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Stood in the Doorway, Said a  
Few More Words, Then Left

by Joshua D. Stanton

For "one more time" I touched her  
face

And smiled at my own absurdity—

I smiled,

And felt her tears on my hand.

(there are no words)

For one more moment, I tried to  
speak

but you know me, I'd rather just smile  
and shrug—

I smiled,

and looked at her eyes.

(there are no words)

For one more touch I would die  
or give the world—whatever  
just for fingertips  
and face and tears to meet.

(there are no words)

For one more emotion she held close  
my hand to her face—not

an embrace

of the body, but of the eyes.

(there are no words)

There are no words, except the few  
I wrote to remember—  
and I have  
not forgotten what was said.

Latent Meaning

by Issabella

Rushing around

A leaf in the air

"Yes, I can do that."

Turning and rolling

A strong wind

"No problem."

Running and fading

The time on the clock

"I'll be there."

Sleeping and rising

The sheets no comfort

"I'm fine really."

Plodding and trotting

A wind up toy

"I can do this."

Saving and helping

Superwoman takes flight

"Maybe I can't..."

Dying while living

A false promise

"Just a few."

Scared and silenced

An empty bottle

"Help me."

I watch as

**THE WIND**

whips the same old house I've always known . . . every nail and board, every shingle, every stone. And the lazy chaos of this place is transformed. It is wrapped in a different hue, haloed and reborn. Textures I've not touched breathe and sigh. This old house is creaking, speaking, and gleaming life. All the steps I've taken I take again, propelled and pushed through my past by the wind.

And the old house is gathered in a melancholy calm as if in holy reverence of a God-authored psalm.

*I hear the pipes of children's games, their notes carved in scrawls on the old houses frame. There are cellos in the background playing lovely and low, they echo off of empty rooms now wreathed with webs of cold. The age-old doors drum in steady time, keeping tempo with the rhythms of our lives. Life hums, chants, and breaks into a chorus, singing to a mystic organ playing unseen before us.*

And the immutable player of the organ is smiling, feeling the notes of our lives--the joy and the crying. Catching the inaudible melodies of existence, the player plays on with power and persistence.

As the wind washes my skin I surge as if gasping: caught, trapped struggling grasping. The wind whispers its song upon my lips; it plays and mingles with my breath, then slips. It plunges to my lungs as it plunged through the house. It is lovely, too lovely for me to figure out. The beauty crescendos, flashing vibrant and raw, filling the house and me with a transcendent awe.

And the wind stands still forever and a moment before leaving as it came, rushing off to fill new voids with vivacity and change.

The unseen player is still playing, the rhapsody rolling to a roar.

And every second pushes the music

deeper

than

before.

**feline and fridge**

burnt out bulb

by Rebecca Wilson

door open

wide mouth

gaping darkness

strong smell of leftovers

whiffs of salmon and tuna

the soft hum of operation

akin the purr of satisfaction

## Early Senioritis: Fighting the Infection

### Juniors and Seniors Facing Life Choices Should Ignore the Lies about Campus Dating

By J. James Pike

(Future B.A., J.D.)

The time is rapidly approaching when a good-sized chunk of floor stalwarts will be graduating. Some may go to seminary, others to Texas, and still others God knows where. These guys will be sorely missed, on the 600 Floor as well as by the rest of the College. Yet not all is lost, for following on the heels of this senior class is a junior class finding itself faced with critical decisions to make. Most troubling is the early symptoms of senioritis I have found reflected in seniors, and juniors alike, this year.

First, I need to define this senioritis. Senioritis in college entails more than just slacking off and occasionally skipping chapel. Those are not bad traits in themselves. No, the senioritis I speak of, the indescribable horror, goes something like this: before you graduate from Northwest, you need to have a wife or potential wife, and that way your life will be complete. These are blatant lies that the prevailing campus paradigm all too often perpetuates with its propaganda. For beneath subtle hints like Roomie's, the Valentine's Day Banquet, and marriage photography advertisements in the mail, lurks a conspiracy of colossal proportions. Make no mistake: campus society thinks you should be married. The question is, is this a legitimate claim?

No, my friends, those of us who are single upperclassmen must rise up and squash this Beast. You see, senioritis can wreck your life faster than Shaun Alexander scoring touchdowns. If you start buying into senioritis, you will start making your career and life choices based on a hypothetical wife or girlfriend who may or may not materialize out of the blue. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Instead of going out and trying to seduce or be seduced, or trying to be some "player," spend some time in the Word. "Nothing compares to the greatness of knowing you, Lord"--nothing compares indeed; certainly not something as trivial as sex. In fact, maybe there is some truth to the thought that only single people can be true Christians. True freedom in Christ is putting Him first, over every aspect of life. Certainly being single offers more time to spend with God. All too often those of us who are single waste this valuable time. Yet, I cannot help but think how much easier it is to follow Christ than the whims of some woman. I know, because I have been there.

Senioritis defies what is good and decent. At a College where men are considerably outnumbered by women, the pressure is even harder to overcome. Don't look for a wife, but rather look for God. Don't become so desperate for love that you start changing who you are and what you want to be. Don't become so pathetic that you are stooping to looking for the first girl you can find and expecting to marry her. If you do get a girlfriend, don't rub it in on the single population. The couple population has basically exploded this year. Just because couples have each other, does it follow that they necessarily know God? Relationships are not a game, contrary to what campus society tells us. Those of us who leave here single are to be admired. "Don't be wishing you were someplace else or with someone else. Where you are right now is God's place for you. God, not your marital status, defines your life." (1 Cor. 7, "Message" Bible)

## Waiting For His Bride

by Kasey L. Poe

Across an expanse a young man  
sits.

He is all alone.

Shrouded in darkness.

The dark is cold and cruel,

He longs to be rid of it

But no relief can be found.

A part of him is missing,

Nothing seems to fill

The gaping hold within him.

He silently hangs his head and  
weeps.

As he stands to walk

From the expanse,

He halts for a moment to

look out across the dreary  
landscape.

His eyes fall upon another figure

That resides on the opposite side  
of the gap.

She too seems much like him,

Lost and alone,

Searching for something

But not knowing what.

He calls out to her,

Not understanding exactly why.

She raises her head from

Her sunken state and calls back to  
him.

As her voice caresses his ears,

A foreign emotion builds within  
him.

He sits again,

This time at the edge of the  
expanse.

He calls to her once more,

Louder than before.

Once again she responds,

But clearer and more firm.

As her lovely voice crosses the  
ravine,

It seems to slice the frigid,

Blackness.

A mysterious warmth

Comes over the young man,

A small smile streaks across

His once solemn visage.

He is held by her,

Entranced by her.

Her gaze entralls him.

Her voice,

Captivating.

Every simple word spoken

From her lips,

Like the finest minuet to his ears.

His stomach begins to churn.

His heart wildly thumps

Within his chest.

All of his thoughts,

Focused upon her.

Still the emotion builds.

He reaches out to her,

Being with her, his one desire.

She too reaches out to him,

To touch him would be bliss.

Though they have stretched

As far as they can,

Their hands fall short

Of each others...

The young man

Slowly draws his hand

Back and clasps his chest.  
A tepid tear trickles down his cheek  
    And onto the earth,  
His breath becomes shallow.  
    He lowers his head  
    And shuts his eyes,  
Suppressing the river of tears.  
    His body quivers slightly,  
    His stomach churns  
    Faster than before.  
The fire within him slowly dies  
    While sorrow replaces it.  
    She cries out to him,  
Her heart as sunken as his.  
    Slowly he opens his eyes  
    To her sweet voice.  
    His eyes fall upon her,  
Tears strewn across her face.  
    He calls to her,  
    He consoles her  
    With his gentle words.  
His thoughts now focus on her  
    Instead of his sorrow.  
His heart begins to pound again,  
    The chill of the black fades.  
    The longing to be with her  
    Still dwells within him,  
As does the hope that someday  
He truly will be able to embrace her.  
He will wait because love is patient.  
Though now he can not be with her,  
    She is still the one he loves.  
    And he will wait for...  
    His beautiful bride!

## Contemplation

by Lindsey Cannon

I sit and ponder,  
    Can it be?  
This feeling I have  
That's swelling inside of  
    me.

I feel complete  
But yet unwhole.  
There is something there  
    Inside my soul.

A yearning, a longing,  
    Craving and desire.  
I feel as if I am clay  
Being perfected in the fire.

So, as I sit here  
And am aware of the  
    things in life.  
I am always aware of God  
And His presence in the  
    present and afterlife.

The sky was dressed immaculately. Its fiery orange fringes flared in opposition to the star-sequined ebony of the east. Sally Kustin knelt on her well-worn couch and looked out at the bright pinks and reds that played between the edges of the atmosphere. Sally loved watching the pretty colors mix and blend. Pollution makes the most beautiful sunsets.

Sally's eyes quickly diverted to the sound of wheels and the sight of eerie, yellow headlights. It was Reverend James Dunn's decrepit old Ford. The aged truck was a ghostly white-almost-blue color, its frame was rather rusty, and you could hear it rattling as it moved along. Reverend James was much the same way. In fact, the Reverend's pasty complexion, his Salvation Army suits, and the rigid creaking of his weakened bones so reminded the townsfolk of the old Ford that the two seemed soul mates.

Reverend Dunn was famous for his sermons on holiness. Nearly every Sunday, Dunn would stand behind the pulpit of Valley Community Church and point out how 'only the servants of heaven made it to heaven' and how in the end 'God will rescue the laborers of the kingdom.' He always preached the same message, using different examples, of course: one week Moses, the next week Elijah or some other figurehead of the faith, but always the same message of humility and servant hood. At the end of the service, Dunn beckoned the proud and selfish to "come forward and be broken," and every week the altar brimmed with struggling saints. "It's what you people need," he would say. "And I'm going to keep on preaching holiness until you can store it in your hearts. Till you're all true servants of Jesus."

The Reverend pulled his truck to a rattling, hissing halt in front of Sally's home. Dunn opened the door of his dilapidated automobile and, with his recognizably unsteady gait, lurched little by little towards the blue front door of the Kustin household. Sally knew he had come; he always came. "Follow me as I follow Christ," he would say. He was the picture perfect servant -- faithful, humble, and weary in well-doing; he was the spitting image of his sermons. "Sure as heaven," said Sally aloud. "Some preachers don't act like what they preach, but Dunn, he's the very person he preaches about."

Rev. Dunn -- humanity's servant -- walked slowly up the sidewalk with a bend in his back and his neck crooked downward like an ascetic monks. His stride was so humble it begged one's attention. As James Dunn neared the lamp-lit stairs, Sally opened the door. "Jessica's at it again," Sally drawled pulling the Reverend into the house. "She's in the bathroom. And she says she's not coming out for nobody, not even for Jesus Himself. She says it's Jesus' fault she's ugly and that if He wants to make ugly things He should stick to making toads and roaches." Mrs. Kustin stood shaking from the thought of her own daughter's words and actions. "Tell her not to tell Lord Jesus what to do. Tell her it's not right to desecrate the temple of the Lord like she has been doing."

Reverend Dunn knocked weakly at the oak bathroom door. Sally noticed how his eyes flickered with a pained expression every time his knuckles hit the wood. "Come out, Jessica," he called in a raspy voice. "I thought you weren't going to do this to yourself again. I thought we talked about how Jesus doesn't want this."

In the bathroom Jessica knelt on the cold linoleum floor, her head hovering above the Kustin family's pink, porcelain toilet. She followed the curves of the basin with her eyes, as if she were watching a marble roll in a downward spiral along the inside of the bowl. 'Pretty,' she thought. 'Pretty blue water in a pretty pink bowl.' She stared through the water like a mystic, drowning out the pounding she heard at the door with the ripples and colors she saw in the toilet. Jessica knelt awe-bound by the sight, by the rose-pink porcelain, by the gentle, baby-blue water, by the sheer amount of beauty in an item of such disgust. She lifted her fingers in mockery of the preacher's voice and her mother's screams. "This is what Jesus gets for making me such a freak," yelled Jessica as she slid her fingers between her lips, over her tongue, back to the curve of her throat. Her face tightened. Her body shook as if it were coughing. Then it came. It ripped through her like a torrent. It scorched the inside of her throat and seared her lips as it flowed out. She watched as the water changed into a discolored, fragmented series of ripples and waves. The basin became a violent collision of shape and color--a natural Duchamp. 'Beautiful. Strangely beautiful,' she thought.

Sally and Reverend Dunn stepped away from the door when they heard Jessica ease up off the floor and flush the toilet. Shortly thereafter the door creaked open to re-



veal Jessica's pale, ghost-like face. "You're killing yourself, you know," rasped the Reverend as Jessica walked past. "What do you think Jesus thinks about people who try to kill themselves? Do you think those are the sort He wants to take to heaven?"

Jessica looked back in disgust. "Look at me!" she screamed. "Just look at me, I don't deserve to go to heaven. I wouldn't fit in up there with all the beautiful people anyway. I'm one of those people Jesus made so others can feel good about themselves. I'm a symbol of what to avoid." With that, Jessica turned her back to the reverend and made her way to her bedroom.

Reverend Dunn and Sally followed swiftly into Jessica's room. Jessica lay sprawled out upon her bed. Her thin, copper-wire hair seemed the only color to contrast the sanitized look of the room. The walls and curtains, bed and closet, floor and dresser—all were the white of piano keys and hospitals. Even Jessica's bone-taut frame was hard to distinguish from the sheets she laid on. As the wind billowed up the curtains, Dunn hurried to lay hands on Jessica, as if to save her from being blown away.

"Oh, Lord Jesus," the Reverend prayed. "Forgive Jessica for her selfish ways. Save her from her pride and lead her back to the road of humility. I know You don't want this bulimic to desecrate Your holy temple. I pray she may be given the strength to be a servant of yours once again. Lord, let me be an example of your good works. Let me show her that the path that leads to heaven is the path You took, the path of a suffering servant."

As Dunn prayed, Jessica flailed to shake his hands from her. She pounded her legs wildly on the bed, and her hair whipped, painting the air red. "Shut up," she screamed. "Shut up! You're nothing like Jesus. You're no servant, you're nothing like Him, nothing like Him at all!"

The preacher grabbed her arms tighter and prayed louder as if to exorcise a demon from the girl's body. "God forgive her for her sin," he said again, this time louder and with more inflection. "Lord Jesus, let her walk humbly so that she too may taste heaven."

"You're just like me," she yelled. "Deep down, you're just a selfish schmuck with an image to sell. The only difference between you and me is that you think you're better because of the things you've done, and I know I'm still ugly. You think all your house calls and sermons make you like Jesus, but they don't. When all's said and done, you haven't gotten one step closer to being like Jesus. You've only made Jesus out to be someone like you."

With that, the Reverend wrenched Jessica up and pulled her ghostlike face to his. He could smell the stench on her breath as she yelled and kicked to get away. He spoke in a loud, furious tone. "You wouldn't know Jesus if He were right here staring you in the eye."

Jessica began to shake, and her body convulsed as if to cough. All of the violence had wrenched her stomach acids to life. She felt the torrent rear inside her and sensed it biting at her throat as it climbed. "You're just like me," she choked, as she let the flood spill out onto the preacher.

The Reverend reeled to wipe the bile from his eyes and mouth. He turned, stumbling into the doorframe as he weaved out of the bedroom. The disgusting stench and bitter taste of Jessica's vomit had triggered his stomach.

James Dunn crashed into the restroom and knelt over the pink basin waiting, shaking as the liquid bit its way up from his esophagus. He hated what he saw. He tried to blur his eyes and stare through the water, but he couldn't. He tried to focus on the smooth curves of the bowl, but he couldn't. He tried to see Jesus in the ripples, but he couldn't. All Reverend Dunn could see was a man leering through the water's glass-like surface, a bedraggled, vomit-stained man too proud to look at his own reflection. Dunn trembled in horror as he stared into his own widening eyes. He shook at the sight of his own humanity. As he stared the flood rose and spilled into the reflection, ripping it into a splash of colors and waves. Dunn, too, was ripping. Torn from his false humility and a hundred Sunday sermons. Cleaved from the plastic Christ he had made himself to be. The Reverend James Dunn had become, once more, a man.

## Stand

by Nathan

Unyielding, unmoving, unbearable me.  
A sanctuary, a temple, a worshipper's  
flea.

I'm a disease, contracting a disease,  
contracting a disease, contracting...

Fractions of moments, simplicity and  
splendor

Talking to my knees, hands upon my  
shoulder

## The Patient Lover

by Spring Vitus

Why don't you ravish?

Gentle lovers only meet through open doors.

Unselfish, un-hurrying love:

Waiting,

Misunderstood.

Breath's rebellion.

Gentle Lover:

Soft hands caressing soul,

Strong arms drawing warm body to cold dust.

Hearts beat.

Embracing in warmth, thawing heart's glacier.

Fresh blossoms burst forth enlivening soul's fallow soil.

Ever ready, entering,

Finally.

How long You must have feared

I never would open the door.

Some never do.

## The Street Corner

by Ruth Page

Electronic impulses cry in the air, with  
Multicolored *lights* and people dancing.

A leg is seen, and then a body-  
All beneath the crimson *light* of her life.

The *glow* of the TV through a smoky window-  
They yell for another poisonous round.

A man lazily leans into the lamppost,  
Somehow comfort comes from its dim bounded *light*.

A man walks by, well dressed, with the Light inside-  
He finds it too cold to stop and chat.

Absence abounds-  
Darkness.

## Your Game

by Kaeley Triller

She runs her slender fingers through  
Her golden mane of hair.  
Her star-struck eyes are sending you  
That "Hey, come hither," stare.

You bite your nails a few times more,  
Glance up, then look away.  
You've been here many times before.  
It's all a game you play.

You rise, adjust your baseball hat  
Before you take this chance,  
Then charmingly inform her that  
You'd like to have this dance.

A midnight walk, a kiss, a rose,  
Her number on your hand.  
What everyone who knows you knows,  
She'll fail to understand.

When morning comes, the dream is gone,  
And, funny, you are too.  
You've left her wondering what went wrong  
And why she trusted you.

You shut her off with matchless ease.  
Somehow you always could  
Ignore your conscience's desperate pleas  
To trade the wrong for good.

You've no clue or you just don't care  
For honor or respect  
Forgetting why it is you wear  
That cross around your neck.

And selfishly you've now begun  
To play another round,  
Not knowing that you have become  
"The one the wolves pulled down."

She stands there alone, back to the sun as it sinks ingloriously behind the veil of trees, mountains, and earth. The wind blows through her, ruffling her hair and teasing her dress. Rain begins to fall—heavy, cold drops—but they pass across her face as if without touching, her mind refusing to acknowledge their presence. Even when she's soaked through, she doesn't know it.

Pain. She clinches her eyes shut fiercely, slamming her mind to the things she feels. She hates it! She hates everything. It's all worthless. None of it makes sense. Life. Death. The world.

"What is life?" she screams. "What're we here for?"

Her voice echoes across the expanse of the graveyard, only heard by the grass and the trees and the thousands of souls lying cold in their graves. Everyone has gone. The funeral is over; only she remains, and the cold memory of that which she has lost.

Her mother has gone . . .

The realization sweeps across her mind, rends her heart. She's alone. Her breath catches at this and she stumbles by the graveside, her dress tearing on brambles that she doesn't see. All she knows is that the others have gone, and that she as well has to go back.

Tears fall from her face, fall to the ground, to the old grave of earth and flowers.

It's all gone . . .

Only slowly can she leave. Fast just makes it hurt worse, brings back into painful clarity memories of picnics and happy times, things she now only wishes to forget—if forget were a possibility. So she goes slowly, one step at a time, overcoming the sorrow and the shadows only little by little.

The sun drops further so only its tip shows. The shadows curl up on the last edges of the light, creeping, slinking over the overgrown grave-markers. And before night falls in its completeness, she sinks down into her grave again, lost and forgotten, ever separated from the one she loves.

At twilight tomorrow, she will rise again. She will weep in the rain and wind and recall the life she had, and the loved ones she lost—the echoes of her voice slipping across the gravestones, catching up in the wind and drowning in the rain.

## Not Like They Do

by Issabella

I don't do things like They do.  
I pray for myself, ask for what I want.  
I compose works of my despair and pain in this world,  
But not of the love and comfort you provide.

I don't do things like other Christians.  
Does that make me less of one?  
I doubt somethings; once I even invited Satan.  
Do I even count? Does that matter?  
Mealtime is wartime, and I fight alone by choice?  
Why would I count?  
What do I have to offer a God that created the sunsets?  
Apart from you and I am nothing.  
With you I feel nothing, I used to.  
I want intimacy with you God!  
I beg for you; I seek you; I chase you! Why do you run away?!

I don't do things like They do...  
.....I'm sorry.

## Fall

by Lindsey Cannon

In the fall when everything is quiet,  
Listen carefully and you will be overjoyed;  
Leaves are falling all around.

Listen carefully and hear the sound,  
As you walk and hear the rustling of the leaves;  
Hear the birds sing a sad song as they leave for the winter.

Look at the colors:  
Golden yellow, sunset orange and fiery red;  
See them twirling, whirling and falling to the ground.

Are you happy or sad  
That winter will come and take away the colors?  
But just remember the snow as diamonds,  
You are rich because you are alive.

## The Sad, Sad Truth

by Chad Baier

*Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,*

*And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way*

*Do not go gentle into that good night.*

-Dylan Thomas

The phone rang around two in the afternoon. Mom explained to me in a hushed tone that Grandpa Baier was in the hospital. He'd had a severe heart attack. My response was a quiet, "Alright. I'll be down tonight." The news was not shocking to me since Grandpa was getting no younger, his health no better. A life of vodka, Salem 100's, and free-for-all gluttony had taken its toll. I finished up my duties at work and set off for my apartment to get a few things for the weekend and headed for home. The drive was slow going, but it allowed me to think of some fond memories of my grandfather. There are few, but they are fond.

Five years ago, we celebrated his eightieth birthday. About thirty friends and relatives showed up at his house on Mudd Bay to pay honor and have a few toasts with a man whose life was earmarked with many events such as these. The weather was splendid, and Grandpa was in high spirits. Everyone sipped schnapps and enjoyed Bavarian beer, schnitzel, spaetzel, and honey roasted ham that only my grandfather could perfect. Birthdays were no big thing to him. However, he was glad to be there, knowing that his birthdays were certainly numbered.

The drive back home also reminded me of the times I'd see him driving around town in his 'Moss-mobile'. He had a 1979 Oldsmobile station wagon that he never washed. The thing was covered in green moss. Never judge a book by its cover: the man who drove that wretched automobile was worth a lot of money. Grandpa was a retired longshoreman of the supercargo category. In other words, he loaded containers, which can carry anything from frozen seafood to Toyota Corollas, off and on ships and calculated their weight disbursement so the cargo ships would keep an even keel. Grandpa loved that job, and it paid him very well throughout the years.

Before that, he was a merchant marine in World War II. I remember him telling me that he heard the rumbling of the atomic bombs that were detonated over Nagasaki and Hiroshima since his ship was just off the Japanese coast. I don't know if he was pulling my leg, but it's an amusing story to pass on to the next illiterate World War II historian.

His life of hard work would be the only thing I would carry in his honor. The other things he was—a bigoted, alcohol consuming, womanizing, verbally and physically abusive father and husband—would not make it into my lifestyle. Unfortunately, my father picked up some of these traits—just the verbally abusive part (however, sometimes my sister, mother, and I wished he were a drinker so he'd pass out and we wouldn't have to put up with his verbal abuses.)

Grandpa's long life of drinking and carousing around Olympia are recorded in the annals of many people I've met. An old friend of my father, Jerry, once told me he saw my grandpa step outside of a bar in downtown Olympia—I believe it was the Oyster House—and pull out his you-know-what and urinate from the sidewalk into the street. He shook, put it back in his pants, went back inside and continued being the life of the party. Jerry said he was nothing short of this in everyday life, but everyone knew that his days were numbered when it came to his marriage with my grandmother, Marcene.

Grandma hated him. She once told me that my grandpa took her up into the hills to go hunting. Skeptical, she went along. She knew he was up to something. When they were deep in the woods, far away from town, a friend of Carl's (grandpa), whom she had never once cared for, just happened to show up in the middle of the forest. Grandma knew that they were up to no good—they were going to kill her and dispose of her in the forest—but they chickened out and decided not to follow through with it. I looked at her like she was crazy. Who on Earth would hate his wife so much to kill her? She convinced me, however, when she told me just how much they hated each other. To this day, I will never forget the look on my grandmother's face when she looked at me straight in the eye and said she hoped that my grandfather's soul would rot in hell for eternity. That is how much she hated him. I, on the other hand, couldn't hate him like that. I could only hate him for the man he was to my father, the man who raised his son to be just as verbally abusive as he was.

It would seem that in a few hours from now, there would be one less of his type in the world.

I arrived around 6 pm. I parked my car and went into St. Peter's hospital to find out which room he lay close to dying in. I thanked the nurse and proceeded to walk slowly toward his room. The floor smelled of chicken soup and urine. Death hung all around. On this floor, people were not here for recovery. They were here, ready or not, to die. I felt as if I were walking for miles. Each step closer to the reality that I was going to lose someone who never really knew me; each step closer to someone I never really knew. I didn't know whether to be thankful for that or not. The room was right ahead of me; I could see his swollen legs sticking out of his gown. I entered, and what I saw was a dying, old, gray man, all alone with his mouth agape, eyes closed, and a diseased heart beating faster than a marathon runner's—it looked as if it were going to beat out of his chest.

This man, whom my father had known for fifty-eight years, was no longer the one who whipped his kids with a belt when they came home from school, late to do their chores. This man, whom my grandmother was married to for twenty-one years, was no longer the husband of a bitter, inflamed wife who was fed up with his carousing, drunken ways. This man, who was my grandfather for twenty-nine years, was no longer the vodka-breathed, once a year Santa Clause I barely knew.

Grandpa Baier's still, unconscious body lay there like the statue in Percy Shelley's poem *Ozymandias*: "Nothing beside remains. Round the decay of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare the lone and level sands stretch far away." No more mean words, no more closed fists, no more bigoted hatred that forced itself into the lives of many within an ear's reach. His empire of negativity was soon ending.

All I could do was sit down next to him, hold his hand, and pray. I prayed forgiveness on my part for not relaying the message of salvation to this lost, unconscious soul. I prayed for a miracle, too. I prayed that God would find some way to lift the spiritual veil that had covered Grandpa's eyes for his whole life. It was all I could do. Then I cried. I cried, as I never had before. I held in my hand a man whom only one person could truly love, and that was Christ. I cried because Grandpa had lived his whole life hurting people. I cried because Grandpa had never known how not to hurt. I cried because Grandpa had never known Christ. It is all I could do, alone with him in that room, just to sit and cry by his side.

He would only make it until the next day, when his heart decided it was time to give up. My grandfather died not knowing or even wanting a Savior. Proverbs asks every seeking soul this question: "What good of a man to profit the world but lose his own soul?" In the back of my mind, a painful truth pangs: this proverb, this pointed, piercing question that sometimes asks it with a quivering, sad anger in its voice, is to sum up the life and death of my grandfather. Another one of life's truisms that gives the most unfortunate and gravest of circumstances: hopeless, hopeless spiritual death. A death preceded by a life of meaningless, pointless, selfish melodrama. Another "wild man who caught and sang the sun in flight, and learn[ed], too late." Carl Baier was not going gently into that good night. I sat in the chair next to my grandfather, my own chest heaving every now and then from the overwhelming grief that I was experiencing and stared out the huge window that overlooked a wide, vast, green, forest of fir trees that stretched all the way to Puget Sound.

## Notes from the editors . . .

Hey Becky,

I can't think of anything clever to write, nothing witty either. It seems I'm all tapped out from editing and writing and reading and editing and studying and . . . I can't remember what else. Anyway, perhaps next time I'll come up with something.

This first journal has been fun. I can hardly wait for the next one; I'm excited to see what everybody submits. I think my favorite part of these "Random Acts" is the variety. What will the talented students at NC think up for the next issue?

Yo Spring!

We finally did it! The first issue has left the building. I feel like a momma bird pushing her baby out of the nest. I hope Random Acts of Literacy doesn't crash... Maybe I should run all over campus in an orange tutu handing out copies of the first issue? Or would that be bad press? Well, you know what they say: there's no such thing as bad press! Even still, I think I'll leave my tutu at home.

You're right! I love the variety of this issue! I was afraid we'd only receive short poems or long stories! Boy, has this turned out good! So, now we're brainstorming for... drum roll please... (insert voices from heaven singing "alleluia") **THE SECOND ISSUE!** I already have several submissions (some I couldn't fit into this one—sorry!), and we're putting student art on the next cover!

Well, where now? **SEND US YOUR STUFF!** If you've just had an operation on your eyes and haven't been able to see Becky's email address all over campus, it's [wilson2425@msn.com](mailto:wilson2425@msn.com). You've got what we want, and we're coming after you!