choices humans make, the poem goes on to say how society doesn't really offer alternative choices for a better lifestyle: "But where else will you / work? Where else can / you rent but Smog City?" (499)

It's an overwhelming fact that society will not aid its inhabitants after manipulating them. It offers all the glitz and glam, but says nothing of the negative side-effects that will follow. Thus the poem ends with the profound lines "Don't read the fine / print, there isn't any" (499). In the real world, society has to only offer the positive to survive. Nobody would ever ruin their finances with credit cards if the media told right out that the interest rates will be out of this world. Society can't afford to paint the whole picture; otherwise nobody would buy into it.

Paralleling the message of this poem is that of "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas." This story speaks of a society which is always happy and never experiences sorrow, defeat, or guilt. When the inhabitants are of age they will be told the secret to their happiness: a suffering child who pleads for freedom but is hidden in a basement. Upon seeing this child, they are bothered, but most eventually accept the suffering of the child because it is the reason they do not have to suffer themselves, and they as one person cannot change the ways of the town anyway. This metaphor alludes to the tactics of society today. Le Guin says "The trouble is that we have a bad habit, encouraged by pedants and sophisticates, of considering happiness as something rather stupid" (424). The media know that they can sell any product or idea if somebody trusted and famous is advertised with it, and then shove the negative consequences in the basement. By the time people find the corrupt side of something "ideal" they either feel helpless in trying to change it, or willing to accept it because "(h)appiness is based on a just discrimination of what is necessary" (424).

However, every once in a while in Omelas someone will not write off the child's suffering as a way of life and will walk away from the town, but ". . .they seem to know where they are going" (427). Why would somebody have confidence in walking away from Omelas when the inhabitants therein are always happy? Is it possible that the people of Omelas could be happy without ever having the contrast of being sad?

As Le Guin describes the never-ending happiness of Omelas, she says, “All smiles have become archaic” (423). There was a time period in art well-known for their sculpted figurines which all portrayed the same, over-exaggerated smile. This became known as the “archaic smile.” The people of Omelas always wear this smile, not because they are really happy, but because it is standard, and if they do not appear happy, then the child in the basement is suffering in vain. Perhaps those who walk away realize that merely the absence of misery does not bring the presence of joy.

I see references to Omelas everyday. Flipping through a magazine I see a smiling girl who is skinny and pretty and surrounded by men, and although everything looks perfect, she knows that she hasn’t eaten a real meal for a year and that no matter how good she looks the editor will always airbrush her photo because something wasn’t good enough. But she needs to smile and make others think she is happy, otherwise all the pain she goes through will be in vain. It’s tempting to want to be her even though there must be consequences. What is a little bit of suffering if somebody can look at me and say, “She is beautiful, she smiles, and she has everything?” But in truth, my happiness isn’t real just because it fits the stereotype. Real happiness comes from living a life with meaning that overcomes misery, and the society of Omelas doesn’t have this to offer. I would walk away from Omelas.

Both the people who live in the market economy and Omelas are taken advantage of because they blindly follow the ways of the society. Those who don’t stand against their society will have to join their society and be absorbed into the people-pleasing lifestyle that is expected of them. Who is there to blame in the end? Certainly not the fine print, because there wasn’t any.

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## Expressive- English 2010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Anna-Lee Smith, "Unfeeling Walls"

For Dr. Robin Calland

I run my fingers along the plain, white walls occasionally broken by the introduction of a door that surrounds my ten-year-old frame. The connecting halls that once seemed a labyrinth are only a matter of remembered and repeated lefts and rights. I know where I am going, I know my destination, and I will get there. I turn the fingerprint-smudged silver handle down and push the ten-ton door with all my body weight when suddenly the load comes easier as Sandra, my social worker, pushes it with a single palm and I stumble into the room. She has done this before. In front of me are the inviting blue and white, flower speckled, pull-you-in-deep sofas that have yet again found a new resting place on their journey around the room. The toys that have been played with only minutes before are organized, upright, in their correct places, displaying smiles, primary colors, and challenges just waiting for the next child, waiting for me. And on the side wall the single window makes its appearance. "The Black Mirror," I call it. It isn't a window into the outside world, but a window into mine.

I wonder why such a cold place has become a sanctuary for me; no feeling is attached to this room, hardly any emotion found within these four walls. The only form of expression is found on my favorite toy Raggedy Ann and her embroidered smile. She is the only doll I can find within the room with eyes intact, her original hair cut, and only a few stains upon her ensemble. Her soft and fluffy body easily forms to fit in my arms and gives love without complaint. She doesn't do much, unlike the remote control car that only works if the batteries are being held in place, the remote is upside down, and the antenna of the remote is touching the antenna on the car. How I came upon this solution I will never know. This car coincidentally has become my brother's favorite toy; Ms. Ann has become mine.

At this point, it is only me and my social worker. She is tall and thin, but far from graceful. Her beautiful eyes and perfectly groomed hair accompanied by her professional aura would make anyone predict she could glide across the room, but she doesn't. She stomps. She is lanky. I like her anyway. She has always been distant, and although I know otherwise, I like to think that I am her only case and worrying about me keeps her awake at night; my therapist says that's me trying to compensate for the attention I missed growing up, but I know my imaginations are just because I have a selfish nature. No one has ever been afraid to tell me about my nature before, so I've learned to accept it.

It feels like an eternity before she enters. Like the time will never pass. She doesn't know; she doesn't know he's not coming; my mother doesn't know my brother is not coming. I am angry with him. He is the selfish one, I think; he is only thinking of himself, he doesn't know what this will do to her. He has given up, and I won't. I don't want her to walk in; I don't want her to realize that her only son has given up on her along with everyone else. I don't want her to realize that her ten-year-old daughter is the only one who has faith in her. I don't.

She walks in. She sees me and doesn't act any different. I am engulfed by her frail arms that have always held me. Sometimes it seems like her voice even takes on a personality like the loving embrace she offers when I talk to her on the phone, twice a week, Tuesday and Thursday 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm.

I can tell she is trying to be strong. She knows; she has been informed. She gently takes my Raggedy Ann and begins cradling it in her arms like a baby; she tells me that I am a great mother, but she's the grandma and she can hold little Ann whenever she wants. I look into her eyes that are looking into the stitched eyes of my doll. I look at her mouth as she pretends to make faces at the "baby." I look at her gentle elongated fingers that look like they could break off at any moment; I steal Ann back and attempt to hold the doll in the same manner.

The time does fly by but I'm not having fun. This is my Friday every Friday; this day is planned for me and there is never any difference. I try to remember what we did in the short hour we spent together and realize that the time was spent with me on the floor playing with the toys meant for much younger children than I, and she talking to Sandra about things they thought I didn't understand. We embrace for another moment and then she begins walking toward the door swaying her hips as she walks which in turn sways the bottom of her skirt that I imagine is waving goodbye to me. She, like me an hour earlier, turns down the silver handle that keeps the door closed and with a little struggle opens it, rests it upon her stiletto-heeled, pointy-toe, velvet shoes with the bow, and turns around and says she loves me. I mutter something similar in return, and she walks out of the door frame as the door quickly shuts behind her until it is caught by the air pressure stopper on the top of the door and gracefully swings into place.

I go home and see his face; I hate that face. He doesn't even ask how it went. He, as usual, is putting something laden with grease into the microwave so he could later stuff it into his unfeeling face piece by piece until he has slurped up every last drop of grease. All people find their brothers disgusting, but I find mine repulsive. Looking at him *literally* makes me want to vomit.

He has always been my big brother, someone to take care of me, someone to look up to, and up until this moment I had, on occasion, but, "never again," I promise my self.

It is Friday again, but months have passed. Five months to be exact. The cold, harsh, biting weather outside finally begins to match the sentiment the walls of this building reflect. It is November, and Thanksgiving is right around the corner. There is nothing to be thankful about. "Nothing except all the things you have, a roof over your head, your freedom," is another phrase coined by my repetitive monkey of a therapist; what the hell does she know?

As she takes her usual stroll into the room and realizes he is still not present, she looks at me and she notices a striking difference: we are alone. That's right mom, no adults to fill *our* time together, just you, and me. Take a seat. I guess we really aren't alone; Sandra is right behind the "Black Mirror." I'm sure she still thinks I'm unaware it is not a mirror at all; adults are insane. They seem to underestimate every brain wave a child has; they can kiss my ass.

She takes a seat next to my small body and for the first time I *really* see her. She used to be bubbly and have energy. Now she is frail, weak, and small. She apparently doesn't notice that her skin-and-bones-body can't fill the wardrobe that her once curvy and plump body could; she still wears the same clothes. I wonder if she thinks because she can fit into the shoes that match the outfits, the outfits will amazingly fit; but they don't. Someone should tell her. Not only is her body so small the skin seems to hang off of it, it has taken on a jaundice color; her once proud hair hangs limply and straw-like around her shoulders; her skin seems almost transparent, and her veins are like an unmarked road map all over her body.

She grabs my hand and we sit in silence. We sit in silence for at least five minutes, but it's a good silence, a silence of realization, a silence of acceptance. This is the last time, the last visit. In a week I will be moving again to another foster home. Progress with her has only gone downhill, and social services decided for *us* that visits are only prolonging the inevitable: adoption.

The sadness upon the embroidered face of my doll has become apparent along with the tears streaming out of the headlight eyes upon the remote control car. They seem to know that it will be the last time that they will be played with by my specific hands and the remote control car appears to realize that it will be a while before another child discovers how it works. Although I can only imagine these unlikely emotions coming from the prized inanimate objects, the sadness in the room isn't imagined and can almost be touched.

I think I am sad. I can't really tell. My emotions have begun to take on the unfeeling façade that resemble the structure of the building. I begin to look around the room and recognize the living room. I always wondered why people called their living rooms, "living rooms." No living really is being done in them and usually four-legged family members aren't allowed to enter them. But this was a *real* living room; a room that had been lived in. So many people had spent so much of their lives in this room. I know I would never forget it. I had lived only a small piece of my pie of life in this room; they were minutes and hours I would never forget. I may forget the names and faces of people I once called best friends; I will never forget this room.

She lets go of my hand and I snap back from my tangent-ridden mind. It's amazing that I find it hard to imagine *something*, but I *can't* imagine what is going through her mind; she is losing her last piece of family and it's a decision someone made *for* her. She looks at me and there is more silence; I have to break it, but I don't. I feel it's probably important to her, so I hold back the urge to scream. She finally does what I want her to. She tells me that she's sorry and again tries to convince me that her alcoholism is a disease that she can't control.

The time has yet again passed quickly, and, as I look back, I recognize that it has been spent mostly in silence and understanding. She stands up to face the door that would never again be opened by her hands and I see her skirt is different; it is a pencil skirt that holds no good bye for me. She doesn't swiftly open the door but stands by it; she is overpowered by its ten foot tall, five inch wide wood planks and she stares at it. She clasps her hands together and laces her fingers one by one and slowly turns to face my small body still being eaten by the pull-you-in-deep sofas. She softly whispers that she is sorry once again and can't seem to mutter anything else. Tears begin to stream down her face, and she thinks she can defy the thirty-minute system. It's been thirty-one minutes and she starts stepping toward me; I struggle out of the sofa against its gravity-like pull, when the door suddenly swings open as though its ten-ton weight is as light as a feather; Sandra steps in and takes my mom by the arm. She turns around surprised by Sandra's touch as though the slamming open of the door made absolutely no sound at all. She knows it is time. She nods at Sandra then turns to me and simply does something I decide to never forget; she blows a kiss and walks out of the room. I am alone.

Do I cry? If I don't, am I heartless? I decide not to cry. I put my mind to all the packing I will be doing when I return to my temporary home. I turn my mind to other things. Sandra returns and walks me outside to wait for my foster parents. It's over, nothing more, nothing less, and yet again I am forced to accept the fate that has been handed to me.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Robern Elster, "Fear, Loathing, and the Pursuit of Happiness"  
For Dr. Bryce Christensen

July 11, 2003 what a picturesque summer day in the quaint town of Enterprise, Utah. The mountains that shelter the rural farming community I still consider home, basked in the midday sun. A gentle breeze blew from the south, over the vast expanse of alfalfa fields that sprawl across the valley, causing them to take the appearance of a dark green ocean with swells rolling toward the north. My wife had left in the late morning to tend to some errands and left me at home to tend our six-month-old son Hunter. I spent most of the afternoon wrestling and playing hide-and-go-seek with him, hoping to expend what sometimes seemed like an infinite supply of energy before his afternoon nap. As I prepared a bottle of formula I placed several phone calls attempting to reach my wife and make plans for the evening. Before leaving she said that she would be back in an hour, and when I began rocking my son to sleep it had been five hours since anyone had seen or heard from her. I began to get concerned. Hunter finished his bottle and, angered that I was no longer on the floor playing with him, began to cry. Knowing that the gentle jostling of a car in motion almost always lulled him to sleep, and concerned about my wife, I clipped Hunter into his car seat, and we began meandering path through town. His cries gave way to whimpers, and then to silence as we made our way through the grid of streets, passing every conceivable place my wife could be. After returning home and carefully placing Hunter in his crib, concern for my wife turned to worry. This was not like her. I sat down on our couch, and, peering out our bay window onto Flat Top Mountain, I began pondering the recent problems my wife and I were having. I sat there, thinking, looking superficially at the issues we were having, naive to the root of the problems until my then wife came home.

I remember the scene vividly. A large cloud passed in front of the sun. Shadows that, seconds before, danced across my family room floor disappeared, and an ominous darkness enveloped the room. The door opened. My wife, without saying a word or casting a glance in my direction, walked through the room and into the kitchen. In silence she filled a glass of water from the faucet. Forcefully pressing the glass to her lips she swallowed two large gulps, as if trying to harness from the water she drank the courage to tell me what had just transpired. Leaning over the sink she broke the silence. "I have betrayed you." The moment those words left her mouth it felt as if the room had instantly decompressed, like the air that once filled my lungs had been sucked out. She continued, "I have never loved you; you don't make me happy; marrying you and having a child with you was the biggest mistake of my life!" As she stormed out the house, slamming the door behind her, I stood there in the kitchen in a catatonic state, knowing what just had happened was in fact reality, yet somehow feeling as though it was all a dream. I was shattered from my daze of contemplation by the cries of my son. Carrying him to the rocking chair, I laid him on my lap and tried to comfort his cries. As the sun subsided behind the western horizon, I looked into my son's eyes and began to weep. I knew that from that moment forward our lives would never be the same again. But how would they change? Should I continue down the path I was on? Or should I use this tragedy as an opportunity to deviate from my current course and peruse the aspirations that were building inside of me? Both paths could lead to disaster.

I was young, twenty-two years old at the time of my divorce and content with the life I was living. I owned a 2500 square foot home on three acres, had three cars, and held down a steady job. Many people would be happy to carve out that kind of existence for themselves. I was not. I learned many

important lessons during the summer of 2003, one of which is that physical possessions will never substitute for love or fulfillment. Another is to never take anything for granted. My divorce was devastating physically, mentally, and emotionally. But it was also an opportunity, a chance to pursue the dream that, before my divorce, I lacked the opportunity and the ambition to pursue. That dream was to practice medicine. The opportunity came when I signed two documents: my divorce decree and the closing papers on the sale of my house. The ambition was derived from two events that made me question what I wanted to pursue in life.

As a child I had only minor interest in the sciences. This interest was always trumped by my love of sports. I was a jock. Since shortly after my birth, through my first two years of college when an injury ended my baseball career, sports were always my first priority (and I have the report cards to prove it). However, shortly after my injury I had a paradigm shift. It occurred when I accepted a job as an orthopedic representative. The job entailed selling orthopedic implants and products to surgeons, and then assisting the physicians that used my products in surgery. The knowledge base required to become a successful rep is enormous, and I lacked all of it. Upon accepting the job I was given an anatomy and physiology book, a book on bio-mechanics, a catalog of all the implants the total joint company I now represented offered, step-by-step instructions on how to implant each device, and a plane ticket for a flight to San Diego that left in five days. Attached to the ticket was a single page of paper that contained the instructions "Please report to corporate headquarters November 11 at 7:00 AM with a working knowledge of the information contained in this packet." I did the best I could with the mountain of information I was given and the time frame I was faced with. However, I arrived in San Diego a wide-eyed twenty-year-old, wholly unprepared for what I faced.

The training was a week of sixteen-hour days, a crash course in bio-mechanics, anatomy, physiology, histology, and organic chemistry. It was as if they expected me to learn in one week what physicians spend four years in medical school learning, and I struggled. For the first half of the week I lagged behind the rest of my peers, but by the fourth day I turned the corner. Information they shoved down my throat the first part of the week began to make sense, neurons in my brain began making connections, and on the dawn of the final day I was confident in my abilities. That confidence, however, did not last long. In fact, it lasted the amount of time it took me to finish my breakfast, for it was after breakfast we learned that we would be applying our newfound knowledge on cadavers, and our performance during the procedure would determine if we passed or failed the training session.

Taking my seat in the van that served as our transportation to the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine, the confidence that had emboldened me earlier that morning had been replaced by the fear and trepidation of earlier in the week. I was shuttled into the first room I came to while the rest of peers continued down the hall. My eyes scanned the room quickly coming to rest upon a large stainless steel table with a black body bag resting on top of it. The regional sales manager for my territory entered the room and explained that, for my final exam, I would be performing a total hip arthroplasty on the cadaver which lay inside the body bag before me. I was petrified. I have never in my life, until the birth of my son, felt so unprepared and inadequate. We unzipped the body bag, and a putrid smell enveloped the room, so dank I could almost chew it. After positioning our patient, I slipped a surgical gown on and was handed a scalpel. I took deep breath through my mouth, hoping that the infusion of oxygen would steady my trembling hand. It didn't. Clear fluid began to ooze from the body's pale, lifeless tissue, as my scalpel traced the line I had drawn earlier in black ink. But as I made my incision and began dissecting the deeper layers of tissues, something strange happened. The fear that

had nearly paralyzed me just moments earlier vanished, and I became enthralled by the procedure I was performing and what I was seeing. What I had been poring over in anatomy books was now before my very eyes: the muscles, nerves, bones, and how they interact with each other was right in front of me, and I was amazed. As I prepared to implant the hip stem, a new voice entered the room. It was that of Dr. Santori, the Dean of Surgery at UCSD School of Medicine and a world-renowned orthopedic surgeon. He walked over to the table and we introduced ourselves. After surveying my work, Dr. Santori complimented me on my resection of the joint and shared some pearls of wisdom. He then instructed me on how to properly suture the joint capsule and congratulated me on a successful surgery. As I tore off my gown and mask Dr. Santori came over to me again and asked me a question that has stuck with me to this day. He asked, "Son, you're young enough, why are you here and not in med school somewhere?" I did not have a good answer. I was fascinated with medicine, but I was also completely content with my role in the medical community. I did not see the need to dedicate over a decade of my life to it. But that changed with the premature birth of my son.

My son did not come into this world with a loud cry, kicking and screaming like healthy babies do. Instead, he was born without a sound, blue and limp, seven weeks premature. He was rushed out of the delivery room and into the neo-natal intensive care unit where he was placed under an oxygen hood to supplement his breathing. I stood there at his side while a whirlwind of nurses, respiratory therapists, and doctors quickly tended to his needs. I have never been more terrified in my life. It became apparent that the oxygen hood would not be enough to sustain Hunter's life and a respirator would be needed to breathe for him while his lungs still developed. Our pediatrician, Dr. Bart, informed me of this and I gave him the consent he needed to continue. The commotion around my son's crib subsided until the only people left were Dr. Bart and I. He explained in detail what he intended to do to save Hunter's life and clearly stated the risks and what my wife and I might expect over the next few days. My son's health gradually improved. Dr. Bart's prescribed treatment worked, and, three weeks after his birth, Hunter was finally able to be brought home. Dr. Bart, a complete stranger before the ordeal, bestowed upon me the greatest gift of my life: my son. The love and admiration I feel for that man will never dissipate, but this was not an isolated event. Thousands of times a day, all over the world, families entrust the lives of their loved ones to doctors, trusting that their physician's ability and training will facilitate their family member's recovery, or lessen their agony. It is this trust that affords physicians a unique opportunity to touch the lives of people in their communities, in a way no one else can. I was oblivious to this "personal" side of medicine until the birth of my son; but after witnessing it first hand, after seeing the impact Dr. Bart had on my life, my goal of becoming a physician was solidified.

Looking back upon the events that have transpired over the past five years of my life fosters no bitterness, and renders no regrets. I do not look upon my ex-wife with angst, for without her I would not have my son. And while her affair caused me much pain and sorrow, if it had not occurred, the opportunity to fulfill my dream would have eluded me. Also, it taught me the most important lesson of my life: never take anything for granted. With the advantage of hindsight, I see my divorce as the final chapter in a chain of events that began with the accepting of a job offer and have lead me to where I am today. I have since remarried to a beautiful and understanding wife and witnessed the miracle of my second child's birth. And as I begin the application process to medical school, I look back upon the tumultuous path I have traveled to the crossroads I stood at in the summer of 2003. I have no regrets.

Honorable Mention: Amy White, "Growing Up: A Collage"

For Dr. Julie Simon

As I look back on my childhood and teenage years, I tend to remember the enjoyable times or events that helped me grow. These experiences have profoundly impacted my life and were the forces that helped shape who I am today. When I started writing for this project, I wrote about memorable events that helped form my outlook on life. I arranged my pieces in chronological order, starting with events early in my childhood and moving to the present. In addition, as I arranged my pieces in this manner, I realized they are in order of simplicity to complexity. Although, my biography is not written in complete detail, the collection of my work provides a sense of who I am and some of the significant aspects of my life.

In order to enhance the voice of my collage, I utilized chronology to map my personal development. My opening selection, entitled "I Like Best," is written in a childlike voice and reflects pleasant experiences I had as child. I wrote about my grandparents and cousins to signify the importance of family in my development. The next piece jumps ahead into my early teenage years, and I titled it "My First Love" to add irony. This story is about one of my tom-boyish experiences of playing softball, which was my first true love. I used my memories of softball because it was an important part of shaping my character to work hard, set goals, be a leader, and be a team player. "Downfall," my third piece, displays my discovery of the opposite sex, which aided in my transformation from a tom-boy into a young lady. My fourth selection shifts from the previous lighthearted tones to a more serious one. "Because I Am" mentions my membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which very much influences my values and standards. I chose to place it after "Downfall," because I truly discovered who I am and what I want to become toward the end of my high school years. "Because I Am" simply defines who I am. My humorous piece, "Street Smart," is next and displays a portion of my experience of moving away from home to "bustling Cedar City" to attend college. This piece symbolizes my newly discovered independence and my realization that I have much to learn, even if it includes traffic laws. "Skydiving" is a metaphor about my writing. I placed it in this part of my chronological map because I became more fearful of what others thought about my writing as I began attending college. My seventh and concluding selection is a symbolic poem, and I wanted to conclude with a poem since I began my collage with a poem. However, "Images of Me" displays the contrast from childhood to adulthood as I employ an adult voice rather than a child's voice. The imagery and symbols in "Images of Me" represent some of my unique characteristics and some of my simple pleasures. This final piece is a representation of who I am at the present time.

In addition to utilizing chronological order, I shifted from simplicity to complexity as well. I began with a child's voice: very plain, simple, and to the point. The two stories that followed increased in complexity. I added more intricate sentence structure and employed elements of irony, as in the title and opening lines of "My First Love." "Downfall" further increases complexity as I added more vivid imagery to my sentences. Throughout the next selections, I utilize complex sentence structure, like the lone sentence in "Because I Am." In addition, I add the humorous elements of hyperbole and simile in "Street Smart." I compared 4-way stops to charging bulls, and I exaggerated and distorted my proceedings at a 4-way intersection. Delving further into complexity, "Skydiving" is an entirely metaphoric piece comparing my writing process to a person jumping out of an airplane. My concluding piece is composed entirely of imagery and symbolism pertaining to my individual traits. In addition, I

wanted to end with a complex poem in order to display a distinct contrast from the simplistic opening poem.

Through my experiences of writing and compiling my assignments, I discovered my true voice speaks most clearly when I am able to select my topics. The pieces I enjoyed writing the most were memories of events that somehow impacted my life. This, in turn, helped me decide to use the theme of chronological order to display my personal development. Additionally, I believe the chronological order allows my voice to speak out clearly because I define who I am and what events have aided in my personal growth. Writing these experiences caused me to realize the many factors in the development of my character, and I realize I write to preserve memories and my voice.

### **I Like Best**

Inspired by a poem by Nikki Giovanni

I always like the 24th of July  
best.

I get to watch a parade  
early in the morning  
and catch candy  
and see cousins  
and get soaked  
from the fire engines  
And go to the park  
to play games  
and run foot races  
and Grandpa gives us quarters  
to buy cotton candy  
and snow cones  
We play in the sprinklers  
then take naps  
At night  
Grandma makes root beer floats  
and popcorn  
and we watch the fireworks  
They are pretty and bright  
and I like the weeping willow ones  
best.

### **My First Love**

The first time I fell in love was on a warm, spring afternoon. The air smelled of freshly cut grass and moistened dirt. I fought thousands of butterflies in the pit of my stomach as I grabbed my mitt and jogged to my position at short stop. This was not my first softball game, but it was my first game starting varsity. I was apprehensive, to say the least. The opposing team looked extraordinarily daunting as they prepared to face our pitcher. Brushing away thoughts of doubt and taking a deep, uneasy breath, I got ready for the lead-off batter. The clank of metal against the fluorescent ball caused me to jump with anticipation. Foul ball. Another deep breath prepared me for the pitcher's second release. This time was

no false alarm. The opponent's bat connected squarely with the ball, and I saw the orb careening in my direction. Somehow, my mind's eye slowed the ball, so I could focus on its every twist and turn. Nonetheless, the ball was just beyond the reach of my tautly stretched arm. I felt the orb skim the very tip of my mitt. Intuitively whirling my body 180 degrees and crouching down, I extended my arm and caught the slowed ball in the palm of my glove. I heard faint gasps followed by cheers coming from the south bleachers, but I was not focused on sounds from the crowd. My butterflies had vanished instantly, and I knew the relationship between me and softball was going to work out nicely.

### **Downfall**

As a sixteen-year-old, the two most important things on my mind were basketball and boys, or a boy in particular. It just so happened that this boy, named Bruce, was in town visiting relatives during the Christmas holiday, and he invited me to go sledding. Here my dilemma began. For one, sledding, or any winter sporting activity, was a violation of basketball team rules. Secondly, if I got caught, I would be suspended for at least two games. However, this was my chance to spend time with Bruce, who I didn't see very often. I did what any red-blooded, American teenager would have done: I chose the boy and sledding.

The combination of the wintry air, the anticipation of sledding, and being with Bruce made me forget about being in the act of disobeying the beloved basketball rules. Bruce and I trudged gleefully to the very top of the snow-packed hill, also known as mountain in Kansas. We debated who should pilot our opening sledding expedition, and I skeptically accepted my fate as the captain. I surveyed the landscape and chose what I believed was the most thrilling, yet safest route to the bottom.

Hopping onto the tube, my swift descent began. Not too far in front of me, I noticed a slightly large and icy mound in the middle of my trail. Abandoning ship was not an option, so I consciously chose to ride out the jump in hopes that it would be an exhilarating experience. I hit the icy, meter-high hill traveling rapidly on my tube. My body soared through the air in a south, southeast direction, and the tube sailed on a westerly course. With a rib-cracking thud, my body landed at the bottom of the hill, not wanting to move. However, Bruce was flying towards me, and I instinctively rolled onto my stomach just in time for him to land on my back. He rolled off, and I remained face down in the snow, neither eager nor willing to face the painful consequence of my decision to disregard team rules.

### **Because I Am**

Because I am a Mormon, because I am imaginative, because I am outgoing, because I am myself – an active, Mormon girl trying to become as happy as I can – come to ask myself am I making my world better?

### **Street Smart**

Small town dwellers become incredibly nervous when visiting a large city, especially because of unfamiliar encounters on the streets. For the townsfolk, one of the most intimidating encounters is a four-way stop. For instance, I, being from a hick town, always learned to avoid the one four-way intersection like I avoid a charging bull. However, when I moved to the large and bustling Cedar City, I discovered the difficulty of avoiding four-way stops. They are all over the place, trying to trample me under their metallic feet. I was nearing an intersection one afternoon and realized, to my dismay, that I was halted at a dreaded four-way stop. Abruptly, I quit singing along with the radio, my breathing

became pained, and my palms grew clammy. I felt as if death was upon me. My brain raced, trying to remember the rules from my drivers' education course. Had the car to my left reached the intersection first? None of the cars moved; we were all frozen with terror. Maybe all the other drivers had stopped breathing too. Nope, I saw movement from the driver directly across from me. Then, the man to my right, a daring soul, put his car into gear and bravely ventured across the intersection. As I waited for my cue to go, the pain in my chest subsided, and I realized these charging bulls were not as bad as I had imagined.

### **Skydiving**

When I write, I feel like a person getting ready to jump out of an airplane. I get an almost crippling, apprehensive feeling in the pit of my stomach, much like the feelings of an inexperienced skydiver as he nears jumping point. I become anxious, and my breathing becomes burdened; I worry that my writing will not flow freely and ideas will not be expressed well. I fear my words will not be understood or accepted. Comparably, a skydiver frets and worries that his parachute will not release, and he will fall to a horrible and untimely death. However, when I make the leap into my writing, I leave my worries behind. I experience an exhilarating and breathtaking view of my environment, but mostly I discover a new view of myself. I float on my ideas and all is well, just like the jumper discovers after he has gained the courage to leap from the airplane. Sometimes my writing hits turbulence, but I know I cannot turn back. When my writing lands, it sometimes tumbles, bumps, and bruises. My ideas do not turn out the way I anticipated, but at least I learned for the next time. Similarly, a skydiver's landing is not always ideal, and he gets injured to some degree, but he will know better the next time. Other times my landing is smooth, and my thoughts, emotions, and ideas have been communicated well. I, like the skydiver, am pleased with the outcome of my daring leap. I am ready to jump again, even though the crippling apprehension always tries to hold me back.

### **Images of Me**

Based on a poem by Billy Collins

It might interest you to know,  
speaking of the plentiful imagery of the world,  
that I am the cream between the Oreos.

I also happen to be the last chapter of a book,  
the scent of freshly cut grass in the spring,  
and the sound of a baseball landing in a glove.

I am also the pillow beneath your head  
and the laughter of a small child.