

# Delta Winds

Volume 28 A Magazine of Student Essays 2015

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# Letter from the Editors

*Delta Winds: A Magazine of Student Attempts*. What do you think? Should we change the name of the magazine from “student essays” to “student attempts”? The origin of the term “essay” is to try something; to make an attempt. In the Middle Ages, Montaigne twisted the meaning of the word from an attempt at anything to an attempt at a form of writing. And ever since then, people have been using the essay to voice their thoughts on, as Aldous Huxley said, “one damned thing after another.”

Unlike the noun “essay,” the verb form of the word, dating back to those same 1500s, means to “test the mettle of,” to show the courage to make the attempt. So now we have not only the attempt but the chutzpah—the boldness to take the chance.

We, the editors of *Delta Winds*, view the writers of these student essays as having the combination of these two definitions. In the writings found in this volume, Delta College students have had the guts to put their perspectives out for a public viewing. These writers challenge themselves to be forthright with their notions of the world and to be at times brutally honest with their own experiences.

As expected, most of these contributors rely on their memories of past events. But in this particular collection of essays, we have found a common thread: a number of the writers question the reliability of these memories. The business of recollecting can be quite complicated. It can lead to clarification and understanding, to longing and heartbreak, to forgiveness and grief. One writer registers surprise when the image of an almost-nurturing mother collapses. Another admits to the murkiness in her collection of memories. Still another peels back the layers of confusion and resentment in the process of uncovering her damaged heart. Collectively, these authors have found and remarked on concerns common to us all. And their attempts at voicing their thoughts have given us one step closer to our own.



Education is the  
movement from  
darkness to light.

Allan Bloom

# The Dividing Line

By Jessica Driver



Jessica Driver is a California native, residing in Lodi with her husband, dog, and cat. Jessica graduated high school from Venture Academy in 2006. She is an English student at Delta College and hopes to transfer to a university in the spring of 2016, where she will pursue a Bachelor of Arts in English.



A boundary line runs through the city of Lodi, along the railroad tracks, nearly dividing it in half. On the west side is the preferred side. It is laden with new, tidy homes, and old, stately houses. The schools are clean and well cared for. The parks, too, are manicured, and if graffiti should by chance make its degenerate mark on public property, it will be taken care of promptly. On the other side of the boundary line, lies the east side of town, or the other side of the tracks. There,

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A boundary line runs through the city of Lodi, along the railroad tracks, nearly dividing it in half.

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homes fall into disrepair. Condemned buildings stand boarded, graffiti-covered, and forgotten. The schools and parks pale in comparison to the west side establishments. There, also, one turns one's cheek to crime, for it is expected. I know what it is like on the east side of town, because I was raised there. I understand, too, the differences and inequalities of the two separate areas in Lodi; I experienced them as a child. In "Pecuniary Emulation," Thostein Veblen states, "A certain standard of wealth...is a necessary condition of respectability" (170), which means, to be respected in a community, one must possess the right amount of wealth.

I used to live in an alley-house off of a main, high-traffic road with my mom, stepdad, little sister, and baby brother. During the day, we neighborhood kids would pool our change together to buy candy from the corner store. At night, I could hear cars, sirens, and gunshots. The first school I ever attended was a flat, brick building surrounded by small, colorful German-built houses and Mexican minimarts. A few years later, I transferred to a

new school across town. That school was comprised mostly of kids who lived on the west side. They dressed differently, spoke differently, and behaved differently than my old classmates. The new school provided unique opportunities for field trips and academic programs. I felt like an outsider. In class pictures I looked homely, and on field trips I could only wish for the trinkets that my classmates brought home as souvenirs.

After some time, I began to develop friendships at my new school. Often, I would visit other kids'

homes, but I soon realized that not even my closest friend would ask to spend the night with me. When I finally summoned the courage to confront her, she gave the sheepish answer, "I am not allowed to go to your house, because you live in a bad neighborhood." I was only a child, yet I was hurt and embarrassed that my house was forbidden. It confirmed what I had thought to be true: I was different. I was poor.

During my adolescence, I began to understand the negative stigma attached to the east side. I noticed homeless people wandering the streets aimlessly. I became aware of drug addicts and gang members. I saw for the first time all the crime and litter that must have been there all along, and I was ashamed of where I came from. I was angry to be classified in the same category with such poor, outcast people. I developed resentment towards my own class, but I also felt bitter towards the people on the west side, as I imagined that they looked down on my family and me. I remember asking myself, "Why is my value measured by material

possessions? Are people not worth more than the things that they own?"

One day, I spent the afternoon with a few friends from school. We eventually made our way back to my place, to play board games and roast s'mores over the space heater. It began to get late, but we were having such a good time that nobody wanted to leave. My friends asked if they could stay the night. Their parents were hesitant to grant them approval.

The last parent arrived in person to debate with her child, and finally they

**I was angry to be classified in the same category with such poor, outcast people.**

consented. Before turning to leave, she looked smugly at my mother and said, "I am not happy about this." I watched as my mom's face fell into shame and embarrassment. I knew how she felt, because it was the same feeling that I had experienced with my schoolmates. I was so angry at this woman for hurting my mother. She did not know what my mom had gone through, and she could not see how my mom's children trusted and loved their mother. The woman only saw the little house that we lived in and the squalor of the surrounding neighborhood.

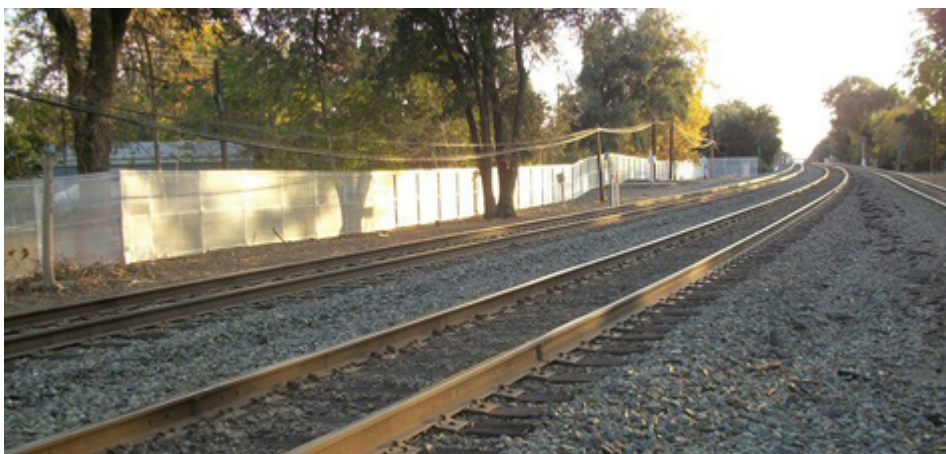
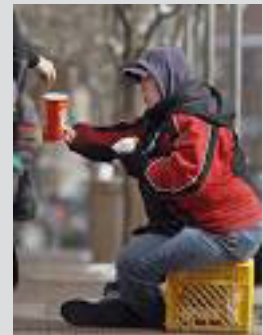
Looking back over the years, I understand more about the dividing line. I know that it is more than just a boundary line. It is a separation between two worlds and two types of people. People that misunderstand each other, fear each other, and sometimes even hate each other. At the root of their differences is money. As Veblen writes, "members of the community who fall short of this, somewhat indefinite, normal degree of...property suffer in the esteem

of their fellow-men" (170). That is, nearly all poor people are denied respect from those

with more affluence. Sadly, this prejudice is at times unavoidable. I have forgiven my friend's mom, and I have walked away from the memory with a story that has helped me to better understand who I am and where I come from. I now know that living on the east side can be a mark of shame, a badge of perseverance, or a rebellious source of pride. For me, at times, it has been all three.

#### Work Cited

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# Unsocial Media

By Christina Teed

Christina Teed is a 19-year-old girl from California. She has six cats and enjoys reading. Her plans for the future include graduate school and winning the lottery.



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Like any devastated mother, she wants to make sure Ben is not alone when he wakes up.

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In any family, there is a certain degree of dysfunction. Add in contemporary Americans' constant use of social media, and there is bound to be some separation. Henry Rubin's 2012 film *Disconnect* is a prime example of how our wired world can detach us from the people we are supposed to love the most.

An early scene in the film shows the Boyd family—Rich, Lydia, Abby, and Ben—going through the motions of eating dinner as a family. With his headphones constantly plugged in or around his neck, young teenager Ben is obviously passionate about music but a social outcast. His father, Rich,

does not show much interest in Ben. With his cellphone glued to his ear,

workaholic Rich does not give much time to anyone in his family. Ben's mother, Lydia, struggles to hold the family together. When she notices Ben texting, she asks, "Could you please not do that at the table?" Ben quickly replies, "He is," looking at his father, who also has his phone out. This scene is significant because it shows that Rich's behavior makes Ben's behavior seem acceptable. When Ben's popular older sister Abby derisively asks, "Is that your girlfriend?" a bemused Rich adds, "Girlfriend? Well, you type away." Rich completely dismisses any authority Lydia had. As the scene continues, we see the kids leave the table after hardly touching their food, and Rich receives a phone call prompting his dismissal as well. Left alone at the table is Lydia, the only one who is more concerned with her family than her phone.

Unknowingly, Ben has fallen victim to cyber bullying. The "girlfriend" he

is quizzed about at the table—whom he has met through Facebook—is a fake girl created by two boys at his school. The pranksters convince Ben to send his "girlfriend" a nude photo of himself, which they soon leak to the entire school. Feeling humiliated and desperate, Ben attempts to end his life. When Abby finds him unconscious in his room, dangling in his self-constructed noose, she shows care and concern for her brother for the first time in the film.

The shock of the hanging reverberates as we next see a jolted Rich rushing into a hospital room, his wife and daughter in tears beside the bed of

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With his phone glued to his ear, Rich does not give much time to anyone in his family.

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the still unconscious Ben. As the days pass and Ben's condition lingers, Lydia chooses to stay by her son's side. Like any devastated mother, she wants to make sure Ben is not alone when he wakes up. Similarly, Abby's grief over the tragedy has affected every aspect of her life. The lack of sympathy from her "cool" friends makes her realize how important her family is to her. When Abby spits in the face of her oblivious BFF, we know that Ben's sister has dramatically reversed her priorities.

Rich has a more complex struggle in dealing with his son's suicide attempt. Instead of staying by his son's side at the hospital, he focuses on finding out the cause of his son's act. He soon realizes that he hardly knows his son. Rich gets in contact with Ben's "girlfriend" and learns that Ben thinks Rich does not love him. This admission upsets Rich because he assumes his love for Ben is implied. Fathers love their children, yet when one does not show his love, a child may not believe he is loved. Rich

never expressed any care or genuine interest in Ben, and therefore Ben assumes his father does not love him.

When the family finally sees the photo of Ben on the Internet, they realize why Ben has tried to end his life. Figuring out the cause just increases Lydia's and Abby's desire to stay by Ben's side, yet this discovery pushes Rich further away from his son as he tries to find who made Ben take the picture. When Rich does find Jason Dixon—the boy responsible—he confronts the boy's ex-cop father and the two get into a fight. Ironically, after blows have rained down upon him, Rich remembers what he cares about in life. Seeing (and feeling) another father protect his son provides this realization. Discovering Ben's motivation for ending his life is

not nearly as crucial for Rich as standing by his family during the

tragedy. There is some promise that Rich will change his ways when he returns to the hospital room and states, "Everything I love is in this room."

Though my family has never experienced a tragedy such as this, I see some prominent similarities between this family and my own. We seem to have an obsession with social media similar to the families in this movie. I am almost always online, as is my brother. My father is attached to his phone just as Rich is. In contrast there's my mother, who, like Lydia, would rather see us spend time as a family than socialize through a computer.

My brother and I have a relationship comparable to that of Ben and Abby. We do not get along often, and whenever we're in public we pretend to have no relation to each other.

My brother is in a different social circle, and our interests—as well as our personalities—are almost polar opposites. But even though we have our differences, we still have this friendship only siblings can share, and I know that if any catastrophe were to befall him, I would be just as distraught as Abby is over Ben's fate.

My father's parallels to the character of Rich extend beyond their mutual obsessions with the phone. Both are highly successful in their professions—so much so they are almost completely absorbed by work. My relationship with my father is almost as strained as Ben's relationship with his father, yet I do know that my father does care about me. Even though he focuses most of his time on business, my father, unlike

Rich, always makes sure to tell me he loves me. We do not see much of

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**This movie teaches us to put down the cell phone and talk to the people who need us the most.**

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Lydia in the film, but what is obvious is her immense love for her family—exactly as my mother loves my family. These women quietly and for the most part thanklessly fight the battle every day to remind their husbands and children of the ties that should bind them.

In many movies, the families and situations feel unrealistic. Many viewers cannot relate to the stories or the characters, superheroes suavely saving the world against impossible odds in the company of their eye-candy, size-zero supermodel girlfriends. *Disconnect* is a refreshing change that captures the lives of families in this media-obsessed world. It shows that in a world so connected through online media, a family member can still be detached and alone. This movie teaches us to put down the cell phone and talk to the people who need us the most.



# A Little Bean

By Kayla Sabella

Kayla Sabella Weaver, eighteen years old, is in her second semester at Delta College. She will be a mother at the end of February. She plans on continuing her education to provide an example for her son by transferring to a four-year college to become a registered nurse (or if that doesn't work out, an English teacher). She wasn't so sure of her goals until she took English 1A last semester with Phil Hutcheon, and wrote an essay about her interests in her career choice. It gave her the confidence to keep moving forward. She would like to thank him for being so supportive and encouraging.



This is a love story that begins with one boy and ends with another. It isn't a fairy tale romance quite like *Twilight*, but a love story nonetheless. I was seventeen, having the best summer of my life. I hadn't started college yet, and I wasn't about to let those last few months of freedom slip by. I spent May and June getting into trouble, goofing off, and falling in love. I had an amazing boyfriend, the type of boy who would walk miles in the middle of the night just to make sure I was

all right. I believed he was perfect in every way. In late June, when I realized that my period was late, I first told myself that I was worried over nothing. As the weeks went by, an uneasiness began to burrow into the back of my mind. I continued to tell myself that this could never happen to me, that I had to stop worrying.

In early July, when the fear began to be too much, I finally relented and turned to a close friend for advice. She suggested I come over to her house, and we would go together to buy a pregnancy test and hopefully put my worries to rest. That night, I can remember sitting on the edge of her bed, feeling numb all over. One minute, two minutes, three minutes: The time slowly crept by. Every moment that passed, I felt my heart race faster. I remember my friend's voice cutting through my empty thoughts: "Do you want to check the results now?" I slowly nodded, and we headed towards the bathroom. On the counter lay two of the three tests I had taken. I stared at those pieces of plastic for a long time. There were two very definite pink lines on each. Two lines meant only one thing: I was pregnant. My friend looked from my face to the

tests, tried making some joke I can't even recall now. I could feel a hard lump rise in my throat and stick there. I picked up my phone and typed out two simple words to my anxiously waiting boyfriend: "It's positive." A moment later, my phone buzzed with his reply. "Shit. We have to get rid of it." Warm tears spilled down my face, and the nightmare began.

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One minute, two minutes,  
three minutes: The time  
slowly crept by.

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After that night, vicious arguments and hateful remarks flew back and forth between my

boyfriend and me. He only wanted one thing, and that was an abortion. He didn't consider my own desires or input. "Prepare for a fight, because I'm not giving up on this," he'd spit at me angrily. Day after day for weeks he'd bully me and we'd fight. My perfect world began to crumble around me. Feeling beat down and alone, I finally gave in to what he wanted and promised the abortion. A week before the appointment, his aunt, a medical technician, offered to do an ultrasound so we could see if the embryo was really there. I knew she was only trying to convince me to change my mind about the decision, but I went anyway, thinking I would only be lectured and talked down to once again.

I remember lying on my back on the crinkly paper of the medical bed at San Joaquin General Hospital. I was staring at a black and white screen in front of me as my boyfriend's aunt squirted the warm gel onto my bare stomach, placed the probe, and moved it around. After a moment, I was greeted by what looked like a little tiny bean in a pocket of black on the screen. My eyes never left it as she highlighted it with the cursor.



“It looks like you’re almost six weeks along,” his aunt said. “Do you want to hear the heartbeat?” Startled, I could only nod my head as she clicked some buttons and moved the probe around my stomach again. Suddenly, a tiny heartbeat echoed throughout the room. I clenched my hands around my shirt tight enough to hurt. This little bean was alive, and I was listening to his tiny heart beating inside me. This was the moment the love for my son began.

I can still recall how I felt that day as I left the hospital with my boyfriend—angry, confused, and lost. Deep down, I knew I never wanted to go through with an abortion, but I didn’t have the courage to tell my boyfriend. I was terrified of what he would do, so instead, I kept quiet. Feeling desperate and alone, I almost chose to give up my pregnancy. Then, on the day before my scheduled appointment, my mother finally found out I was pregnant.

My relationship with my mother is complicated. I never really knew my biological father. My mother divorced and remarried several times. I always despised how she put together and tore apart our family over the years, and I had vowed never to do the same to my children. I watched her struggle to find a home for us, a home that was close enough to keep us in the same schools and near our friends. She would take on extra jobs and hours at work just to be able to give us a comfortable life. I admired her. She continued with college and finished her bachelor’s degree despite becoming pregnant and a single mother. My mother was always stern, making sure that the one aspect in our lives that would remain the most important was our education. She made sure we stayed in school, and expected nothing less than A’s or B’s on our report cards. I often had to sacrifice time with friends and after-

school activities to get better grades.

In my teenage years, I often rebelled against her rules, and my grades often dropped. I began to lie, skip class, and fight with her. I had no goals for the future, no plans for college or a career. I only wanted to do whatever I wanted, when I wanted. I didn’t care that my mom only wanted the best for me; I often just thought she was being unfair. I still blamed her for tearing our family apart, and letting me grow up in a broken household, and I had taken refuge in my plans to escape to a fairy tale life with my perfect boyfriend.

Now, suddenly my fairy tale life had come crashing down around me. Reality hit hard, and Prince Charming had become a nightmare. I was terrified of how my mother would react because I knew how stern she was. I expected her to kick me out, to disown me, to ship me off to live with a father I hardly knew.

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**I had no goals for the future,  
no plans for college or a career.  
I only wanted to do whatever I  
wanted, when I wanted.**

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I was completely taken aback by her reaction. She called me into her room, and we had a long talk. I told her

of the arrangements for the abortion, trying to convince her that I was going through with it. “But is that what you want, Kayla?” she asked with that irreplaceable motherly concern on her face. And in that moment, it was as if everything I had held in—all the pain of keeping it secret, and the struggle of fighting my boyfriend alone—came pouring out in reckless sobs that racked my whole body. “No, I want to keep it,” I cried into her shoulder. She reacted to the news not with anger, but with sorrow. She was disappointed I hadn’t turned to her first. I have never looked at my mother the same. I began looking up to her, seeing a strong woman instead of one bent on tearing apart my life. She knew the struggles I had to face as a single

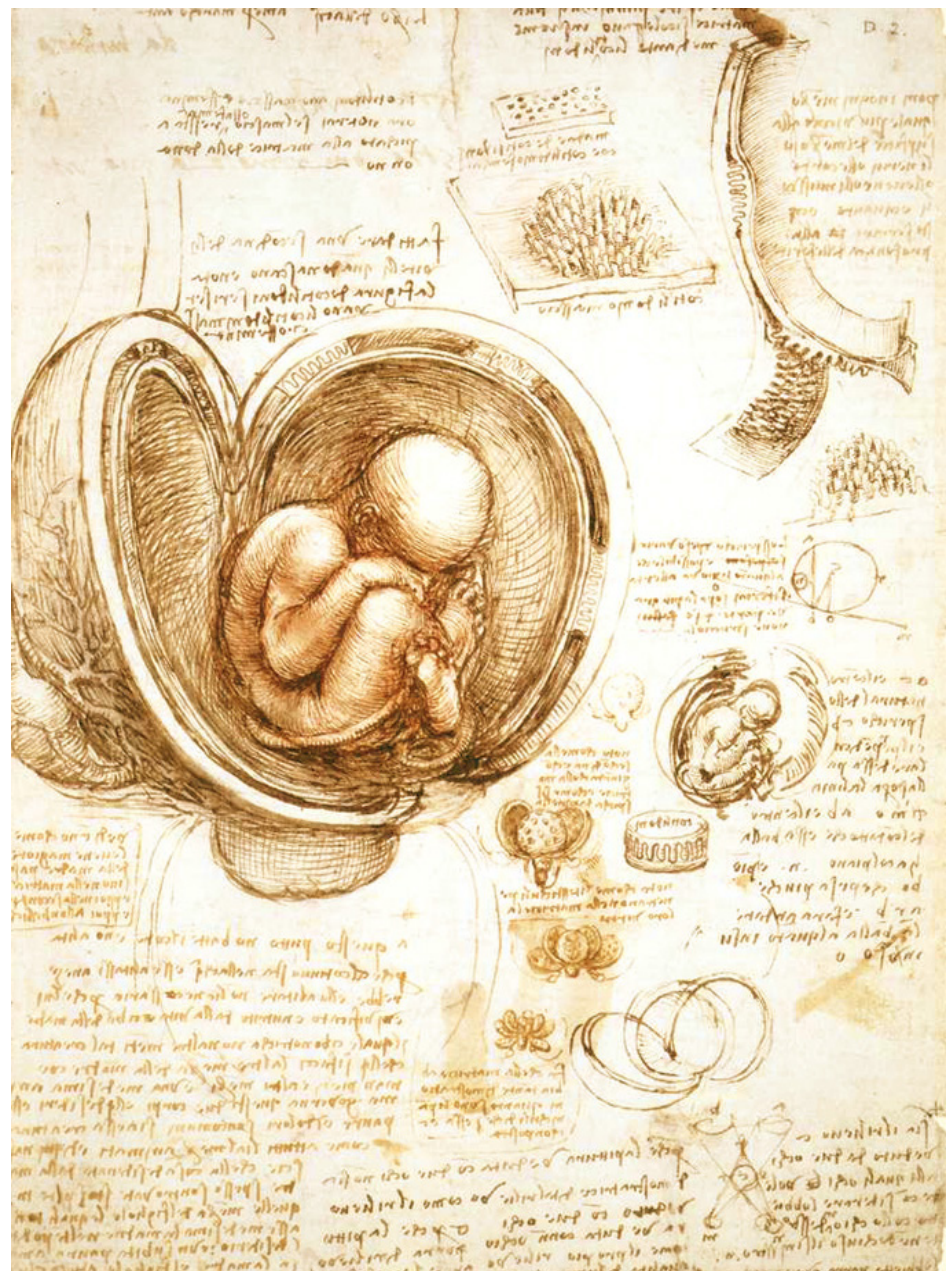




mom and a young student in college; she went through the same situation. She made it clear that even though she would be by my side through my pregnancy and beyond, I needed to continue my education and prepare to support myself and my son. It wasn't until after this talk that I began to face reality and grow up. I broke it off with my boyfriend, and although he was furious, I let him walk out of my life for good.

From the moment I saw my son's image and heard his heartbeat, I fell in love. He has changed my entire life,

and he isn't even here yet. I wouldn't be here taking night classes if not for him. I now have set goals to enter the nursing program in the future. I plan to follow my mom's example, making sure I am prepared to be a mother myself by putting my education before anything else, because I know it is the only way I can really give my son a good life. Every kick and punch I feel (and there are quite a few of them nowadays) reminds me to stay on track in school and try harder to achieve my goals because everything I do, I am doing to give him a life he deserves. He's my little bean, and I can't wait to meet him.



# Adventures in Education: Mexico and the U.S.

By *Eloisa Garcia*

One of my sharpest memories took place when I was in second grade in Mexico. That morning my brother and I were eating our usual cereal for breakfast, dreading the time to start our thirty-minute walk to school. I had been complaining about having to walk to school. When my mom came into the kitchen, I told her that I did not feel like going to school that day because it was freezing cold. That was all it took to spark her anger. I had never seen her react that way. I had done worse things than complain in the past, but none of them had triggered such a reaction. She grabbed

me by the shoulders and stood face to face with me while she yelled, “I am tired of your

complaining!” I will never forget the look in her eyes. I am not sure if it was a look of anger, disappointment, or both, but it made me feel like I was the worst human being on the planet. One thing is for sure, though: I have never seen that look again in my life.

As I matured, I came to understand that my mother’s fierce reaction on that day was based on her determination to give her children better educational opportunities than she had herself. My mom grew up in a very poor area in the south of Mexico, and she finished only the first grade. In her town, basic things like electricity and clean drinking water were not considered essential—and were not available. Having teachers was almost a luxury. There was only one classroom, and the teaching position was hard to fill due to the poverty of

the town. The few teachers who were assigned to the local school stayed for only the year that it took them to get their credential. They then left. My mom was lucky to attend school for a year. Many parents did not bother to send their kids at all. She was barely able to learn some numbers, the alphabet, and a few short words before the teacher moved away. Still, that was all she needed to continue on her own. She knew about a literacy show on the radio, and every morning she would sneak out her dad’s small battery radio and tune in the show. Listening to that show, my mom started learning

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**In her town, basic things like electricity and clean drinking water were not considered essential—and were not available.**

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the sounds of consonants and vowels put together, and eventually mastered reading and

writing. She learned the basics of arithmetic on her own later in life. With this behavior, she created a positive role model for me. I share my mom’s thirst for knowledge. I was always among the top students in my classes in Mexico.

However, my schooling in Mexico would not be the only educational challenge for me. Walking to second grade in the cold has been sharply etched in my mind. And it has only been matched by my first day of high school—here in the United States.

It was five o’clock on a Monday morning when my alarm went off. The few moments of peace vanished with the sound of the alarm. It had been really hard to make myself go to sleep the night before. I was awfully



Eloisa Garcia was born and raised in Mexico until the age of 13, when her parents decided to come live in the US. She remembers wanting to get an education ever since she was little, but the experiences of her transition from one country to another almost made her abandon that goal. She states, “I became very insecure about myself and what I was capable of. Luckily, my mother has always been my most prevailing example of perseverance. Her example is what made me come back to school, after a four-year absence, to pursue a degree in biological sciences and become a dentist someday.”





nervous about the upcoming day. I would have been less nervous if it were not for the fact that it was not simply my first day of high school. It was also the first time I would be attending a school in the United States. I had been living in this country for only a month. I knew merely a few words of English, and on that day, I had to go out on my own to figure out how the school system worked. I reached out for the alarm and turned it off. I thought about the long day ahead of me. It took a large amount of will power, but I finally managed to get up just because I didn't want to be late on my first day.

My sister had been of enormous help, giving me an orientation about the bus schedule. She explained when and where to take them. I did not realize, however, she had forgotten a minor detail until I was on the bus and my stop was approaching. She never told me how to let the driver know

I was getting off. I didn't give it much thought until I got up and walked towards the driver, the way we did back in Mexico, but the driver never stopped. That is when I realized that things were done differently here. I felt the stares from almost everyone in the bus; a couple of boys giggled and pointed towards me. As I walked back to my seat, my face burned with embarrassment. Luckily, one of the ladies in the bus understood and signaled me to pull the cord next to the window. I pulled the cord and a green light in front of the driver turned on and he stopped soon after. I knew how to say thank you, so I thanked the lady and ran out of the bus.

With that start, I did not expect the rest of my day to be any better, and it was not. As I walked to my classroom, I paid close attention to the conversations of the people around

me. I was trying to locate people who spoke Spanish. Without any luck, I just kept walking to my classroom. Once there, I listened in to the students around me.

It was finally time to start. The teacher began with a short introduction, which I tuned out because I did not recognize any of the words besides "good morning." After a while, everyone got up and began to make a circle. I mimicked their movements, but I was clueless about the imminent activity. One girl across from the circle was the first to speak. She started with the words "My name is" and continued to say something that was incomprehensible to me. Then it was the turn of the person next to her.

I felt cold as ice and my legs began shaking when I realized we were doing introductions. I counted ten people ahead of me. It all seemed like a slow torture. I could barely breathe when the person next

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I felt cold as ice and my legs began shaking when I realized we were doing introductions.

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to me spoke. It was finally my turn, and I could not say a word. Everyone waited. At last I managed to say, "My name is Eloisa," in the shakiest voice I had ever heard. Everyone waited for me to elaborate, but I could not say anything else. The teacher said something that I assumed was an encouragement to say something about myself, but I just shook my head and looked at the floor. The person next to me began to speak, and as she did her introduction I felt like leaving the classroom and hiding in a place where they would never find me. Unfortunately, I still had an entire year ahead of me.

The rest of my classes were not as painful because there were no more introductions involved. During lunch, as I waited in the food line, I heard two girls behind me speaking Spanish. My feelings from that moment can be

compared to those of someone who had just found an oasis in the middle of a desert. I was beyond excited because I had finally found someone I could talk to. I immediately turned to approach them. I introduced myself and asked if I could sit with them during lunch. They assented, and we started to talk about our classes. Sadly, lunch was over too soon. When the bell rang, I had to go back to being on my own. The feeling of relief I felt during lunch did not return until the bell rang again at 2:10, signaling the time to go home.

My first day of high school was one of the toughest days of my entire life. However, I would not change anything even if I could. It was a hard experience, but on that day I learned a lot about my strengths. Now, I like to

reflect back to that day whenever I feel intimidated about a new challenge. After that day, I can face anything.

Thinking back to that morning during second grade, I can now understand and justify my mother's reaction. My mom did not want me to be the kind of person who quits when a few adversities appear. She did not want me to throw away the educational opportunity that I had in hand. I realize now that by forcing me to take that long, cold walk to the classroom in the second grade, she was helping me to develop the strength that would enable me to survive greater challenges, such as that traumatic first day of high school in my new country. She made me a stronger person by encouraging me to take advantage of the opportunities that she never had.

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She made me a stronger person by encouraging me to take advantage of the opportunities that she never had.

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# A Meaningful Vacation

By Thong Duc Cao



Born in 1956, Thong Duc Cao first visited his grandparents' rural village in 1969. In this essay, he recounts the experiences that left such a deep impression on him. In Vietnam, Thong worked in herbal medicine, making traditional remedies with native plants. He completed a five-year degree in herbal medicine from a university in Saigon. After waiting fifteen years to come to the United States, Thong arrived in California, where he studied ESL in Stockton's School for Adults. He then enrolled in Delta College's ESL program and now is taking classes in English and math. He hopes one day to practice traditional Chinese medicine in the United States in order to help those in need.



My father arranged the whole family to take a C-130 military plane from Da Nang city to Cam Ranh Bay airport, where many U.S. soldiers were stationed. When I sat in the plane with a seatbelt around my belly, I felt afraid of the huge sound of the engines. My mother calmed me and gave me a piece of chewing gum.

Born and raised in my beloved Vietnam, I was thirteen when my parents took me to my

grandparents' village—Dong Lac. On our way, I saw the green fields exposed to the warm sunlight with white storks flying by. In the field, I noticed people wearing conical hats and rolled-up trousers. But I couldn't understand what they were doing, some of them bent to the ground, moving their hands nimbly with small green plants. My mom explained that they were transplanting the rice seedlings. Afterwards, they would have to care for the plants by plucking out weeds and spreading manure through their paddy field. Three months later, these farmers would harvest their crops. I had never known how hard it was to cultivate rice for food.

Soon, the coach stopped at a crossroad. We got down and walked to the village. A mixture of special scents—straw, rice, flowers and mud—overwhelmed the air. Some villagers greeted us warmly. My parents cheerfully returned the greetings. For me, I was gazing at the cows that were grazing along the road with their long tails switching

back and forth. Some calves prowled around. Sometimes they searched for their moms' udders and sucked noisily. We stopped at the gate of a big house with a tiled roof. Two spotted dogs rushed out, barking loudly. My grandparents hugged me lovingly. I was too moved to say anything until my mom reminded me to greet them. My grandpa was quite old but still

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She continuously chewed something and sometimes spat the red liquid into a spittoon.

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healthy. His voice was sonorous. My grandma, on the contrary, was thin and gentle. She had blackened teeth.

She continuously chewed something and sometimes spat the red liquid into a spittoon. How surprised I was when she told me she chewed betel, mixed with areca-nut and slaked lime. This mixture, which was used for ages by our ancestors, had a spicy and acrid taste. My grandma said that the betel and areca were indispensable in traditional Vietnamese betrothals and weddings. Many relatives heard about our visit and came to talk to us. Our first meal in the rural village was very warm and familiar. In the evening twilight, my grandpa lit a gas lantern. There was no electricity in the village. That first night I had an indescribable feeling, hearing the plaintive harmony of chirping crickets and boisterous frogs.

A peaceful winding river fortified the paddy fields with tons of alluvium. At the river's banks, fruitful coconut trees reflected on the surface of the water. A flock of quacking ducks swam here and there, some of them diving and leaning over with their rear-ends sticking up. Several duckweeds drifted slowly with purple flowers.

At the edge of the village, clumps of bamboo swayed in the wind—a range of motionless mountains prominent on the horizon. What a poetic scene!

I explored the vast garden of my grandparents. My dad showed me mangoes, avocados, bananas, jackfruits, oranges, and lemons. Their branches were curved with fruits. Several bees were buzzing and gathering honey from flowers. A fragrant subtle smell was everywhere. I was delighted to pick some fruits and enjoy their fresh sweet taste. Many odd birds settled on the branches, where they had made their nests into strange shapes. I climbed up the trees and discovered many very young birds, featherless, calling for food from their moms.

My grandparents had livestock—bulls, cows, and goats. In addition, there were many cats, dogs, pigs, hens, cocks, and ducks. The bulls ploughed, the goats produced milk, the pigs provided meat, the hens laid eggs, the cocks announced the morning dawn, the cats caught mice, and the dogs patrolled the house. At first, I was afraid to approach the bulls and cows because they had pointed horns. However, I saw many children sitting on the backs of the bulls, feeding them along the country road; these animals then seemed gentle, not menacing as I had thought.

I had a chance to witness the villagers plowing their fields. A man steered two muddy bulls down the path, yelling special words to turn right, to turn left, and to stop. Many women stood in the mud, bent their bodies, and quickly put rice plants into the wet soil in straight lines. They did their work, regardless of the hot sunshine or cold rain. They used sharp sickles to reap ripe rice plants into small bunches. An aromatic scent of yellow

rice occupied my lungs. I breathed deeply the fresh air and shared the farmers' joy of harvesting after days of toil. Then, they shouldered these bunches home, ready to be trampled for the valuable rice kernels. The field of stubble remained with sparrows eating the dropped seedlings.

Our relatives showed special affections to my family. We rarely visited them since we lived in the city. But on this trip, I met my cousins, uncles, and aunts. They all were plain, honest, healthy farmers. Their knowledge about nature was admirable. They also had favorite outdoor hobbies. One day, my cousin and I went to fly a kite. He tied a small flute under it.

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**At first, I was afraid to approach the bulls and cows because they had pointed horns.**

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When the kite flew in the high sky, it made a series of special sounds that I had never heard before. He invited me to catch crickets in order to have a cricket fight, to capture cicadas, which sounded loudly in the trees. My cousin taught me to swim. At first, I was a little scared when I was in the water, but gradually I became daring. Of course, we stood in a shallow place by the river to make sure I was safe. He and I eagerly caught many fish. He wrapped some with clay and burnt them in a heap of flaming wood. After a while, he carefully took off the clay and we appreciated the savory taste of burnt fish. How excellent it was!

Absorbed in such activities, I forgot that the time of separation was coming. The summer had passed swiftly. It made me tough and sunburned. I seemed healthier, yet I felt extremely sad when I had to leave. I discerned a sacred feeling in my heart. I experienced a profound attachment to my native land. It penetrated through every cell of my body. My mom understood my whirling sensations and comforted me.





At the farewell, my grandparents were quite sad, and so were we. They told me to study hard and to return to visit them again. I knew they loved us very much. They gave us many gifts: glutinous rice, dried fruit, fish, and bamboo shoots. My cousin gave me a tiny buffalo made of clay and a cage with four birds inside. I kept thanking him, unwilling to leave. Eventually, he brought our luggage and walked with us to the coach station. I walked calmly, my heart sobbing. On the train back to Da Nang city, my whole family admired the blue sea with yellow beaches, the remote villages lying under forests of green bamboo,

and the ranges of blurred mountains in the far distance. All of them provoked in my soul lovely feelings for my country.

Indeed, the journey to my parents' village during my summer vacation when I was thirteen years old opened my mind and taught me many valuable lessons about rural life, about the life most of my ancestors had lived. Most importantly, it increased my love for my Vietnam—my beloved country, which I have now been apart from for a long time, my beloved country, which I desire to visit once again.

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Many women stood in the mud,  
bent their bodies, and quickly  
put rice plants into the wet soil in  
straight lines.

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# AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENT IN MY LIFE

By Abdul Goleima Juana

My uncle was yelling my nickname, “Gibao! Gibao! Where are you?” I came out from underneath the dining table and ran to him. He gave me a piggyback ride, and we left the house before the rebels could burn it down. We ran down the hallway and out the front door; but before we could run any further, we were stopped by a group of rebels carrying guns and machetes. “So, who should we kill first?” asked the commander, casually. Without thinking, my uncle dropped me and ran; the rebels chased him and I heard a couple of gunshots. I didn’t wait for them to come back. I ran off also, not knowing where I was going.

There was a white unfinished building nearby, so I ran inside. I found a

group of about fifty people crouching low in one room. I looked around at the scene of unknown faces; their images became blurry. It was like the tide rushing to meet the seashore—tears welled up in my eyes. I felt alone although I was surrounded by a multitude of people. I cried louder and louder; I cried for the sorrow I felt from abandonment, for my family who I thought I would never see again. The fear was now creeping in my stomach. Suddenly, a man asked, “Whose child is that crying?” Another man said, “Shut him up, or get him out of here before he blows our cover!” A hand protruded out of the masses and grabbed me. “He is my child,” said a familiar female voice. When I looked at the woman, I recognized my pre-school teacher. She was with her husband and her three-year-old son. She was feeding her son sugar. She gave me some. But before we could

exchange words, a man standing by the window yelled, “A group of rebels are heading in our direction. We have to evacuate now!” I exited the building with my teacher and her family.

As soon as we left, I heard people screaming in terror and when I looked back I saw that not everyone was able to make it out—the rebels had set the building on fire. The rebels were burning the people inside the building. The smell of the people burning alive was disgusting. I continued running with my teacher and her family.

Before this catastrophic incident, I never understood what war was

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Suddenly, a man asked,  
“Whose child is that crying?”

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because I had only experienced happy and peaceful

incidents, like playing hide-and-seek with my friends. I remember one time when I was in Sierra Leone. It was a beautiful sunny morning in February 1997. Just after eating breakfast, I was playing my Gameboy in my bedroom, and my mom entered the bedroom. “Gibao, put on some decent clothes. Your father is taking us to the beach.” I went to the closet and found a purple short sleeve T-shirt, a pair of grey Scooby-doo shorts, and a pair of flip-flops. Then, I took my soccer ball and I left my bedroom. I went in the kitchen for some snacks, and I saw my mom making some delicious sardine sandwiches for the trip. I grabbed some fried shrimp chips and dashed to the living room. My mom yelled, “No running in the house, Gibao!”

In the living room, my dad was sitting on the couch, drinking his tea, and reading a newspaper. I sat next to



Abdul is Gone but not Forgotten

Abdul Goleima Juana was born on January 12, 1994, in Freetown, Sierra Leone. He passed away on July 30, 2014, in Stockton, California. As the father of Abdul, I am proud to say something about him. Abdul was calm, caring, determined, humble and humorous. He had a readiness of heart and a teachable spirit. During his primary school years, he used to get up by 5 a.m. to revise his schoolwork, and by 7 a.m., he was on his way to school. There was not a single day that he was late for school. If he had an assignment due, he would not give anyone rest until he was finished.

After graduating from high school, Abdul enrolled at San Joaquin Delta College, where he was awarded with AFFIRM scholarships and where he placed on the Dean’s Honor Roll. Words cannot express my sorrow over the irreparable loss, nor can the passage of time take away the pain. My heart is deeply saddened by the death of Abdul. Just when I thought he had become a gentleman, he was snatched away from me, leaving a gap that only Allah (God) can fill.

No one would have thought that after America, Abdul would have no chance of going back to Africa to meet loved ones and friends. His dreams and ambitions have been cut short by death. His plans and hopes have been dashed away.

By Gonzalez Momoh Juana



him while I was eating the shrimp chips. My older sister came to the living room from her bedroom. My dad yelled out to my mom, “Hey, honey, are you done yet making those sandwiches? We have to get going because we don’t want to hit traffic!” My mom replied, “Yes, dear, I’m done.”

She came out of the kitchen carrying a brown basket, a big family-size umbrella, and dragging a small ice-chest. My dad helped her carry the basket. He put the basket, umbrella, and ice-chest in the trunk of his car. My dad and mom were in the front seat while my sister and I were in

the back seat. We left the house at 11:00 a.m. But we were still stuck in traffic for about

two hours. We arrived at the beach at 1:00 p.m. My dad, my sister, and I started playing soccer in the hot sand, while my mom was relaxing under the umbrella. It was about 101 degrees on that day. We played for two hours. Sweaty and thirsty, we joined my mom under the family-size umbrella. We ate the sardine sandwiches and drank some Kool-Aid from the ice-chest. Later, we swam in the Atlantic Ocean and then went home. That day was one of many happy moments in my childhood.

On Wednesday, January 6, 1999, a civil war broke out in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Six days before my 5th birthday. I remember that morning like it was just yesterday. The morning after the sleepover at my grandparents’ house on Wednesday, January 6, 1999, the rebels attacked my city. The memories of that early morning still stand vividly in my mind: I was sleeping in the boys’ quarters along with my cousins when a deafening sound woke me up; my grandparents were already up. A second later, I heard the sound again; I later learned that it was the sound of gunshots.

Then, I heard people screaming in terror. “The rebels are coming! The rebels are coming! Run for your lives!”

Everyone dispersed like mice seeking refuge. My grandparents and cousins ran off without me. Everyone thought that I had left with another family member. But I was left alone and my city was under attack. Everyone was screaming and running out of their homes with some of their belongings on their heads. This frightened me, so I put on my shoes and hid underneath our dining table. Moments later, luckily for me my uncle came to the house looking for me.

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**On Wednesday, January 6, 1999, a civil war broke out in Freetown, Sierra Leone.**

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My teacher, her family, and I ran over ten miles, moving from one

building or house to another seeking refuge. We started walking on a paved road, and I realized I had lost my shoes. It was about 110 degrees that day, and I was walking bare-footed on the hot paved road with my teacher and her family. My teacher was carrying some of her belongings on her head with her son on her back, and her husband was carrying a big backpack and two suitcases in his hands, while I was burning the soles of my feet on the hot pavement. I saw a lot of burned vehicles. I saw dead bodies that were decapitated. We walked and ran for about three days while eating sugar and seeking refuge, until we arrived at a highly secured neighborhood where my teacher’s parents lived. For a moment, I was happy because I was safe. When we arrived at their house, they offered us water and a cooked meal—bulgur and pumpkin soup. I ate like I hadn’t eaten anything in years. I stayed with my teacher and her family for two weeks. During that time, she was unable to locate my family.

I was beginning to give up hope of ever being found. But one day while

playing in the backyard, I saw my dad coming from a distance. I didn't wait for him to get near. I ran to hug him, screaming, "Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!" He opened his arms wide to embrace me. "My son! My son! My son!" We hugged each other with tears running down our cheeks. I took him inside the house to introduce him to my pre-school teacher. "Dad, this is my pre-school teacher, Hawanatu, who saved my life and is taking care of me." My dad shook her hand and said, "It is nice to meet you. Thank you for

saving my son's life and taking care of him." My teacher said it was nothing. I hugged my pre-school teacher and her parents. I told them good-bye and I left the house with my dad.

We walked about three blocks down the street, and then I saw my mom, my grandparents, and other relatives. I ran to meet them and they all gathered around me. That day was the best day of my life, for I was reunited with my family.



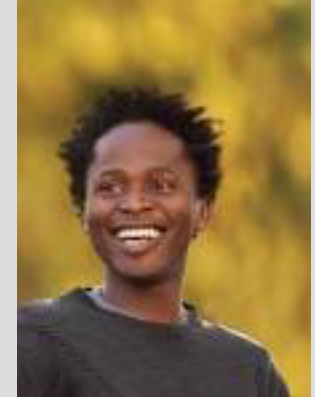
## Postscript

*By Gonzalez Momoh Juana*

*I wish to express my thanks to Auntie Hawanatu and her family for saving the life of my five-year-old child when all were running to save their own lives. When we arrived at home, everyone was very happy to see Abdul alive after ten terrible and unpredictable days.*

*The Sierra Leone civil war, which lasted for ten years, resulted in massive brutality. The rebels acted as if they weren't human beings. They didn't hesitate to inflict everlasting pain and punishment on civilians by forcing them to witness the killings of family members and by mercilessly chopping off the hands, arms, and legs of these civilians.*

*Within a ten-year period, the rebels left behind over five thousand dead, hundreds of amputees, and the devastated city of Freetown. The political injustice that prevailed in Sierra Leone made people move into the jungles and become guerilla fighters who started destroying the country from the farthest east to the west, from March 23, 1991, to January 22, 1999.*



# Coming Out

By Brianna Webb



Brianna Webb sates, “I had a rather unconventional childhood. Coming from a split family, I needed an outlet, and writing was it.” She decided to pursue writing and will be majoring in English at UC Davis in the fall. She is excited to see what the future holds.



My life, up until this point, has been a lie. I tried to fight it, I tried to hide, but this was something that was inherent in me, something that I was born with. Everyone says, “Oh, it’s a choice” or “She’ll grow out of it; you just have to give her some time,” but I am living proof that both of these statements aren’t true.

I had finally begun to understand what I am. After years of just trying to avoid it altogether, I decided it was time to start being honest with not only myself, but with my friends and family as well. I knew that before I opened up to others, I needed to cope with this for myself, but it was

just so difficult. And now, standing in front of my bedroom mirror with a stranger looking back at me posing a confused stare, I was at a loss. Since I was a little girl, it has been engrained in both my siblings and me that appearances were important. What other people thought of you really did matter, and your status was something that should not be taken for granted. Growing up with a childhood of being so concerned with how I appeared to others, I really began to resent having to put up such facades. Wearing the “proper” masks just to please others was exhausting, and it got me to thinking, why should I care what anyone thinks, as long as I’m happy with myself?

Originally, I just pretended it wasn’t there. “No, that’s not me, that’s not who I am” was a thought that crossed my mind quite frequently. Next came the anger; I could literally be ANYTHING in the world, love

anything I wanted. Why did it have to be this? Eventually, I just started telling myself that if I could make the right sacrifices, such as happiness and truth to myself, I could end up back on the “proper” path. It was easy enough for the Aztecs, and it seemed my sacrifice was just a small price to pay. After realizing the only way to change my fate was to sacrifice my happiness, I became very depressed. A life without passion was definitely not something that I had envisioned

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And now, standing in front of my bedroom mirror with a stranger looking back at me posing a confused stare, I was at a loss.

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for myself. The thought consumed me, both physically and emotionally; it became a darkness that I couldn’t seem to bring to light. After all of the denial, the anger, the bargaining, and the depression passed, I decided the only way to be truly happy was to follow my bliss, accept who I am, embrace my passions, and thrive in my lifestyle. I knew no one would accept me until I had truly accepted myself, and with my newfound acceptance, I gained the courage to come out to my parents.

The amount of time I spent in front of my mirror trying to recognize my newly-discovered self was a lot more than I would be comfortable admitting. The anticipation of revealing myself drove me crazy. One of my worst traits has always been overthinking, and in this particular circumstance it was eating me alive. In my head, as well as aloud, I practiced different situations of how the conversation with my parents could go. It took me a while, but eventually I gained the courage to face them.

I heard the front door close, and

with that I left my room to head downstairs. With every downward step my anticipation built up, so much so that when I reached the final step I thought I might explode. My parents had just decided to pick up a pizza for dinner, since they were both so exhausted from having such a long day at work. As my mom took off her blazer and my dad loosened his tie, I knew I had no choice but to be honest. Growing up in a family of business people, I had spent countless days witnessing the aftermath of a hard and unhappy day at work. My mom was a supervisor, and my dad a banker, so both of them had stressful days where all they wanted was to come home and go to sleep. Early on in my childhood, I decided that I didn't want my life to be a tedious chore as my parents' appeared to be. I wanted to live a life of happiness and passion, which solidified why I needed to do this.

As effortless as our Monday pizza night seemed, I knew the news I was about to break would be difficult for my parents to swallow. After 30 minutes of random dinner conversation and with my anticipation building more and more, I finally spoke up and said, "Guys, I have something that I really need to talk to you about."

The curiosity and concern that flashed across their faces did nothing but further my anxiety.

"I know this is untraditional, and probably not what you envisioned for me, but I'm tired of hiding and it's time to be honest. I'm...going to major in English."

As soon as the words left my mouth, the dining room was dead silent. Although the silence was miserable while it lasted, it was what I wished for once the interrogation began.

"Oh, and just how exactly are you planning on supporting yourself? You know we can't pay for everything for your entire life."

"What do you even do with a degree in English?"

As I was bombarded with questions, I had an epiphany. All of these things that my parents were asking me were completely irrelevant. Their main focus was money and how my decision would reflect on them as parents, and how it would look to others, but my main focus was happiness. Money and status were important to my parents. The proper sacrifice in their eyes was to cut off happiness, only to have money pour out from the wounds. This is where my parents and I clashed. In my

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In my head, as well as aloud, I practiced different situations of how the conversation with my parents could go.

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opinion, happiness is the most important part of anyone's life, and if you're not doing what makes you happy, then everything else is for nothing. Something that I realized through this experience was as hard

as you try to fight something, the more you succumb to it. I tried to deny my passion, but as hard as I fought, the more I truly wanted this for myself. I may not have all of the answers right now, I may end up in a tiny apartment, living off of Top Ramen and "mac and cheese," but I'm going to be happy as hell doing it.

Being true to yourself is the most important thing you can do. Acting based solely for the purpose of pleasing others does not lead to true happiness. Many don't realize this, but happiness is important. Act for the purpose of creating your own happiness, and everything else will fall into place. As hard as it was, I am now officially out of the closet, a declared English major, pen in hand, ready to conquer the world.





Candy Lin is a seventeen-year-old attending Benjamin Holt Academy. She has lived in Stockton her entire life. She is currently a high school senior who is excited for college but whose college destination is still unknown. Her plan is to have a minor in literature or English along with majoring in biology. Her long-term goal is to become an optometrist, but she has always had a very strong passion for art. As she says, “I draw and create art in my free time, have a heavy appreciation for film and TV, and reading, so I want to have a healthy balance of art and science in my life. I have very varied and eclectic tastes, so I hope to both bring this passion to others and be able to further my interests.” In addition to reading and watching films and shows, she enjoys playing the piano and jogging. Being published in *Delta Winds* will be the first time she will appear in print. “I am excited about this accomplishment! It’ll also be the first time any writing piece of mine will receive an audience aside from an English teacher, so I no longer completely feel like a secret, unread, underground writer.”

# My Grandmother Danced Barefoot to Korean Music

By Candy Lin

My grandmother danced barefoot to traditional Korean trot music. She spoon-fed me rice soup, making sure she blew the heat out before giving me a taste. The sweaters she knit for my two sisters and me were intricate, their patterns colorful and geometric and so carefully made that, even after her death, and long past our days of wearing them, my mother would refuse to donate or throw them away. My grandmother carried with her a confidence founded in an early marriage and a strong-willed character. With experienced fingers, she played the piano to accompany her voice, which sang aching, expressive songs in the foreign sound of the Korean language. She watched black-and-white classic American movies until she fell asleep, yelled at dogs when they jumped on her legs, and placed her false teeth in a pink cup half-filled with water on her headboard shelf.

Very few of the guests at her funeral knew any of this. Very few of the guests knew anything past the superficial facts of the old woman lying cold and stale and preserved to be presentable inside the coffin. They knew they were sad, and they knew she was dead, but they didn’t know. I was only eleven then. I’d had my grandmother for eleven years, and almost half of those years I’m not sure about. I’m not sure if I truly recall or only believe I do because I’ve seen photographs. But some particular stories are too tender to forget.

The summer heat was stifling. On a

straw rug, my sisters and I lay on our backs. Four big, red birds were sewn into the yellow straw, and the edges of the rug were curled and worn from use. Above us was the ceiling fan that we willed to go faster because the heat was nearly unbearable, and throughout the entire house, trot music was blaring. The singer’s nasally voice made us squirm, and the old-fashioned style made us scrunch our faces and giggle. When my grandma came out of her room swaying along to the music, we giggled even harder. She really did love the music, but more than that, she loved to hear us laugh, so she swung her arms and moved her feet in exaggerated steps, joining us on the rug. We watched her strong, pale feet crinkle the straw rug. We resisted the temptation to dance with her, afraid we would break the magic of her silly solo dance, which she did with her eyes closed and a smile on her face. On the really hot days, like this one, she would always dance barefoot.

My grandma’s window faced the outside street, so with my forefinger and thumb, I was able to split open the thin aluminum blinds to look for my parents, but they weren’t outside. There was nothing but the blank midnight sky and an empty street illuminated orange by the streetlights. I felt like crying because I thought my parents had left me to suffer the boredom of spending the night with my grandma. My toes curled from the cold, so I turned back with reluctance after she called for me. When I went to her bed and lifted the thick blanket to tuck myself in, then I really started

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They knew they  
were sad, and they  
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but they didn’t  
know.

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crying. My grandma asked me what the matter was, but between the suffocating heat of her embrace and my tearful hiccupping, I couldn't tell her that I didn't want to spend the night watching colorless old movies and sleeping in the same bed as a woman who smelled like old laundry.

The only light in the room came from the television, and the only light that came from the television came in slight variations of white. I never said a word, but my grandma must have sensed my disappointment because she got out of bed and told me to follow her into the kitchen. She sat me down on the wooden kitchen chair, where I waited for twenty minutes and listened to the sizzles and pops of

my grandmother's cooking. There are things that fill my memory in order to make it real again and to allow this memory to unfold as a story—how long I waited for the

food, how dismal the street looked to me that night—but then there are other things that I just can't invent or bring back. I don't recall everything she cooked, I don't remember whether she hummed as she shuffled around in the kitchen, and I don't know if there were a few sniffles still in me as I sat there as gloomy as a five-year-old could get. I don't remember those details at all. What I do remember, though, was the warmth of the food she brought out to me on a tray.

It was the same tray we would use for her once she grew too weak to feed herself. But I was at the inexperienced age of five then. I didn't even understand that death and sickness could touch anyone I loved. I was five, and my grandma was healthy. In fact, she was glowing from the excitement of letting me sample her food. She was near radiant. I remember her settling on the chair she pulled out across

from me, and how delicately she blew across the surface of the soup so that it was the perfect temperature once she fed it to me. I was five and petulant, and now I'm seventeen and wistful, wishing that I hadn't let on that I didn't want to spend the night with her, but feeling lucky that it granted me a fond memory of a midnight snack.

I feel lucky because the scenes I remember the most after the happy ones were not tender at all. They were relentless and heavy and sobering—relentless in how these memories treated my mom, heavy in our chests when we stand in front of my grandmother's gravestone, and sobering in the way her death affected

us.

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**I didn't want to spend the night watching colorless old movies and sleeping in the same bed as a woman who smelled like old laundry.**

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She had Type 2 diabetes. She never ate well, and she didn't take care of her body. It landed her in a nursing home, and then it brought her to

a hospital bed and kept her there. We didn't visit that hospital room often (I don't think my mom liked the idea of having us witness our grandma's slow death), but it remains as stark and glaring a memory as the hospital room itself. Everything in there was white. The starched sheets, the complicated oxygen machine, the tile floor—it was all white. My grandmother, too, pale under the thin covers, was so sickly white she was almost transparent. Medical tape stuck with a cruel adhesive hold on her wrinkled hands, and a tube stuck unnaturally out of her mouth. I don't think she was ever lucid enough to understand what was going on or where she was because her eyes were constantly glassy, so there was nothing to do but marvel at the sterile, white floor as the ventilator hissed beside us.

At the funeral, where we wore all black, my family and I sat in our





own designated section of the room. There was snot on my sleeves and on the collar of my jacket because I was afraid to ask for tissue. My memory is spotty here too, but this memory holds no sequence. I don't know where it fits, just that it's seared into my collection of memories. My grandmother had high cheekbones, silver hair, even skin, and a full face. Her eyes were almond-shaped, her chin was strong, and dimples flashed whenever she smiled or yelled. The old woman in the coffin wasn't her. The face of that woman was warped, her hair was limp, and half her face was sunken. It scared me, and when I went alone to the restroom afterwards to wash my face, I did it as quickly as

I could because I was afraid she'd pop up behind a bathroom stall or show up in the reflection of the bathroom mirror. I was eleven then, and old enough to feel guilty about my fear, but I felt it all the same.

These things are hard to talk about, and there are things that are even harder to think about—like how my mom ran sobbing to the casket as it was being lowered into the ground, the number of graduations my grandmother missed, and the new grandchild she would never help raise—but she did help raise my sisters and me. She was a part of our lives since we were babies, and despite her death, that's how she remains.

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Her eyes were almond-shaped, her chin was strong, and dimples flashed whenever she smiled or yelled.

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# How I Met My Mother

By Tenille Packer

“You must be Tenille. You look just like me.” Those were the first words I heard when I stepped off the airplane in Columbus, Ohio, on a warm summer day in July. I was fifteen years old, and a lively teenager who had felt abandoned her whole life. I had entered the terminal and scanned the immediate area, not exactly sure whom I was looking for, when I heard her voice. It was the woman who gave birth to me—not my mother. I didn’t really have one of those. I hesitantly gave her a smile. “Yup, that’s me.” This is how my relationship with a complete stranger began.

Her name is Allison Morant. She left me, my older brother, and my older sister for my grandparents to raise when I was just six weeks old.

Actually, my grandma found me in a dresser drawer, and a highway patrol officer brought my brother and sister home from playing out by the highway when my dad was at work and my mom was who knows where. She left soon after that incident, and that’s about all I could remember of her until that nerve-wracking day at the airport when I was fifteen. The only memory I had of her before then was when I was about four years old. She told me that she used to come to visit us until I was five. I thought she had come to visit when she was pregnant. And when I tried to sit on her lap, she pushed me off and said her belly was too big for me to fit on her lap. I don’t really remember her from the waist up. But I had always thought this was a true recollection. When I asked her about it, though, she said that she never came to visit me when she was pregnant. I guess I subconsciously fabricated my only childhood memory of her.

When I went at age fifteen to visit Allison that summer, I ended up staying with her for a year. That year was quite eventful. She was a raging alcoholic who was almost never home. My nine-year-old stepsister was basically trying to raise herself. Allison would come home briefly, either drunk or hung-over, so she would give me the keys to her car and tell me to drive my little stepsister to her elementary school. I didn’t have a driver’s license or even a permit. I was happy to do it, though, because I was a teenager with freedom, and at first I cherished the adult role I was prematurely being handed—until I realized the gravity of the situation I had fallen into.

Allison soon told me about the many

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**She was a raging alcoholic who was almost never home.**

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poor decisions she had made throughout her life. Turning to prostitution in order to support her drug

habit was one of them. She told me that she needed money and became creative in ways to make more of it, by robbing her “johns.” In San Francisco she specialized in robbing wealthy Japanese businessmen. She would take them into a hotel room and pretend to put the “Do Not Disturb” sign on the door, but would block the handle latch so it would stay unlocked for her partner to come in and rob the client while my mom would be in the bathroom with him. After Allison was finished with her client, she would quickly leave the hotel room and meet with her partner in crime to count their take and celebrate. I am not sure why she ever wanted to tell me these things, let alone right after I had just met her. I guess she wanted me to get to know what adventures I had missed out on in her life. I am glad I missed those particular adventures.



Tenille Packer is a communications major with a passion for traveling the world and learning about new cultures. She has been to seventeen different countries so far and has lived in Ohio, Texas, Nicaragua and throughout California. She is a single mother of two boys, and her educational goal is to attend Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to obtain a Bachelor’s degree.



Even though we went through some traumatic experiences, Allison and I had some good times together as well. When I turned sixteen, she took me with her to a travel agency to book a trip to Chicago for the “Taste of Chicago Fourth of July Festival.” That was the first time I had been to a travel agency, which later fueled a career interest for me, and also the first time I had been on a vacation. It was a blast! As mother and daughter, we needed that experience together. Everyone thought we were sisters. We had a spectacular view from our hotel; we went on a dinner cruise on Lake Michigan. It was the best memory I have of Allison. That trip changed my life. I found a new passion for traveling, and a few years later I went to a travel academy and became a travel agent. Because of Allison, my passion for traveling the world grew, and I have now been to seventeen countries so far, including Nicaragua for a year and Costa Rica and Panama, all of which were wonderful educational experiences for me.

Unfortunately, the positive experiences with Allison then were few and far between, and I spent only that one year living with her. I left Ohio very angry with Allison. I flew back to California to live with my grandma and siblings again. At Christmas, Allison came to California and got so drunk that she told me she had wanted to abort me but my dad wouldn’t let her. That night, she was so obnoxious and abusive in her drunken rage that she tried to kick my pregnant older sister in the stomach. After that, I stayed away from her as much as possible until I could leave. I stayed with friends whenever I could. Once, after I was gone for about ten days straight, I came home and all she said was “There you are. I was about to put your face on a milk carton.” I couldn’t

believe that was all she had to say.

Until I became a mother of two little boys, I could not fathom how Allison could do the things that she did. When I was going through my divorce, I had a moment of weakness when I thought that maybe I should leave my kids with their dad, that maybe they were better off without me. That is when I finally understood why Allison left me. It is extremely difficult to be a single parent, or a married one, for that matter. I am similar to Allison in the way that we are both the life of

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**That night, she was so obnoxious and abusive in her drunken rage that she tried to kick my pregnant older sister in the stomach.**

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the party when we go out, and we are pretty funny and can make friends very easily. When I realized that she left us kids to go out and party and live

a life free of responsibility, I actually felt empathy instead of anger towards her. I have had those exact longings. There are many times when I have said life would be so much easier if I didn’t have kids. But the difference is that I would never do what she did. No party is more important than giving my children a good life and a good upbringing. Allison left us for an outrageous life of drugs, alcohol, and prostitution. She was so wrapped up in her own destructive habits that she wouldn’t even notice if one of her children were gone. That I could never do to my kids.

When I was back in California living with my grandma, I got a letter from Allison saying that she had gone to rehab, and she apologized for all the hurt she had caused me. I felt like it was a robotic, rehearsed exercise, and I ended up throwing the letter away. I tried to avoid contact with her for a few years, until I got married and was in an abusive relationship, and I knew I needed to leave the unhealthy situation. Of all people, Allison ended up being my shoulder to cry on when push came to shove in my marriage.

She told me about her past experience with abusive men and how it never got better, it only got worse, and that I needed to do what was best for my family. She told me that since I had been through so much adversity in my childhood, I deserved to have a happy adulthood. She said that my children deserved a happy childhood as well. Those words convinced me that she was right, and I have taken her advice and have been happier than ever because of her.

I am thankful to report that Allison is happier than ever before, too. She has been clean and sober

for a few years now, and we have built a bond that I cherish. She is raising three of my sister's kids, and I tease her, saying she is finally "paying her dues." When I go back to Ohio to see her, my favorite time to visit is during fall foliage. She drives me around the back roads and laughs while I cry at how beautiful the trees and covered bridges are. At her home we watch Jeopardy together, and she is always impressed with how much random information I know. It is a serious battle of wits. She is very intelligent for someone who never received a college education. Since we both sew, we do crafts together. Through these

and other shared experiences, I've discovered many connections with her. It is amazing how our senses of humor are exactly alike, and we even have similar mannerisms, even though I did not grow up around her. We are both extroverts and have a passion for sticking up for the underdog. I have seen her literally give the shirt off her back to a friend in need, and she will always give the benefit of the doubt to those who have done wrong in their lives. Perhaps because of her own many false steps, she will always give

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**"There you are. I was about to put your face on a milk carton."**

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someone a second chance, and I, too, believe that everyone deserves a second chance—including

her. My kids have yet to meet her. I can't wait until the day they can finally get to know their grandma, now that she is someone worth knowing.

Our relationship is not perfect, but at least I am able to call her and talk to her about things that only she can understand. There is nothing that I have been through that she hasn't been through. Allison is a new and improved version of herself since she has been sober. I commend her for letting go of her old habits and making better decisions in her life. I may not have grown up with a mother, but it is comforting to say that I have one now.



# Meeting John Doe

By Kayla King

Kayla King, 19, is currently attending San Joaquin Delta College and plans on transferring to UCLA. While she has always been fond of writing, her real passion is in the visual arts. She is grateful for the support and encouragement of Dr. Phil Hutcheon, as he is the one who convinced her to submit her pieces to *Delta Winds*.



I never had the chance to be “daddy’s little girl.” I was the product of a one night stand after a work party that only my mother chose to take accountability for. My father, six years younger than my mother, thought he was too young to raise a child and, frankly, didn’t want to. So my mom took on full custody and cut him loose from having any responsibility. She got a baby, he got his freedom, and I got the highly coveted title of “bastard.”

My mom didn’t talk about my father until I asked. I was five or six, and it

was the night before Father’s Day. Our arts and crafts project that day had been to make a picture frame out of popsicle sticks to give to our dads as a gift. I remember being confused by the project and asking one of the day care providers: “What do I make if I don’t have a dad?” She gave my popsicle sticks to another little girl, replaced them with crayons and paper, and told me I should draw my mom a picture instead. So I did.

On the way home, I asked my mother about my father for the first time. She gave me watered-down details and tried her best to skim over the fact that it was his choice not to be in my life. But once I knew he actually existed, I was determined to meet him. Everyone had always told me that I was a great kid, so why wouldn’t he want to meet me? I begged her to call him and invite him over to play Barbies or whatever dads liked to play. She told me not to get my hopes up.

A few weeks later she called him and invited him to a picnic in our backyard

(my idea), and to her surprise, he accepted the invitation. I was finally going to have someone to make popsicle stick picture frames for. I picked out a dress for the picnic and spent hours rearranging the toys in my room. It all had to be perfect. But on the morning of what would be our first meeting, my mom answered the phone, and I saw the expression on her face change: He wasn’t coming. She did her best to console me, but I was

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**She got a baby, he got his freedom, and I got the highly coveted title of “bastard.”**

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crushed. I spent the rest of my childhood haunted by that day and the question it raised: “Why was I not worth his time?”

As I got older, the feelings of grief I had towards my father transformed into bitterness. I hated him, but I was also very curious about who he was. He still worked at the same UPS facility as my mother, and she would overhear conversations he had about his life and family. She gave me as much information as I asked for, and I asked for a lot. But the more I heard, the worse I felt. He liked to golf. He got married to a dental hygienist a few years after I was born. He had a son named Tyler, who didn’t know I existed. The images I conjured up of his happy, suburban life swirled around my mind like a cyclone. He had claimed to not be ready to be a father, but there he was coaching Little League every weekend. I promised myself that one day I would tell him how wrong he was to have ignored my existence, and show him that he had missed out on a great kid.

I got my chance the summer before my freshman year of high school. My mom told me that there was going to be a company picnic and that there

was a good chance my father and half-brother would be there. She told me that I didn't have to go if the thought of seeing him made me uncomfortable, but I was determined to go and finally give him a piece of my mind. I made a list of everything that I wanted to say to him and spent a week picking out an outfit that made me feel as mature and "put-together" as possible.

The morning of the picnic, I was a nervous wreck. Throughout the car ride over to the public

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## The morning of the picnic, I was a nervous wreck.

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park, I hyperventilated. As I helped my mom carry a cooler full of drinks, I struggled to compose myself. But he wasn't there. Hours passed and still no action. I started to calm down. Maybe he had flaked once again? I relaxed and let my mom lead me around the park and introduce me to her coworkers. I smiled as they commented on how tall I had gotten and how my mom had told them such good things!

But then my mother said those fateful words: "There he is." And there he was. In the flesh, ladies and gentlemen, The Invisible Man! My heart began beating in slow motion, and my vision became blurry. My hands shook and every cell in my body was telling me to run away, but I stayed. And I watched from somewhere outside of my own consciousness as my mother introduced this stranger to me as "my

coworker John and his son Tyler." Everything I had planned to say, every ounce of strength I thought I had, vanished in less

than a moment. "Nice to meet you," I stammered, avoiding his gaze. This was the moment I had waited my whole life for, and all I could do was stare at my shoes and attempt to fight back the tears that had begun boiling beneath my eyelids. I told my mom that I was going to the park bathroom, and turned to walk away. But before I was out of earshot, and after I began to feel that familiar ache in my heart, I heard him remark, "I guess she didn't have much to say."



# We Were Just Doing Our Jobs, Sir



Jonathan Bethards was born in Lodi, California, but raised in Stockton. He graduated from Lincoln High School in Stockton in 1996. He went to Delta after graduation but as he states, “I was burned out on education so I went to a vocational school of sorts and got my EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) certificate/license and was hired on with a small ambulance company.” He worked on a 911 ambulance in Stockton (mostly downtown and northwest) in 1999 until he was hurt on the job in 2003. He came back to Delta College when his workers compensation case was settled to start his reeducation in the fall of 2013. “I struggled to adapt at first but now maintain a GPA of 3.23. I haven’t decided on a major yet, trying to find a career that I can do physically and won’t crush my soul (haha). I’m a big-time sports fan—Raiders, A’s and Lakers . . . also big time into the Thunder and Ports and go to the games a lot.” In his free time he enjoys hiking, hunting, fishing, and photography with his family, his girlfriend Evan, and his springer spaniel Budd. “I owe my current success at Delta to the great staff, especially Mr. Powell and Dr. Hutcheon of the English Department and Señora Ciccarelli—a superb Spanish teacher. I never really enjoyed writing, but love to read and I believe this has helped immensely with my writing skills.”

The man’s family stood around us in a circle; I could feel their eyes on us as we worked feverishly under the blazing afternoon sun. This isn’t going to work, I thought to myself. I glanced over at my partner, Oscar, and I could tell he was thinking the same thing. We didn’t have much time left until we had to call it, but neither of us was letting up yet. This was definitely not how I saw my first shift back from vacation going.

My time as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) on a 911 ambulance may have lasted for only five years, but they were very interesting years. I will freely admit that a majority of our shifts were spent just hanging out at quarters; but some days we would just get slammed, and this was looking like one of those days.

After an afternoon full of the usual calls, mainly non-life threatening, and with the temperature soaring in the low 100’s, Oscar and I were ready for a short nap in the cool confines of our quarters. We were a few blocks away from our air-conditioned station when we heard exactly what we didn’t want to hear: “Unit 92, are you clear for a code 3 call?” I cringed as I picked up the microphone from the radio and responded, “Unit 92 is clear and available.” Dispatch proceeded to have my unit and Stockton Fire Engine 6 sent out to a “man down” call in the middle of the street. I told Dispatch we were en route and gunned the engine as Oscar flipped the sirens and lights on. Code 3 driving isn’t nearly as fun as it may look; legally we’re

only supposed to go 15 mph over the limit. We have to watch out for all the numbskulls and space cadets on the road as we navigate our way to the call.

We reached the scene at about the same time as the SFD; I quickly ran around the back of the rig and threw the monitor, airway bag, and our main bag on the gurney. I yanked the gurney out of the rig and made my way through a large group of people standing around a man lying in the street. I

...but some days we would just get slammed, and this was looking like one of those days.

looked down at my partner, who had been assessing the patient, and read his body language and hand signals. This was not going to be an easy call. The man, who was in his late 50’s and had an extensive medical history, was non-responsive and had no discernable pulse. As I hooked him up to the monitor, we could all see why he was non-responsive; he was in respiratory arrest and ventricular fibrillation. In other words, this man was in a world of hurt.

My partner and the fire medic were getting ready to deploy the defibrillation paddles and the fire EMT was doing chest compressions as I readied an IV setup and prepared the epinephrine; I had been in this situation before and knew we would need these at a minimum. Upon seeing my partner apply gel to the paddles and the man’s chest, a woman became hysterical. The fire captain was putting forth a valiant effort to restrain her but was failing. The rest of the family started to become increasingly confrontational and angry. “Why the

hell aren't you doing anything?" I heard from behind me. "Get off your asses and FIX him or...or so help me I'll SUE you," screamed the woman, who was now engaged in some serious hand fighting with the captain. Now, clearly we were trying to help the patient, but when panic and love combine, a situation can change from stressful to violent in an instant.

The fire medic got the IV in on the first try and was now trying to get an airway into the lungs. This was not an easy job as he had to keep stopping to clear the patient while Oscar defibrillated him, push another round of epinephrine into the IV, or keep the patient's increasingly agitated family members back so we could do our job. On his third attempt, the medic got an airway, and almost simultaneously we heard an unmistakable sound. It was the sweetest sound I think that I had ever heard. It was the slow but steady beeping of the patient's heart, represented by a beautiful normal sinus rhythm on our monitor.

Oscar and I, sweat pouring down our faces, exchanged a quick smile and then looked over at the fire crew. They were equally soaked in sweat and were smiling even wider than we were.

"Why did you stop?" screamed the woman. "Why are you all smiling like a bunch of assholes? MY HUSBAND IS DYING!" The fire captain had finally had enough and gripped the woman by her fleshy arms. "Ma'am! Your husband isn't dying: we got him back!" That was it for the woman and her family; they all broke down and cried and started thanking us in between sobs.

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**"Get off your asses and  
FIX him or...or so help  
me I'll SUE you,"**

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The patient, though not out of the woods, was doing far better

than he was when we arrived on the scene; after all, he was breathing on his own and his heart, though slow, was beating on its own. I couldn't believe it; this was the first patient we'd revived who hadn't immediately crashed again. As we loaded him into the rig for transport to Saint Joseph's, he opened his eyes and tried to say something. "Sir," I said, "don't try to talk. You have a tube down your throat. You're going to be okay, and your family is going to meet us at the emergency room." Tears started to roll down the man's cheeks, and he looked me right in the eye. I could tell that he was trying to thank me. "You're welcome," I said as I choked back tears of my own and put my hand over his: "We were just doing our jobs, sir."



# The Big Red Pickup

By Marla Jenkins

Marla Jenkins is my pseudonym; I am a re-entry student, born in Mexico, but raised in Chicago. I have resided in Stockton since 1997. I am a proud mother of two children. My son is a junior at UC Davis and my daughter, a senior at Bear Creek High School, plans to attend UOP. I am now focusing on my own education, with plans to pursue my childhood dream of becoming a Registered Nurse. I am a devoted student and determined to excel in any educational area I am exposed to. I wrote this narrative essay in my English 1A class and shared it with my classmates in order to raise awareness about domestic violence. My professor, Dr. Phil Hutcheon, played an important role in my academic success, because he believed in me. I now realize that we all have potential, but sometimes we need a word of encouragement. I am thankful because Dr. Hutcheon guided and enhanced my writing skills.



April 11, 2012, was the day that I promised myself that I wasn't coming back to my husband. I honestly want to remember every detail of that episode, for it will give me the strength to face whatever challenges lie ahead for me. Oscar and I had been arguing throughout the terrible night before. His behavior had turned scary, and I feared for my safety, so I decided to stay outside in the front yard overnight so that he couldn't hurt me.

I remember being extremely cold and scared. Oscar continued his emotional and verbal abuse toward me throughout the whole night. The next morning I told him that we were finished, and he agreed. He added, "Leave now. I don't want to see you in my house anymore." I said, "Okay. I'm leaving as soon as I shower and gather my personal belongings." Oscar said, "No, leave now!" It seemed as if he was possessed because his character was worse than ever.

I reached for my car key, but he said, "No, you're not taking the car. Just get out now." The only things he allowed me to take were my cell phone and my purse. He literally threw me out of the house.

I felt close to having a panic attack. My heart rate was elevated. I had major palpitations, and my body was trembling nonstop. I began walking toward the main street. I had a long walk ahead of me to reach a safe place. When I turned to look back, I saw something that made my heart race even faster: Oscar was chasing me in his big red pickup. When he caught up with me, he insulted and threatened me. I told him I would call the police. He said, "Go ahead. By the time they get here, you're dead."

It seemed as if he was leaving, but then he began driving straight toward me. I heard the engine accelerating, and I saw the big red pickup approaching me. Instinctively, I jumped into some bushes to avoid his running me over. Suddenly, the street seemed endless, with no help in sight. I was approaching a storage unit area where no one was around. I crossed the street to see if that would keep him from chasing me. He continued riding alongside me saying that if he wanted to, he could finish me right then. Finally, a man stopped in the middle of the street and asked, "M'am, are you okay? Do you need help?" I instantly said, "Yes, please help me." I approached this total stranger's car and with no hesitation got in.

This man called the police and waited with me until a squad car arrived.

An officer took me to a safe place and asked if I wanted to press charges. The officer explained that even if I didn't want to press charges, he still needed to write an incident report. I was granted a temporary restraining order against Oscar. But, ultimately, the officer determined that it was necessary to take Oscar into custody, and he was arrested for attempted murder.

When you say "I do" to someone, on the happiest day of your life, you never imagine that your spouse could someday turn into a monster who will try to kill you. The terror I experienced when I saw that big red pickup coming straight toward me will stay in my mind forever. There are days when I still feel broken. But overall I strive to live my life fully and worry free. I take every opportunity to share my experience with others, especially other abused women, to help them find the courage to change their lives.

**He said, "Go ahead. By the time they get here, you're dead."**



# An Analysis of the Chorus in *Henry V*

By Alex Chellsen

In *Henry V*, William Shakespeare utilizes the character of the Chorus to transcend the limitations of the Elizabethan stage and challenge the audience's imagination. The Chorus praises King Henry V and his motivations for waging war with France through the application of colorful commentary. Two of the most common literary techniques that the Chorus uses are metaphor and wordplay, which were very important to Elizabethan theatergoers for several reasons.

The Chorus applies metaphor in several passages throughout the play to reveal details about King Henry's character. In the prologue to Act 2, the Chorus reveals that many English men are preparing for war by "Following the mirror of all Christian kings" (2.6). The Chorus could be

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**The Chorus makes use of wordplay to engage the audience and enhance interest in certain situations throughout the play.**

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saying that King Henry represents a mirror that reflects England's values, and the country's citizens see themselves in King Henry's image. In the prologue to Act 4, King Henry visits some of the soldiers at the English campsite in an attempt to elevate their heavy hearts; the Chorus states, "With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty; / That every wretch, pining and pale before, / Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks. / A largess universal, like the sun, / His liberal eye doth give to everyone, / Thawing cold fear, that mean and gentle all" (4.40-45).

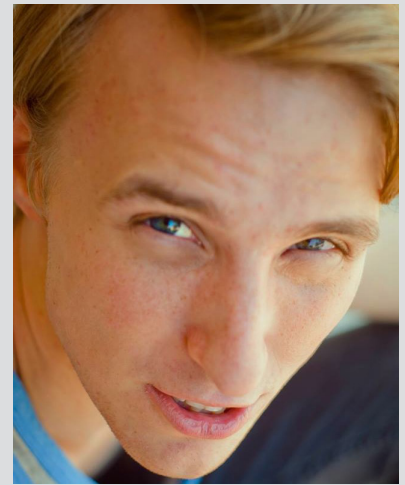
In this passage, the Chorus uses the sun as a metaphor for King Henry

being a light that brightens the dark times that the English are living in. Like sunlight, King Henry brings warmth to the soldiers who are weary from war. King Henry is also depicted as a sun to England in the prologue to Act 3 when the Chorus says, "The well-appointed king at Hampton pier / Embark his royalty, and his brave fleet / With silken streamers the young Phoebus fanning" (3.4-6). In Greek mythology, Phoebus is an epithet of Apollo, the sun god. The Chorus also uses other mythological references to King Henry's godlike qualities, such as in the prologue to Act 2 when the Chorus says the English soldiers ready themselves for war, "With

wingèd heels, as English Mercuries" (2.7). In Roman mythology, Mercury is the winged messenger of the gods; therefore, King Henry is perceived as a god and the English troops are his devout followers

who carry a message of King Henry's sovereignty to the French.

The Chorus makes use of wordplay to engage the audience and enhance interest in certain situations throughout the play. In the prologue to Act 2, the Chorus informs the audience that The Earl of Cambridge, Lord Scroop, and Sir Thomas Grey plan to kill King Henry when he says, "Have, for the guilt of France (O guilt indeed!), / Confirmed conspiracy with fearful France" (2.26-27). In this passage, the Chorus makes a pun by pairing the word *gilt* (gold) with *guilt* to signify that France is guilty of the murder of King Henry because the country pays off the assassins with *gilt*. In the



Alex Chellsen, born and raised in Antioch, California, is currently working towards finishing his English AA and General Education at San Joaquin Delta College and plans to transfer to a UC school after completion. Alex loves to write short stories, poetry, and literary analyses, and uses the skills he has learned from composing class essays and research papers in writing the Young Adult Fiction novel he is working on, which he hopes to publish in the near future. In addition to being a full-time student at San Joaquin Delta College, Alex also works as a tutor at the Reading, Writing, and Learning Center on campus and raps and produces music under the stage name "AIA." Alex is deeply honored to have one of his essays published in *Delta Winds*, and he hopes this is only the beginning of a publishing career.





prologue to Act 3, the Chorus also uses wordplay by requesting that the audience imagine King Henry and his soldiers sailing to France: “Grapple your minds to sternage of this navy” (3.18). A grapple is used to fasten one ship to another, and the Chorus uses this pun to urge the audience to hitch, like deck hooks, its imagination to King Henry’s “majestical” vessel (3.16).

In the prologue to Act 4, the Chorus narrates King Henry’s arrival at the English campsite on the night before the Battle of Agincourt and says that his physical appearance does not leave

“...one jot of color / Unto the weary and all-watchèd night; / But freshly looks and overbears attain / With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty” (4.37-40). In this passage, “attain”

can mean exhaustion, but the Chorus also uses it to play on the word taint (a tint or color) to signify the color (and brightness and warmth) of Henry, which eases the fatigue on the soldiers’ faces. In the prologue to Act 5, the Chorus describes the English citizens who wait at the coast of England to welcome home King Henry and his soldiers: “Behold, the English beach / Pales in the flood with men, with wives and boys, / Whose shouts and claps outvoice the deep-mouthed sea, / Which like a mighty whiffler ‘fore the king / Seems to prepare his way” (5.9-13). The Chorus uses the word “flood” to describe the setting of the shore and describe the overflow of the English people waiting for King Henry’s vessel to drop anchor in England to greet him with applause louder than the sounds of the sea.

Elizabethan audiences may have loved the use of metaphor and wordplay in *Henry V* for a few reasons. English literary critic G. Wilson Knight believes wordplay and metaphor were important during Elizabethan times

because of the “age’s literary strength” (146). The English language was developing significantly during the Elizabethan period, and that was due to the ability of many Elizabethans to read and write well. Second, the Elizabethans may have been drawn to these writing techniques because, it is believed, William Shakespeare had been inspired by philosophers such as Aristotle and Quintilian, who used wordplay and metaphor to strengthen their rhetoric (147). When the Chorus applies these writing techniques, the purpose is to make the language in the play more engaging and effective. Finally, Elizabethan audiences may

**The English language was developing significantly during the Elizabethan period, and that was due to the ability of many Elizabethans to read and write well.**

have been enthralled by the incorporation of metaphor and wordplay in *Henry V* because just as these techniques are used in modern writings to make references that are culturally relevant,

William Shakespeare also employs these methods to include allusions appropriate for the time period (Manhood 185-192).

Some critics contend the Chorus in *Henry V* is nonessential to the narrative development of the play. However, the Chorus adds meaning and enjoyment to the play by reflecting the attitudes of the people through the use of metaphor and wordplay. *Henry V* would not be as engaging if the Chorus were not included to usher the viewer or reader into William Shakespeare’s interpretation of fifteenth-century Europe.

#### Works Cited

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*The most influential of all  
educational factors is the  
conversation in a child's home.*

William Temple

— — —

*Education is the best  
friend. An educated person  
is respected everywhere.  
Education beats the beauty  
and the youth.*

Chanakya

— — —

*The goal of education is the  
advancement of knowledge  
and the dissemination of truth.*

John F. Kennedy

— — —

