

Pegasus



Pegasus



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Photographs Hanging on Your Wall

Photographs hanging on your wall
If you look, they will tell you all
With the memories they hold
They have stories to be told

Showing your growth
In more ways than one
Sometimes formal
Sometimes fun

Most evoke pleasant memories
Some reminders of good times gone by
Holding in them your histories
They bring to you a laugh - they cause you to sigh

To take a look deep inside
Behind the pose and the smile
Some things you had to hide
You were showing them all the while

When you think of the lessons you were learning
At the time unseen
You wonder of this with yearning
What did they mean?

Looking back on this now
Can you see?
Are you asking yourself, how?
How this could be?

It has taken so long to uncover
To be able to release to grow
To look and discover
Now to feel your Spirit glow

The reflection you see
The things that you feel
Like a branch on your life tree
Are ever so real

It is the Spirit of YOU
It was with you all the while
It is something that holds true
It over shines the pain with a smile

The windows to your soul, do they shine?
Can you reflect on them now?
Reassure, things will be fine
As time passes you see how

It is all a part of life
The growing and the pain
The struggles and strife
Without them there is no gain

So take more than a glance
Look and discover
You have a chance
Your truth will uncover

Lillian Blanchard

Star of Darkness

Feeling like a star of darkness
In a universe of light
Feeling distant from the heavens around me
Being one in my own world

See the brilliant stars around me
See them brightly as they gleam
Wish that they would shine for me
Wish they'd shine so I could see

I'll just sit on my star
Learn to cope inside my jar
Sifting through the sands of sadness
Will I stay or travel far?

Sitting under a lifeless tree
Playing for the hardest to please
Hoping to feel freedom soon
But that is just a tease

Feeling like a star of darkness
Has overtaken me
Feeling comfortable in my prison
Now no one is left but me.

Brian Campbell

I Write——At Traffic Lights

I write.
Not novels or journals of untold value,
But quiet poetry,
For no eyes but mine,
Or those whose eyes fall to my favor.

I write.
But only when visited by the muse.
I cannot, as great writers do,
Summon her to do my bidding,
When taking pen in hand,
No, not I, instead——,

I write.
As slave to her convenience,
Never of my own will,
But to my dismay,
As she dictates.

I write.
Finding myself leaving sinks of undone dishes
To search for pens,
Or on cocktail napkins, which, unwittingly,
Become canvass for my masterpiece.

I write.As servant to master,
I run as she beckons,
And therefore,
I write,——at traffic lights.

Dona J. Dulin

The Gift

My mother gave me a stalk of lavender,
That she had tended and nurtured in her garden.
A gift, simple and unpretentious.
Of all the many things she has given,
Not one of great import.

Lavender, that I had tried and tried
To grow in my own garden,
But, alas, all my thumbs were brown.
I raised to my nose,
And drank in its eloquently pure scent.

The Earth has many gifts.
Some rare, some precious, some simple.
And as this gift brings a soft smile to my lips,
I wonder——,
Is this the stuff that life is really of?

A simple gift, not given on some momentous occasion,
Or to mark some passage,
But a gift to share the simple beauty
Of one of Earth's children.
My mother gave me a stalk of lavender.

Dona J. Dulin

CHANGE

You came to class so chipper and bright while making us laugh with pure delight.

The joy of your youth and the love shared, made the change in you hard to bear.

We could not see your tear-stained heart or recognize your pain. We watched as your appearance and countenance slowly changed.

You no longer shared your life with us. You seldom came to class. We knew that you were changing but did not expect it to last.

Change...

You complained about your family and often being tired, however, when advised to see your doctor, you did not want to bother. The signs were there, we knew you were not the same, but how could we know you gave up hope.

Hope in your dreams, life, family and friends. Hope in the future and then...

The past is behind us and the present is now, the future ahead with many leaps and bounds.

Change what you can and leave the rest to God! Remember he is standing right by your side.

Trindy S. Grundy

Beautiful Bird

Beautiful bird to love you is easy
To be loved back is the challenge
The freedom of a bird in flight
Could be the reason you just might
Never know until you try- to tame
Bring it down within your reach
Breach no trust or distill discomfort
Give the bird its wildest dreams
It is made for you for you it seems
But sadly your love cannot be returned
For you are grounded and the bird is free
Another time another place
Could this love prevail unhindered grace
I hold firm the bird so frail
But unveil my selfishness and see what is right
Return to flight my beautiful bird
But carry on your wing my heart felt word
For I never knew I could love again
Love what I needed what I need is you
Beautiful bird-so proud and free
You let me taste your love then took from me
A piece of my heart will soar where you go
I wish I could fly free with my bird
Through un-breathed air so new
Beautiful bird maybe one day you will see
And spread your wings once more and fly
Back to me

Brian Hist

Day Dream

On to thee I gaze
Captivated by you
I try to speak
But the words get in the way
For when I am with you
My time is never blue
Oh, to be able to hold you
Close to me all day
For a rose hold no beauty
To a smile from you

Brian Hist

Untitled

A lonely man stands alone
Glistening eyesight as tears strike earth
The pounding of his heart beat that of a drum
Over and over thoughts swirl through his mind
As if caught in a storm that has no end

A lonely man stands alone
A silhouette of a rose held in his hand
Casts a small shadow on a carved marble stone
As a light breeze blows he closes his heavy eyes
If his hurt were a river
His river never run dry

Brian Hist

A PARTY FOR NIKOLAS

My eyes gaze in wonderment
I rubbernecked and stared
Streams of explosive chatter
Coming from everywhere

Momentous, keepsakes, souvenirs
Tokens on display
Two times one thousand was the
Pass word for the day
Could that have been a football play?

Large firms have concern
Wondering if they will crash and burn

Your mom and dad hoped and prayed
To deliver you on this special day

Champagne glasses held up high
Toasting in the Confetti and
Ribbon midnight sky
Shouts of applause and encouragement
As Ms. Crystal Waterford pivots
Whirls and twirls for all to see

Old reliable counting down the
Time for you and me
As she lands in Time Square effortlessly

Two thousand Bells rang as you made your
ENTRANCE
On the
MILLENNIUM

Lillian A. Hobdell

HELD CAPTIVE

Do not ask me out

darn it

Can you not see I am studying

I think I am doing that

I need to be alone

with a Tutor

I am trapped in an avalanche

of papers

I have no order in my life

I didn't take notes

I forget what rain, snow, wind and sun feel like

I only made a few classes and the teacher expects me to know this stuff

Am I going insane

I hate cramming

I always study

ten minutes before class

No longer can I live like this

my way isn't working

What will release me from this bondage

me I guess

I need a guide, a map and people who understand me

they said they understood at the bar but it didn't help

What is this thing called good study habits

it must be a new addiction

My professor said do it this way

GUESS WHAT I GOT AN A

Lillian A. Hobdell

A letter he'll never read

sparks of reality warmed my soul when the halls brought you back to
me,

my heart threw a Mardi Gras Festival and took off her shirt
because she felt freefree at last to shout and laugh
without offending anyone
without avoiding eyes
bright pink fusia, flowers, woven souls, shooting stars, gleeful
howling, and a

cigarette

but I guess I was wrong
from the very first cup I told you
but it took a little longer for you to get
that you weren't going to get laid.
that I am a person
more than some girl to bake cakes for your enormous ego
that ego, it got mean when it realized
smoothness is not the way into this girls heart,
and you can just forget about her pants.
so you can keep neglecting to return my calls
cause I wasn't giggling before
and I'm not even smiling now.
call me a hypocrite again and I'll show you a carpet I've woven out
of broken dreams, eyes avoided, and childish lies that stumbled out
of your careless mouth.
yet how can I be angry with a blanket of snow

Anonymous

A Drift of You

I drift along through Summer's tears,
The glow a day long by my side.
And a face whispers through my fears,
That all pain I feel that I hide.
Clouds drift away as insects fly,
To a life I bid no good-bye.

A single trap of my heart will wander,
Away to a place none can tell.
That all feelings shall I put asunder?
So tell me why that for all I fell,
And in time another came?
Shall then I myself the soul I blame?

Continue the butterfly to winds of sleep,
And I to sleepless wonder,
So sing me a lullaby so humble and deep,
That I may sleep in the moonlit under.
And whisper of dreams to me,
So that a drift of you I may see.

Jeremy Charles Kester

Flood Waters

Let reality be a flood.
I shall then run from water.
Until my feet, trapped in mud,
I then shall fall asunder.

Jeremy Charles Kester

A Wish to Never Part

Send me a whisper of your gentle touch,
A feeling whisks over me,
Of your beautiful eyes,
Staring at me,
Calming into me.

None other than you,
Wanting nothing.
Touch me again.
So that I may want you more,
And I may have your love.

Play not my fragile heart,
Broken glass without your hold,
Sting inside my skin,
Until a tiny kiss placates me,
Healing the wound of loneliness.

Jeremy Charles Kester

He

When he was young
Crouched beside a wavering tamarack
Where the air was cool
Despite the blazing sun
Hugging himself, afraid
Hoping to soothe his grief

He had to hold back the tears
Welling up in his light blue eyes
The strap of leather had hit him hard
The blurring brown becoming pain
He covered his face with small hands
Hiding, hoping

When he was young
Bit his lip until it bled
Hoping to hold back the tears
They rolled down his cheek
He wiped them dry
"Just a baby" his father would say

Heather McElroy

Restless Peace

I search the walls surrounding me
painted the color of your skin lying in a box of satin and peace
bought at the cost of raped emotions
colorless lifeless mysterious.

Tears so easily explained by lost love, induced by the pain of
isolation and guilt, sowed from times of my studying you, have
yielded harvests of vines that stifle the breath I struggle to
breathe the fuel for a life that I no longer know.

Selfishly I cry for me and my failure to extract from you the angered
child too proud to speak.

Telling of babbling that poured from my mouth: like incubated jewels
matured in times of pain and scraped knees from falling while
fumbling to grab up and stow the crumbs you would leave me,
would only expose a secret of the love you have protected me from
danger you have sought to make not mine
with a love so selfless, it would not ever be called your own.

These walls restrict me, yet I claw for them in times, and nights of
souring padded insanity that I label love,
told that here lie the roots of my foolishness.

In this box, your face is lifeless and no different then what I knew
you for and yet disturbing, the eyes that I will no longer see for
they are cemented shut like sunken treasures safe in the depths of
the soil on which I stand.

You lie in a confinement that makes a mother cry with questions of
why life has gone I long to tell her that you have lived in this box
for years

and these walls are wings that you had suffered for,
scars you had burdened propelled you towards rest.

Anger bled from a father could never match that of yours and I feel
justified in knowing that in a lifetime he will finally know regret
that accompanies the silence he has offered you, pleading eyes
wishing that only he had spoke.

Friends of few gather amongst your many visitors, only the true wear
the loneliness of pained frustration in memory of one who emotionally
claimed numbness.

I reached for your pockets in search of finding what you have kept
from me,

remembering the times you told me of making one uncomfortable in
searching for the truth.

Crying, angry at the discovery of emptiness
in the pockets of a pair of pants you would have never worn.

Heather McElroy

MICHAEL

Who would have thought?
Not so long ago,
My life would be enhanced
By one I had not known.

It could be expected
When taking a wife,
Forever and completely
Changed be my life.

Though my plans and dreams
Concerning this love,
Would dissolve like fog
From the sunlight above.

Distressing, disheartening, and painful
Such would be,
I knew through my Faith
God would look after me.

The hurt, like an old wound,
Would eventually heal,
And life, like a new boat
Would seek even keel.

Now one would expect
The referred to enhancement,
Could not have come
From my marriage disenchantment.

No, dear friend,
I am grateful to say,
It's my stepson Michael
Who has made my day.

Like coal into diamonds,
Create earth's special pleasures,
Time spent with this Gift
Became my life treasures.

Andy Nelson

We Are the Ones

WE ARE THE ONES

Let that echo throughout your minds
And linger between your thoughts when you wake
Because the dawn of a new era is here
This newness
This young, and bright future will flash its
Colors in fluorescence
While the victory of succession will change
From attitude to unity
My brothers and sisters

WE ARE THE ONES

The ones in which one purpose was intended
When we, Journeyed the old man Atlantic
And stepped ashore the land of oppression
And we, fought died, and prayed for freedom
Cause we, never did get that being a slave
Thing down
We've always were in the midst of the
Midnight storm
But God willing the morning would come
Calm and sweet
Giving our starving souls a taste
Of comfort we well deserved
My brothers and sisters

WE ARE THE ONES

That in fifty years the minority will
Become the majority
And with all the hoopla that will be
Present in the world
Black America will flourish like a
Field of dandelions
Showcasing to all alike that unity
Is Paramount
That unity bleeds longevity
That unity makes strong
That unity most importantly builds hope
A hope that is finally surfacing from
Year to year and season to season
A hope for a prosperous life to all my
People
So I say support your Stores, Businesses
Brothers, Sisters, Mothers, Fathers, and Children

FOR YOU AND I ARE THE ONES

Gabriel Posey

Pieces of Me To: You

Colors from my mind and soul
falling onto canvas

I take my magic wand
And whirl them into symbols

Fragments of where I've been
of who I am
of what I feel

I cradle and create them
Nurture and dispense them

Fragile they flow
From my breast to your zone

A gift of myself
Pieces of me

Energy from what you inspire
inside my swirling soul

Please don't misunderstand
Please don't crush this joy

These are feelings from me
Naked expression clothed into
comprehensible representation

Vulnerable and sensitive- gift wrapped to you
I rejoice in them
Sharing them with their cultivator

Will you misunderstand them?!!!
Will you crush my love?!!!.....
...these pieces Of: Me -To: You....

Liberty Anne Justice

Perched

My face is in the wind
It's comes to blow me through my dream world
My life is that dream
I am in a play
An actress

On display
My brain is running in place

NO

Faaaaaaaaaster

FREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEER

It is FLYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYING

SOARING

Never touching ground

Until the sudden crash of my bleeeeeeeeding heart
.....vIbRaTeS through my life
through this dream

Hold me

I want you to NEVER LeT Go

I NEED YOU

But wHeRe are you

WHERE ARE YOU

Where are

Where

Where is the RELIEF

the MERCY

Mercy?

Huh? What's that

It's hide and go seek time in my dreams
I am always far
Very far

But you can always hear my footsteps

If you listen
But you must listen closely

Openly
Sincerely
Unbiastly
For I AM openness, sincereness, justice

AND **FREEDOM**

I still respect the self that's never lived

I stare at it- CRYING
Crying as I watch it standing on its perch

But in its CAGE
It cannot fly

Only a mental vision
Visions
Visions of who I ignore, hold in, repress

Visions in a nightmare

This nightmare

My life

Liberty Anne Justice

Newspaper in the Wind

Words on the wings of a newspaper
As if a bird were soaring
These words tumble in the breeze
It's contents forever crying

Black ink doth stain the grey
Like evil in the human
Words of death where children play
The pulse of good slowly decreasing

Yet they soar
(this dove without wings)
As if such things can be tossed away
Not burdened enough to take flight
It flies. It flies. It flies this day.

For tomorrow shall bring more More MORE
No lessons of ink will be heeded
And to eternity these sorrows may be
Just another weight to be discarded

Liberty Anne Justice

The Chosen One

The morning dew on your petals is breathtaking.

Tiny droplets glistening as you awaken.

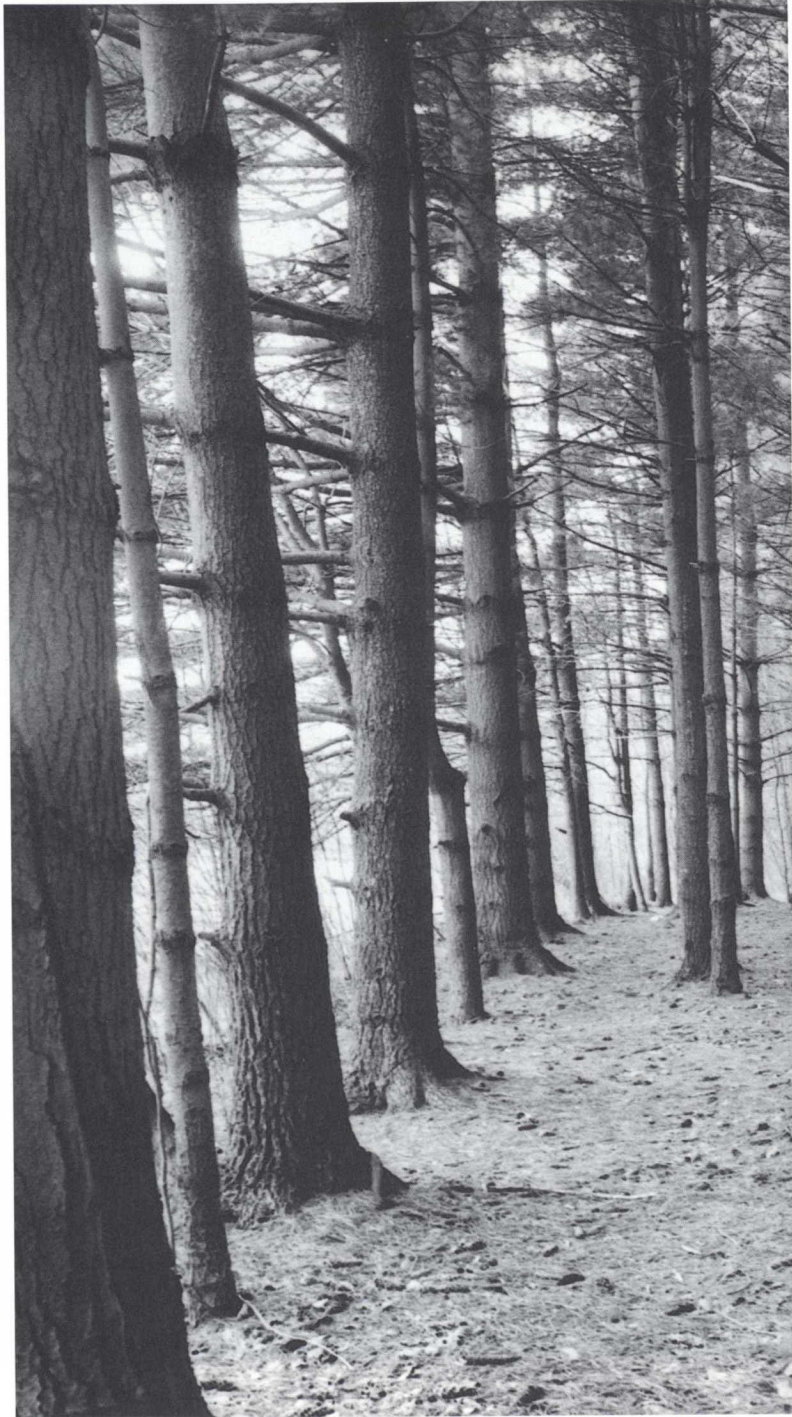
You strive eagerly to reach the warm sun.

Her rays give you energy - as if you were the only one.

Growing in perfection, yet one day will come.

You shall be plucked from my earth and be given to someone.

Suzanne Wright



Sentinels
Dona J. Dulin



Untitled
Marnie Levensgood



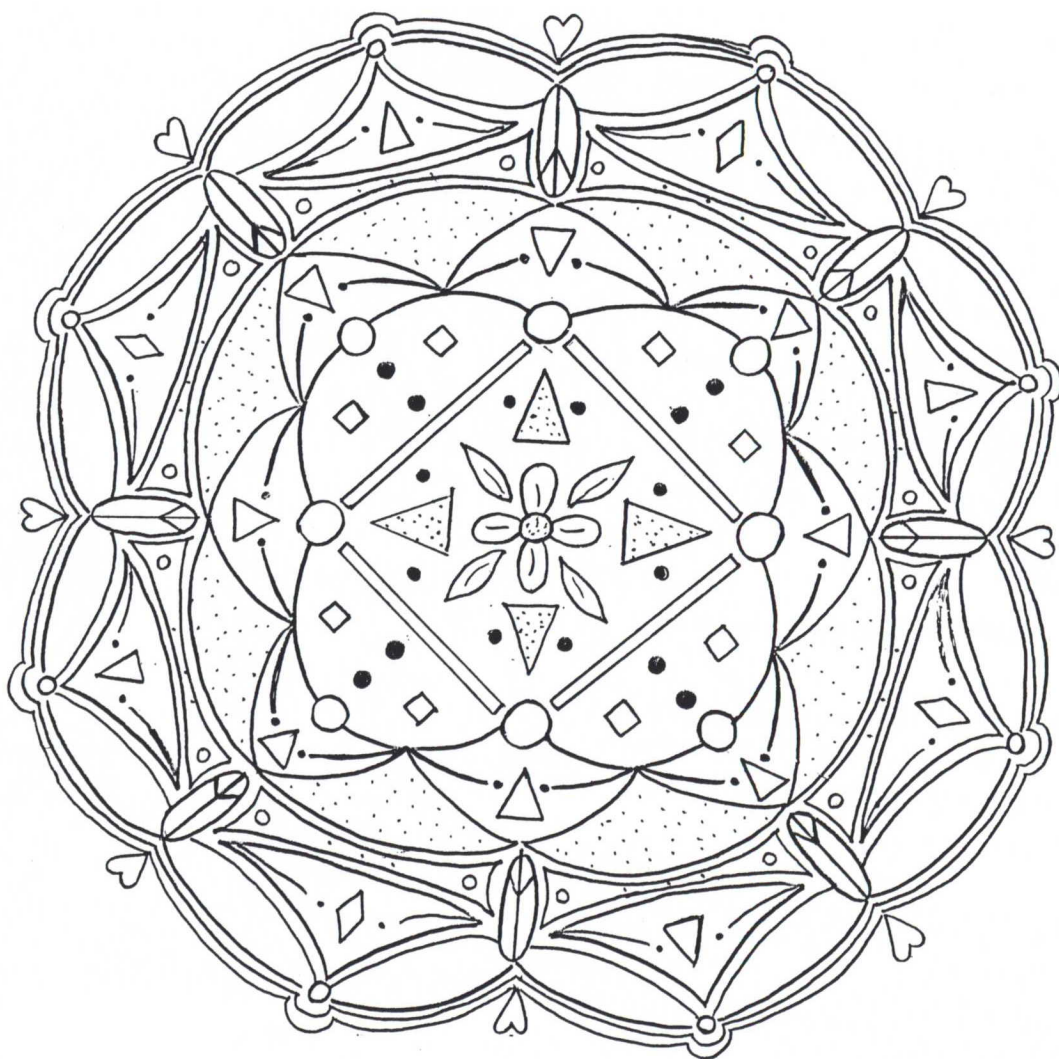
Untitled
Victoria Murdock



Untitled
Victoria Murdock



Untitled
Victoria Murdock



Gramma's Kitchen Floor
Liberty Anne Justice

Rightful Possessions

Shelly kicked the car door shut, since her arms were full of groceries, and glanced over to her neighbor's yard. There knelt old Ms. Roberts tending to her garden. "Good morning Ms. Roberts." The old woman glanced up at Shelly and smiled. "Oh hello Marie, how's your mother Shelly doing?"

"No no Ms. Roberts. Marie is my eight-year-old daughter, I'm Shelly."

This wasn't the first time she had to remind her of that. "That's nice dear. Now you just run along and play with your dollies like a good little girl, while I finish weeding my garden." Ms. Roberts tore a carnation from the ground by the roots and threw it aside. Shelly glanced at the pile of torn flowers and then at the garden of weeds. It had seemed almost comical, yet pathetic to her.

"Uh, Ms. Roberts, your are weeding your garden aren't you?"

"I most certainly am Peter," the old woman replied as she tore a tulip from the ground. Peter was Shelly's husband. Shelly shook her head.

"Poor old lady," she thought. "She's getting worse by the day."

She went inside her house.

"Mommy! Mommy!" cried Marie. "Look what Daddy got me for my birthday!"

Shelly looked at her husband who was standing nearby. "But Peter, her birthday isn't until next month."

"Well Shelly, I told her that if she would clean her room before mommy gets home, I would give her one of her birthday presents early." He then added, "Hey, you've been pestering her to clean it all week." Shelly rolled her eyes, "Peter you can't keep bribing the kid like this. Before you know it, every time we ask her to do something, she'll keep thinking, 'What's in it for me?'"

"Hey Lady! I'm teaching her not to be taken advantage of."

"Pete, how the hell is she taken advantage of by obeying her parents?" Shelly replied in an annoyed tone of voice. "I meant well!" Peter snapped defensively.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. Go watch your damn TV show!" Shelly groaned.

"Women!" yelled Peter and he left the room. Shelly crouched down to her daughter. "I love your father dear but he is a royal pain in my butt sometimes! "You mean an ache in your butt can wear a crown?" Marie joked. Shelly chuckled. "Come on, show me what he got ya."

Marie lifted a golden locket from her chest. "Oh that's beautiful! I must admit Pete, you do have taste," Commented Shelly. "Oh so now we're pals again?" "Shut up, now where did you find it?" "At the antique store in the mall," answered Peter. "Only problem is we can't seem

to get it opened.”

At three the next morning Shelly was awakened by a soft moan of agony. She got up out of bed and walked into Marie's room. The child lay in bed drenched in her sweat and her face looked swollen and flushed. “Mommy,” she whimpered, “I have to throw up real bad and my tummy really hurts.” Shelly placed her hand on her daughter's forehead. “Oh sweetie, You're burning up. Here, let me take you to the bathroom.” When Marie was finished, Shelly tucked her back into bed and kissed her cheek. “Now lie quietly dear. Mommy's gonna go get the thermometer.”

Shelly left Marie's room and went into the kitchen. She was fumbling in the darkness for the light switch, when she stepped on something soft and furry. The creature shrieked and clawed at her ankles. “Dammit Barney you scared the heck out of me!” The cat ran into the next room and hid under the living room couch. Its eyes were glowing with fury at its owner. Shelly finally found the light switch and flicked it on. Temporarily she was blinded but gradually her pupils adjusted to the brightness. She opened the medicine cabinet and took out the thermometer. Shelly walked back into Marie's room and took her temperature. “A hundred-and-four, oh my God!” She gasped and rushed back into the master bedroom to shake her snoring husband awake. “Peter, we have to take Marie to the hospital. She has a really high temperature and is very ill.”

Dr. Murphy scratched his chin in puzzlement. “Mr. and Mrs. Goodwill, we are doing everything we can to pinpoint the cause of your daughter's illness but so far we have not been able to come up with an accurate diagnosis.” Shelly clutched her husband's hand. “Is she gonna be okay?” The doctor put his hand on Shelly's shoulder. “All I can say is that I assure you she's in good hands.”

A week and a half had passed and neither of them could eat or sleep. Both Shelly and Peter didn't show up for work and the hospital was becoming a second home to them. The doctors still couldn't find what was wrong with Marie and the child grew sicker and sicker. Shelly was sitting by her daughter's bedside, when Marie weakly whispered, “Mommy.” “Yes dear?” “Could you please take this stupid locket off me. It doesn't belong to me. It belongs to somebody else and I'm too weak to take it off myself.” “Sweetie, don't be ridiculous. Your father bought that for yo...”

“Please Mommy,” groaned Marie. “Okay, I'll take it off for you if you like.”

Shelly removed the locket from her daughter and instantly Marie began to change. The color poured back into her cheeks and her body began to fill out to its former plumpness. It was like a balloon being inflated. Marie was again the perfect picture of health. The child sat up and smiled. “I feel much better mommy, Can we go home now?” “What...how?” Shelly gasped. “Because it's not my locket. It's someone else's.”

Shelly rushed down to the cafeteria to fetch her husband. "Are you serious?" Peter asked. "Our daughter is wasting away, practically on the brink of death and you're telling me that the moment you took off the locket, she just got better?" Then added, "Out of the blue?" Shelly eagerly nodded. "How can that be possible? Unless of course, this whole illness of hers is merely psychosomatic." "Honey," replied Shelly. "I doubt very much that this sickness was only in her mind. Let me tell you another thing, she was babbling about the locket belonging to someone else." Soon after the child was released from the hospital.

One day, Marie was at school and Peter had just left for work about ten minutes before. Shelly had the day off from her secretarial job and decided to stay home to straighten the house. When she entered Marie's room to clean, she sighted the locket lying on the little girl's dresser. She hadn't worn the thing since her recovery. Shelly picked up the locket and examined it. She tried to open it but she failed. She then took a safety pin from her robe and tried to force the locket open with that. Suddenly the object burned red hot and Shelly dropped it on the floor. The object quickly cooled down. After sucking her blistering fingers, she picked the heart up once more and fastened the chain around her throat. She waited for hours for something Drastic to occur. There was nothing.

That night Shelly was twisting and turning with a horrible dream galloping through her mind. She saw the figure of a man, with a transparent body, dressed in bloodstained clothes. He held out his hand, and although his mouth wasn't moving, an eerie voice whispered over and over again, "Take off the locket. It's not yours, it belongs to her." Shelly then stared deeply into his pupilless eyes, which glowed pale, florescent lights. They grew brighter, more intense and suddenly, she began to see visions through them.

The first vision showed a man, dressed in black, running faster and faster. Clutched in his hand was a pistol, with the barrel still smoking. Clutched in the other hand was the locket. The stranger kept looking over his shoulder, as if to see if anybody was chasing after him. Suddenly, there was a loud honking and a screech of tires. The man looked towards its direction and flashed a face of terror. Shelly then saw the locket fall to the ground. Later shown was the man in prison, only now, he was a helpless paraplegic, condemned to live the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

Shelly saw the locket lying in the street, where the man from the previous vision had dropped it. However, this time it was in daylight. A young woman picked up the locket, brushed it off with her handkerchief and put it on. The lady happened to be nine months pregnant. The same woman was shown, but this time in a hospital delivery room, where she gave birth to a horribly deformed child. Later on, while nursing the baby goblin, she tore off the locket and threw it out of the two-story window. She looked down again and saw that the ugly child was no longer in her arms. There was instead a beautiful baby girl. Shelly next saw the lock-

et, In a garbage can.

An old lady picked it up and put it in her purse. Then the locket was seen being given to the old woman's teenaged granddaughter, as a Christmas gift. After a short time of wearing the locket, the teenager's hair fell out. The moment the youngster removed the heart, with tears in her eyes, the hair grew back to its former state. Over and over, Shelly kept seeing images of people owning the same locket, living through awful streaks of misfortune. The visions went all the way up to Marie's illness.

Shelly woke up terrified and felt her body itch all over. She got up and went into the bathroom. She glanced into the mirror and yelped at the sight of her reflection. Her entire face and hands were covered in hives. Shelly tore off her nightgown and realized that her whole body was covered in them. There was so many on her, that she was disfigured. Her body tingled violently. She reached for a bottle of calamine lotion, only to realize that the bottle was empty. "How can that be? I just bought this a couple days ago."

The sensation became so unbearable, that Shelly was forced to claw at her skin, drawing blood and causing it to burn and itch even more. The mirror suddenly began to bleed profusely, as a hand emerged from the surface, smeared with the crimson fluid. Shelly stood frozen with fear. "Give it to me," the voice hissed. Shelly took off the locket and the hives went away. She handed it over. The gold heart fell through the ghostly hand, like a hot knife through butter. "I said give it!" the voice hissed louder. She picked up the locket again and as before, it fell through the hand. "The locket!" The voice hissed again, even louder than before. "It keeps falling through your hand, dammit!" Shelly snapped. The blood and the hand vanished. Suddenly a soft pathetic moan was heard. Shelly began to feel a little bit of pity for the apparition. "Look, I'm alive and solid as stone. Who is this person? Perhaps I could give it to them."

The reflection in the mirror transformed. Instead of Shelly's reflection, stood a beautiful young girl of about sixteen. A minute passed and the figure, still quite beautiful, seemed a bit physically more mature. Another minute passed and she started to develop crows feet and her breasts began to sag. Again, in another minute, her hair started to gray. It seemed that the girl in the mirror was aging ten years with the passage of every minute. Finally, in the place of the young girl stood the figure of old Ms. Roberts. "All right, I'll give it to her tomorrow morning," Shelly answered, picked up the locket and turned off the bathroom light. For a while, she thanked heaven that Peter and Marie could sleep through the apocalypse.

Shelly knocked on Ms. Robert's door. The door opened. "We don't want any savings bonds thank you." Snapped the old woman as she slammed the door in Shelly's face. Shelly knocked on the door again. Once more, Ms. Roberts answered. "Shelly, how nice to see you.

You've come to visit an old bag like me? How was your first day of kindergarten?" "Ms. Roberts, I'm thirty-one and been out of kindergarten for eons," replied Shelly. "That's nice

Peter. Now won't you come in? I'll fix us a nice pot of tea." "Oh, no thank you. I'm not big on tea," Shelly answered. "Well at least come in." Shelly obliged and entered the house. She and the old woman sat on the sofa. "Ms. Roberts, I've brought something that I believe belongs to you." Shelly handed her the locket. The old lady put on her glasses, which hung from a chain around her neck and examined the gold heart. Shelly noticed that she managed to open it with ease. Ms. Roberts glanced at the locket as tears rolled down her face.

"Richard," she whispered sobbing. "When I was young, practically a child, I fell in love with a charming young man, four years my senior. His name was Richard Scatz. We were planing to get engaged, as soon as I was finished high school. On my seventeenth birthday he gave me this locket. I recall him saying, "This locket is for you and you alone, Maureen. If a thief should ever steal this from you, cursed be him and anyone who wears it but you." Late one night, we were walking home from a ballet. Suddenly, a stranger jumped out of nowhere and tore the locket from my throat. Richard tried to tackle him, but the thief fired a gun and my beloved fell over dead. The scoundrel sped away and was soon after hit by a car, which crippled him for life. The police caught up to him and he was later sent to jail. With tears in my eyes I demanded my locket back, since it was the only thing I had left of Richard. The thief claimed that he had lost the object somewhere. The cops searched him and found nothing. So apparently the man was telling the truth. I haven't seen the locket since...until now."

Ms. Roberts showed Shelly the middle of the locket. There stood a picture of the young man and the girl she had seen the night before.

Kathryn Ganime

The Wedding Veil

Tessie and Jane were walking home from school one Friday afternoon. They were both freshmen at the Dougwoodville Upper Academy. The two of them had been the best of friends since the fourth grade. When Tessie moved to Dougwoodville from Boston, her first few weeks at the academy were a living hell. She was an awkward young girl with bottle-cap glasses and mousy brown hair that she would always have tied in tight braids, because her hair was too thin to style fashionably. Tessie was terribly meek, however very intellectual. She was nevertheless a prime target for the cruelest juvenile tormenting. That was where she met Jane who up until Tessie's arrival was the school's main misfit. Jane was a heavyset girl with severe acne problems. When the two lonely girls finally met during social studies, they paired off and had been buddies ever since.

Now they were in ninth grade and still had to deal with the ostracism; tripping in the hallways, from the cheerleading squad, sarcastic catcalls, from football team members, the rumors, the "kick me" signs, the spitballs they had to comb out of their hair between classes and of course the giggling. That damn giggling! Every time Tessie and Jane raised their hand in class and were called on; their classmates would laugh at every question and comment made. This happened whenever Tessie had to give an oral report or when Jane tripped while attempting to play a sport during gym class. Tessie and Jane, being the only ones to arrive at school dances without dates, pretty much sat on the gym bleachers most of the time, since most of the music being played was for romantic slow dancing. The two were indeed the most miserable students at the Academy.

A Corvette sped by them and Tessie was struck in the head with a water balloon. Following the splash was a hateful chorus of wild laughter that faded off over the horizon, as the car drove out of sight. "Damn you Christil!" Jane hollered and shook her fist. Christi Montgomery was a tenth grader, captain of the cheerleading squad, most popular girl in school and ringleader of Jane and Tessie's abuse. She and the other cheerleaders' favorite prank was to speed by in a car and fling water balloons at the unhappy girls.

Tessie tried hard to stop her tears but was unsuccessful. Jane sat down beside her and gave her a hug. "How can such a snob like that have such a sweetheart for a boyfriend?" wondered Jane. Pete Richards was the most gorgeous guy in school, captain of the football team and the tenth grade class president. He was also one of the few students who wasn't cruel to Jane or Tessie. Sometimes he would come to their defense but unfortunately, when Christi was around, he kept his opinions to himself. Pete never really stood up for himself or for anybody else against her, because Christi would verbally cut him down to size.

Tessie and Jane walked a little further down until they came upon a familiar intersection of

town. There were dozens of little, old fashioned, stores. They were both well acquainted with the area and that's why they rubbed and blinked their eyes when they saw the bridal shop. "That's funny," commented Tessie. "We pass this way all the time and I don't recall seeing that wedding dress store before." "Maybe they just opened," replied Jane. "How can that be? First of all, wouldn't there have been some goofy advertisement, such as a hot air balloon with the words "Grand Opening" written on it? Also, it is between the Laundromat and Harrison's Comic Book Blowout. Don't you remember that those two buildings were right next to each other until today?"

"Well, since it's here why don't we go check it out?" said Jane.

They approached the small door, which had on it a white sign with gold lettering that read, "Come in, we're open." Jane grasped the handle and pulled. As the door opened, a gentle breeze entered the store and a soft tinkling seemed to ring out the popular tune, "Here Comes the Bride." Tessie looked up and saw silvery wind chimes hanging on a hook near the door in which they had entered. It seemed almost magical. "Oh how cute!" She thought.

The inside of the shop was so enormous; that there was no possible way the small building could encompass it all. Just then, a charming old woman of about seventy-eight approached them. "Hello ladies, is there anything I can help you with?" "No thank you ma'am, we're just looking." replied Jane, as she stared at the columns of satin, white, beaded gowns. Each was so beautiful that it was hard to believe that they were crafted from earthly materials. "All right, let me know if you need any assistance." the old woman replied and walked off. "Jeez!" remarked Jane. "I wonder if I could dye any of these gowns and wear it for my sister's wedding." She then added discouragingly, "Yeah, like I'll fit into anything here."

Tessie wasn't paying attention to her companion. She was mesmerized by the whiteness of the satin gowns. She walked down towards a cluster of brass hooks. Each held a light and airy wedding veil. Tessie was drawn to one that was certainly the most beautiful. It had a pearly crown, studded with sparkly diamond-like chips. The veil part itself was composed of fine elegant lace and sewn into it were tiny silver balls, sparingly spread throughout. She reached out ward and lifted the veil off of the hook. A price sticker was nowhere to be found. However, inside the veil was a tag that read, "Wear this veil and it will reveal your husband to be." Tessie sarcastically thought, "Yeah right." Then placed the veil back onto the hook. She walked back up towards the front of the store where she met Jane. "There you are. I was starting to get worried Tessie."

As they exited the store out onto the pavement, Tessie was surprised in not hearing the door slam shut. That very second, she turned around and what she saw caused her eyes to grow as big as dinner plates. The bridal store had vanished. The Laundromat and comic book stores were once again side by side, as if the bridal shop had never been there in the first place.

"Hey Tes, what's holding ya up?" "Nothing Jane, forget it." Tessie answered and they walked home.

That night after dinner, Tessie went upstairs to do her homework. When she got to her room she unzipped her bookbag and found the very same veil, which she had encountered, earlier, neatly folded and tucked next to her English book. She pulled it out and examined it. "But that's impossible, I'm positive I hung this thing back on its hook." She read the inscription once more. He whispered, "I can't believe I'm doing this." and placed the crown on her head. Out of thin air appeared Pete, Christi's boyfriend. He smiled at her and winked. "But what about Jane?" Tessie asked. "Don't worry Tes," answered Pete. "She'll meet my cousin Jake on our wedding day." Then as quickly as he appeared he vanished into nothing.

Kathryn Ganime

Madam X. Lover
0 Hearts Nomore Lane
Loveless, Pa. XoXo

Dear Etalocohc,

This is the hardest thing I ever had to do, but I can not live like this one moment longer. You are the first and last thing I think of every day.

Tired of surrendering to you, the enemy within, the demon who took me, Madam X hostage. No longer having the quality that distinguishes a vital and functional being. Tortured by your sweetness, your smell, lusting for you, waiting for the moment we can be together again.

Fighting an endless battle, at times winning, but it does not last long.

I can not resist your sweetness, driving miles late at night, in the sweltering summer heat or frigid winter weather, the wee hours of the night.

Asking people if they have seen you around town? Everyone knows and wants you. The hit of the party, a REAL WELL KNOWN. You are all over the world and here I sit.

When you spend time with me, I can go for hours, days, without food, water, putting my life on hold again. I can't seem to get enough of you. Then you're gone in a SNAP, seeing only the trash you left behind.

Crying when you are gone, feeling your departure, detoxing again. Not able to sleep, up all night thinking of ways to be free of you Etalocohc. The toll on my body shows your repeated abuse.

Friends urge me to give you up or get help. They know I am not the only one you're with, selling yourself for money. When the cash is gone so are you. Never knowing what you will be wrapped up in next.

Etalocohc I have a lot of tonnage invested in you, but it's over;
I want you out of my system for good NOW.

Sincerely,

Wanting you more but the
POUNDAGE is too much

Madam X

P.S. Remember I know you write your name backwards!!!

Lilian Hobdell

SOCIETY'S CHAINS

It was a hot sticky July afternoon and being that July'98 has been the hottest July in the world since the first official global recording of temperatures, it may just have been the hottest July afternoon on the planet too. But I wasn't exactly thinking about universal heat where this essay begins.

I was standing amongst the collection of Falaky Square commuters, in Cairo, as we each waited in suspense for our means of public transport to come and rescue us- whatever number bus or mini-bus it may have been. You all know the routine (except for those poor souls who've never lived or dared to ride outside the comfort of a private car). You and everyone else have their heads fixed in the same direction, peering up the lane of hope, tension and impatience, where your land- submarine on wheels will eventually surface from the rest of the flooding traffic. You and everyone else spot something in the distance that resembles a bus, but it's too far away to make out its route # just yet. As it nears, the suspense builds while all eyes await the moment this over sized sardine can with windows, seats, doors, and wheels identifying digits will come into focus; and the fate of all the hopeful potential passengers will be determined. Who will finally realize their dream of getting on the autobus they have been waiting for and be whisked away to wherever it may be they're going and who will remain standing in the heat?

Me, I wasn't very lucky this particular afternoon. Several rickety old city buses had passed me by without bearing the lucky number of 811. So I continued standing impatiently waiting for my wheels of relief to turn up as bus after bus passed me by like an outcast.

Yes, I stood and stood and yet another unlucky numbered autobus came by. Many people got on although it didn't actually come to full stop long enough for all of them to gracefully ascend. But the driver knows well he's in Egypt not England and here if he can see only men in his side view mirror approaching the rear bus door it's okay to assume that they'll run and jump into his vehicle of overdue junkyard scrap metal, mish-ish-can (no problem), as he begins to pull away. For as we all know, men make getting onto the bus an Olympic event in Egypt. It is a tradition.

But in this particular marathon onto the bus things were different. An older gentleman in the crowd wasn't so capable of grabbing and leaping onto the stairs. Unnoticed by the weary informal chauffeur as not being one of the able Olympic contestants, the poor old guy was thrown to the street in his brave attempt to grab hold of his transportation.

I was standing there and had seen the guy fall. My first instinct was to run up to him and see if he was okay. Then I thought, "What would the people around me think of a religiously

dressed woman going to tend to a male.” Then my conscious told me, “Who cares, he might be hurt. Go see.” I hesitated but then began to walk in his direction. A teenage boy beat me to him because of my procrastination. I was relieved someone came to assist him out of the seemingly heartless crowd of statue like onlookers. I wondered why it took so long for anyone to act. How come no one seemed to care? My GOD! Have we humans become that cold? I guess so. Or maybe they were like me, hoping someone else would come to his aid, but still, it wasn’t because I didn’t care or wanted someone else to help him. I hesitated mostly because of what people would think of me.

The teenage boy helped the poor man to his feet. I walked up to him and asked him if he was injured. He said, “The bus drove away before I could get on.” I told him it was dangerous for him to run up to the bus and he should’ve waited for the next one. I then motioned with my hand to the curb and told him to sit down and take a rest for a while. He thanked the teenage boy who helped him. I felt so ashamed, so chicken, so empty-like, when normally I’m the one who always does what I believe is right no matter how many people are against me. I had let public opinion prevent me from quickly acting in a time of need.

I walked away, assured the man was alright, feeling like a cowardly soldier. I resumed my standing pose half paying attention to the buses that rolled by and half daydreaming; staring down at the black top in shame and embarrassment of my weakness. I was in a daze, thinking about the chains of society which I’d let hold me back; even though I am and have the reputation for being a self governed individual who doesn’t care about mass opinion. The teenage boy who’d helped the old man came and stood near me. I wondered if he’d noticed my hesitation at the time of the accident and thought I was another coward of society too.

I thought to myself how it is so pathetic that we allow mass opinion to shape us into shallow and overly self-conscious people. No matter how immune a person may claim to be there is always something in us that is repressed by the fear we’ve been brought up in of “What would they think?”

We seem to contradict ourselves on almost every topic that jeopardizes peoples view of us. Take for example how almost everyone swears that physical appearances are insignificant and that it’s only “What’s on the inside that counts”. Deep down inside we know that is the right thinking but practically every woman disguises her GOD given facial features with those camouflage colors we call “Make-up.” She is insecure of public opinion and incapable to ignore the scrutinizing eye of society. Now, men would use “Make-up” too if mass opinion encouraged it or approved of it to “Enhance” themselves into what society considers “Beautiful.” Instead they worry about how many muscles they can achieve to decorate their bodies. Which is also society’s opinion of “Beautiful.” She and He unable to contradict their

god-Society. She and He too weak to endure the criticism of mass opinion and live by their own initiative and governing.

So even I, who has accomplished to defy so much peer and society pressure when it comes to doing what I believe is right, sacrificed quick action in a time of need for a fellow human being on account of fearing mass opinion. Shame on me! But I have learned. GOD willing I will never have second thoughts about doing the right thing again.

My true wish for all human beings is that they learn, as I have, to do what they believe is right no matter what anybody thinks. Stop cheating themselves and repressing their GOD given gift of reason for fear of society's opinion, and may I repeat, as I said before how I think it's pathetic what shallow beings society has shaped us into?! Of course I may! Why should I let you stop me? There's no need to ask your permission to express my opinion!! Is there??????????????????

Liberty Anne Justice