



Pegasus

Spring 1999

According to mythology, the magnificent winged steed Pegasus was created by Poseidon from beach sand and sea foam combined with the blood of Medussa's severed head.

The exquisite creature was caught and tamed by the ancient god Belerophon, who used the horse's extraordinary abilities to aid him in his exploits. When Belerophon attempted to fly to heaven, he fell off the steed. Pegasus continued the ascent, eventually evaporating into stars making the heavens his permanent dwelling place.

The constellation Pegasus, in the classical tradition, shows his foreparts flying upside down. The most easily recognizable feature of the constellation is the great square representing the front trunk of his body. Pegasus has transformed from the myth of a creature who ascended to the heavens into the constellation memorializing his exquisite beauty and amazing courage.

Pegasus

Spring 1999, Volume 32

Pegasus Magazine is published annually by the
Campus Life Office of Delaware County Community College, Media PA

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the Campus Life Office at 610-359-5341

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At Face Value

A strong crevice here
A nose of romanesque stature
Lines of feather-like elegance
Radiating from orbs that squint,
With the intrusion of the sun.

Imperfect pearls that jut and gap
Yellowed with age and the flow of imparted wisdom
A thin lip, a reserve chin
An abundance of flesh that memory serves
As taught with character.

A lithograph of experience
Etched with pain, tinged with laughter
A misplaced mole or wart
Sprinkled at random to add definition
And punctuate this statement.

Leathery and grained
As the texture of fine doeskin
Or callused and thick
As a suit of armor
Against the onslaught of time

The shielded portals
That have dimmed,
Yet shine with secrets still unknown to the novices
Still with the twinkle of mischief.
A twinge of pain, a hint of loves known and unknown.

These are the beautiful ones
Not the youthful, the unblemished, the unflawed,
Those blank pages, they have no poetry, no story
Treasure the lines, the soul, the poem, the song
In these, the faces of the old.

Dona J. Dulin

Slow Southern Woman

She is a slow southern woman
With that slow southern style;
Her voice flows soft and silky across my shoulders when she whispers my name.
Her style reminds me of those gentile women of long ago...
Sitting on the veranda of those old Georgia mansions.
Sipping something cool to drink,
Patiently waiting for the heat of the day to pass over those deep Georgia plains.

Kathy Shoemaker

Temptation

The bloodshot eyes pierced
My soul as I opened the door
To the arena
Dodging smoke
Emanating from the dungeon
I strolled onward
My scarred body
Fit together like
A jigsaw puzzle
Lifted a hand
Shook its head
I stumbled onward
Euphoric friends
Welcome me back
To their session
With steaming metal in hand and
Plastic in pockets
Not me
I walked onward
The Main Event
Stood four feet high
Tantalizing me
Like the good old days
Singing sweet music and
Telling lies
On my own
With no where to go
I didn't stumble onward
I just said "no"

Benjamin Bigelow

Mother Nature

(Winter)

Rugged trees stand tranquil, motionless against time
Leaves withdrawn, stripped of nature's earthly cover
Brisk winter breezes, indifferent and unforgiving
Her children slumber peacefully, beneath the ivory glow

(Spring)

A sparkle of sunlight, a delicate breeze, fill awakening needs
Her children welcome her return, awakened by a robin's sweet song
It is a time of rejoicing earth's miraculous rebirth
As she is replenished with bountiful treasures so cherished

(Summer)

Whispering willows, wandering trees, dance in the zephyr
Cheerful trees sway gently amidst the wind's pure delight
An enchanting, fair meadow now lay in fortune's domain
And delights in the glory of a long summer rain

(Fall)

Leaves cascading downward, destiny's never-ending cycle
Mother Nature transforms them, into a myriad of autumn shades
The sun's warmth travels gingerly along its chosen path
And retreats from the meadow, to again bring forth new life...

Victoria Alicia Dittbrenner

Anniversary

The restaurant seemed warm and inviting

Then they started their silent form of fighting

Him: caught between thought and a feeling confused

Her: lying with a heart that's not sure if it's ever really been used

It stemmed from a conversation on the phone

The words were the same

Many times spoken

New was the tone

Ideas were shattered

Vows were broken

All that mattered

—————Was who to blame—————

Chris Gantz

China Patterns across a field..

Spring vista,
fragrant and full.
Warms me,
fills me.
Like fresh baked bread.

Firesong of Summer,
springing from the locust's soul,
perched early upon the desert rose.
Piques my ears,
like a gospel choir.

Garden harvest,
abundantly bursting with earth's flavor.
Fields that yield gold,
now turn to seed.
Leaves divinely fall
at my feet.

White palace forms
from first frosty flakes,
chilling my bones,
stiffening them, and all around,
hiding the field's gold
with a whisper.

Toni Louise Ruddy

Capture the Moment

I had a poem in my head
I heard the rhythm
Tasted the words
But before I found my pen

—mom, the dog chewed
my shoes again
and by the way,
the washer's overflowed

Wet laundry drips.
I sit with pen in hand
but the flavor has changed.
I only hear the dog barking.

Toni Louise Ruddy

Road Rages

Of many ages
Hits the pages
Fills the cages
One of the gages
Of the stages
Of the decay
Of our day
Rotting away
Hope for today
Another way
Our youth display
Their dismay
And all their fears
Of coming years
As in their ears
Satan jeers
The end nears
My little dears
So load your gun
We'll have some fun
Society undone
With reckless abandon.

Toni Louise Ruddy

The Pursuit of Happiness From My Living Room

And if we do not choose everything
For the sake of something else...(for at that
Rate the process would go on to infinity,
So that our desire would be empty and vain),...

-Aristotle

There's a race on
for the meaning of life.
Hurry up- figure it out.
Watch Lucy reruns, Oprah
and Nick at Nite
Somewhere there, lies the meaning of life.

Six o'clock is the hour of knowledge
First local murder
Then world despair
But first the Big Story
Tyson bites Hollyfield
Film at eleven

Drive your big SUV
to your house by the sea
with your jet ski in tow.
Only then can you know
the wonders of life
and true purpose.

Who can devote time
to solve the mysteries of life
when there are beanie babies(to hoard,
tomagotchi's(to be ordered,
and bodies by Jake
to be whipped into shape (results not typical)

And what is the use of poetry today?
If it's not made of fine leather
or 14 karat gold?
If it can't be sold on QVC
or split on Wall Street,
what purpose for it then?

Literature in its purest form
is now TV movie soft porn.
Journalism became Hard Copy.
Cherished video stars
lead young minds
to ask important questions
about the meaning of life and
the pursuit of 3.5 minutes of glory

Let's put on our Nikes,
cover our heads in purple,
and catch the next space ship outta here!
Heaven's Gate is wide open
and I'm sure those suckers are laughing at me
Cause they know the meaning of life

And I'm stuck here in my living room looking for the channel changer

Toni Louise Ruddy

"ODE TO MY UNBORN"

Be still my child,

Your birth is now a trembling thought;

Waiting.

Together, we're searching for the impossible,

Surrounded by lazy, misguided obstacles,

Of adventurous sex.

I'm trying, I'm thinking,

Believe me.

Accomplish what you mean to,

Accept evil for what it is, or

Who it is.

Then with extreme valor,

Exhume it.

Understand it.

Appreciate the forsaken aspects of life,

Allowing insanity to merely knock at your door.

Time is untamable, working against us,

A hellish tornado.

We're fighting for you, together.

Behaving, confessing, and sinning.

Allow laughter to fill your days, with

Promiscuous parties and,

Play with pleasures forbidden by society,

Whomever that may be.

Scream and cry, if you care to,
So resonant and fierce, the whole world will know,
Your pain is worth their ears.

Bark against the injustices of religion.
Howl against the crimes of philosophy.
Let your thunderstorms explode,
Your volcanoes erupt.
Feel the earthquakes.
Portray the hurricanes and
Wild winds of your emotions.

Shake the very rusty, hot gates of hell,
Damn all other judgments with a
Burning stare and iron clad fists.
Rip into the sky with frenzied,
Bloody finger;
Passion is waiting,
Beyond the heavens!
Beyond the bland angels of today!
Grasp your Love with a deadly embrace,
A vice which even the deadliest of sins,
Could not tamper.

As your birth unfolds unto the world,

The clouds will be forced to cower,
And the trees will bend.
But the earth will still stand as your prison,
Containing your beauty.
Believe.
Defend.
I want to feel your pain for you.

Dale John Jacobs

The Gift Within

As I quiet my mind
I begin to look within

I keep stumbling over the
Same old things

My pain has a purpose:
I didn't go through this
For nothing

It helps me to have compassion
For those still suffering

As I learn to bring awareness
To what is going on in my mind

I begin to discover my hidden truths

I now know who I am
And most of all I like her

What a wonderful gift

Lillian A. Hobdell

Tell Me Exactly

Tell me exactly
Just what it means

All of this talk about
Self esteem

Who makes the rule
And who's on which team

What do they really
Know about their
Own self esteem

We are the ones
In charge of our team

We are the only judges
Of our own self esteem

AMEN

Lillian A. Hobdell

The Perks of My Job

I was once an angel in heaven enjoying God's reign
I guess one would say I went a bit insane
All the power and knowledge I wanted to own
So from paradise into these fiery pits I was thrown

In the beginning I took the form of a snake
While in the garden I tempted that lady and that apple she did take
My power forever thwarted the process of time
I alone had introduced the innocents to a life of crime

Over the hundreds of years I have changed my shape considerably
I have brought about wars, plagues and poverty
Alas the work became too much so I enlisted an army of demons
They trudge along this impressible earth: they are my faithful legions

A naïve teenager thought she could control my power
She chanted my name so here I am at this midnight hour
I will whisper in her ear the story I wish to tell
About the blurring line between earth and hell

An innocent child walks in to eat
Consumes the poison of the tainted meat
The precious life force is thrown-up
Thanks to me the child will never become a grown-up

A junkie takes the needle and slides it in
Satisfaction wells up inside my cold skin
The overwhelming high casts out his spirit
I am the addiction; I am there to steal it

A virgin on her back with no help around
The rapist driving it in deeper, pushing her to the ground
He tells her he left his evil seed within

Don't you realize darling it was my sin?

A twelve year old boy picks up a gun
No need to be worried, he is my son
As he blows his fellow classmates away
The evil resides in his heart; decides to stay

The insane woman talks out loud
Appearing to be by herself in the crowd
People fail to notice that it is me by her side
I am planting the dirty thoughts; I am her guide

A huge accident occurs on I-95
I was there I took six lives
Handed the drunk driver the keys to his car
Put his face on t.v; now he's a notorious star

Human are faced with a disease that kills
Millions of bodies are lined up on the hills
The carnal pleasures tainted by the threat of aids
Your life in your own hands; you are having sex with razor blades

A husband raises his fist to his wife
He beats her relentlessly; ruins her life
She lies in the hospital due to his rage
This is my novel; I control the next page
I am the King of the Netherlands
The fate of thousands rest in my unforgiving hands
So bow human; get down on your knees because,
I LOVE MY JOB!

Michelle McNamara

Innocence

I remember a time when I was young and innocent with a quiet nature.
I dreamed of a day I'd be swept away and come back grown up and mature.
I believed, as a little girl, that so much inside would change and along with that
The outer beauty, too.
I spent my time in a daze disturbed by no sound as other dreamers do.
Mixed in with all this pleasant thought about the woman I'd become
Was a need for the love to light a spark and pound my chest like a drum.
Now that little girl's dispersed and a womanly form I have taken.
In this woman-hood I've discovered how badly I've been mistaken.
I have no love, no beating drum; my figure's not so beautiful.
My mind still aches with fantasies I have yet to fulfill.
Instead of wanting to be mature the little girl now appeals.
To be the jewel in daddy's eyes-I forgot just how that feels.
I forget how to dream as I did back then and how to play without worry.
I forget how to stop all the tears from falling, since my eyes are constantly blurry.

Angela Polansky

What is Love

Is it a piece of me I give away to someone special?
Is it a magical spell put on my heart?
What makes my body shiver, when feels the gentle touch?
What makes me blush of thoughts, of words unspoken?

I'm scared to death, but fear nothing.
I doubt the world, deny the logic,
Believe in lies and hope for magic.
"Be practical," my mind is saying.
"Don't be afraid to feel," the heart is praying.
Don't look for signs, don't need directions.
I'm full of strange, unknown affections.

Two hands to hold me tight,
Two lips-a kiss to last forever.
A single glance, a dance, a candle,
A moonlit walk, a little boat like cradle.

Is it the burning fire with inside?
Is it the storm, the thunder, lightening
That shakes my world? Oh, it's so frightening!
I don't how, and when, why,
I feel like laughing, but I also wanna cry.

My heart's confused, my mind's not clear.
The world around seems so unreal.
I wonder if it's just another toy,
A game to play and possibly enjoy.

Is there a rule, a guideline, an instruction,
Or probably a book, a manual-advisor.
Somebody, Anybody! Help me find the answer.
I need to know. Please, tell me, I will listen.
What is love? May be just another lesson.

Nina Strahilova Petrova

Lightness

There are those thoughts
which under the scrutiny
of their weight
imprison the mind's
ability to obtain
a pure clear
perception and perspective.

There are those thoughts
which by virtue
of their lightness
slice corners
from the world
reducing it's size,
subtracting it's weight,
shrinking the distance
between Us.

Think light.
cut deep the distance
between Us.

Kevin Arthur Mettee

Laudomia

Stark white skin flushed
Against the surface of the bed
Pale moonlight askance shines
Down upon naked breasts

Amber red tresses flow down
Upon the curves pale naked
Shoulders drifts down upon
Bare naked back, arched in ecstasy

The two lovers entwined
Against the sadness of the moon
A bright tear drops off
The edge, rolls down the

Curves of her bosom
I lap it up with my tongue
Licking the bare naked skin
Wetness soaks through both
Us both, Lovers in Moonlight.

Kevin Arthur Mettee

Advocata

Chilled ice melts, rolls
Languidly down curves, warmly
Glowing under lighted candle.
Sage brush burns slow evanescence
Wisps of spinning smoke curls,
Brushing tender robust skin
Arced in the candle light, shining
In sympathy to the stars, pale
Teetering on the edge between
Sense and emotion ever lasting.

Kevin Arthur Mettee

shadow-trees (a self-sketch)

I am
thinking myself
a Reflection-Shattered
Scattered. Reaching, I pull
a fragment Retaining
the whole Reflection
of my thought
which paints Existence
with Light and Shadows.
Discarding it, I reach
for yet another.

I live in the Shadows
of trees, Thinking
myself a Reflection.

Kevin Arthur Mettee

Lux Aeternea

I catch your tears like drops
Of rain moist upon my brow.
When I awaken suddenly
To realize they are my own.

Maybe it's me who dreams,
warmed by the chill of death,
Unrequited love as an invisible
Garland of flowers sweet as my diadem.

You who dance in my dreams
Wistful as gossamer strands in the moon,
Swing like the pendulum arced towards
Hatred and love, dreams and death.

Only to stop the perpetual sway
Until the light from the moon washes
The scene in blinding pale white
Leaving my milky soul to dance
Hand in hand with you through
the garden of infinite delight.

Kevin Arthur Mettee

Baudelaire indoctrinates a young poet, lover

I told my young apprentice, lover, friend
Undressed, passionately perplexed
By all the qualms of love,
“Look beyond the double doors
Those which lie ahead
And do cast yourself further
Through that single door, illumined, instead.”

She turned to me puzzled
And so viciously implored
“What of you know of love,
You who swell with your unattached Self
Rubbing against carnal moon-like curves
In the cellars of debauch, wretch, and filth?”

Head down I sank as the words scathed my Soul.
“Three women, yes, I did endure
Not but just the night before
Without thoughts of love - but disease
Festering upon my abject heart
Torn by blood-lusting vultures
Slowly gashing my insides apart.”

“Tis but vain-glory,” she did begin,
“The love of which I speak, of course
Is that of the pure heavenly Divine,
It is that of Swedenborg which I seek,
Not of your endless filthy women and wine.”
All the while I sat listening in distress,
While ultimately did I finally digress,
“I’m sorry, but my advice presented
Doesn’t seem suited for you,
Apparently not in any way worthy or true.”

Despite a much flawed faltering resolve,
She again enlightened surprise inside of me,
Replying in an unwavering voice, as sweet as could be,
"No I must admit, and I do insist
That your advice is unveiled truth, as it is,
But I implore, simply how can it be
That one with such vile and bitter insanctity
Could or would know such an empyreal truth
Other than you being of old age
And I in my youth."

Long dead silent stares.
I then offered the reply,
"Once I led a life designed as honest, noble and true.
Modeled after all those which the Saints do,
But after much of life's miseries, wretched lies
Oh plunge did I
Into the hands of evil, dark and drear
Pouring burning oil all through my ear
Spattered bile all across my broken Soul,
Reeking of a bloody carcass impaled upon a pole.

Despite my declination, something still rang true
Through all my vice, better acquainted am I with godly virtue."

Then she widely smiled and not with much further ado
She took leave of my presence
Leaving me a long kiss and a simple, "thank you."

Kevin Arthur Mettee

How I Came To Be Here

We met in Boston, my hometown. He was handsome and regal; all the girls swooned over him. I was no exception. Why he chose me, over all the prettier faces, I could never guess. We were introduced at a social dance. Then we took walks in the afternoon. We talked of plays and poetry, family and politics. Well, politics not so deeply. He said, "I am of the Southern Tradition," whatever that meant, I honestly didn't care.

Our walks developed into carriage rides. His carriage was the envy of everyone. Two matching Hackneys pranced down the street to meet me at my door. They were turned out as perfectly as two horses could be, their sweat glistening under the bearing reins. My mother would wave as we trotted off to our engagement. At the end of the summer, he returned to Georgia. He left with a lock of my hair.

The letter came that October. There was a flurry around the house. I had been invited to his family's plantation for a visit. Mama knew this was an "on approval" visit. As I packed my trunks, she advised me in every way. "Don't show your schooling." I looked at her confused. "What I mean is, Don't argue the point. Let him always win." I thought about that a lot. Our dinner table was always full of lively conversation about any manner of subject. But, I knew my Richard. He would never stifle me. When it was time to leave my mother wept with a sentimental flare. My father was unusually quite; he just kissed me on the forehead and went back to his books.

The trip down to Georgia was uneventful. When I arrived at the station, my chaperon introduced me to Richard as if we didn't know each other. I played along. While waiting for my trunk, I watched the Negroes working around the station. Though none of them seem happy, I saw no evidence of the horror stories I had read about in the North. "I'll be a good Master. I will not treat them cruelly, I will be generous." I promised myself this as I watched the driver stiffly climb to the driver's bench. Richard was very happy to see me. We smiled at each other, and he held my hand the whole way to his estate. It was a long drive, several hours. He pointed out sights along the way, with such pride. I felt proud too. His family was warm and gracious. I knew I would be accepted. Even though some ladies whispered about my accent from behind their fans.

It was Richard, I began to worry about, after I been there a month or so. He began to drink more. He spent less and less time with me. "The farm needs my attention," was always his reply. The worst was to watch him late in the evenings wander down to the slave quarters, usually a bit to the liquor. Sometimes he did not return till morning. If I questioned him, he got

angry, he would tell me to mind my own affairs. I began to feel isolated. I took to horseback riding to ease my mind.

I rode daily, without a chaperone. His mother thought this "highly irregular," but I was not controlled. My rides grew longer and longer until they lasted most of the afternoon.

One afternoon as I rounded the barn on return from an outing. I heard a commotion. I dismounted and walked around to the other side of the barn. My heart stopped at what I witnessed. Richard, holding a boy by the arm. I can still hear the whistling sound of the riding whip followed by the crack and the scream of his victim. There were several Negroes gathered around, all loudly praying. A woman on her knees, who I could only guess was the boy's mother, begging for "Mas'er to stop." I began to shake. I ran over to Richard and grabbed his arm. "Richard" I screamed. He let go of the boy, who shrank to the ground. He turned his attention to me. I let go of his arm; there was a wild look in his eyes I can't explain. He struck me across the face. The surprise of the strike threw me to the ground. I did not look at him. I felt my arms go numb and a tingling around my mouth. I couldn't catch my breath. The Negroes took advantage of the moment to scurry off with the boy.

"Don't you ever again interfere with my methods. If you're going to stay, you have to learn your place." He walked away from me, smacking the riding whip against his boots leaving reddish lines against the polish. I began to cry. I was angry more than hurt. I got to my feet with the help of a Negro standing near by. He tried to say something, but I can't remember what it was. I ran passed Richard to the house and went straight up to my room and began to throw my things into my trunk. I realized and verified out loud, "I'm just a ornament to wear on his arm at formal occasions, a barer of his legitimate children". The Negro, Julie, was standing by the bed watching me. I stopped when I saw her.

"I'm getting out of here...you should too" the realization that she could not, struck me hard. I fell to the bed and cried. She sat next to me and stroked my hair.

Talking almost at a whisper she said, "There, there, don't go worrin about us. We've done so far, I guess will make it the rest of the way. This is no place for you; they'll pull you down. You're too good for that. You take your chance and run." I stopped crying and listened. "Beside, we hears Lincoln is on his way to lead us out of here. A regular part'n of the Red Sea, I'm a guess'n," she laughed, "no need to fight his war." I sat up and looked at her. There was such pride and strength in her. She gave me strength.

I finished packing, quietly. Then I went down stairs and demanded a carriage to the train station. Richard's mother commented as I got in the carriage, "I told you no northern girl would have breeding enough for down here." I said nothing.

I got back to Boston before Christmas, to a disappointed mother and a proud father. The war started a few months later, and that's how I came to be here.

Now, look at my apron, stained with blood, and I'm so tired. But the soldiers just keep on coming. I hear there's been a battle in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, lasted three days! Nurses will be needed there too, I suppose. How much longer can Lincoln's war last? I guess as long as it takes.

Mary Sturgis

Going up?

Setting: An orderly and a mental patient who thinks he's the Pope and is wearing a hat made from a newspaper are trapped between floors in an elevator.

Paul: Dammit I told you not to do that!

Pope: Sorry

Paul: sorry? Sorry?

Pope: yes my s...

Paul: they ought to shackle you people

Pope: Catholics?

Paul: What.....No, you crazy fucks who can't keep their hands to themselves.

Pope: I was merely trying to help you, my son.

Paul: Help me? How does pressing every button on the panel and getting me stuck between floors help me?

Pope: The lord works in mysterious ways my son

Paul: look fruit loop....

Pope: You look troubled, do you want to make a confession my son?

Paul: O.k. that's it... listen to me very carefully you are not I repeat not the Pope you are just some loon that thinks he's the pope. Now, I don't want to hear another peep from you. They'll figure out what's happened soon and get us out of here until then ...not a word.

A couple of seconds pass in awkward silence

Paul: Give me that. (Snatching the paper from the pope's head and beginning to read)

Pope: That is no way to treat the Pope's hat. Please return it.

Paul: Hey what did I tell you, huh? I ain't gonna play make believe with you so put a lid on it freak. (Paul goes back to reading the paper)

Pope: Well it is my hat

Paul: (looking up from the paper, becoming more agitated) First of all It's not called a hat it has a special name.

Pope: which is?

Paul: it is called a Mitre or something like that.

Pope: Can I have my Mitre back?

Paul: this is not a Mitre. This is a newspaper that you folded to look like a hat.

Pope: Mitre

Paul:(grinding his teeth and taking a deep breath)....No... this does not look like a Mitre

it looks more like a pirate hat.

Pope: It's part of my new image. I'm even considering my own clothes line...Pope gear.
What do you think?

Paul: I think that you had better start praying nut job. Because if we don't get out of here soon I'm gonna knock your teeth down your throat.

Pope: I'll see what I can do (putting hands together in prayer)

At that moment a voice from above calls down to them

Voice: Hey listen up guys, I'm working on the problem. I'll have everything fixed in a little bit.

Pope: (looking triumphantly at Paul) He said not to worry and to give me back my hat.

Paul: That wasn't God you loony toone that was the repairman and I heard him too.

Pope: Whatever you say my son (patting Paul's shoulder)

Paul: Okay ... all right (yelling)Hey buddy...yo

Voice: Yeah?

Paul: What's your name?

Voice: My name?

Paul: Yeah

Voice: It's Otis, why? what's it to ya.

Paul: Are you God?

Voice: well the ladies sure seem to think so.

Paul: Yeah I'll bet, Thanks,.... see Corky he is a repairman named Otis not God. do you understand now?

Pope: I didn't hear anything. Are you feeling okay my son? Perhaps a blessing will help your troubled mind. (blesses Paul)

Paul: (calmly) I'm gonna kill you

Pope: maybe you should talk to Doctor Richards about all this anger you have

The elevator starts to move as Paul lunges for the Pope

Paul: (throttling the Pope) you are not the pope do you understand? do you?? The pope does not run around Central Park in high top sneakers andand ah sheet with a cross drawn on it and a paper hat...

Pope: (muffled)Mitre...

Paul: ...yelling obscenities at the tourists and asking for donations so he can get the Popemobile turned into a hotrod.

The doors open and the hospital staff pull Paul from the Pope

Doctor Richards: (to the pope) are you all right ?

Pope: (Kneeling down to kiss the ground) Yes, my son I am fine.

Paul: (to everyone) that dude needs his brains lobotomized or somthin, he's screwed up.

Pope: he stole my Mitre

Everyone looks around in confusion

Pope: My pope hat

Staff: (in unison) Ooh

Doctor Richards: Paul I'll see you in my office in twenty minutes. We have to talk

As Doctor Richards and the Pope begin walking off stage together the pope causally takes a newspaper from a desk and folds it into a new hat.

Pope: Don't be too hard on him, my son, Some people just don't like elevators, Castro's the same way.

Paul remains on stage with a frustrated and confused look on his face as the lights dim.

Chris Gantz

A Daughter's Smile

This is a story about two people drawn together by events and circumstances. Unlike in character and manner, life brought them together into an integrated whole, willing to gain understanding of each other's Independent quality of being real.

Connie Rye was ten years old at the time, petite in stature with huge Emerald green eyes glowing like gems in the noon sun. Her golden wheat hair fine in texture, rich in color like an autumn day was a radiant sight to see. Her bronzed colored skin looked kissed by the sun. Connie would decorate her hair and tiny wrist with multi colored plastic barrettes and bracelets. She walked with a rhythmic prance that would swing her pony tail from side to side.

Connie lived in a small brick house with freshly painted white shutters and a picket fence. The lawn was beautiful, lush, and green. Having lived with her grandparents since her birth, Mom Mom and Pop Pop showered her with love and affection. She would ask questions about her mother and father but could see it was very painful for her grandparents. They told Connie wonderful stories about her mother who was loving and full of life. Her grandparents had only one small picture of her mother. Connie resembled the women in the photo, except her skin tone was much lighter than Connie's. At age fifteen their daughter decided what was good and moral according to her will. Mom Mom said she had no respect for her race color or creed. She must live with the remains of the wreckage she created. They never met her father or his family. Connie wanted to ask more questions but knew it was the right time.

Connie's grandparents would tape her chore list to the refrigerator except Saturdays and Sundays. Crossing off each task with Pop Pop's huge red felt marker as she completed the list. Her grandparents would chuckle to each other watching how seriously she took her job. It was time for lunch and after that she readied herself for a new day of adventure. Connie always kissed Mom Mom and Pop Pop good-bye. They waved and reminded her to be careful and look both ways. She would shake her head yes, and off she would go.

Connie felt like royalty as she proudly rode her Pink Lady bike. She loved how her white streamers effortlessly flowed through the air. A wire basket held her thermos filled with ice cold water with a floating lemon slice. The silver bell on her handlebars would announce her arrival into town. She would greet her friends and neighbors with her Miss America wave and smile. She would pass several small homes with crying babies, children at play, dogs barking and mother busy with household chores. Connie was fascinated by the dilapidated gray house with time worn shutters and windows. The large porch was warped by natural erosion. Nature still thrived among the worn and faded charm of the old estate. Connie wondered who the woman in the white caned back wheelchair was. She seemed transfixed on something outside of her-

self, tightly grasping a pink blanket to her breast. Dressed in crisp pastel colored dresses, her hair was neatly tucked under the matching turban. She frequently saw a small stout person wearing green gardening gloves, kneepads and yellow galoshes. She seemed happy working in the vegetable garden behind the mansion. Her hair pulled in a tight bun with gray and white curls framing her face. She wore an old tattered straw hat with a fresh flower under a narrow strip of fabric. There was a most artistic production of vegetables in the garden she was attending. The flaming colors of vegetables, ruby red tomatoes, purple squash, bright orange sweet potatoes, sea foam green beans lined in a row. She was spellbound, mesmerized by the plants grown for food. Connie felt herself salivate just at the sight of the garden.

It was a sweltering mid August afternoon in Chattanooga, Tennessee in the late fifties. This particular day was well over 100 degrees, and the humidity was the same. Her head felt as if it would ignite at any moment as the sun beat down on her. Connie's brow beaded with drops of moisture exploding into steady streams of hot salty liquid flowing down her cheeks. Her hair clung to her neck like a wet rope. She held fragments of her once usable soft, absorbent tissue to wipe the sweat from her brow. The small town of Dale seemed like a ghost town, affected by the scorching, sizzling temperature of the day. The wheelchair on the once gracious porch was vacant.

She decided to stop for a cold drink and examine the garden in the rear of the grand estate. She noticed the person attending the garden and decided to introduce herself. This meeting would change her life forever.

She introduced herself to the woman extending her tiny hand. The woman took off her gloves and gently took Connie's hand. She introduced herself as Eartha Clay Johnson. Mrs. Johnson's mother thought the name was an expression of love.

Eartha told Connie that a garden is like the early stages of life, growth and development. She said the most important part was to prepare the beds for new arrivals. Young plants need gentle treatment just like a newborn baby. They require regular watering, feeding, and most important love. They will grow and mature and finally leave the beds. They will supply someone with vitamins and minerals necessary for a healthy mind and body. Connie was touched by her statement of God's gifts.

Connie told Eartha how she would escape pressures, broken promises and unsaid truths in the woods. She invited Eartha to her favorite place in the woods. Eartha was thrilled and accepted immediately. They sat under Connie's tall woody friend, the Mighty Oak. She felt protected from the universe with its inhabitants and all things upon it. They talked about the theatre in the woods. Mother Nature proudly displayed her splendid masterpiece of wild flowers. The Dogwood, Maple and Hawthorne trees held the musicians perched atop the trees. Eartha

pointed out the lush green carpet that covered the entire surface of the woods. It was a never-ending show, changing four times a year and free to all who enter. They agreed this was the Greatest Show on earth. Eartha told Connie what an important part the animals, birds and bugs played in the woods. Everyone was important in this show. She wondered if Eartha was really Mother Nature. She was able to put into words what Connie felt.

On the walk back to the garden, Connie asked who the woman on the porch was. Eartha's gaze saddened as she looked towards the porch. She said the girl was the girl of her life. A unique flower who needed special care. She was not able to endure life's storms. She now lives within, the joy is gone. Only one person could help her now: she did not say who. Eartha named her deceased son Liberty. A name that meant quality or state of being free. Eartha told Connie he was much like her. He asked many questions, loved life, people and playing in the woods. His Godlike ability surrounded his being. Liberty followed his heart even when faced with the enemy. He fell in love with my special porch flower Angel. Their love was strong, secure and respectful. They produced a beautiful baby girl that vanished two days after her birth. My son did his best to heal their hearts with love. It overweighed all obstacles, except one. The color of their skin led to my son's death. When Liberty passed so did Angel, only her body exists in a lifeless shell. Connie asked about the one person who could help. Eartha said "Come I will show you who."

Connie walked up the eight creaky steps leading to the porch. Eartha held her hand as they walked towards Angel. An eerie feeling took over Connie's existence as she gazed down at Angel. She suddenly said "Mother" and Angel came back to life.

Eartha looked up to the heavens and thanked God for Angel's recovery and Liberty's daughter. She knew her son was smiling down on them.

Eartha Clay's garden is now in full bloom.

Lillian A. Hobdell

View of a Room

The first mistake was getting on the train to Amsterdam and the second was missing the last train returning to Brussels. This is how we found ourselves roaming the cobblestone, canal lined “straats” of Amsterdam for sixteen damp, bone chilling hours, searching for accommodations of any kind. The search for a vacancy sign led us through the city like thirsty nomads chasing a mirage. Afterall, Amsterdam’s hotels have been booked solid for two years, and arriving in town without confirmed reservations was, needless to say, impetuous and blatantly stupid. Although, in this case, inane actions were the impetus of an unexpected reward- an opportunity to reside temporarily in a four hundred year old Dutch canal house.

The house rose lofty and slender amidst structures of the same tax-evasive Dutch design, looming before us, silently beckoning. This inaudible sign “siren’s song” found harmonic accompaniment from the houseboats, as they rasped and thumped against their moorings, the Amstel summoning them to dance upon its glossy, star- lit surface. The symphony of sound and thought found its soloist in squealing tenor of the door hinges. Rusted and ancient, they cried out, as if disturbed by the notion of someone gaining entry. As the wail of hinges subsided the symphony concluded, silenced by the click of the roughly hewn door closing.

Suddenly, I realized exactly how cold I had been, this magnified by the intense warmth emanating from tiny radiators hidden discreetly throughout the house. The warmth amplified other aspects as well. It allowed the scent of the wood, moist and decaying, to permeate the air imbuing it with the fragrances of obscure Dutch recipes prepared and long since consumed by a previous tenant. The stale odor of the century, remnants of the previous lives that existed inside these walls, lingered in the air an invisible yet tangible presence. One scent faint, but compelling, drew me to the living room to find charred oak blazing in the hues of yellow and orange in a small hearth located in the center of the left wall. Entranced by the crackling fire, I chose my seat accordingly and settled on the floor directly in the front of the fireplace.

Inadvertently I had seated myself in the center of the room, as I laid down, sinking into the velvety plushness of the area rug that dominated the floor, my partial view expanded, allowing me to saturate myself with the ambiance of the room. While viewing the room from my unique vantage point, I realized that this house was decorated like my own home, eclectic and peculiar, filled with an array of the strange and odd. An over stuffed chair, the cushion permanently indented, filled the niche between the fireplace and the doorway that led to the kitchen. In the opposite corner, lurking like a fleshless skeleton, stood a white resin chair its bare bones appearance a stark contrast to the overwhelming clutter that surrounded it. The odd parade of furniture continued with rattan loveseat, its faded floral cushions held in place by jagged spikes

of wicker, dominating the wall opposite the fireplace. Tightly wedged into meager space at each end of the loveseat rested mismatched end tables, worn and weary with age, adorned with tarnished brass lamps. My observation of the room concluded at the wall of windows, which stare like lidless eyes into the night.

Finally, as a sigh of relief rose from my lips, the events of this tumultuous day were behind me. Now I could relax and revel in my thoughts. Fortunately, the mistake I thought I would rue had materialized in an unexpected form - the comforting warmth of a canal house. Closing my eyes, I realized how fortunate I had been today and could now afford to allow myself the luxury of sleep. As I began to drift off, the symphony that had ushered me into this home played like a lullaby, lulling me into a world of pleasant dreams.

Cheryl A. Breese-Workman