THE BUCKEYE

MAY 2010

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Cover Art:
Hayden Palm
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*Heyward Rogers*
It was two o’clock as I gently let the door close behind me, using my hand to support its swing shut. In my free hand I held a twelve-gauge shotgun by the barrel. It’s cool metal felt amplified by the chill morning breeze. I sat down gently in the old white-washed rocker next to the door. The old wood creaked under my weight. I rested the shotgun on the armrests and put my hands on it, like an old lady stroking her treasured feline companion. It’s unexplainable how men, especially boys, feel with a gun in their hands. As if some gravitational force draws our hands to the cold metal of those killers. I was fairly certain I wasn’t going to use it but still, it comforted me. I looked out at the night, already turning light blue. It was a scene that would make an illiterate man fill with a burning desire to write poetry. I was out here because I couldn’t sleep. I figured I would just wait out till morning, maybe catch a doze in the rocker. I was already falling into a state of sleep that usually only appeared when you had math class the first period after lunch, when it came. It came from far off, in what started out as a distortion. It was one tiny blip on the endless beauty of the early morning scene in front of me. The image of the road seemed to quiver, like a mirage during a heat wave. As it got closer, the image grew a face, with hair, and a body in a flowing robe. It never had color, that’s what I remember most of all. It was an outline, and the filling in was the scenery behind her. I do believe it was a her, and later events made that more clear. Her face was cherubic, almost to the point of being ugly. It was like one of those baby angels painted in murals on old chapels in the Vatican. However, she was a woman; I saw that by her height. Her height was distorted by the six inches or so that she hovered off the ground. Things became fuzzy in my mind at the moment she raised her hand.

I rose and almost dropped the shotgun as my legs pushed it off the chair. I caught it and grabbed it at the barrel again. If I dropped it, it might go off and I didn’t want that. I felt that I was being completely controlled by the apparition in front of me, but I still clung with a cold grip to the worries of the world I had left when I stepped off the porch. The shotgun was a symbol of this. It never occurred to me during this experience to use it ever, not even to look down the barrel or aim it, never. We walked down the path to the forest. I walked maybe ten paces behind her. She still hovered above the ground, and never looked back. The woods where lit dully by a combination of a shred of rising sunlight and a falling moon. We walked a small path until the path ended. I followed her into the rough woods, stepping on low brush and crawling at times, getting the pair of jeans I had slipped on increasingly dirty. My long sleep shirt was becoming more and more tattered as well. She passed easily through the underbrush. It occurred briefly to the small section of my subconscious (that was not being controlled by the odd infatuation I had with this phantom) that she may just vanish as I passed around a tree, leaving me in the woods at two in the morning. No such thing happened.

Eventually, the woods ended and revealed a river, also lit by the blue tint that enshrouded everything else I had seen. Something was by the river bank. It was an old fashion wash pail, that was probably used to wash clothes on one of those wooden wash boards. The apparition had stopped and was pointing to the pail. I approached mindlessly. The pail was about four feet long, made of tin. It wasn’t the pale that struck me; it was what was in it. It was red, and my mind skipped through the other possibilities, directly to blood. However, the liquid was not like regular blood. A year ago, I had been cut pretty deep by a shard of glass when my forearm landed on an old shattered beer bottle. The blood had been thick and syrupy. This liquid was watery, but something in the small portion of my mind still rendered functioning told me that it was blood. All of these thoughts ceased to matter, because something from behind had grabbed my head and pushed it into the liquid. I caught my throat on the edge of the pail and I felt an acute shortage of breath, followed by blackness. I was almost positive my eyes were closed, but they began to see something.
The river scene was being displayed to me in sepia tone like an old movie. I half expected cowboys to come riding through the stream after an Indian, firing old Winchester rifles into the air. What actually happened was much more horrible. Suddenly, a woman ran onto the scene. She was obviously exhausted and it appeared that she had been crying. She stopped to listen for a second, and panic filled her face. Her thin brown hair was tied into a white bonnet and she was wearing an old fashion dress, which was tattered and mud stained at the bottom. She looked like an artist’s disgruntled depiction of Laura Ingles Wilder. There was no sound in this vision, and I didn’t know what she was looking for, as her head spun around furiously. I soon learned. Three gruff men in cliché western attire jumped down the embankment a couple yards behind her. One of the men stepped forward, pointing at her with his gun. The two other men were carrying rifles. The man in front was wearing a mustache on his face like an ugly rodent and a bulky cowboy hat. He carried a pistol with a six shot chamber. I saw quite clearly his finger bring the hammer at the posterior of the gun down. The gun went off in a flash of light, and the girl screamed. Or at least I thought she screamed. In the vision, it looked like she had just opened her mouth wide. The bullet had caught her in the upper thigh, sending a brief geyser of brown liquid onto the dirt. Even in sepia tone, I could tell it was blood.

She turned, limping, and began to half fall, half crawl into the river. She was on her knees, beginning to swim, when another explosion of light shone from the bank of the river, this time from one of the rifles. It caught the woman in the head, splitting her skull in half in an upward curtain of blood that went forward in the direction of the bullet. The men stood in tribunal on the bank, loading and firing on the body that was probably already dead. The image began to fade, like a picture on paper does when it’s dropped into water, seeming to buckle inwards as the ink melts off the page. Then the picture was no more, and I felt myself being jerked back.

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Luke Cochran

Henry Rogers
onto hard ground.

When I opened my eyes, I was staring at my chest, which was covered in wet, cold blood. I pushed off my backward thrust hands and turned around. I rose up and saw myself looking into the eyes of the apparition. I considered screaming, but my jaw was frozen shut. We stood there in the blue tinted twilight by the river. If it wasn’t a ghost, the scene could have been romantic, but it was not, not even close. Suddenly, the apparition materialized. The lines of the phantom’s shape were filled in by grotesque green skin, a ragged white robe, and a mess of long tangled brown hair. The figure dropped to the ground and landed with a thud. I stood looking forward into the wood for a moment, until I dropped to my knees and grabbed her head. I will never forget what she told me. Her eyes opened wide and her mouth did the same. She told me to bury her. I grabbed her in my arms, one around her leg and one around her head. I rested the shotgun on her chest and carried her through the woods. At this point in the tale, you are undoubtedly asking the obvious question of why. Why didn’t I stay on my porch? Why did I follow her? Why did I pick her up and bury her? All of these are logical questions of human psychology. But when I stepped off that porch I entered the apparition’s world. The rules of psychology no longer applied. Free thinking became a foreign topic. There was only utter and total infatuation that impelled me forward. That was all.

I’m positive that carrying her through the woods wore me out considerably. This was confirmed when I woke up the next morning with aching arms. I didn’t feel any fatigue when I sat her down on the ground near the shed behind my house. I rested the 12-gauge on the shed and opened the old wooden door. The rusty hinges echoed high-pitched screams into the night. I grabbed a shovel from off its peg in the shed, and let the rusty door slam shut. I turned to dig the shovel into the ground, when I felt something cold press into my ear. I turned around to find myself staring down the barrel of a six shot pistol. I backed up on instinct and I saw the same gruff characters I had seen in that sepia-toned movie staring me down. They were different now. Their flesh was falling off their faces and the once brilliant leather clothes they had worn were now dirty and ripped. The dead

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eyes of the apparent leader of the tribunal looked into mine as his right hand steadied and his thumb pulled the hammer of the pistol down.

No matter how hard I try when I recant this story, I can never remember the exact point when I grabbed the shotgun. I must have grabbed the gun by the barrel and slung it to my shoulder, but no matter how hard I try, the moments after the ghoul’s thumb pulled the hammer are still a void. What happened next was a flash of light, and the gun on my shoulder recoiled in an explosion that left me almost entirely blind. Something warm began to travel through my body. It didn’t hurt at all really. I guess it was like sticking your fingers out the other side of a blob of Jell-O. I felt the warm metal moving through me painlessly. My vision came back to me and I collapsed.

I gained my consciousness pretty quickly and rose slowly to my feet. The tribunal was lying on their backs. The middle one had been gutted good and proper, and he had nearly been cut in half. I could see his spine through his rib cage and his lower stomach no longer existed. The man on his right had his throat torn open and long slash marks on his chest, undoubtedly made from the shotgun. The man on the left was missing one of his arms and the nub that was left was pointing skyward. I turned around to see the woman was lying face down in the grass behind me. She had at least five shots in her, all in her mid section. I turned her over to see that the shots had hit her in the upper shoulder, the lower chest, and the rib cage. Some of her ribs had been shattered and were now pointing out of her chest. I began to dig methodically until the blue twilight flowed into red twilight. I placed the corpse of the woman in the grave. It was only three feet deep, but she fit. I piled the dirt back on and stomped at it with my feet to even the ground. I stashed the bodies of the tribunal in the wood behind an especially large tree. I put a large stone on the grave I had dug and slouched into my house.

I woke up the next morning covered in dirt and fully aware of what had happened last night, except for of course, the brief moments of void during the story. I went out back hurriedly before school to check the bodies. The grave was undisturbed, but the bodies of the tribunal were gone. In their places were piles of sickly tan dirt. I kicked the piles to the ground and stood over them for a moment before turning my back on the woods and returning to the house.

I don’t go into the woods anymore, and I stay away from the tool shed whenever I can. I don’t have any more trouble sleeping, and I count that as a blessing. I have never told anyone of the experience because I know that will lead to disturbing the body that lies just beneath the surface of the dirt beside that tool shed. The undisturbed sleep is my gift from that spirit, and I am thankful. If I ever do happen to wake again at two in the morning, I will read a book. Because you never know what will happen on one blue twilight.
Murphy Smiley-- Gold American Vision Award in Scholastic Art Competition

Kip Worthington

Sam Pinsley
A great man once said, ‘let it be’
Pass through life without indignity
Suffer the stones and arrows, the breaks and blows
And to you, joy and peace will flow.

The great have pondered on knowledge-filled quests
Should we rise to a stage of vibrant unrest?
Or stay like stones with elite poker faces,
As the shrewd, wicked world around us races.

Human nature of the vibrant and bright,
Strives forward with unprecedented might.
To sing in the new and out with the old
Ignoring the admonishes that they are told

Or is there a counterbalance, is it implied?
That some should strive forward to improve their lives?
And that others shall stay, reluctant slaves to shadows,
While the vibrant strive forward to prepare brighter meadows?

The question, the ponder, the genuine fear,
The pattern that’s carried us through human years.
We often thrust with all our might,
To change what is wrong and keep what is right.

But often we’re stopped with no explanation
We just ‘let it be’ without animation
My call, dear sisters and brothers and friends
Bear with the struggles that life at you sends
Second Place Poetry

The Little Cowboy

by Wren McFadden

When I was very small
I always asked and begged
To have my favorite story
About a cowboy read,

That little red book
Was my favorite sight to see
When my mother came in
To say goodnight to me,

I will never forget
The adventures that he had
From catching evil outlaws
To earning his sheriff’s badge

I always read it every night
And wanted to hear it more
But no matter how many times I heard
The little cowboy was adored

When the story had been ended
And just then put away
I finally laid my head down
For this marked the end of day

Sam Smith

Braden Wellborn
Third Place Poetry

Narnia

By Ross Blackwell

Inside a wardrobe, some might find
A magical land, beautiful and divine
It’s full of creatures, both fantastic and shrewd
There are centaurs, dwarves, and talking beavers too
And even a great king, by the name of Aslan
Is a majestic lion that keeps watch on the land

Four children have entered through the magical portal
They have a high bounty because they are mortal
The White Witch you see, is an evil of sorts
She hides in her castle of snow, her fort
The prize that she seeks just exceeds her reach
A battle was brewing, and her troops she must teach

When Edmund is captured, the plot takes a twist
His siblings embark on a magical quest
They travel across wastelands, barren with snow
To the camp of mighty Aslan, they are destined to go
The mighty King has made the ultimate sacrifice
He has rescued Edmund, at the cost of his own life

The tears for his life that were spilled on his grave
Ran straight to his heart, that which they saved
It soaked into his body and straight to his heart
This brought it back to a miraculous start
Now the great beast, they swiftly must ride
To join the fierce battle on the great countryside

All across the wide range, arrows were bound
And also to Thud on bodies to the ground
Through the midst of the fighting only one thing is heard
That powerful, meaningful arrangement of words
For Narnia!
For Narnia!

Ross Blackwell

Ben Shankle
The Tell-Tale Heart Poem

by Matt Miccioli

The eye, the eye,
The eye that must die.
Frothy and gray-blue,
I must be rid of you.

Seven nights have passed through,
That I peered in on you.
Now, now, is the time for the deed.
The detested will meet thy judgment too.

The deed was done without a creak,
Into the floorboards without a squeak.
But the heart, the heart, and its incessant beating,
The beating, the beating, drove me into seething.

Through the haze of madness,
Into mental regress,
I confessed, I confessed.

Silver Medal Winner--
Daniel Maynard
Got caught stealing Buckeyes off the Buckeye tree;
Six demerits is the consequence for me.
Wake up at seven, my eyes are groggy;
Driving to school, man it’s so foggy.

Walking into Wallace what do I see?
Dr. Seay is staring down at me.
Mr. Sharbel walks in and does his spiel, “Boys, you know why you’re here.”
We’re innocent we jeer.

If you wanna live, listen now.
Trust me, I know how.
Trust me you won’t regret becoming the teacher’s pet.
Sitting in front is an asset.

That’s the 7th grader with sixty demerits so don’t go near;
From what I hear
He got seven for coating a teacher’s head with veneer.
Looks like we’re writing about Moscow;
I think I’ve got it memorized by now.
Remember bathroom breaks are in short supply;
If you use them too much they’ll run dry.

Ten seconds left five, four, and three
Imprisoned by next week’s demerits, but now free!

Nick Obremsky
It was late in the month of November, and John Kanahele, a burly man with bright blue eyes and light, wavy brown hair, was standing on the edge of the boat anxious to get off. He was docking on a port in Cameroon, Africa, where he was on assignment as a wildlife photographer. He could feel the edginess of the people on the boat waiting to get off in the city, Kribi. The crew anchored the craft and opened the gate and a battalion of people came down the already-let-down gangplank like a herd of panic-stricken elephants spooked by an unruly poacher. The deep-blue-eyed man was swept along reluctantly with the swarm of people.

Once in off the boat, John hopped on a local bus that took him up to the Dja Wildlife Reserve. This is where he was to photograph the bush. He rode 13 hours on the hot smelly bus, which croaked and screeched like the endangered bird John took a shot of on his trip to Columbia. The vehicle rolled along into the reserve where he met his guide.

“Bonjour, bienvenue a la raserve,” said the guide.

“Excuse me?” exclaimed John. “Sorry, but I don’t speak French…maybe I could get an Engl-”

“Non, desole, you are American, am I corrigez,” the native said in his French manner.

“You’re correct.”

“Well then, welcome to the Dja Reserve. My name is Pierre Maloo and are vous John Ka…Kan…”

“It’s pronounced Kanahele. It’s Hawaiian.”

“Pleasant. French is the main language in Cameroon, as you can see. Well since it is getting to be dusk I will show you where you will be staying.”

“Ok, thank you.”

The room John was staying in was a pleasant one. It was cozy and small just the way he liked it. The cottage-like room had a bed, a bureau, and a side table with lamp. The room had one door that lead to the bathroom, which had an old fashion sink with a mirror. The bathroom had a sliding door, which lead outside. Outside of the door was the shower that overlooked the savannah. When you walk out the front door on the dirt path and turn around the house looked like a creamy white, plaster egg, with windows.

The next day, right before dawn, John and Pierre made haste to get to their vehicle. In Pierre’s haste, he forgot to fill up the spare gas tank. In addition to that he didn’t even fill the car up enough to begin with. So with a half-empty tank of gas, they made tracks towards the sunrise.

On the trip, John had shot divers of animals from the Black Casqued Hornbill to the blue scorpion. In the middle of John taking a shot of a wildebeest Pierre cried out, “Ahh, monsieur, we have a problem!”

“What is it Pierre?” asked John blithely.

“Um, well, il n’y anaucuh gaz laisse dans let raservoir.” Pierre looked back in the pickup. “Oh Dieu, je n’ai mis aucuyie essence dans les frais suppla mentaires peux!”

“Pierre! If there is something wrong say it in English!” exclaimed John.

“I forgot to fill up the gas tank up enough and I forgot to fill up the spare gas tank.”

“No! Pierre! How did you forget?”

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“I…I don’t…desole monsieur.”
“It’s ok. Do you have your radio?”
“I umm I, excellent,” Pierre said sarcastically. “I left that too.”
“Oh God, Oh God! Pierre why!” John bellowed.
“I…I’m ainsi desole monsieur.”
“Well, Pierre, what do you suppose we do now?”
“Je would guess la promenade in the direction we came from,” he mused.
“Well, before we go I’m hungry,” complained John.
“Au least je remembered that.”
Pierre unhooked his rucksack and revealed four water bottles, along with six luscious pieces of fruit: two bananas, two papayas, and two mangoes.
“Since vous ate something” said Pierre. “Shall we, vous Americans say, ditch te vehicule at la head for la safety?”
“I guess that’s all we can do?” replied John.

It was midday. They walked for four hours for about four miles. John and Pierre were walking not on the road but through the bush. According to Pierre it was the best way to go; which it wasn’t.
“Pierre, are sure we are going the right way?” questioned John.
Pierre really didn’t know if they were going the right way or not, he just didn’t want to get yelled at again.

******************************************************************************************

It was midnight. The American and the native walked for around seven more miles resting gradually along the way. They were under a tree napping. Pierre heard a twig snap. He opened his eyes quick as lightning. When he opened his eyes Pierre saw bright green dots floating in midair.
“Monsieur! Monsieur! Monsieur Kanahele! WAKE UP!” screamed Pierre halfway yelling and halfway screaming
“What is it, Pierre?” asked John half awake.
When John looked up he saw the dots too.
“Pierre, what are those green bead looking things?”
“Monsieur, those are lion eyes,” whispered Pierre.
“Then if those lion eyes belong to an actual lion,” John whispered sarcastically, “why aren’t we in the tree yet?”
The animals felt the tension growing in the humans. They started bounding for them.
“Get in the tree!” yelled John.
John ended up getting into the tree first. Pierre was slowly dragged away by the lions. John heard a scream, then complete silence. John could not tell if the gashes on his back were from the lion’s claws or the thorns in the tree. He hoped they weren’t from the lions.
It was dawn. John felt pain in his back. He was still shaken from the frightening experience. He warily climbed down the tree. Once John stepped to the ground, he looked around. He saw nothing of Pierre but a piece of his clothing stained with blood. He also noticed there weren’t any lions either.
“That’s good, nothing is here,” John thought.
So he started back towards the way he was going.
******************************************************************************************
He was tired, parched, and famished. John wanted to drop dead. His goal was at least get to the trees for shelter. His clothes were ripped and he was half-naked already from the trip. John was miserable; he was questioning why he ever went on the assignment in the first place. He walked for about five more miles stopping to rest once. He finally found a road and was walking towards help. John rested under a tree beside a road and made a fire for the night.

Once John woke up the next morning he saw smoke rising like balloons in the distance. He got up and started running towards it ignoring his pain. Gradually he saw a speck, which took shape of fire. It got bigger as he ran towards it. John was saved! The people standing around the fire were wildlife officers burning poached elephant trunks. He was so excited he was found. John told the officers his story and they took him to the patrol center. His gashes and his really bad sunburn were finally on the road to healing.

The 37-year-old John with deep blue eyes, three years later still tells the story to every one. His 11-year-old son and his 8-year-old daughter along with his wife love to hear it over and over again.
10:15 pm Sunday Feb. 7

“Do it!” said the twins.
“No,” said Johnny.
“You said you would do it if the Saints won and they won. Now do it. Of course you could always back down and we would always know that our little bro was too much of a coward to finish one little bet.” Bobby persisted with a malicious grin on his face.

“Fine, I’ll do it,” spat Johnny. He knew he shouldn’t let that get to him but he couldn’t help it. He took a deep breath, looked in front of him and saw a nauseating fifty foot fall to the alley below his ancient brick New York town house and the eight or nine feet separating him from the next building. He had said he would jump over to the next apartment building if the Saints won the Super Bowl and now he had to fulfill his promise to his two insufferable older brothers. He was terrified, petrified. He felt the warm blood coursing through his veins and the adrenaline pumping him up. He bent his knees.

“ONE, TWO, THREE!” and still he stood there rooted to the apartment by fear.

“GO, NOW!” he yelled, attempting to trick his body into obeying.

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His brothers started to laugh at how ridiculous he looked, perched like an enormous bird of prey. Finally Johnny’s pride overcame his fear and he leapt. All he could feel was the horrible sensation of nothingness below him. He saw his left foot hit the rim of the adjacent apartment building but watched in horror as it slid away and he fell into the abyss.

“Johnny! Johnny! JOHNNY! Steve and Bobby yelled.

“What happened?” Johnny spluttered; then he blacked out.

When he woke up, Johnny was in a hospital bed surrounded by his entire family. He had trouble seeing them through a series of tubes, monitors, and other medical things that crisscrossed his body. His mom was there, her eyes puffy and looking very sleep deprived, like she had cried for hours. Her dark black hair was in disarray and covered her heart shaped-face. His dad looked as white as a sheet. His uni-brow was furrowed and his massive chest was heaving, probably from yelling at the twins for the stupid bet. And the twins, above all else, looked sheepish. “You’ve been out for hours Johnny Boy; it’s one in the morning. The doctor said you might not make it,” his mother said through a veil of brand new tears.

“Yeah, and when we get home your brothers are going to be reprimanded for what they did,” Johnny’s father said.

At this the twins gulped, and they should have. Their father was six foot six and over 250 pounds and nearly solid muscle, whatever punishment they received would be very excruciating indeed. After a few more minutes of ranting about the boys’ stupidity he settled for giving them the evil eye and muttering under his breath. He looked like he was about to strangle them both when the doctor walked in.

“As you can see he is alright, but it will be awhile before your son will recover. I must ask you to leave; your son needs his rest.” Almost as soon as his parents were gone Johnny fell into a black haze.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

It was two months later. Johnny had been deemed fit to leave critical condition two weeks after the incident and had regained the ability to run after six weeks of excruciatingly painful physical therapy. It turned out that Johnny had managed to land on only one knee. While this practically turned his knee and two thirds of his right leg to shattered glass, it probably saved his life. The doctors had not been sure if he would be able to use that leg again. He was just happy to get out of the depressing hospital. His parents picked him up and they went back to the apartment. Johnny’s parents were acting strange. They seemed very grim and did not say a word to Johnny. When they got to the apartment complex Johnny’s parents did not even open the door for him. In the apartment, everything was coated with a layer of dust; it looked like nothing had been cleaned since he had broken his leg.

“Guys, has everything been alright since I left?” Johnny asked.

“Of course, what would have gone wrong? Said Johnny’s dad with a smile; yet his eyes were vacant. Later, while they were eating dinner, Johnny noticed something else unusual.

“Dad, why is the fire escape boarded up?” Johnny asked.

“So you numbskulls never go on the roof again!” his father exclaimed angrily. The rest of dinner was spent in silence. At 9 o’clock Johnny went to bed for the night.

* * * * * * * * * * *

It was two weeks later on a Saturday. Johnny couldn’t get to sleep. Recently he had been having the same nightmare over and over again. Every time he began to fall asleep he saw disturbing depictions of a horrible place where he was surrounded by death on all sides; ghastly decapitations, impalements, and other macabre things that were to horrible to even look at. But the chilling apparition was the worst. Floating above continued on page 18
Everything was the face of a horrible, dying man. The left side of his skull was decompressed and crusted over in crimson red. All around the face was a halo of hellfire. And it spoke in a horrible, demonic voice. However, nothing it said could be understood by Johnny. It would say a few words in gibberish and then rush towards Johnny, and Johnny would fall. He would feel himself being consumed by nothing. Then he would wake up.

“This is ridiculous; it was just a few bad dreams. I have to get some sleep.” Johnny yawned sleepily. So he started to drift off.

It was the same grotesque scene. Bodies were strewn about and there was the head looking down condescendingly at Johnny. But this time it did not speak gibberish.

“Johnny, you have upset the balance. You must come to us,” said the grotesque, destroyed face.

“What? I don’t understand. Who are you?” Johnny managed to blurt out before shrinking back in fear.

“You may call me the Undertaker,” cried the face menacingly. “And you must come here; you have destroyed the balance of life and death. YOU MUST DIE!” cried the Undertaker.

“No!” yelled Johnny.

“Yes, my minions have already found you and they have already been given the order to kill. The Balance will be restored!” screamed the Undertaker over Johnny’s own nightmarish howling.

“No!” cried Johnny. The Undertaker disappeared and in his place appeared a cyclone of hellfire. He felt the burning; his skin was melting away; he felt the searing burn like acid on his body, then he awoke in a cold sweat.

The next morning, a Sunday, Johnny was still jostled by the dream but was beginning to think that it had been only that, a dream. He was going to get some breakfast when he heard two whispering voices coming from the kitchen.

“Johnny…ruin everything…take him out.”

Johnny was shell-shocked. He couldn’t breathe. His head was spinning. He must be jumping to conclusions. After all how could anything or anyone get into the house unnoticed? And besides it had only been a dream.

“Yes. Johnny must die!”

Johnny could tell who said it this time: Steve! His own family was out to kill him? It couldn’t be! He heard footsteps in the kitchen. He had to get out now, but where? It wasn’t like he could just walk out the front door, and the fire escape was boarded up. He decided to go for his bedroom window. How would he get down though? Then he remembered his old rope ladder from his childhood fort in Montana! The old thing had sat in his closet for years, the last connection to his old life in the country. He would tie it to the bedpost and climb down the 60 or so feet to the ground. As Johnny was halfway through the window he heard footsteps in the hallway. He was just beginning to go down the ladder when he saw Steve and Bobby entering his room. They were each hiding something behind their backs. When they saw the ladder they ran to the window and drew out their weapons, two enormous kitchen knives from behind their backs! They began to hack at the rope ladder in a wild frenzy. About half way down the ladder Johnny felt the rope give way and break. He fell and landed on his back. He felt himself starting to blackout. No, he could not fall into darkness with the twins so close! He slowly rose to his feet and looked up to his bedroom window, and there were Steve and Bobby scowling. Wait no; there were two figures behind them, Mom and Dad! This did not make any sense. His closest family members were the mercenaries he had been promised in his horrible dreams. He ran wishing only to be away from his would be assassins.

Two hours later he was sitting in a dark and filthy subway station in the Bronx. Johnny now understood why his parents avoided it. He could see at least three different drug dealers with pistols in clearly visible continued on page 19
holsters on their sides standing in plain sight. Also, the whole place stank of urine. He had no idea what to do. He had no money to do anything and his entire family wanted him dead. They were probably already looking for him. He was crazed with fear. Every shady person that walked past was an assassin with a massive knife in hand. Every sudden noise was a gunshot meant for him. He simply sat there in utter disbelief about what had happened to him in a few short hours. When night came Johnny left the subway for fear of getting mugged by some street gang. He walked aimlessly and eventually found himself in a small park. He decided to sit on one of the benches and relax.

“I’ll just lie down for a minute,” he thought. As he slowly began to drift in and out of sleep; he saw visions of the hospital with his family sitting silently around him; what had cause them to become so hostile? Then, through bleary eyes still hazy from sleep, he saw two people coming from behind one of the oaks nearest the bench.

“Get up!” Steve yelled. Johnny started and scrambled to his feet. Both of the twins had their knives out and were ready to gut him mercilessly.

“We’ve been looking for you,” they said in unison. Their voices were about as emotional as machines. “But why? What is this all about? This doesn’t make any sense!” shouted Johnny.

“It makes perfect sense, you were supposed to die when you jumped but now we have to finish you off,” explained Billy. “That’s what the Undertaker said to you, didn’t he?”

The name sent chills down Johnny’s spine. So there was no doubt that they were the mercenaries, the “minions” from his dream.

“What are you? I know you aren’t my family,” said Johnny with false bravado.

“Finally figured that out have you? It doesn’t matter what we are. Your family has been dead for nearly three months,” spat the thing that was not Bobby with a disgusted sneer.

At that moment he took a lunge at Johnny with his monstrous knife. Johnny, always having been very athletic, side stepped the blade and flipped the thing onto its back. Now the thing that looked like Steve was coming after him. Johnny hit the blade aside and punched the imposter squarely in the jaw, and took off. He felt like he was running in slow motion. He didn’t seem to cover any ground. After several minutes, Johnny risked looking back; his breath came in ragged gasps. There, across the street, were the twins, two gruesome puppets that barely passed for human beings. Johnny looked for a way to lose them. The alley he was in was fenced off at the end. The twins would catch him long before he had climbed it. To his left he saw a fire escape. It was his only choice. He climbed as fast as he could to the roof of the building. No, not just any building, his apartment building! As he realized this, the twins made it to the top of the fire escape. They did not even look out of breath. Right behind them were his parents who had seemingly come from nowhere, looking like they had just won the jackpot. They too sported large weapons, a golf club and a Louisville Slugger. All four approached Johnny slowly with their weapons drawn. Their eyes appeared different, the eyes of predators. Also, they all wore eerie smiles that showed no happiness or joy, but a lust for blood, Johnny’s blood. To him they looked like the things a child would check for in their closet. The sinister group marched closer; with each step they looked even more horrendous. Johnny knew he had no choice. He had to jump for any chance of survival. How ironic. He turned and leapt for all he was worth. He knew instantly he would fall short of the ledge, and he flailed his arms helplessly in hopes of somehow making the distance. Just as before he saw his left foot hit the ledge of the opposing apartment building and then slide into nothingness, and he felt himself sucked towards the ground

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once again. The last thing he saw was his “family” looking down at him and grinning with a large dying man’s
face in the background. Then everything went white.

12:15 am Feb. 8, 2010
The doctor walked sadly to the family in the waiting room…..

“Mr. and Mrs. Walton, I am sorry to say that your son is dead. His injuries were too much for him to
handle. His heart burst three minutes ago. Johnny never woke up from his coma after the fall,” said the doctor
with all of the emotion of a cardboard box.

At that moment several paramedics ran in with an old man on a stretcher.

“Doc, this guy is messed up bad. He was hit by a car crossing the street, and now he has severe internal
bleeding and the left side of his head was decompressed by a rear tire, we could use as much help as we can
get,” said one of the younger paramedics.

The doctor quickly walked away and left the family sitting in the waiting room, Ms. Walton crying into the
shoulder of her husband, Henry.
He lay frozen, petrified, cold beyond the bone. The remotest vestiges of hope had long since been driven far from his soul, mind and body. His urine saturated clothing gave rank testimony to his utter refusal to even shift his arm to relieve himself. To do so meant searing lead would surely tear deeply into his body. The final torment. In the last 36 hours he had seen and heard things no young man, nay no being should ever witness. Men hit by cannon balls. Men exploded by cannon fire. Frenzied horses dragging their entrails in a final desperate attempt to escape the demons consuming their flesh from the inside out. Human beings screaming in guttural agony from mortal wounds. His eyes swollen from fatigue; tears and smoke had turned his eyes crimson. Snot and blood effused from his nostrils. Yet he no longer noticed any of these things. His mind was no longer truly conscious; rather he existed in an evil fog where every crack of a rifle was aimed at his eternal soul like a wounded animal surrounded by a pack of the cruelest dogs, biting and tearing at the last remnants of life. There was no youth left in his inmost being and he knew with certainty that he would never ever again hear music, shake a man’s hand, or receive the love of a woman. All that was left was the utter certainty of eternal death. They were beaten with no fight left. The enemy had to smell the vile fear and he knew with absolute certainty that they would soon simply walk over unopposed to discard his life. And he knew full well that he could not even lift his head to spit at them as they killed him. The sound of the horse’s hooves didn’t penetrate this fog for a full thirty seconds. Then a shrill alarm sounded from every corner of his brain. He lifted a corner of his eye and lightning struck his soul. The old Dixie flag waved again. Fresh troops! Dozens of men, hundreds of men. His eyes opened. Was it possible? Thousands of men, horses, and cannons pouring over the ridge and whooping the rebel yell. A fire of hope swept his heart. He might not die. Could it be? He lifted his head for the first time in twelve hours and drank in the sight of his valiant redeemers driving deep into the enemy locations. Raw courage ran through his veins and swelled his muscles with power. He stood erect and fitted a percussion cap to the firing nipple of his weapon and walked forward to join the fight.
It was like I had lost my own soul. My father, a kind, caring man, had died. All his life he had devoted to me. As I watched him on his deathbed, I swore I could see the Devil’s shadow. He had said he could save my father. To think I sold my soul to the Devil. It was only yesterday that my father was still alive. I had come home from the movies. My father was sleeping. On his desk was a doctor’s note diagnosing him with cancer. It said he had a year to live. I was shocked. James Smith was the healthiest man I knew. I needed to have some time to myself.

I went to the park. It was dark and people were leaving. A single lamp was flickering. There was a hell’s moon out as the locals call the new moon at this time of year. This was odd because there was a full moon out yesterday. Perhaps the moon was cowering in fear at what was afoot that night. A man appeared in front of me. He looked to be about sixty and his hair was pure white as if it were a candle with a white flame. He wore a crimson red coat. Yet the most menacing of all his features was his shadow. His shadow was hunched down like he was ninety, his leg was lopsided, and his back looked as if it had shriveled up wings. He asked, “Are you Ben Smith, son of Jack Smith?”

“How do you know my name?”

“I know everything young one. I also know about your father’s cancer.”

I was shocked. He knew my name and about my father’s cancer.

“I can cure him for a price.”

“Are you a doctor?” I asked.

“If that’s what you call me, yes.”

“What’s your price?”

He grinned sardonically. “I was hoping you’d say that. My price is undying allegiance, your soul so to say. You do whatever I want. All you have to do is sign here and your father will live.”

I didn’t know what to do. I looked at the contract. It said the contract is nullified if the results are unsatisfactory. I took my pen. “Ow!” I said as I cut myself on the pen. The blood dropped on the paper.

“That will do,” he said as he took the paper from me. Then, he disappeared.

The next morning I woke up, and my father seemed unusually happy.

“Morning son.”

“Hey, Dad, why do you seem so upbeat this morning?”

“I was about to tell you I had cancer yesterday, but you were asleep when I woke up. I went to the doctor for a CAT scan and miraculously I’m cured.”

My heart skipped a beat. It was all true, I thought. Exactly three hours after my father said this he died in a fatal car crash. When I was at the funeral I heard the devil’s voice saying, “He would only get in our way, young one. He had to be put out of the picture.” I thought to myself, What have I done?

FOUR YEARS PASSED and I forgot about the old man and our deal. Then on a hot July night, he came to me. It was raining outside. The devil appeared in my apartment, looking as if he hadn’t aged a minute.

“We have work to do, go to 350 42nd Avenue and kill the family with their friend.”

I replied, “No.”

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"We have a contract."
"You said if results were unsatisfactory I was free of the contract."
"I cured your father and that was the deal. Now kill them."

My skin started to turn black as if it was charcoal, and I had the uncontrollable urge to kill. As I approached 42nd Avenue, I had no clue what I was doing. I didn’t ask myself who are these people or why am I doing this. My only thought at the time was kill them, kill them all. I broke through the door not even bothering to use the doorknob. The house grew very silent. I heard the cries of children from the living room. I smashed through the living room. Inside were two children, a woman, and two men. Both of the men had knives out. That didn’t matter. One of the men ran at me. Before he had a chance to stab me I picked him up and tore him limb, from limb much to the horror of the family. The other man threw his knife, and it hit me dead center in the chest. I didn’t notice the knife as I tore his head off. I took the woman’s head and crushed it in my hand. But the most pleasurable part of all was strangling the kids, and watching the light go out of their eyes. I pulled the knife from my chest, and the wound healed itself instantly. I woke up, and I was home. “Thank goodness it was only a dream,” I said as I got dressed.

I looked at the morning paper and my heart stopped. The headlines stated, “Newly released convict’s family and friend massacred last night”. I went to town and in the local bookstore I saw a book named Legends of Satan. I immediately bought it. I flipped through it and found the passage I was looking for. It stated: “The devil chooses a successor called the Gatekeeper of Hell. Legend has it that this gatekeeper kills whoever the devils wants him to. Just before he goes out to kill, the gatekeeper’s skin burns black, scarred by the sins of the devil. He possesses inhuman strength. There can be only one gatekeeper every millennium, but the devil must make him sign a contract. This contract can’t be destroyed except by a former gatekeeper. For there to be another gatekeeper, the devil must retrieve all of the fragments of the contract and repair it. To free himself, the gatekeeper must issue a challenge to the devil. The devil may ask a riddle. If the gatekeeper answers correctly, he is free, and the devil is sealed away for a thousand years. But if he fails, he remains a servant forever, enduring the torture of his victims.”

I closed the book. I knew what I had to do. When he came that night I was ready. “I have a job for you.”
“What if I challenged you for my contract?”
“I accept. I assume you know the stakes?”
“Yes, ask me the riddle.”
“What is light yet is also dark, what is day yet is night? That is my riddle.”

I thought and thought. “What does he mean?” Then I remembered the end of a story my father used to tell me. He said, The devil, no matter how tricky he is can’t, resist putting the answer of his riddles in plain sight.

I answered, “You.”
“What!”
“You are Lucifer and Satan; you are light and dark.”
“No! How did you? Ahhhhhhhhh!”

He screamed as he disappeared. I held the contract in my hands. I burnt it. I took the ash and scattered it all over the world so that when Satan finally broke free He would have a hard time finding it.
And the Sun Shall Shine

by Blake Patton

Boom! Booom! Boom!
The bombs drop into the little town
The villagers below can only frown
The lethal needles explode from their instruments of metal
Next rolls the fleet of vehicles, they step on the pedal

With a last dying roar the walls give in
Right after this break, comes the great flood of men
They flow by the thousands, wearing camouflage clothes
The sky is black as charcoal, yet the wind does not blow

Is it the explosions below that make a stomach sick?
Or is it the mere thought that death may soon lick
The countryside, the homes, of the place that I’ve known
Or the fact that leadership and freedom may soon be overthrown

The fire left behind is like a beast with a hot bite
Like the bomb that was dropped, that hurt the men who were shot
So what would you call this explosive catastrophe
I call it war and it forever haunts me

The bloodshed is not over but is nearing its end
The brutality and the bodies, the dead bodies of our men
Outside the sky is dark with ash, but I keep one thought in mind
That peace is soon coming, and the sun shall shine

Samuel Gaston
Pillars of MBA

by Miles Curry

I knew this is where I would be taught
Then very suddenly, I thought
A student at MBA – what does that mean
Some say it’s worth more than the wealth of a king
I must tell you, I’ll tell you something
That I too value it – and I too sing

As I pounce around campus, I observe the first of three
Pillars of the man we are groomed to be
The first is that of a worthy Gentleman
It has always been priority now, it was priority then
MBA helps us live with less sin
The most important step in becoming real men

I enter the classroom, crisp and cool
I feel the knowledge, as deep as a pool
The next pillar, Scholar – yes, it is secondary
But it’s still required, it’s still necessary
MBA influences this as the English did tea
Befall an esteemed intellect, full of glee

After school, boys hurriedly abound
Football, basketballs, baseballs flying all around
The third pillar, a dedicated Athlete
MBA covers this field like a sheet
So, when I see the word “sports”, I don’t take a seat
But instead, take interest, interrogate, and be all I can be

This forever my story; this is always my song
Six years of hard time, all the days long
MBA was there, always there for me
Behold an honorable man stands before thee
Grateful forever, I will be
Grateful forever, I will be
Pulled from the bubbling stream by the hands of a small child,
Placed in a small container of water for the long journey home,
Unaware of the invisible lines separating it from the world outside.
Finally placed in a small, plain glass bowl that was to be its home,
Never realizing anything more than its bowl, the four walls surrounding it,
And the beings that seemed to sustain its life.

Am I like a minnow, trapped in a fishbowl,
Unaware of anything outside of my everyday life?
Am I untouched by the world surrounding me,
Never realizing there is a universe around me
Which holds thousands of mysteries and possibilities?
Should I ever question what has been taught and revealed to me in my short lifetime?
Or should I just drift through life like a minnow in a fishbowl, never questioning the world around me.
Into the Sunshine Gleam

by Cameron Travis

Way up high in a tall oak tree
Sat a little longing chickadee

His big bird feathers just coming in
The leaves pleading with him loudly in the wind

He peeped over the brown wall
That had so long kept him from a deadly fall

His little brothers curled up in a nap
While his tiny wings began to flap

A hopeful hop was all the need
To send him falling at a terrific speed

The squirrels that guard the tree
Were happy at his flee

With outstretched wings he pulled up tight
The grass grabbing at his underside

High into the sky he soared
The beavers watching chewing on their wooden board

All the creatures applauding
The cats and dogs calling

The bird flapped past the small stream
Out into the sunshine gleam
Robin Hood

Retold by Henry Moxley

Ol’ Robin Hood was a dashing man, brave and all that stuff
He stole from the rich to feed the poor and lived out in the rough
He had a trusted friend, little John was his name, he was everything but small
He was quite the opposite, strangely enough, for he was rather tall
Now Prince John, that crooked man, was in charge of the town at that time
He taxed the poor people to his heart’s delight and sat there drinking his wine
He had a plan, a good one at that, to capture good ol’ Robin Hood

He would capture that friar and hang him tomorrow and send word into the wood
Robin ol’ Robin when he got a whiff of this he was not happy indeed
He jumped up with a yelp and a yell, for he would not allow this deed
He ran to the wall overflowing with guards, like flies to something sweet
He snuck around and scaled the wall like it was a small feat
He fought his way through a sea of soldiers and decked a whole platoon
He ran out of there and looked at John, almost as if to say, “See ya’ later ya’ loon”
Wind-powered, and upon wind it depends;
The flapping, and the rush of water beneath,
The shift of balance, the tilt;
Cruising by, sitting on the comforting seat, as feet
Dangle off the side, to feel the flow,
Of the water, as I turn to and fro;
It is a second sleep; like a second bed;
Out on the water.

The beams and ropes bearing the engine,
One not needing of gasoline;
I pull to go faster, and let loose to cruise,
At a satisfying speed,
No more than anyone needs;
The refreshing spray,
And the end of the day;
Spent out on the water.

The rush of excitement, but peace inside,
Taking a break from everyday life,
Enjoying the serenity of the lake,
As I look back at the wake;
As I feel my movements causing it to shake,
Powered by me, and upon me it depends,
A wonderful ride that to I it does lend,
Out on the water.
My Old Wilson Baseball Glove

by Jacob Lothers

My old Wilson,
Strung together with old, hard leather,
Had an iron grip,
No chance that I’d slip,
One single ball through that rough glove of mine.

If only I had the skills to back it up,
Barely any catches, not close to enough,
Every year, I’d be stuck with the same position,
Right field or left, sometimes center, but not as much.
And each time I stood out on that grassy field,
The only field my rubber cleats knew,
Was pretty much all that came in a game,
Unless someone rather skilled drilled one through.

I’d sprint after that ball, make the best effort I could,
And by the time I threw the baseball back to second base,
The runner would already be rounding third.
And so, my Wilson and I would trudge back to right field,
To the little dirt patch among the vast grassy, green outfield.
He was a man who showed trust. He was a man who faced death with courage. He was a man who sacrificed his life for someone else’s life. He was a man who died for loyalty. His name was Samuel Davis. The above has been said of this remarkable man, but he accomplished more than what can be written on paper. Sam Davis showed the world what real integrity, real loyalty, and real courage are. Let Sam’s actions and behavior serve as an example to all and let him be recognized for the commitment and dedication he demonstrated for his cause.

Samuel Davis, a native Tennessean and attendee of the Western Military Institute before it became Montgomery Bell Academy, joined the Confederate war effort in 1861. Under Confederate General Braxton Bragg of the Army of Tennessee, the nineteen year-old Sam Davis was placed in the First Tennessee Regiment. Looking for opportunities to help the Confederacy, Davis offered himself to General Bragg as a scout by his own will and wishes. Now a member of Coleman’s Scouts under Captain Henry B. Shaw, the real identity of Captain Coleman, Davis and the company of scouts spent time on the Union side, gaining what turned out to be correct information. Dressed as a Confederate soldier, Davis was captured by a detachment from the Seventh Kansas Calvary after being under the impression that these soldiers were Confederates as well. Sam Davis was led first to Union Captain Levi H. Naron, and then to Union General Grenville Dodge, the commanding general in Pulaski, Tennessee. After a long interrogation, Davis refused to offer the wanted information; from whom had Davis obtained his confidential knowledge? General Dodge begged that Davis reveal the information, for if Davis refused, he was to be hanged. With still no answer, General Dodge called for a court-martial, the verdict being death by hanging. Davis was brought to the gallows upon his coffin on November 27, 1863. Having written a letter to his mother the previous night, one cannot imagine Davis’ distress. Everyone took pity on him, including both General Dodge and Captain Armstrong, the Provost Marshall. After a few final words and a short discussion with Captain Armstrong, Davis himself ordered the soldiers to release the trapdoor. Davis took death calmly and accepted it with bravery as he stuck to his words, “I would rather die a thousand deaths than betray a friend or be false to my country.”

“He was a most admirable young fellow, with the highest character and strictest integrity,” recalled General Dodge. Even as Sam Davis’ opponent, Dodge saw Davis’ evident traits of loyalty, courage, and commitment to his cause. Being a gentleman of example, we all have learned from Sam’s actions and the traits he demonstrated as gentlemanly. The institution of Montgomery Bell Academy has strived for its students to support the world and its positive cause with such faith and dedication as exhibited by Samuel Davis.
Once there was a wanderer, all ragged and gray Who traveled to and fro, all night and day One day the wanderer discovered a place That would wipe that frown off his face A place that was glowing with serendipity A place rich with serenity A village filled with small houses of yellow Where birds were singing in a sweet falsetto
And a shimmering lake with a gleam so bright Where the people play with much delight The meadows were fruitful with flowers and berries And butterflies were fluttering like little fairies
Ah, yes, the land was a delight So the man encamped here for the rest of the night As he was sleeping a person approached him A pudgy, red bearded man, with a bright green coat in good trim
And he said, “Why do you sleep here? Come sleep on a proper bed.”

At daybreak, he smelled a meal, the savory meal Of tasty delights wafting through the air, catching him in a spell So he headed down to breakfast to be greeted by a year’s worth of food He filled his belly with as much as he could, feeling guilty that he had been rude
Then he had realized that he had found his place A place he could settle, feel at home, and be embraced So he decided to stay, for he had found a true home

The man built a cottage right next to the lake and would no longer roam.
The Milam Stone
by Stephen Ray

As Mark sat on that vial of a log,
in a world of misty fog,
Pondering, pondering over the
unfairness of life,
in a struggle, truly a strife.

A small figure, only fifty pounds,
fell on him in a mound,
The figure said he was looking for
a stone,
one that, with its beautiful green
glow, shone.

Then a war broke out,
suggested by a soldier’s shout.

Watching his house burn,
tears filling his eyes,
Until a voice made Mark’s life turn,
a voice that told him everything but
lies!

The Ballad of Iwo Jima
by Heyward Rogers

LVTs are near the shore
All painted up, ready for war
Doors are open, ready to land
The smell of hell, in the sand

First wave jumps out, not a sound
As the first man moves, hear the
rounds
Of machine guns spitting, all
around

What a sight, O what a sight
Mortars dropping left and right
Many young men, without a fight

Rest their heads with one last
breath
Ready to face their impending
death
Sergeants shout “down boys down”
Up the mountain we hit the ground

Forever scraping the terrain
Until we saw why we came

We came to fly that flag aloft
The mountain, tall which up we
fought
The colors raised, red, white, and
blue
To signal victory, and freedom too.

The Buckeye is a magazine of writing and
art from seventh and eighth grade classes at
Montgomery Bell Academy. The title was
inspired by the buckeye tree that stood in the
grove on the north end of campus. It was once
a familiar gathering place for both faculty and
students.