

Labyrinth Magazine

Literary/Art/Photography
Spring 1998



Design these 2 pages as a unit
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Maybe use a theme, a student's poem,
a graphic here?

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cover near
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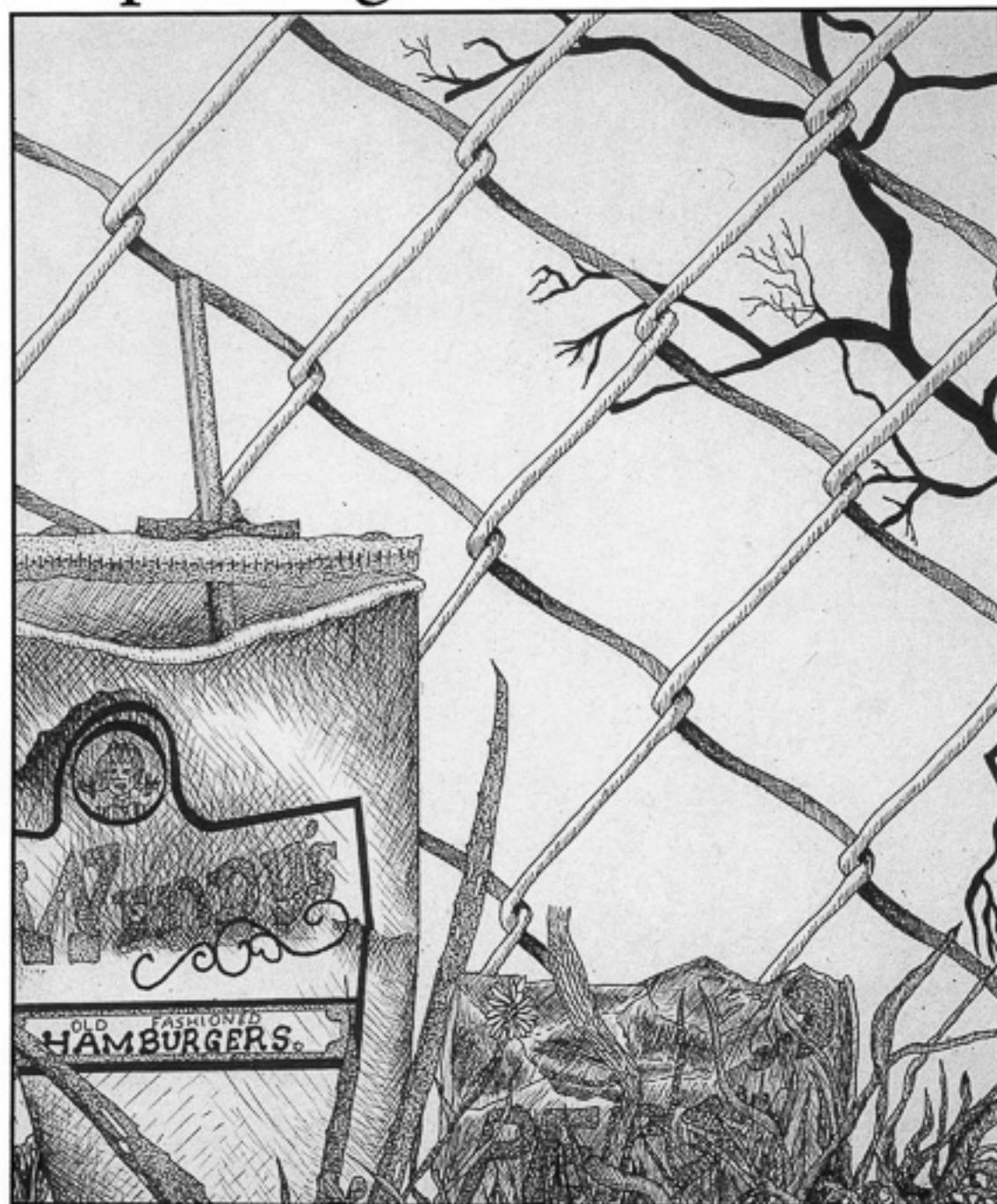
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cover and title page art
by
Chris McElfresh

Spring

1998



*nice reflection
of cover art*

art credit?

T. C. Williams High School

*address
phone #*

Labyrinth Magazine

Literary / Art / Photography

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*Could this
listing be placed
elsewhere to
avoid crowding
this page?*

Beautiful photo!



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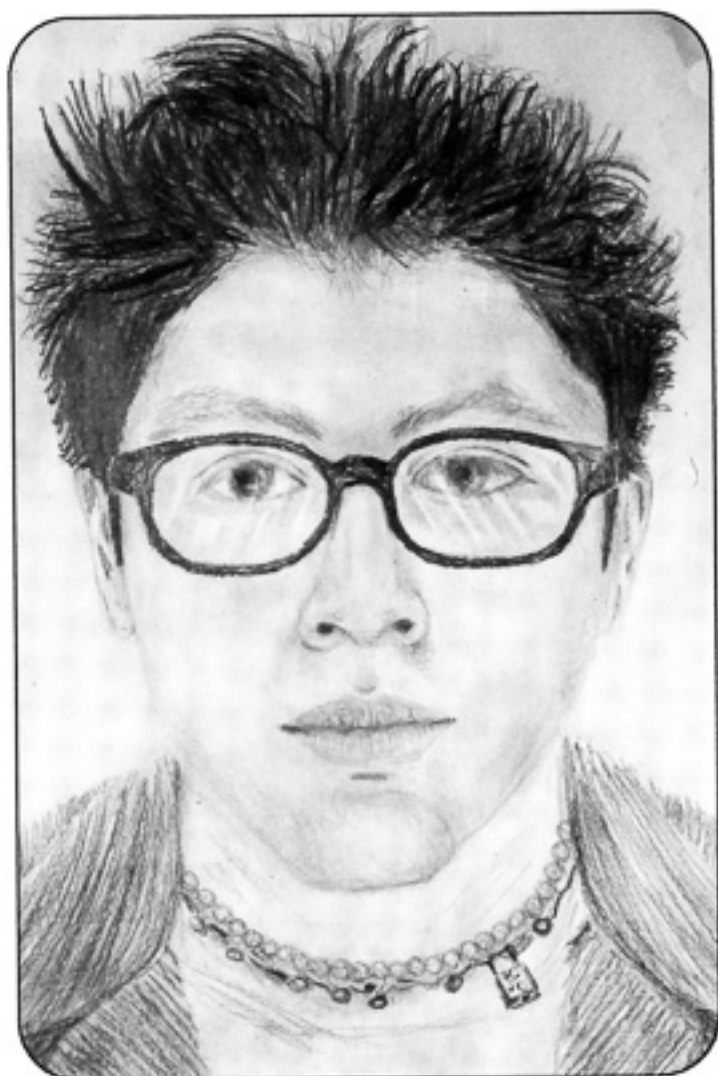
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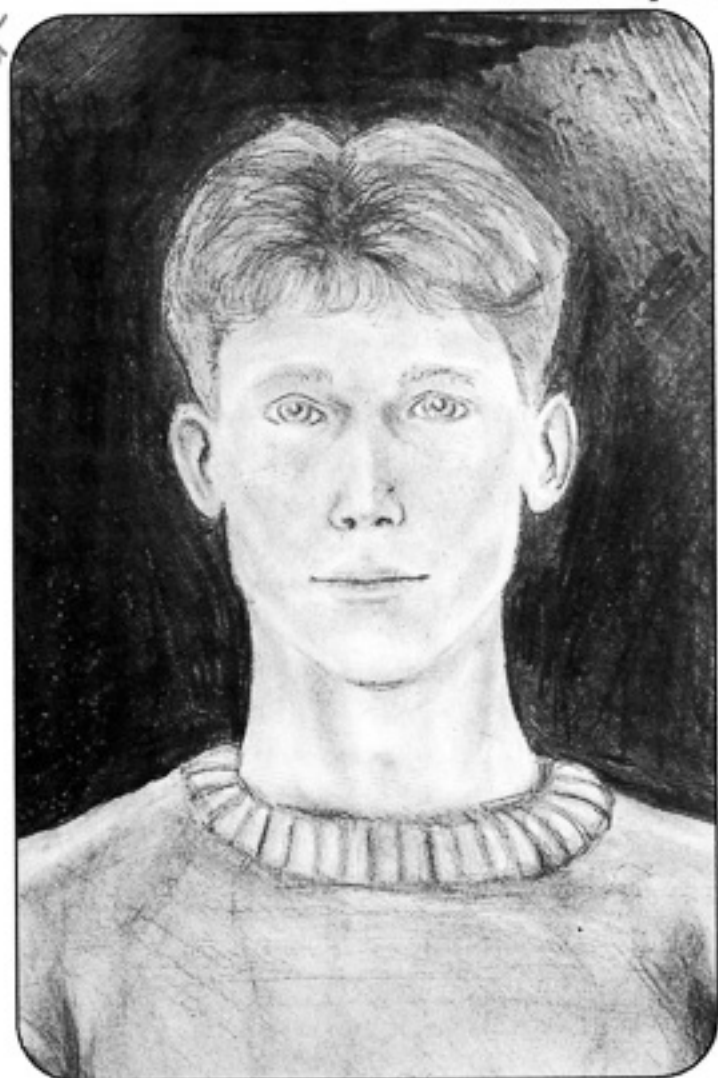
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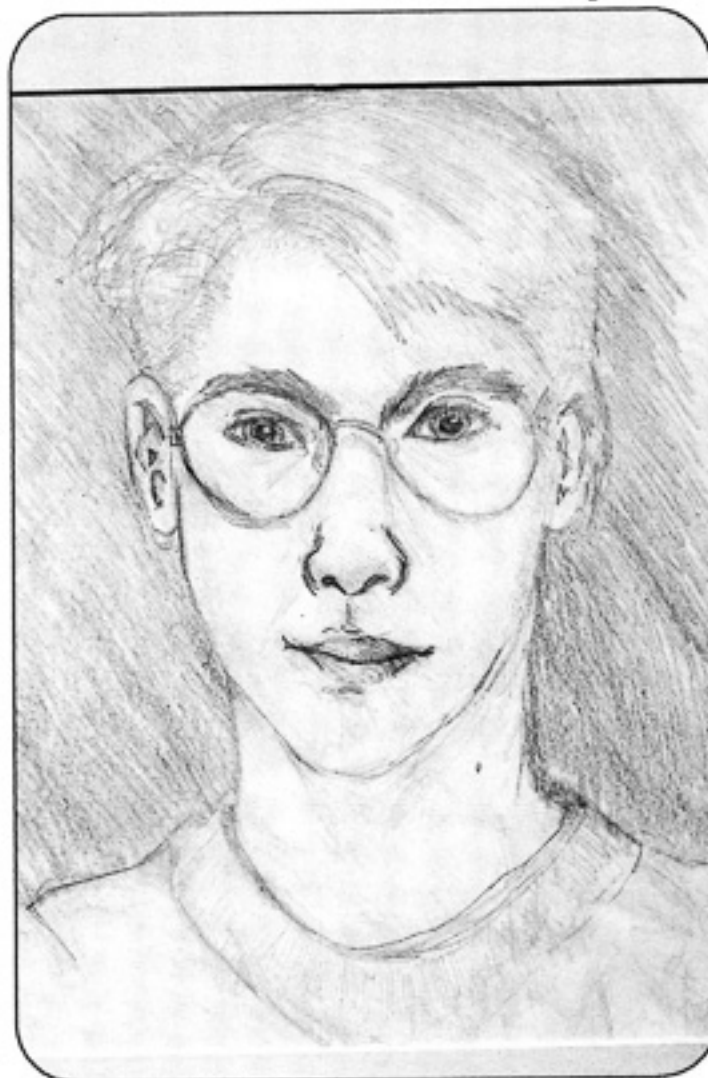
Marco Cepeda



Diana Papazian



Stephen Harding



Andrew Johnson

*excellent
work*

*✓ nice
touch*

✓
G

loved her. And she loved me. We both knew it in our hearts all along; but, it took a tragedy to help me accept it in my mind. She was the one. And, you know, it's funny, I didn't even realize it. Michelle.

I had known her since we were 5 and I know it should have become apparent earlier, but I didn't see it. Damn it! I

— didn't see it. Why didn't I see it? I missed my chance; she's

*She was smart, funny and beautiful,
everything else that a hormone driven
teenage guy wanted ...*

*by Allen Brooks
Labyrinth
Short Story Contest winner*

gone. True happiness was right within reaching distance, but I was blinded only an object of desire-Brook.

Brooke, as corny as it sounds, had it all. She was smart, funny, beautiful, and everything else that a hormone driven teenage guy wanted in a girl. And I guess that's only why, in the beginning, that I thought I wanted her. She was a new and exciting prize. But I didn't even see that that was all she was, a pretty prize like you would win at a carnival booth.

A solid friend, Michelle was always in the back of my mind. Smart, pretty, musical, and everything I could have wanted in a friend and more. I just didn't see it when Brooke arrived.

That was one unbelievable fall. Brooke had just moved

G I loved her

Good
design

here from California,* her dad just gotten a federal job in D.C., so the family arrived in July. We were all starting our junior year of high school that September. I was working on a score for my friend's movie, and I thought my life would always be this good. Boy, was I wrong.

Lots of stuff happened that fall. Music was very important to Michelle and me, so we were sort of music buddies. Near the end of the first quarter, I finished the score for Brian, and Michelle had just received a big award for band. She was first chair trumpet, and had been as long as we could remember. She loved band; it basically was her life and when she and I weren't hanging out, she was practicing the trumpet.

Brooke, still the new girl in town, and I started dating; and I thought that this was the greatest thing that could have happened.

*My heart knocked
against my chest
as I quickly turned
the corner toward
the intensive
care unit.*

After we started going out, I couldn't believe my good luck that I had won this prize. But nothing remains forever, as I now know, and my world with Brooke just crashed. In November, Brooke's dad got fired from the State Department and her

family had to return to California. Our last night together she was so excited about getting to be back with her old friends, I tried to be happy for her. But her shining eyes told me that I wasn't really going to be missed all that much. We kept in touch for about six weeks; and then, in one of her brief letters, she told me she had she met Steve. She told me this was her last letter.

It was then that I realized something,* Brooke was just a prize that I could never win and didn't really want. Sitting there with the letter in my lap, I thought about Michelle. She was pure class and had never made me feel anything but ok as I would leave the music room to be with Brooke. Somehow though, subconsciously, I realized that seeing me leave with another girl had hurt Michelle.

I finally saw what my relationship with Brooke had done to Michelle. My friend, my music buddy had always loved me deeply, and I had never seen it! What I had had, up until that moment was completely platonic. I had loved her all along; but like a sister. But now I realized that I also loved her, in a deeply spiritual way! I had to tell her! Getting Brook completely out of my life was like lifting a cloud from my heart that had been covering my true feelings, my real feelings, for a genuine person and not some "doll prize."

I pulled up to her house

and ran to the window. I always went into her room through her window, I can't even remember when I had ever used the door; but she wasn't there. I saw a note on the bed, from her parents to me.

Jack-

*Michelle was in a
car accident coming
home from the band
competition. She's in
Sibley hospital in D.C..
If you can come, she's
asking for you. We'll
meet you there.*

Mary and John.

God! Sibley. It was an hour away, but because I sped all the way there, I made it in 45 minutes. I finally screeched to a halt in front of the emergency room. I ran to admissions, asked the receptionist what room she was in, and ran up the stairs to her room. My heart knocked against my chest as I quickly turned the corner toward the intensive care unit. I almost knocked her parents down in the hallway.

"Where is she?" I stuttered as Michelle's mom hugged me tightly.

"In room 534 in the I. C. U.," her mom answered, "but Jack, there's something you should know." She was crying, but I didn't want to hear anything,* I wanted to see Michelle,* I was already down the hall.

As I ran into her room, her parents trailed far behind.

Michelle's soft form was in a big white hospital bed. The lights were dim and I saw her slowly breathing. The beep of the heart monitor was like a metronome keeping the beat. I glided, as if in slow motion to the bed. She had bloodstained bandages on her face and arms. I picked up her little hand, her head moved slightly to the side and her eyes fluttered opened.

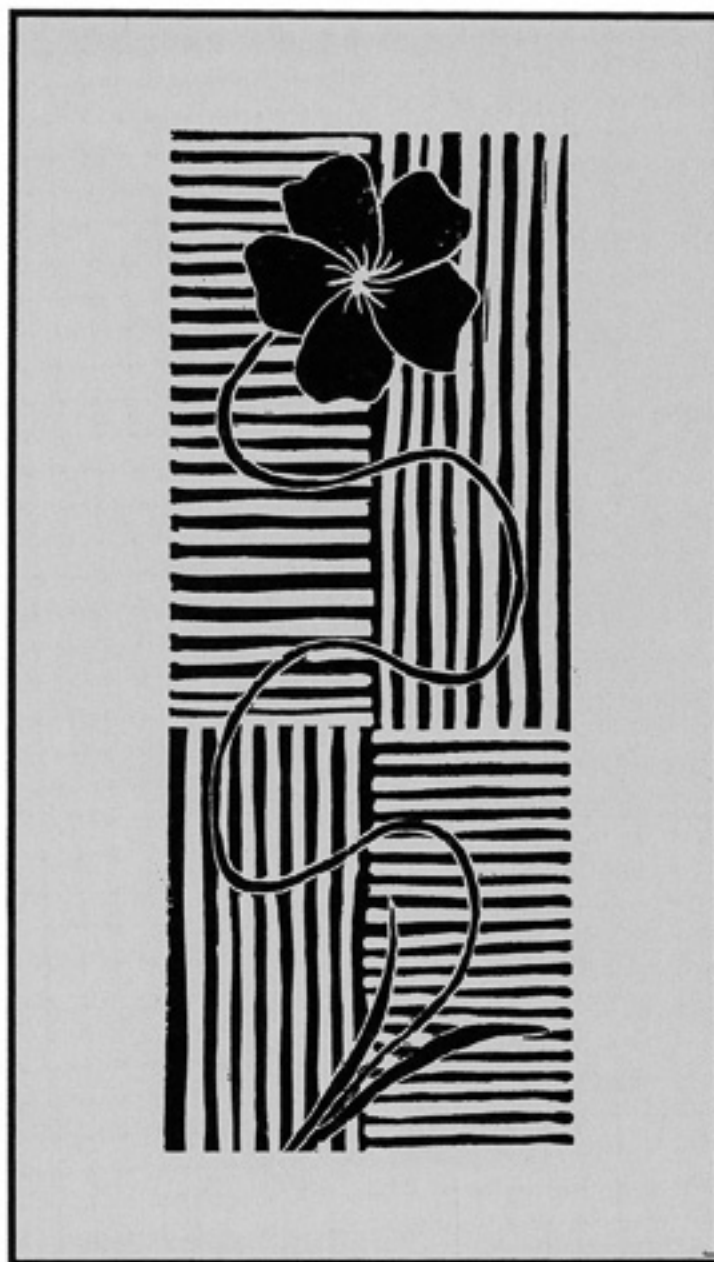
"Michelle?" I said softly, as if to see if she was still there. All she did was squeeze my hand. I leaned closely toward her and my lips brushed her ear.

"I," it was as if my voice was gone. "I," as I choked back tears, "I love you." And I held her hand to my face and looked directly into her eyes as she turned her head to mine.

"Jack," she said, in a way I have never heard her say my name before. "I know." She closed her eyes. Unbelievably, her hand fell limp, and the heart monitor turned into a steady tone. I knew that she was dead, that my life had been wasted, that the purest, most wonderful love that I would ever know was out of our, out of my, hands. I knew that calling the nurse would do nothing, I just held her hand, burrowed my

face in the pillow and cried.

I could not go to school after she died and I cried for weeks. I just laid on the couch in the den watching old videos from when we were in grade school



together. It seemed like both of our moms had video taped every concert, birthday party and big event in our lives so I had hours of images to watch and remember her by. I felt like giving up on life. All that I could ever have wanted in my life was gone.

A few weeks after Michelle's funeral, I went over to her house when I knew her grief-stricken

parents would be visiting her grave. I walked around her room, gently touching the nick-knacks on her shelves. Then I found something, I hadn't seen since our childhood. I had given it to her when I first met her on the George Mason Elementary School playground. I took it, got in my car, and drove to the cemetery. I arrived and waited respectfully for her parents to leave. When the car drove off, I walked solemnly to Michelle's grave, a simple tombstone at the head of painfully fresh, young grass.

I knelt, and started to cry. I searched in my pocket and pulled out the object I had taken from her room. The trinket was just a lucky quarter that I had bent on the train tracks. I remembered her face that hot summer afternoon that I had given it to her. A memory of a cute little girl, that grew up into an incredible young woman who has left me here, alone. I pulled out my keys and dug a small hole at the base of her tombstone. I placed the lucky quarter in it and patted down the earth.

"There Michelle, when I was ten, I wanted to give you something I thought would bring you luck forever." As I gently kissed her head stone, I said, "I love you."

art by Allison Smith



photo by Ursula Miller

Crops of ⁷sliver falling
 they form deep mirrors on the ground
 a vortex to another world
 reflections, distorted in puddle
 time does not apply here, there
 but what is time to each of us?
 just another illusion, constraining
 telling us we are almost gone

we follow each other, silently
 no question asked

no delusions shattered
 our lives are how our parents made them
 young slender reeds, swaying
 bending in the wind of mortality
 short ephemeral lives wasted
 destroyed at the end of innocence
 bright sunlight reflects from the ground
 slowly drying the silvery pools
 a world fades into mist
 lost through our neglect and haste

Scott Johnson

✓ *After the Rain*

Lipstick Traces

(A Secret History of the Twentieth Century)

I have read hundreds, possibly thousands of books. Every one of them is a part of my identity; my thoughts are squeezed through their filter, and with every book I consume I change imperceptibly. The dominant phrase in *Lipstick Traces* is age-old, handed down from a 12th century Islamic prophet: "Nothing is true; everything is permitted."

Greil Marcus' *Lipstick Traces* is an original book in its own right, but it is also a collage, a linking of countless books as well as manifestos, lyrics, poems, and griffitoes. Marcus' ambitious aim is to demonstrate a link between subversive movements of this century. He traces the underlying discontent from vivid accounts of the French Commune in the late 1800's, through 1916 dadaism in Zurich, through French student movements in the 50's and 60's, and finally the punk rock explosion in the 70's.

Lipstick Traces affected me strangely.

*A personal essay
by Ben Cannon*

punks, perhaps because of some pretentious desire to understand French art, but perhaps it was because this book is not philosophy but the attempt, through numerous accounts, to name a common desire, a desire I have felt and could never understand.

While *Lipstick Traces* did not affect my

outward behavior, it had a large impact on my perception of the world. It made me much more aware of how much of the modern world is merely a construct, and how much of modern stability rests on a monopoly of viewpoints. *Lipstick Traces*, by demonstrating that the myths my world is made of do not have to be anything more than myths, erased that monopoly and in its place left only the exhortation, "I take my desires for reality because I believe in the reality of my desires." The idea that the country I inhabit could be nothing more than a coalition of capitalists who exist only to perpetuate themselves and stimulate higher levels of consumption, while not entirely correct, is nonetheless heady stuff for a boy raised on He-Man, Dickens, and John Wayne. *Traces* opened my mind to philosophy which I would have formerly found either incomprehensible or uninteresting, and opened also the possibility of creating my own philosophy. Author Marcus states, "Nothing is true; everything is permitted." and to find out about the various groups who have lived it is both chilling and invigorating. If one can tear down the walls civilization has built around us, everything would be "possible, and permitted: the most profound love, the most casual crime."



Latoria Giles

Die Nacht ist Still

Die Nacht ist still
Das Mondlicht ist hell
als Der wind Schiebt
Die bunten Blatter unter
meinen Fuss, Menine Gedanken
traumen.

Eine Kalte Brise Setzt
an Mein Gesicht vorbei und
Sehe ich ab auf einen Weg
Ich sah einen Weg der in
den schwarzen wald fuhr.

Grimmig und tief und Verboten
tief und unverzerhlich Ich
Ignoriere meine Neugrir
und spaziere weiter.

*Avoid using too
many elements
that may compete.*

The Night is Still

The night is still,
the moonlight is bright,
as the wind pushes the
colored leaves beneath
my feet, my mind wonders.

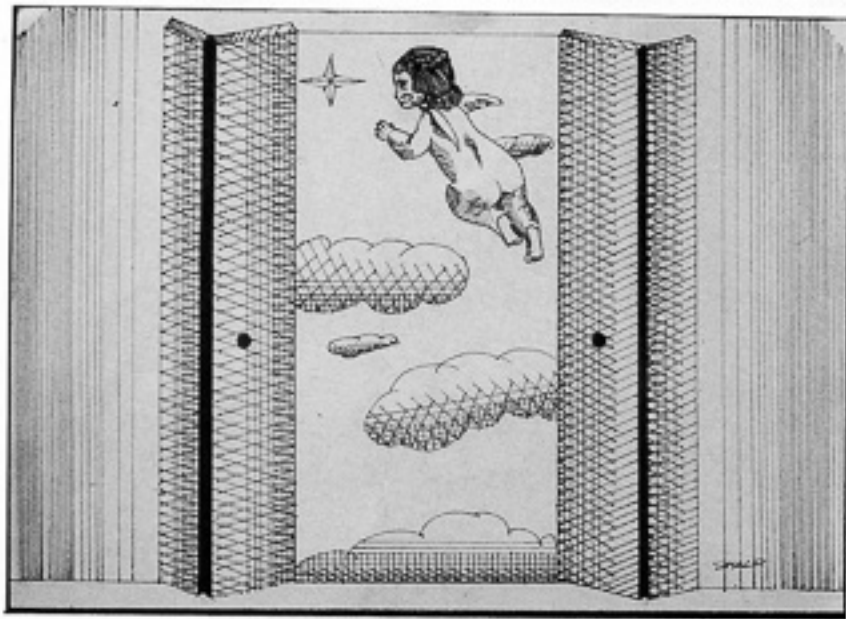
A cold breeze rushes by
my face, I looked down
and notice a path of dirt
leading to the black forest
of the night.

Grim and deep and forbbiden.
Deep and unforgiven
I ignored my curiosity
and walked on

Andres Garrido



Chin Park



Reñee Peña

Blowing Kisses

she taught me how to blow kisses,
that's how we always said,
"I love you, good-bye"
we made Japanese kites,
they weren't
supposed to fly
and we rode the teacup ride
at the beach

great details

she was my first audience—a standing ovation
powdered doughnuts and Italian cookies
asparagus carpet
the "How to Climb a Tree Show"
an old white fence
a dirty swimming pool
thick glasses, lenses tinted pink, to give her cheeks a
rosy hue

a basement that led to another world
crushing berries in the back yard apple juice
Christmases that tickle my memories
and
I never appreciated how wonderful she was
until I felt her absence
my second-grade soul nearly shattered

I never said good-by

my mom told me that I still could
I asked, "How will she hear me?"

I thought and remembered.

...I blew her a kiss!

Ali Miller



Lexye Street



Lettie Nocera

*link
between
pages?*

Foreign Hyphenated American

"Couldn't I just be?"

by Dara Moore

Do I dare claim the African in African-American that is used to describe my ethnicity? I've never been to or seen this strange country they say is my native place. I'd like to know, please, what exactly makes a race?

I am Black, human, woman. To some, I am even an American; but African? I don't feel it. I'm not ashamed of being called African-American, though I am justifiably unsure of what this really means. I am not indifferent, but I am ignorant about my heritage.

But if African is me, and I am African, how am I to know this culture? This rich heritage is recognized only through English words. Do I look African? Do I speak Swahili? I wish I did. But the language of the masters was English; and English, not Swahili, is what was taught to me and is what I will teach my children.

So, will my children still be African because their skin is brown and their ancestors were descendants of a continent and culture unknown to them except through pictures and their English language textbooks?

My ancestors were Africans; I don't doubt that. My ancestors were also slaves. Slaves whose lives shared a very rich culture. Does that make me a "Slave-American"? Throughout the course of "African-American" existence in America, the names bestowed

upon us have changed drastically and dramatically. We can hear a litany of racism in the list. "African", "Slave", "Boy", "the notorious 'N' word", colored man, Black, Negro, Black-American, Afro-American, and the now politically correct, African-American. What is it about a specific race that defines it only as being "Black" or "White"?

Couldn't I just be? Couldn't we all just be?

Then at least racism would be "nothingism." A beautiful culture and people couldn't be defined in the single word that is now used to define me. Me, who personally feels highly unworthy of claiming a continent to which I'm only connected because the color of my skin.

Why is it correct to claim a culture as yours solely because of where your ancestors once lived? Labels divide and reinstate the obvious. Labels are also as useless as racism. Labels make "Foreign Hyphenated American," when neither is needed to describe any of us.

Aren't we all so much more than a label, a name, and least of all, a skin color? Who we are today, not what our ancestors were, is what should define us. "To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without roots," says a Chinese Proverb. I disagree with the sentiment. I'll make my roots here in America that will enable my family to grow without being bound to one cruelly defining word or culture.

photo by Kira Lashley



alignment?

If everyone wrote books about life exactly as it is, would anyone bother to read them? No, the reader wants something out of the ordinary, something out of the realm of common experience. The same desire for the new and unusual applies to films. No one goes to the movie theater to see real people doing real things. By distorting a story the author is portraying reality. The distortions of settings, characters, and themes in both the novel and the film *Great Expectations* make the works more effective.

The fantastic settings in the novel *Great Expectations* help convey

No one goes to the movie theater to see real people doing real things.

the themes. The quiet countryside is nice, until a convict is found in the graveyard. It is certainly not realistic to expect

that convicts will be waiting in graveyards for small children, but the use of this setting is much more effective than if it was just a back country road. The exaggerated spooky mist and soft grey stones bring images to the mind allowing each reader to incorporate their own reality. Ms. Havisham's home is trapped in time in both the movie and the book. Once again, it is not really probable that the wedding cake would still be there, but this distorted view gives insight into Ms. Havisham's character. The streets of the city are distorted as well. London, in the novel, is seen through Pip's bizarre fish-eye lens. His view of the city is not a realistic one but rather a stylistic one. Dickens conveys the true grit of the underside of the city on arrival, and later the decadence of the rich with the "Finches of the Grove." Thus, the reader gets a very true-to-life feeling even though the real description is highly distorted. This is exactly what Flannery O'Connor is trying to say with the words, "It is the only way to

make people see." We all view our external world through the veil of our emotions, so a writer must use distortion to make the setting effective and "real" to the reader.

Just as we view a place through the filter of our own imaginations, we also use that same filter to perceive people. The characters in the novel and the film are wonderfully exaggerated. Joe is a good man. No one in real life could be that perfect. In Pip's childish eyes,

London, in the novel, is seen through Pip's bizarre fish-eye lens.

however, Joe is goodness and wholesomeness personified. Estella's perfection is different from Joe's. She is cold, beautiful and unreachable. Even after Pip "makes himself worthy of her" she is still not attainable. Again, no

A
review
of the book
and film by
Charles Dickens

Great Expectations

by Katherine Mangu-Ward

Does the essay discuss the film - actors, director/producers, etc.?

real human's heart could be as cold as Estella's, in the book or the film, but her icy portrayal makes her all the more understandable and recognizable. The characters of the seedy lawyer Mr. Jaggart; the meek Molly, and of course the huge and frightening convict Magwich are all distort-

Miss Havisham is completely off her rocker! In the book she still wears her yellowed wedding dress, in the movie, clothes from her youth.

tions of reality as well. They are stereotypes which the reader/viewer can identify from their own lives. The best example of this distortion of character is Ms. Havisham. She is completely off her rocker! In the book she still wears her yellowed wedding dress, in the movie, clothes from her youth. Crazy Miss Havisham has engineered Estella to seek revenge for Compeyson's treatment of her. Ms. Havisham's character is far beyond the range of believability but because of this distortion, she comes alive. She is the most impossible and the most memorable character in the entire story.

Finally, there is a great deal of distortion in the themes of *Great Expectations*. Two of the driving themes are the desire for revenge and Pip's quest to be a richer, better person. The theme

of the evils of revenge is very exaggerated. Ms. Havisham's upbringing of Estella is wildly improbable as being a means to seek revenge on the male half of the species. Miss Havisham's effectiveness frightens even herself at the end when she sees the pain she has brought Pip. This exaggeration of the need for revenge allows the reader/viewer to identify similar, more human feelings in themselves. Pip has great expectations of what will occur when he gets to the big city. He plans to become a rich artist or businessman. The promise of the city is greatly exaggerated. More importantly, however, the theme that Pip wants to be "worthy" of Estella is incredible. Pip wants to be a good person and thinks that goodness comes with financial success. The major epiphany of the book is when Pip realizes the goodness is not what he learned in the big city; it is what Joe taught him; it is what the convict got from him-unconditional giving. The struggles Pip goes through to

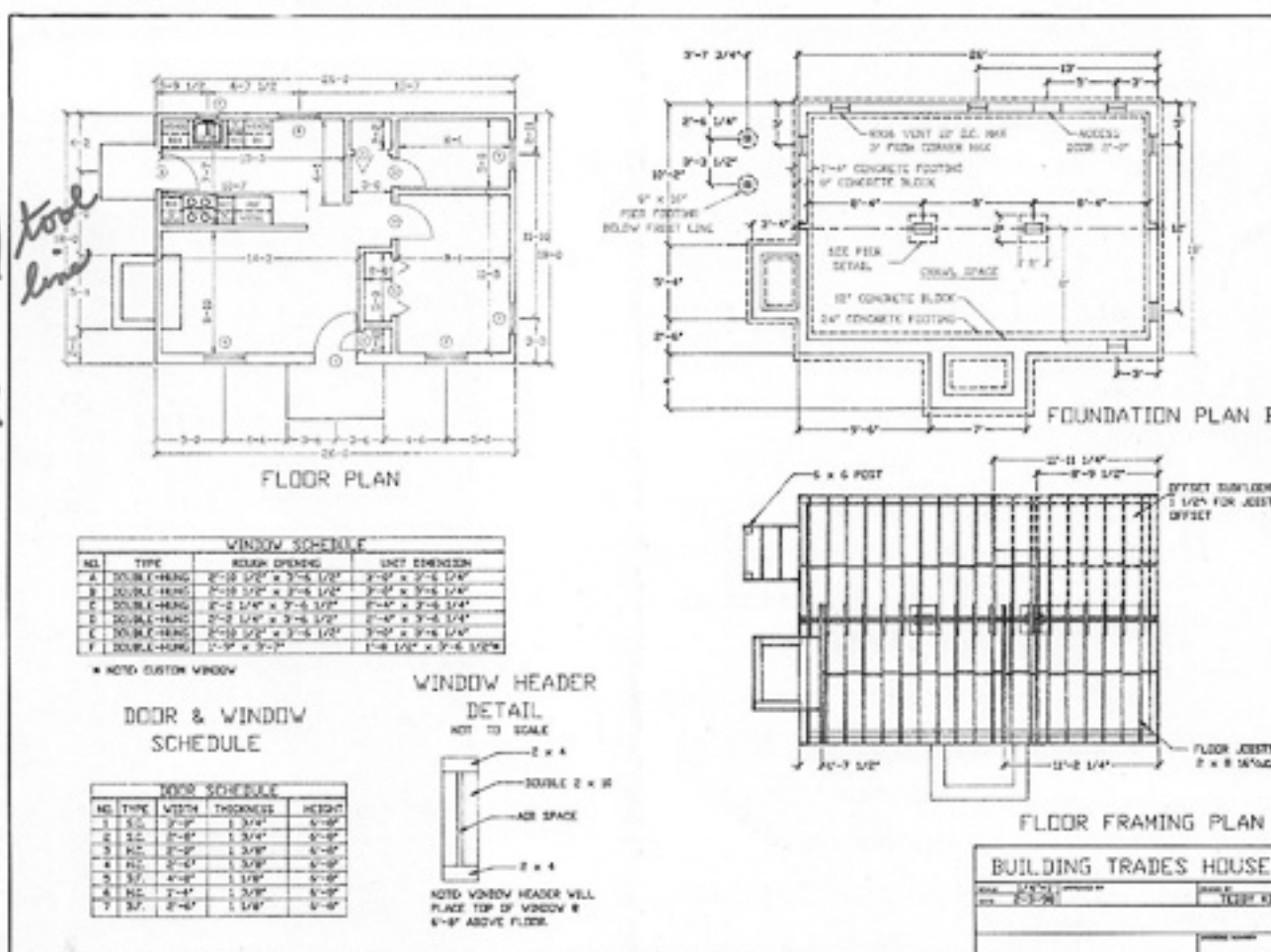
realize this is superhuman but by portraying them in this manner Dickens and the director of the film aid us in identifying our own moral difficulties.

"Nothing is good or evil, but thinking makes it so."

"Nothing is good or evil, but thinking makes it so." The technique of distortion to promote effectiveness is one that has been used since stories were first told. Myths and legends are distortions of real life lessons that because lessons are distorted it makes it easier to moralize *Great Expectations* serves the same purpose. By distorting the characters, the setting and the themes, Dickens conveys his sense of reality more clearly than true realism could ever have. *Great Expectation*, both book and film, use distortion to produce emotional and intellectual impacts. ■



Megan Baroody



Editor's Note: This design by Teddy Kim exemplifies his solid expertise in the technical field of architectural design. Teddy's original layout is presently being constructed by the building trades department at T.C. Williams High School. Technical drafting instructor Kerim Remzi prepares his students in every aspect of the technical design field, making sure that by the time his students are seniors they are well grounded in the principles of design and can produce drawings like the one you see here. Teddy is planning a career in architecture and will major in technical design at Virginia Tech University this fall.

The Squirrel

*great
photos!*

Squirrels know how to dance,
They know how to groove.

They know how to get
their boogie on the move!
Watch'em they're smooth!

They got the move.

Can strut their stuff.

So come on, do the electric squirrel with me!

You gotta' move to the left
and then you move to the right
and you shake your little paws
let your nose twitch twice!

Then you wag your bushy tail,
and you move your shoulders round!

Let your whiskers sliiide to the groove.
Ooooooooooooooh! Yaaaaaaaahhhhhhhh!

Throw your head into the air,
let out a little leap,

Move your shoulders up and down,
and go cheep, cheep, cheep!

Get smoooooth!

Get doooooown!

Let your cool stuff happen.

Yaaaah, it's aaalll goood!!

Now, shake your hind legs
so the blood's flowing fast
and twitch your little nose
and bend yo' back in half.

Boogie on,
groovy squirrel.
Boogie on!

Andrew Rankin



photographs by Andrew Rankin





Alexandra Holliday.

*link
between
pages?*



*good
design*

The English Patient

Ben Cannon

*A critical
✓ analysis
of
Michael Ondaatje's
novel*

Photograph by Mary Sherzy



Indent
→ Authors employ setting to many differing purposes; a dramatic backdrop for the main action of the story, a motivating force, or a symbolic reflection of traits possessed by the characters themselves. In *The English Patient*, setting becomes central to the novel as a combination of all three.

→ Of course a war romance cannot exist without a war, and thus there is a war in *The English Patient*. In this sense, the setting functions as a backdrop, intensifying the passions and the sense of urgency in the relationships. This is also true of the desert section, which gives a dramatic sparseness to the romance between Clifton and Almasi. The desert as

a backdrop also makes possible the eclectic group of "international bastard" desert explorers that otherwise would have been difficult to believably assemble in one place.

The *English Patient* uses the setting to a great degree as motivating factor in the actions of the characters. In some way or another, all of the characters have suspended or submerged their individuality during the course of war, and in the serenity of the smashed villa, amidst the ruins of a great society, they come back to themselves via relationships with the other characters. To Kip and Hannah, who have had to subordinate their personalities into shells of routine in order to deal with the honors they experienced daily, the villa represents stability and within its confines they can reclaim their humanity and fall in love. Throughout the invasion, Kip has only been able to take comfort in sculptures

and paintings, inanimate objects in whose lack of mortality he can find peace. He has been utterly self-reliant and utterly alone, but the safety and proximity of the villa force humanity on him again.

He has been utterly self-reliant and utterly alone, but the safety and proximity of the villa force humanity on him again. ✓

For Hannah, the disorder of the place becomes a motivating factor in that it forces her to rebuild, while giving her the peace and assurance to do it, "In one soil-rich area beside the house she began to garden with a furious passion...in spite of the burned earth, in spite of the lack of water. Someday there would be a bower of limes, rooms of green light." The villa is both order and disorder, representing an ancient culture laid waste. It at first seems to be contrasted sharply, both in its order and disorder, with the desert.

Almasi is certainly of the desert, a man who could, "Hold absence in his cupped hands knowing it is something that feeds him more than water."

Allow more space.
? The villa which contains rooms upon rooms, and whose gardens "were like further rooms.") But upon closer examination, the villa and desert become variations upon a similar theme: an ancient place, defined in many ways by its history, but a place whose entropy opens up possibilities and relationships not available in more civilized venues. "There was no order but for the great maps of art that showed judgement, piety, and sacrifice, the oases of the Italian peninsula." ?

→ For the English patient himself, the desert is both motivating factor and reflection of his character. It is hard to separate the symbolism from the effect of the desert on both his and Katherine Clifton's characters. Almasi says that the desert could "Never be claimed

or owned—it was a piece of cloth carried by winds, never held down by stones, and given a hundred shifting names long before Canterbury existed... Erase the family name! Erase nations! I was taught such things by the desert.” But the extent to which this was learned in the desert or present in his character before is never clear. Almasi is certainly of the desert, a man who could, “Hold absence in his cupped hands knowing it is something that feeds him more than water.” A man who wished to escape not only nations but obligations. “What do you hate more than anything?” he asks Katherine. She does not hesitate with her answer, “A lie. And you?”

“Ownership. When you leave me, forget me.”

Almasi thus travels in the desert, where ownership is impossible, where in the company of men he can spend months on end alone in a landscape that defies borders and certainties. But the desert forces human proximity while isolating groups in an emptiness. “Propinquity in the desert. It does that here, he said.” In this sense the desert is very much like the villa, where despite and on account of its

impermanence, the group: an Italian-American, a Canadian, a Sikh and “international bastard” were forced together uncovering themselves amid the rubble of the past. The impermanence they all felt to be apart of their characters at that point in time, was eventually what pressed them into relationships with one another.

The English Patient is about many things, but largely it is about people finding themselves, people defining and redefining their identities by their relationships with others and with their environment. It is interesting to note the connotation between the cave of swimmers in which Katherine Clifton dies and the trompe l’oeil room in which the English patient finally dies. (Both paintings in series ? landscapes commemorating a time when water flowed freely, when plants bloomed easily with a profusion of moisture.) There is a suggestion that here at last Almasi accepts the closeness and richness of his relationship with Katherine, in their proxy water-rich rooms. ■



Soaring firm above
 The sun swoops down and skims
 Along the cresting river
 Docking by the shore, the flying fiends
 Pause from flight,
 Basking in a shadow's glow
 Amidst the rays of sunshine radiance,

The birds race through leaves
 And brush aside the swaying trees
 The docks that stand, posed and sturdy,
 Merely float and quiver as the shadows
 Flash by and up to the sky,
 Returning only to break the waves and
 Cool their burning wings

Megan Hunter

good variation of type face

Flight

*You're right about the
 space; there is a lot!*



Urusla Miller

The Cycle

by Catherine Armstrong



photo by Addie Helmke

Stevie a small boy of five sits in front of the television. His body sits in there living room, sitting in the dilapidated couch which creaks when he moves. His ears hear the rain pouring down outside and the shrieks of the kids in the street. A gunshot goes off somewhere far away and it registers in the very back of his mind. The nerve receptors in his skin feel the cold draft coming in from the crack in the window. The water seeps into the house through the crack and soaks through a blanket lying on a table under a window sill.

His body is there to bear witness to all of these things, but his mind is somewhere far off into TV land. The place in which he lives is not just one bungalow, identical to all of the others in the housing project. He lives among the happy little children

with their grand old houses, big backyards with swing sets, and skateboards and big wheels in the street. The birds always sing in TV land and it is always summer. Magical things happen everyday and whenever he wants to, he can just stretch out his wings and fly away.

He watches the characters pop out at him from the screen and the images are food for his wild imagination. But suddenly, the figures disappear. He looks up in horror and dismay to see his mother standing over him. Her eyes are sunken and glazed over but that angry scowl on her face tells him he's in for something.

"Just what do you think you're doin'" watchin' that trash?" She shakes his shoulder violently.

The Cycle

"Why'd you turn the TV off mama?" he protests.

"Get up offa that couch and do what I told you to you lazy little freak!" Her slurred words set off an alarm bell in the front of his mind and tries to shake off her hold on his shoulder but she won't let him go.

"Let go, Mama!"

"I'm not lettin' " you go till you tell me why you didn't do what I said."

"I just wanted to watch the end of that show.

A gunshot goes off . . . and it registers in the very back of his mind.

Why I have to do everything right when you tell me to? I was gonna'-----"

She shakes him violently again and pulls him up. "I'll teach you to get sassy with me." She storms and smacks him hard on the side of the head.

A young girl, his sister, attempts to do her homework in the next room. By now, she is used to blocking out the sounds of rage and cries of pain from her little brother. There is nothing she can do.

Stevie is set free with only a bloody lip and a throbbing head, but comes away feeling broken. The only thing he has to fight with is his rage, pure, unstoppable rage. He leaves the living room and, with quiet purpose, creeps into the bedroom he shares with his sister. On his bed, an orange tabby kitten sleeps peacefully. Hearing Stevie's arrival through its always half-alerted, the kitty raises its head, stretches, and eyes Stevie with a sleepy gaze.

It is about to roll over and return to dreams of hunting when Stevie, with a sudden surge of pleasure

and power, runs at the kitten and grabs it by the tail. The animal, with a hiss, defensively turns on Stevie and bites his small hand. Stevie screams and jerks his hand up, bringing the kitten with it. Blood rushes to its head and it screams in fright and anger at being so violently disturbed. Stevie's sharp fingernails dig into the kitten's tail as he walks with it across the room. As he heads toward the wall, he jerks his hand wildly to avoid the claws and sharp teeth that try so hard to protect their owner from a small boy's torture. The kitten screams and writhes, struggling to reach Stevie's hand, though its head is almost touching the ground. The claws reach up, the jaws snap, but it cannot fight him.

The crazed little boy stands in front of the wall and stares at it, calculating a plan. His eyes are, by this time, rolled back in his head and he breathes heavily as the headiness of power courses through his body. With a mighty heave, he raises the kitten and slams its head into a wall. A scream tries to escape the animal's mouth, but it loses consciousness upon hitting the wall and then swings his small arm forward again. Slam! The front legs collide with the wall and hang at odd angles. The kitten

"Get offa that couch and do what I told you to, you lazy little freak"!

twitches violently but it is no match for Stevie; again he hits the wall with the dying kitten. Boom! Its body now hangs limp. The muscles in the tail quiver slightly and blood seeps from its eyes. It can do nothing. Like Stevie in the hands of his mother, the kitten is completely subject to his torture. One last time, he smashes its orange-furred head against the wall. This time, the kitten cannot even quiver in

response. Disgusted with its inability to fight, he drops it on the floor in a heap and stalks out of the room.;

For a time, the room is silent. The kitten though still clinging to life, is not conscious. It lies in a jumble of legs, the blood still dripping from its face and

coating the orange fur. The claws which had, just moments ago, been fighting to save their owner's life, are now sheathed and covered with the white fur of the

animal's paws. Outside the rain still pours

She looks around the room to see where it might be hiding. Her eyes catch sight of blood on the floor and, with a shriek, she rushes over to the wall. Her mouth drops open as she sees the kitten crumpled on the floor. She kneels down and a cry of disbelief escapes her lips. She cannot believe what has happened to her kitty.

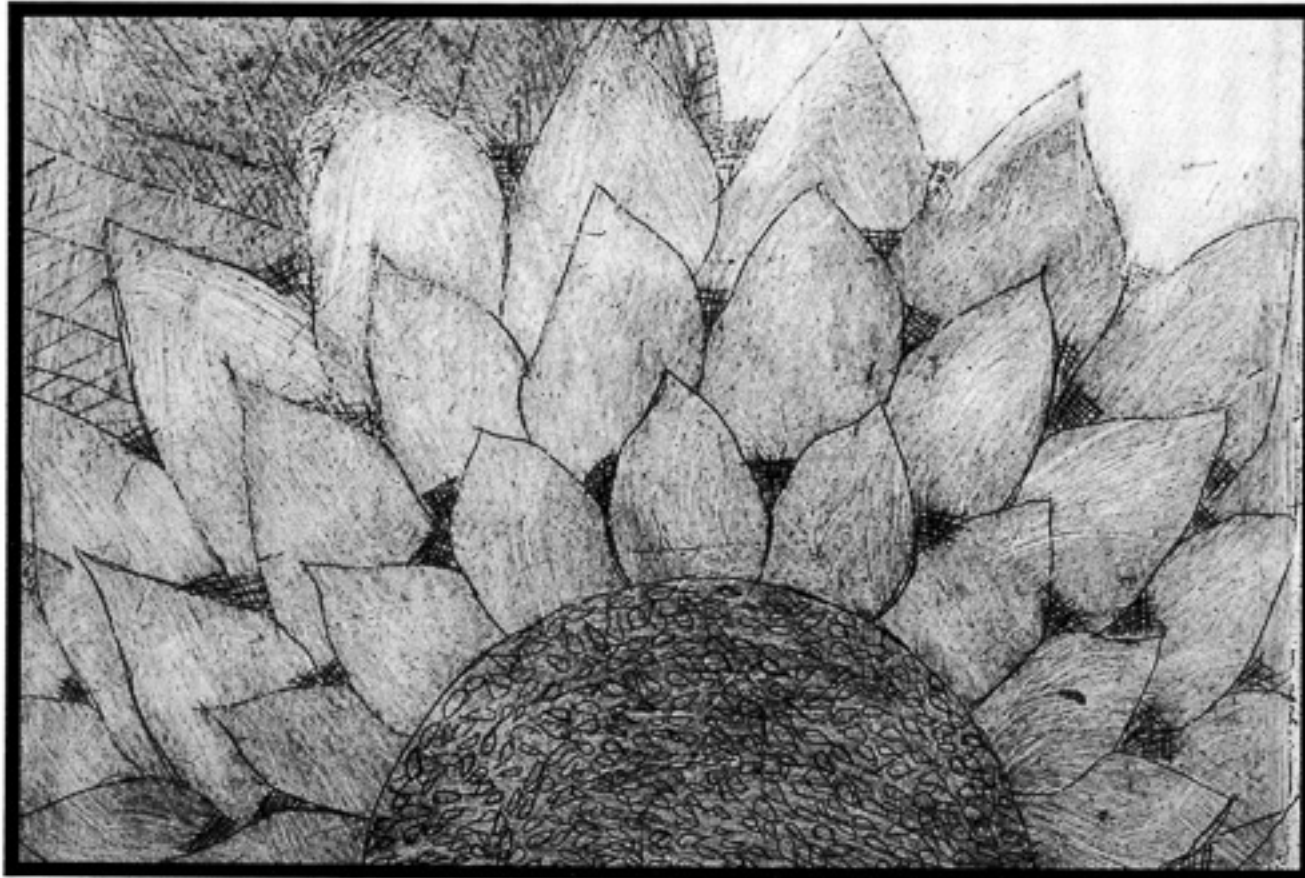
As tenderly as she can, she lifts the lifeless animal into her lap and peers into its eyes, praying that they will look back and see her. Her whole body shakes as she sobs, her tears falling on the kitten's fur.

"What happened!" she moans. For several minutes, they sit like that, her small frame bent over the animal. Suddenly, it stirs and opens its eyes to

stare at her. She stops crying and tries to get it to move. She prods its neck and chest with her small fingers. It tries to move its head up to be petted, but it cannot muster the strength. The kitten mews low quivers from head to tail, and dies.

Julie, seeing the life expire from her beloved

pet, begins to cry uncontrollably. She buries her face in its blood-stained fur and sobs with the grief and rage. Who did this? Was it her little brother?



Or was it her mother on a drunken rampage? Why would they hurt her kitty? Why was life so unfair? All of these questions flood her young mind and all she can do is cry. The animal's still warm body is pressed against her face but it isn't the same. She hears no contented purr, no little heart beating, no breath. It is just a bag of bones and blood in her arms.

No one would look for her until after dinner time and maybe not even then. She could run away, find a nice tree to bury her kitty under, and never ever have to come back. She could just live there, in the woods or by the river. She could hunt for food, just like she always imagined her kitten would have if it had lived in the wild. She could curl up in the soft leaves and make a cozy bed. She could, she could. No! She could do nothing but cry, alone with her kitten, alone with her sorrow.

Art by Olga Iraneta

For Those Days Long Ago

For those days long ago
 curled up by the fire
 for those hot-chocolate days ✓
 dripping, blissful with
 marshmallows
 and the goodness of
 Christmas trees

crystalline flakes knocking on the
 window panes
 caricature, carved out of the
 unfathomable snow
 with wild abandon
 we were angels of the ice
 lords and ladies ✓
 of fragile citadels
 until the joy seeped into our
 warm woolen mittens

for those days
 when we meant nothing
 and had responsibilities
 innocent romps through silver
 imagination's epitome
 leaping over brooks
 and our troubles
 endless crusades
 through primeval forests
 on little, well-worn paths of gravel
 and illusions

for those days
 when we battled
 the dragons of authority
 found ourselves
 jousting windmills
 nothing more
 than our own well-being
 quixotic dreams of a
 future never to occur?

And yet we would
 lie in the shady summer sun
 ice cold lemonade smiles

and the mirth of wild flowers
 staring up at cloudy pictures
 of our hopes for those days
 of wooden chairs
 and terra cotta patios
 living plastic
 toys marching



Amanda Geary

to the unheard beat
 of a silent drum
 whiling away the hours
 with ingrained patience
 and a well-read book
 Crayola ✓
 afternoons
 spent peacefully

in the company of
 periwinkle and burnt sienna
 or was it raw umber?
 for those leaf-raking days when
 the world
 cast off its working clothes
 put on its leisure suit
 origami fire
 fell from the trees
 and we donned flannel
 against the wind's fury
 pumpkin pie
 cornucopias of
 sweet potato cordiality
 grace of fresh -picked apples
 as we carved
 into pumpkin ghouls
 and cardboard masks our worries

for those days long ago
 when nothing could go wrong
 and a year was longer than forever
 what happened to those days?

as the earth
 circled the sun like a top
 those days mattered less
 to our busy schedules
 and appointment books
 no one had time to enjoy
 the summer sun
 the winter snow
 so they were left off our calendars
 thrown to the wind
 as little scraps of paper

for those days long ago
 when carefree and young was an
 everyday thing
 not an ideal for a mid-life crisis

oh! for those days,
 which we'll never see again.

Scott Johnson

excellent!

My commitment to the future goes beyond the "Keep it Clean" recycling campaign. It goes beyond the "Be Smart, Don't Start" drug and alcohol campaign. It even goes beyond the cliché "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." My commitment to the future includes all of these things and much, much more.

Everyone spends a lot of time preparing for his or her future. The future is the reason that students study, people work, and even why children brush their teeth. These things don't help you while you're doing them, they pay off later when you pass the test, earn your paycheck, and end up with no cavities. However, my commitment to the future is not only a commitment to my future, but it is a commitment to the future of society. I think of the future as being "the time that is to come." I am making a commitment, a pledge, a promise, to that "time that is to come" and to the people that will be alive long after I am gone.

We, as people of the world, have the power to make a difference in the lives of others. A few kind words delivered with a smile, can make all the difference to a lonely, hurting soul. Knowing that we can make a difference is why it is so important to give back to the community, to take time out of our hectic lives and do the things we always meant to, but felt we never had the time. Who knows if the confused child that you mentor today will grow up to discover the cure for AIDS, rather than turn to a life of crime? Who's to say that the river you help clean up today, won't be the same river in which your grandchildren will learn to swim?

I believe that as responsible, functioning members of the human race, it is our duty to leave

My Commitment to the Future

by Katie Keller

the earth a better place than it was for my generation. No, we didn't create the polluted, brain-dead, morally reprehensible world in which we live, but do you know what-neither did our children, and neither did our grandchildren. Should we do nothing and leave this mess to them? I think not! Maybe past generations haven't done as well as they could have done, or as they should have done in making the world a better place; but what's done is done. I believe that our generation can be different. As Christopher Morley said, "There are no precedents; you are the first you that ever was." Generation "X" doesn't have to remain the lazy, worthless, apathetic group of young people that we are perceived to be by some judgemental baby boomers. We are able to do more-indeed to be more than anything anyone ever dreamed of before. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Everybody can be great because anybody can serve." I truly believe this-do you?

I know a bright, beautiful young woman who is at a major crossroads in her life. This girl, a mere sophomore in high school, attends a special rehabilitation program in a school for kids with drug and emotional problems. Sadly, for six years of her life she was also sexually abused by a neighbor. I believe that this girl, along with so many others like

Editor's Note: Pat Herrity, English teacher at T. C. Williams High School, coaches students who participate in local oratorical contests. Katie wrote this speech for the Optimist's International 1998 Oratorical Contest. On April 15th of this year Katie delivered the speech at a luncheon club meeting held at Belle Haven Country Club. Selected as this year's second place winner, Katie says, "Competing in this contest was really fun and I sure did learn!"

photograph by Megan Petwill

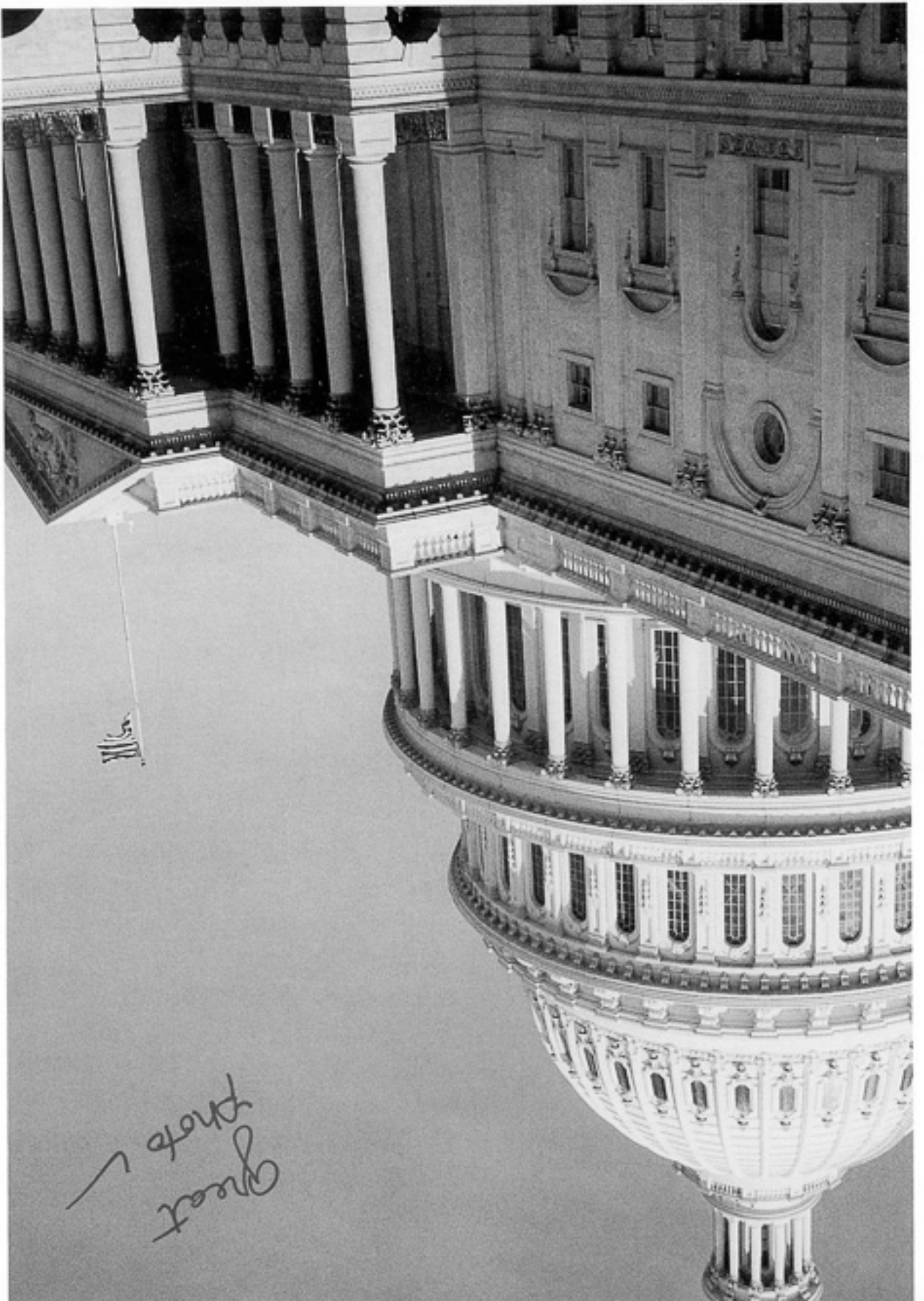
Israel Zangwill once said, "Take from me the hope that I can change the future and you will send me mad." Hmm...My sentiments exactly.

we are united in our goal, we will achieve it-and leave this third planet from the sun a better place for our children, grandchildren, and all future generations. This task is not an easy one. It will take dedication and perseverance. Some people will even try to stop us. But together, we can work through anything. We can keep our commitment to the future.

Some say I'm a crazy dreamer. I agree with them. I also agree with Edmond Rostand, who asked, "What is life without a dream?" So if you share this crazy dream, this crazy commitment, this crazy pledge, join me now in building this world. If we are united in our goal, we will achieve it-and leave this third planet from the sun a better place for our children, grandchildren, and all future generations. This task is not an easy one. It will take dedication and perseverance. Some people will even try to stop us. But together, we can work through anything. We can keep our commitment to the future.

My commitment to the future is to help build this world. A world where people don't have their lives torn to shreds by violence. A world where you can go outside and take a breath of fresh air, instead of a breath of carbon monoxide. A world where everyone has a friend.

her, can grow and blossom into an adult who doesn't attempt suicide and doesn't think about running away, but who is happy and satisfied with life. Molding this dysfunctional teenager into a contented adult will take a lot of commitment. She needs people to love and support her, not judge and disown her. She needs to be able to trust, to let her guard down without fear of being taken advantage of, to experience true love and acceptance. Only when someone commits to do and be these things for her, will this girl be able to flourish. Imagine-what if we could clean up the environment, get rid of problems caused by drugs and alcohol,



great photo ✓

A Sociological Analysis of
J. D. Salinger's novel

The ^{excellent design}Catcher in the Rye

by Brendon Barnett

The novel *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger describes the feelings of Holden Caulfield, a confused adolescent who sees his mid-twentieth century American world as one where innocent love is corrupted or destroyed, he is coerced and used by insensitive brutes, and people are "phonies" without real substance behind them. Holden's views of life are all products of Holden's struggles with society; Holden is overwhelmed by these negative social forces, and lingers on the brink of insanity and suicide.

Holden is overwhelmed by these negative social forces, and lingers on the brink of insanity and suicide.

In *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden sees his world as one where innocent love is corrupted or destroyed. He sees people he loves devastated by exposure to the world- his sister Phoebe, his brother Allie, and his friend Jane Gallagher. Initially, Holden sees his sister Phoebe as an innocent and free child, bright and not yet corrupted by society. This feeling is best shown in the scene in Chapter 15

where Holden watches Phoebe riding the carousel, which Holden describes as an image of perfect freedom and joy. However, when Phoebe tries to grab for the gold ring, Holden also feels the ride is dangerous. The danger represents what Holden sees as Phoebe's inevitable fate to become corrupted by the world, yet he says that she must be allowed to do as she wishes. Holden sees his dead brother Allie as innocent, because Allie was a bright child who took joy in life. When Allie died, Holden went into a fit of violent rage in his garage. Later in the story, when Holden is wandering through New York City, he begs the spirit of Allie to keep him from disappearing, as if his incorruptible love for his lost brother can save him from being swallowed by the corrupt world. Holden sees Jane Gallagher as an ideal woman who is corrupted by the sexual coercion of his intensive schoolmate, Ward Stradlater. Holden is angered when Stradlater goes for a date with Jane, and implies that he has engaged in sexual intercourse with her.

Throughout the story, Holden attempts to call Jane, but never succeeds in reaching her; she represents to him an unattainable female ideal, and his

alignment?

inability to reach her contributes to his feelings of rejection from the world, as does all of the corruption of innocence that he has seen in his life.

In *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield sees his world as one in which he is coerced and used by insensitive brutes. Holden is by nature a sensitive person, and is taken advantage of and brutalized for this kindness by people such as Stradlater and Maurice, the bellboy. In Chapter 4, Stradlater asks Holden to do his English homework which is to write a descriptive paper, so that Stradlater can go on a date with Jane Gallagher. Holden reluctantly agrees, and writes a heartfelt and creative essay describing his brother Allie's baseball mitt, which was covered in poetry that Allie had written while waiting in

the outfield. When Holden comes back and sees the unconventional composition, he yells at Holden, whereupon Holden grabs the paper and destroys it. Holden argues with Stradlater, hits him for corrupting Jane, and

lap to engage him, but he resists and pays her the agreed-upon five dollar fee. She says that the fee is really ten dollars, but Holden refuses to pay it. Later, the prostitute comes back with the bellboy, Maurice, and she takes

Holden reluctantly agrees, and writes a heartfelt and creative essay describing his brother Allie's baseball mitt, which was covered in poetry that Allie had written while waiting in the outfield.

eventually is beaten to the ground. In toward the end of the story Holden is convinced by a bellhop named Maurice to pay for a prostitute. When the girl comes to Holden's room, he only wants to talk to her. Holden is a sensitive and kindhearted person unwilling to have sex with a stranger. She tries to sit on his

her fee while Maurice unnecessarily assaults Holden. In both of the above examples, Holden's kindness towards others is repaid in hate and violence, and this hate helps to contribute to his depression about the world.

In *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield sees his world as

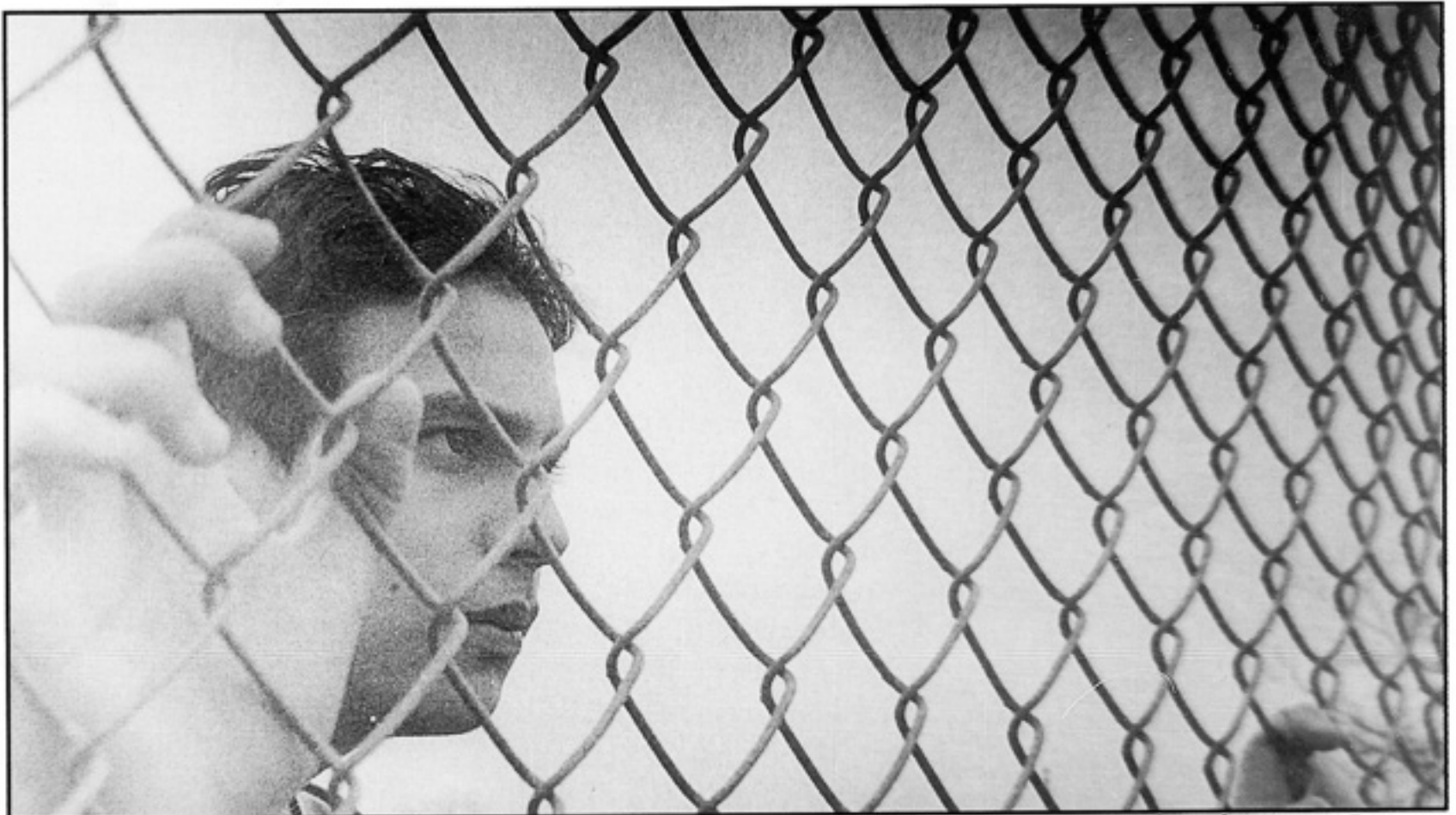


Photo by Aaron Riutta

one where people are "phonies" without real substance, such as Ernie, the piano player; the famous husband and wife acting team, the Lunts; and his brother D.B. Holden sees such people as sell-outs, because they have real talent. When

Holden goes to a nightclub where Ernie is playing the piano, the crowd is impressed by Ernie's virtuoso performance, and applauds heartily at each masterfully-played song. Holden perceives this to be a phoney performance; because Ernie is just playing for the crowd, and no longer even knows if he is really playing well. Holden purchases tickets for a Broadway show featuring the Lunts, and comments that "...they didn't act like people and they didn't act like actors. ...They acted more like they knew they were celebrities and all. I mean they were good, but they were too good." and the Lunts were like Ernie from the club in Greenwich Village. Throughout the story Holden refers to his brother D.B., a writer of Holden's favorite books. Holden see his brother as having real talent and feels he has become a prostitute in Hollywood, selling his talent in order to make

money from "phony" people. As with Ernie and the Lunts, Holden sees D.B. as someone corrupted by the world.

Holden Caulfield is overwhelmed by these negative social

Vaudeville shows, Lawrence Olivier movies, Grand Central station, and the fact that a prep-school student could nocturnally wander unharmed in Central Park would be lost, and Holden Caulfield would not have been the

same character.

Holden Caulfield is the product of a specific social atmosphere of prep-school "phonies" and brutes, young and jaded prostitutes, corrupted innocence, unrealized creativity, and the impersonal.

Except for a few people, Holden is unable to relate to his peers or his elders and he feels isolated from such people as the taxi driver and Sally Hayes, with whom he unsuccessfully tries to communicate. He feels isolated and alone, and

becomes suicidal and delusional. Perhaps if he had grown up in a different environment, with more people around who would understand and nurture him, and less exposure to unfair violence and corruption, Holden Caulfield would not have embarked on the four-day journey documented in *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Art by Brendan Barnett



forces, and lingers on the brink of insanity and suicide. All of these elements of Holden's depressing world are a result of his social environment, and also the social environment of J.D. Salinger. If the events in this story had taken place a few generations earlier or later, the significance of the rare record Holden seeks for his sister Phoebe, the depressing effects of



The Street Light

Don't call my name, my
child, I'm in grief.
I was renamed, therefore I
cannot answer
I should be silent now.
Forget, forgive
My poor sinful soul, my
flaming dancer.
Oh, only if you could
come down at night,
Unchain my burning
ghost, be my judge
And join my light with
that of One's in Charge
I would have nothing in
this world to fight!

But you, Oh Lad, you have
your father's power
The fire of his heart is
burning in your eyes
You will release me at the
final hour
I know it's fair . . . my
child . . . you're old . . .
you're wise.

Tatyana Pakovleva



All Alone

All alone,
Secluded from the
outside world,
Isolated,
Trapped in my own hell,
No one to talk to,
No one would
understand,
By myself.

Electricity fades,
The cold engulfs my body like a thousand spikes,
Chills run down my back,
The night and darkness have come.

My mind is clouded,
Memories fading,
Alone with my thoughts,
My feelings.

Andrew Dorin

link? **Editor's note:** Mr. Jeff Cunningham's tenth grade Honors English class took a field trip to Old Towne, Alexandria equipped with cameras and their imagination. The assignment was to write a poem inspired by a photograph. The students strolled the cobblestone streets searching for the perfect shot. After the poems were written, they were judged, and several of the best, along with their photographs, were scanned into the class web page. These poems and pictures can be viewed at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Oracle>. ✓

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