

EXPOSED

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Fulf War

Kimball Richards, Holdrege

On the fertile frontiers of the quiet land of Crecia in the realm of his Mightiness Emperor Benz, there lived a quiet people. Here in this heavenly spot of Crecia, serf and peasants cultivate the land in patchwork style. Three brothers, knights in all, lived in a simple dwelling of a plaster, stone, and sticks. These knighted brothers had their humble dwelling in the thickest part of the bush. Yet, only one broad path led to the mini manor.

Sir Rufus Buique was the oldest and held the major position of the manor and affairs of staff. He was also known as Unc, because he was so much like their uncle. Sir Luke Buique, middle bother, was more disposed to nature and its grandeur. Sir Christophe Buique was the youngest. He is still quite new to his knighthood. Therefore, we find him trying to get his pages and squires

in order. In all they were not battle, adventure, or dragon slaying, seeking knights but knights of peace and order. That is why they enjoy the rustic and calmness of nature.

They would spend hours talking, watching, and observing these wonders of nature. With their advanced education only in reading and writing, they would keep lists of flowers, and bird migrations. It was common for a guest of the three brothers to hear about their first sightings of jays, warblers, lilies, white trilliums, and daisies in the spring and summer. These three knights would work out deals with the farmers to provide low amounts of straw for deer or other wild animals of the forest during the winter. They would supply the serfs with three fine horses for plowing the fields.

It was about this time mid-spring that Luke was out with his squire and page weaving in and out of the bramble to the country road. The sun shone bright outside of the forest and meadowlarks chirped and sang.

“What a beautiful day!” The knight exclaimed breathing deeply the warm country air. “The cows are out. The young wheat are creeping through Mother Earth and what a delicious fragrance of growth.”

He paused to soak in the view like a sponge in shallow water. The earth was alive and the sun was pouring life and warmth to Mother Earth. The fresh green landscape was lush and pretty.

The country road, like a ribbon of dirt, lay on a green patchwork quilt. Two distant riders were spotted by the small party. As the two riders came closer, Luke recognized them as Lord Mazidi’s messengers.

“What now?” Luke Buique questioned himself in a low voice.

Luke hailed the two riders and questioned how Lord Mazidi was doing. Mazidi was well and so was his court.

“So what brings you here on a fine day like today?”

“Fine indeed,” the harbinger with a thick mustache and hawk-like appearance agreed as he shifted in his saddle to view the young barley and wheat. “I

would by the Saints, to keep everyday as fine as today.”

“Oh, what stirs?” Luke questioned hinting something was not right.

“War,” the harbinger replied in a grave tone.

“What?” Luke said surprisingly.

“Yes, Sir Buique,” the Messenger confirmed, “Lord Hon has declared war or something like that on his Lordship Mazidi several days ago.”

“What? War?” the baffled knight questioned knowing that Lord Hon and Mazidi were great friends but now enemies.

“Here is a letter, my lord wanted to give you. It explains what he wants and wishes you to join him in the Fulf Valley.”

Having said this, the messenger produced the letter, turned his horse, and rode back the way he had come.

Sir Luke was dazed by the news and wondered if he had seen that messenger before. However, too much absorbed with the news, he glanced at the letter and then stuffed the letter inside his tunic and marched back into the brambles towards home.

Sir Rufus was in the manor house eating a light meal of cold meat and some grapes. He was absorbed in the trills of the warblers and choruses of the song birds. He made sure that his munching on his meat did not interfere with the sound that was coming through the open window. However, this was silenced as pounding of hoofs became audible to the senior knight. He stopped eating, and the birds stopped their twittering. Rufus went to the north window to see who was approaching the house. Two riders in chain mail and yellow tunics came up to the front of the house.

Rufus wondered as he watched the two riders enter the house, why they were there. A page announced the two men as messengers of Lord Hon. These two men came in scraping their chainmail socks and jingling their spurs on the stone-worked floor. They greeted their host with a small bow and inquired how he was. Rufus was fine for the moment as he told them.



Hot Seat

Tyler Garrelts, Kearney

Fulf War

cont.

"How is Lord Hon?" Sir Rufus asked his guests.

"He is well in health," the oracle answered, "But greatly troubled in mind."

"What ails, my Lord?" The curious knight questioned.

"There has been a big dispute over some flowers with My Lady Hon and the Lady Mazidi and in the dispute, Lord Mazidi supported his wife's opinion and similarly with Lord Hon and his wife. In short, the argument became a debate and the debate became a roaring battle of which war was declared."

"War!" exclaimed the hearer of the news.

"Yes, war," the harbinger continued. Now, this messenger could have been Mercury or Apollo sent from Zeus proclaiming the end of the world.

"Lord Mazidi has persuaded Lord Van Hueston on his side and we have Lord Toshota. My Lord and Master is wondering if you will be joining us for the battle two weeks hence."

Sir Rufus was stunned at the news and sat down to catch his breath. Could this be true or is he just hearing things? At length, he questioned this oracle about where the great event was going

to occur. The messenger could not answer but produced a letter from his tunic and handed it over to the knight.

"This letter contains all the details," he concluded handing him the letter and retreating. "Lord Hon would like to know if you and your brothers could join him and crush Lord Mazidi."

After a moment's glance over the document, Rufus sat there and wondered. Could it be possible that the empire was starting to crumble? He knew he would need to talk to his brothers first before deciding. Standing back up, the knight told the messenger that they will send a reply by a messenger within two days.

The messenger and his aide inclined their heads and walked out to their horses. They soon rode off passing Luke as he came out of the woods.

Luke could sense that something was stirring as Lord Hon's messengers rode out of sight. Christophe was called in and later they all knew that there was a war within the empire and they needed to decide which side they should be on. They shared the letters from Lord Mazidi and Lord Hon and consulted the Pact of Benz Empire which they signed along with Lord Mazidi, Hon, Toshota, Van Hueston, and others when they became knights of the realm. It was a long night and a long two weeks of figuring out what to do.

Finally, the day soon came as the warlords gathered in the Fulf Valley. Ironically, the sky was cloudless and blue with birds singing and flowers giving beauty to the grassland. From a large hilltop, one could see the grandeur of the Earth in spring. The three brothers on this hill were saddened to see four large columns assembled in that field of honor.

"Well Brothers," Rufus broke the dreamy silence. "Let's go down and see if we could do something about this silly war."

They rode to the center of the two forces and waited for their lordships. As they waited, they noted a couple of flowering bushes of baby's breath. On the little wiry bush, pale delicate flowers peeked out timidly from their buds

which give off a beautiful fragrance. In one direction were the forces of Lord Hon and Toshota and directly facing them were Lord Van Hueston and Mazidi. Lords Van Hueston and Mazidi came with a man in a friar's frock who kept his face hidden. Lord Hon and Lord Toshota also came up on the other side with a similar brown-robed figure. As the four Lords came up, they stopped a good pace away from them and began throwing out questions at the three brothers in the middle.

"Well, what did you decide?" Both Mazidi and Hon questioned the brothers from both sides. "Whose side are you on?"

The brothers found themselves surrounded on both sides. It was an awkward moment for them all.

"We are on neither," Rufus responded with resolution. Their horses shifted at this response.

"But he said that you would join our side at the field of battle," Lord Mazidi roared at the three knights pointing at Luke.

"You did the same for us," Lord Hon declared also to Rufus.

"My Lords," Rufus began calmly. "We said that we would be here on the field today but we did not promise that we would join anyone's side, my Lords, only that we would be here."

This really irritated the warlords because they all equally loved and valued the help and loyalty of the Buique Knights.

"If you are not on anyone's side, then," Lord Toshota questioned trying to avoid the impending silence, "whose side are you on then, your own?"

"On the Emperor's side," Luke responded.

The Warlords acted surprised to hear this. The hooded strangers jerked at this as well but remained behind the speakers.

"The Emperor's side," Lord Mazidi repeated with a questioning look, "which side is that?"

"The side that you four are breaking," Rufus pointed out. "My Lords, do you not remember that we all agreed to the Emperor's Benz Pact when we all became knights and Lords of the

realm? In this said pact, we all agreed to protect and stay unified to uphold the empire from our foes. How can we break our word?"

"Now let us be reasonable brothers," Lord Hon cut in the conversation. "This war has nothing to do with the pact. We are here to settle some of our differences."

"I am sorry," Luke put in. "It does have everything to do with it. In order to stay unified we need to have peace among ourselves. It is impossible to have wars within ourselves and stay as one. Just as the great teacher said, a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. So we do not want to take any of your sides, but that of the Pact of which we all pledge to keep and protect."

"We entreat you, my Lords," Rufus chimed in, "to stop this silly war and join again the hands of friendship and unity again."

Christophe and Luke eyed each other and were surprised at the bold statement. Rufus just shrugged his shoulders in response to the stares of his brothers.

The four leaders soon saw that the Buique Knights were determined and resolute. They all looked at each other and nodded in satisfaction and agreement. Lord Mazidi approached a few paces and stopped.

"Well knights," he began in a cheerful manner, "are you resolute in what you have said?"

"Yes, my lord," Christophe confirmed trying to be as bold as his oldest brother. "We are resolute even if you may cut us to pieces."

"That will be unnecessary," a voice said that was familiar to the trio knights. It came from one of the hooded strangers who advanced with the other one. When they halted in front of the Knights, they took off their hoods and removed their robes. They wore the tunics of the Emperor and chain mail.

The Buique Knights jumped in their saddles and looked at each other. They suddenly realized that this whole meeting was a set up.

"Sir Knights," the rider with a heavy mustache addressed the three knights, "we are pleased with the loyalty that you have shown for his Highness. We

had come out here to test your loyalty for the Emperor, may he live forever. He feared of any possible factions in his realm. We also know of your trust that you have with these four Lords. Of a truth, they all hold you three with high regards and esteem. We principally wanted to test your loyalty to the Pact to which you pledged your lives, property, and honor towards his Majesty Emperor Welford Benz the Third. So with the help of these four lords, we have devised this plan to call war and see which side you would take. I will be glad to report that this trip has been successful."

The four lords laughed at the surprise of the three brothers who just blushed and slowly joined in with the laugh. When all was said and done, the beardless companion asked for Lord Van Hueston's lance, which he gave. The messenger waved the flag in the air a couple of times and then waited. High on horizon a red flag waved two times. The messenger responded with a circle wave and lowered the banner almost to the ground. The red flag repeated the gesture and then a host of men and banners came over the hill.

"What's this?" Lord Van Hueston said while reaching for his sword. "Nothing to fear," the mustached rider announced. "In fact, you are all invited to join the Emperor for a picnic this afternoon."

To this they were all struck with amazement and surprise, but they ordered their servants to warn their armies and then hastened to meet the Emperor. Soon the valley was filled with soldiers intermingling with other soldiers. The three brothers heartily enjoyed themselves with music, games, laughter, and merriment of the occasion.



Warm Water Spring

Ben Krueger, Hastings

My plane touched down in Chicago on a brisk morning in mid December. It was my first time traveling by plane and I knew immediately that it was not an experience that I would ever enjoy. The experience had left my body in a state of quiet chaos. My stomach was uneasy, my feet were shaky and my ears just would not pop. Ignoring these ailments, however, I forcefully sustained my calm, gathered my senses and made my way to the exit ramp, returning to the gravity of the real world outside. I found myself instantly satisfied with happy little luxuries that I had somehow managed to forget, like the keenly subtle comforts of walking and personal space.

A similar sense of relief seemed to overcome the other travelers as various voices began to summon themselves from the cloud of silence that had settled over us. There were so many

voices that they all bled together, hiding themselves with their own volume, but still the occasional “Mom” Or “Grandpa” could be plucked from the chaos that only seemed to grow in both volume and emotion the closer we got to the fresh air that awaited us just beyond the great glass walls. These many somber and serious persons, who had for the past several hours spoken not a word, were suddenly transformed into living greeting cards as they were met by family and friends with jubilation and abandon.

Suddenly, the differences between these random travelers and me became cold and burdensome. I found myself wondering if any of those around me had taken the time to notice. At a glance they might have discerned any number of differences. Someone might have noticed how young I was

compared to the much older persons that had traveled with me. My jet hair struck out so painfully in that sea of gray. Or one might have wondered after my well-worn blue jeans that contrasted painfully with the many suits and Sunday dresses that the others wore. The most pointed difference, in my opinion, was my lack of luggage.

I sincerely doubt they did, of course. It is just the way of things. As I watched each of these strangers intensely with feigned disinterest, I could clearly see that they were each far too absorbed with their own moments to worry after mine.

I consoled myself, however, with a secret vengeful joy of walking upright and briskly past my burdened cohorts with ease as I had nothing but my light jacket and empty wallet to weigh me down. I secretly delighted in their struggling with their heavy cases and carry-ons as they awkwardly tottered up and down stairs or ramps. I found myself shielded from the wasteland of their indifference by a sudden mean streak that flickered to life in me as I clandestinely reveled in their silly plight.

But it was not long before I discovered that I was not as alone as I had first believed. As I walked those

carpeted halls, I was slowly but steadily joined by others whose appearance far better matched my own. One by one, another young man in simple clothes would summon himself from the crowd of elegant strangers to march at my side, each with a somber face and no luggage.

Although we were keenly aware of each other, we shared only the briefest glance or nod of acknowledgement between ourselves as we all seemed so eager to escape that glass prison. We spared not one moment to speak so much as a single word to each other as we all trudged through that collage of random people toward a secret destination that was ours alone and ours together. We moved as one; like some school of land fish, we gracefully slid through the crowds, each with eyes forward and gravitating toward ever more of our kind as we went until our numbers swelled into the twenties. My loathing for those who had ignored me dissipated as I suddenly found myself overcome with a commanding sense of belonging and purpose, for their joy could never compare to the swelling of my own heart that I knew in that moment.

We maneuvered through those bobbing gray heads and suede jackets with

the powerful grace and shrewd dignity of the young. We were almost defiant of these clichéd travelers as if rebuking some implied insult of their very presence by our own in turn.

With every escalator we encountered, we climbed, refusing to ride. With every door we passed, we burst through with exaggerated prowess. Our steps became more and more vigorous until we had to fight against the urge to break into a free-form run down those inviting carpets. In every twist of the path, we made this trek our own as we joyfully endured the length of our journey that was in truth, much longer than I had anticipated.

It might have been a silly thing looking back on it now, how I had become swept up in that moment with no reason or rhyme for it, but there it was, this great relief in knowing that I was not alone, and an even greater comfort in the thought that I had in some way returned this ease to these various strangers that now marched at my side. It was a solace that would linger with me through the many years that followed.

Finally, our secret adventure was at its end as we stepped outside into that blistering cold and stood before our prize. We were nearly blinded by the morning sun and pressing winds. The air was almost too cold for smells, but there were the lingering fragrances of gasoline and cigarettes. It was not snowing, but bits of flurry were whipped into the air and swept around by the airstream. However, none of this could dampen our spirits as we collectively took joy from the sight of a promised school bus that waiting patiently for us at the curb. It was covered with black snow and yellow paint and big bold letters on the side that read “Naval Basic Training”.



Art of Deception

Ben Krueger, Hastings

The COMFORT of Strangers

Jason Woods, Hastings



Sticky Fun
Jon M. Buhlmann, Elwood

Look at Summer

Jacqueline Ott, Juniata

Look at summer,
With summer eyes,
As the pools fill up,
Under clear blue skies.

Breathe in summer,
Through your sun-screened nose,
Smell the sweet scent of flowers,
Where the green grass grows.

Walk through summer,
With bare feet,
On soft green grass,
Or take a seat.

Listen to summer,
With sunburned ears,
The laughing of young children,
As the end of the day slowly nears.

One by
ONE
Jacqueline Ott, Juniata

One by one,
They were pronounced deceased,
One by one,
They increased,
One by one,
They said good-bye,
One by one,
They flew to the sky,
One by one,
Our fathers and brothers,
One by one,
Our cousins and others,
One by one,
They went to war,
One by one,
We say no more.



Anxious Partner
Ben Krueger, Hastings



Forgotten Faith

Travis Buchanan, St. Paul

Remember the Times

Jacqueline Ott, Juniata

She sits in the grass and talks to him,
And hopes that he's listening to her;
She talks about life and how it'd all gone right,
Except for this.

She talks of the past and all their laughs they used to share;
She smiles and laughs and suddenly forgets about all the good.
She feels a tear in her eye and starts to wonder why she wasn't there for him;
She tells him she wishes she would've been there through his tough times.

She sits there for hours and just talks to him,
About the good and the bad,
The happy and sad,

And about how life has changed.
She realizes it's late and she has to get home,
But it's hard to leave him there alone.

Before she stands she gives him a rose,
And whispers "I miss you."

She stands with weak legs and starts to walk away then feels a gust of wind.
She smiles and turns to look back at her rose lying on his grave and says,
"I know."

182 Minutes

Christina Einsel, Hastings

The energy stifles me as I
Try to find my breath.
We are gathered like slaves,
Shoulder to shoulder,
Skin against skin

Looking up to the reverie that
Has chained us together
As one.
Soaking in the smell of bitter ale,
I am consumed by the sound that
Embraces me through and through

And I see what I already know with
Brand new eyes.

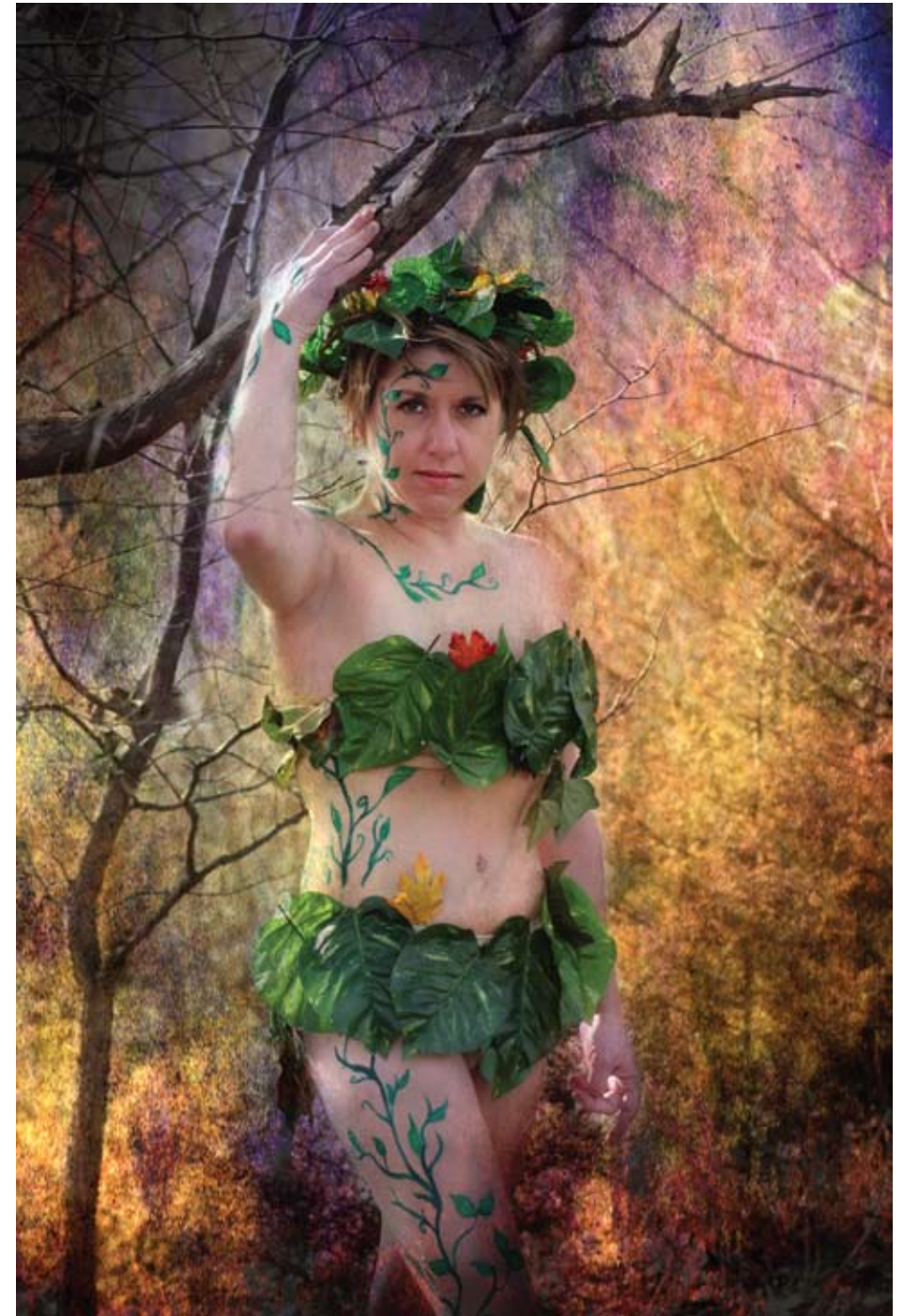
I feel the ground pounding from
Underneath my feet,
But my heart sets its pace to the overwhelming rhythm.

There's no Panic in the air,
As the moon becomes our
Disco ball

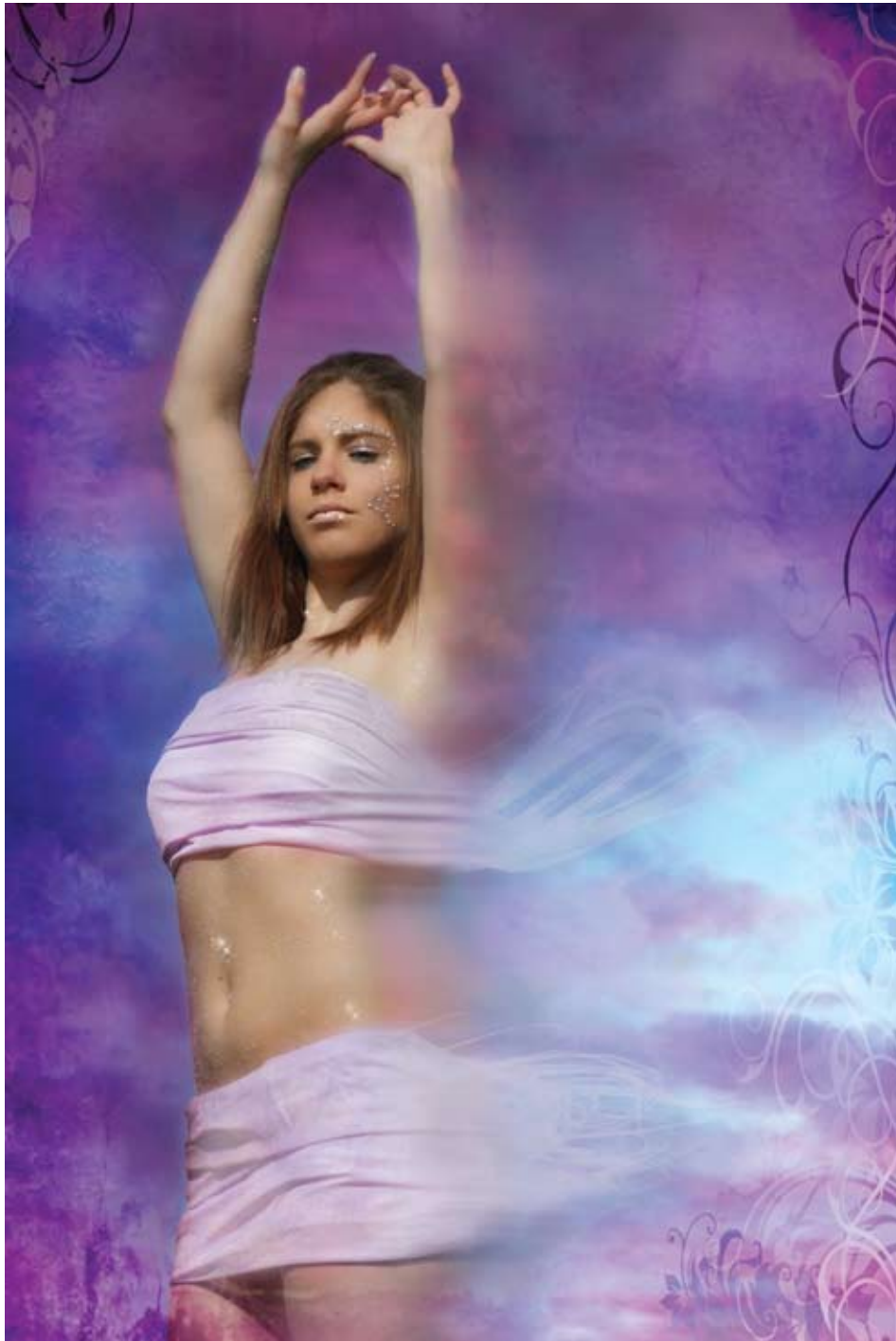
And the lights beat me repeatedly
I Blink, Blink, Blink
Dance and swerve and scream until
My lungs are torn away from me.

The beat gets less steady,
And the air begins to clear.
The only noises are coming from
The unknowns. From us,
Not through a filter that amplifies
The beauty which still rings in my ear

We walk
We Fall Out
I walk



Earth Goddess
Melody Rodriguez, Hastings



Air Goddess
Melody Rodriguez, Hastings

The ENCOUNTER

Christina Einsel, Hastings

I have met Hope in my darkest days
When I could bear myself no more
It was a flash of brilliance before my eyes
Hope encircled me with a halo of light
Showing me multiple paths that could never end

Hope embraced me with happiness
And my forgotten smile was invoked by grace
There was purpose within my soul
As I gazed upon Hope

Hope touched my heart
And held me tight
As I thrashed and pulled away
Frightened by the love
I would never believe

I have met Hope
And without him
My soul would never have been found
Fate has led me
To my guardian angel
To a new life

Terror

Christina Einsel, Hastings

The things we fear
Are unconquerable
Because we choose to let them be that way

There is nothing
To be afraid of
But the strength
Of our own minds
Which can weave deceit and slander

We are all capable
Of being courageous
But we envelope ourselves
In a net of safety
Blinded by security
Waiting for the right time to run or to surrender

Our souls are bred for bravery
Yet we cannot look past
The elements that petrify us
Into trees left only to stand alone
For eternity



Aftermath
Ben Krueger, Hastings



Under the Crescent Gaze
Abby Gentert, Hastings

Shadows

Caitlin Riley, Hastings

Shadows creep through the room
Watching in silence
Waiting for the chance
To strike

Alone she enters
The shadows lie in wait
Patience is their virtue
For haste will surely fail

Their time has come
Without warning they strike
A turn of the head
An open mouth
A silent scream
Blood pours over her alabaster skin
And coats the withered rose

Light had failed her
Like it always had before
This time she did not struggle
She surrendered without a fight

The shadows retreat
Her body falls to the floor
The latest victim of the darkness
But never the last.

Lost in the world
Nowhere to turn
Every word a flame
With a third degree burn

Lost in the world
With nowhere to go
So I seek out the ocean
For the ebb and the flow

Cause I gotta find myself
Gotta search my heart
Gotta look inside
And find who I really am.
I gotta find myself

Who am I?
Where can I run?
Cause the ground's shaking
Under the sun

Who am I?
Where should I be?
I want to go flying
Through the air, so free.

Cause I gotta find myself
Gotta search my heart
Gotta look inside
And find who I really am.
I gotta find myself

Searching my spirit
To find what was left
So I can keep what's important
And throw out all the rest

I think I found myself
At home in your arms
As long as I'm with you
I will not be harmed

Cause I finally found myself
I finally searched my heart
No longer looking inside
I found who I really am
Finally, I found myself
I found myself
I found myself.

Gotta Find MYSELF

Caitlin Riley, Hastings



Majestic Innocence
Abby Gentert, Hastings



Water Goddess
Melody Rodriguez, Hastings

Ugly Truth

Jacob Erb, Shickley

All to true, they come and go
With innocent and precious heart in tow
Oblivious to the reality in stow

At first sight perhaps
Or pursuit from the young chaps
Initial phase-- makes one melt for days
Over and over, that old record plays

Gone away is this enamored feeling
Constant remembrance always dealing

All to true, they came and when
With shattered hearts unwisely spent
Left only with painful sediment

All to true, they come and go
With innocent and precious heart in tow

Russian Roulette with a Flower

Derrick Joseph, Palmer

I was walking home one day and along the long path I stumbled across a group of wild flowers.

As I stare, intrigued by their sheer beauty, I find myself stopping for a better look. I wonder how the flowers feel growing in the warm rays of the sun and how peaceful they always seem to be.

I walk towards the flowers for a closer look and better understanding of how simple life would be if I had been a flower. I think of the happiness they give to people and I bend over to see why.

I stare like a curious boy at the flower as I touch its soft petals and the coarse-sometimes prickly stem of the mysterious plant. I even go as far as to smell the plant. I find no real reason why a simple flower would bring such happiness.

I then ponder the idea of picking a few and bringing them home to my love. As I stand alone on the path and pick the first, a childish game comes to mind, so I sit by the patch of vibrant flowers and begin the game.

She loves me, she loves me not, she loves me, she loves me not; I can only hope that the one I love loves me as much as I do her.

I continue: she loves me, she loves me not, she loves me, she loves me not; the terror of her not loving me keeps me wishing the flower ends on loves me.

She loves me, she loves me not; there are only six more petals left and that means she loves me not.

I finish it out though:

she loves me...

loves me not...

she loves me, loves me not,
she loves me, she loves me not.

I find myself horrified by the flower. I throw down what is left, hating it; I mean it must have been a bad flower full of hate if such things are possible.

So I pick five more flowers to take to my love who is waiting for me to return home.

As I continue my walk I wonder, "What if she really doesn't love me?" Where would that leave me? I come to the only logical conclusion: that I would be all alone with a big empty house we once dreamed to be full of children.

I push the thoughts to the back of my head as my house appears in front of me and I walk to it.

Then, as I walk through the door, I notice my love has packed all her clothes into briefcases and her belongings into boxes and as I run to ask her what is going on, I hear a honk outside; it's a taxi and without saying more than a "good bye" and "we are over," she grabbed her belongings and was off.

To where I will never know.

So now as I sit crying in my empty house with nothing except pictures to remind me of her, I find myself thinking of the flower and how it came to "she loves me not", leaving me feeling weak like I have been playing a game I couldn't possibly win like Russian roulette with a fully loaded gun. The gun a flower...the bullets love;

but yet not a gun aimed at my head,
but a gun aimed at my heart.

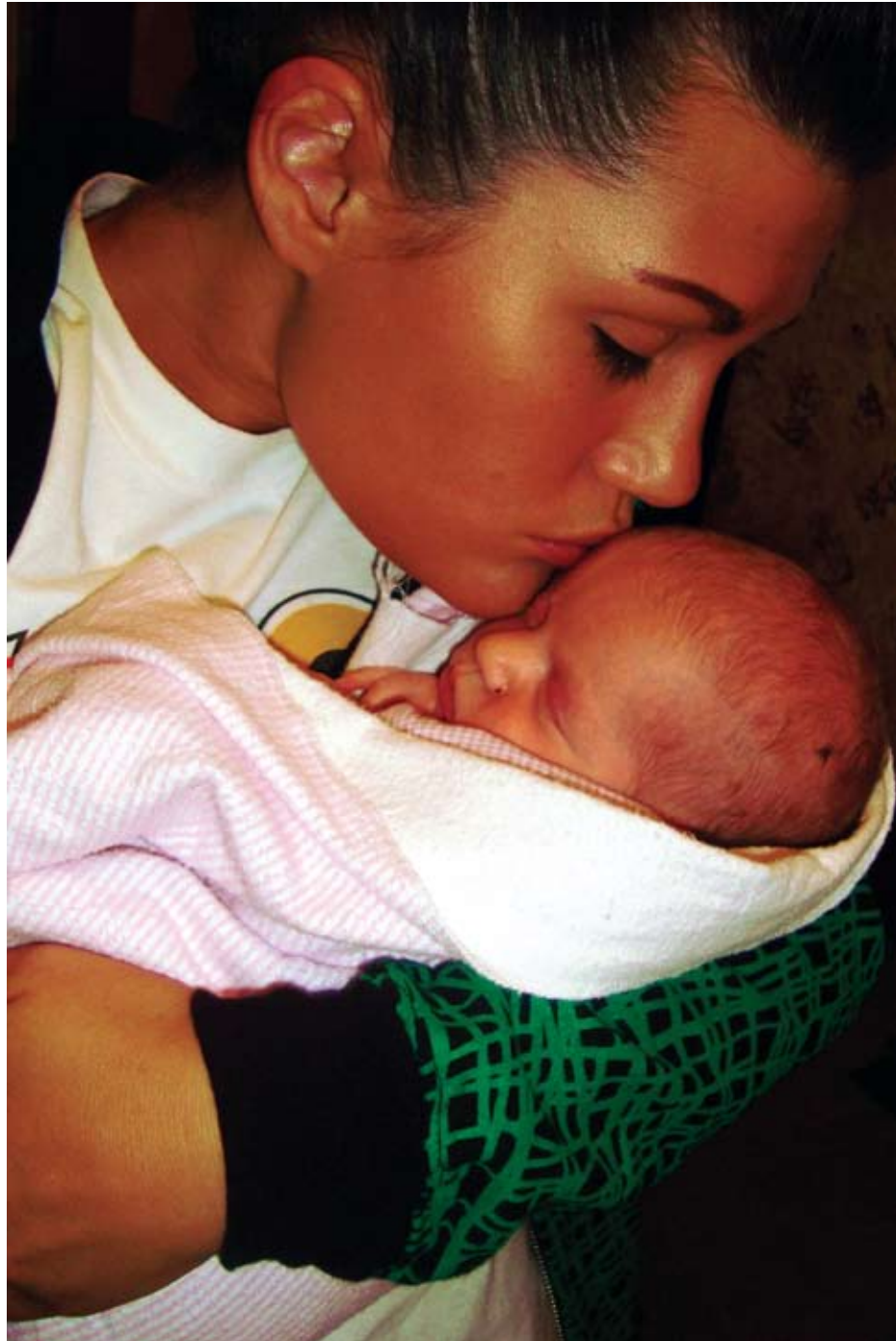
As I lay down on this dreadfully dark and quiet night (not even the birds are chirping as they do every other night), I can feel the hole that was left by this flower where my heart once was...

not a small hole, a hole like someone had fired a cannon and the ball went into my chest and out the other side with no way to stop it.



Fire Goddess

Melody Rodriguez, Hastings



Love
Patty Juranek, Edgar

A Mother's Nightmare

Melody Rodriguez, Hastings

Toys, toys all over the floor
Can't see the carpet or close the bedroom door
Toys in the bathroom and all over stairs
I'd offer you a seat but I can't find a chair
Each and every night I put them away
But like a bad dream they are back the next day
My home is in ruins as it is being overrun
And I sit here and think, why didn't I just buy them gum?

The Finale

Melody Rodriguez, Hastings

I sit here, enclosed in a sea of smiles
Hoping you don't notice my stare
Gasps from every direction trail each burst of light in the sky
Everyone smiling, except for you and I

Inside I am screaming, crying
Stop, why are you celebrating?
With each explosion of light
Another minute of your life disintegrates

The wind wisps away the smoke
And with it goes another day
Another moment, another memory we have yet to create
A smile, a hug and the wet kisses I would wipe away as a child

I know this is the end
The last time we will see through the same eyes
The last chance I have to tell you, I'm sorry
Sorry, for ever disappointing you

Here I sit, enclosed by a sea of smiles
Gasps from every direction trail each burst of light in the sky
This time I am smiling, because I remember you
Your hugs and especially your wet kisses
That given the chance I would never again wipe away



The Platte River Sunrise
Ben Krueger, Hastings



Faculty Advisors: Carole Meyer, Mary M. Dixon
Layout & Design: Joseph Zach, Hastings
Cover Photograph: *Frosty Morning*, Ben Krueger, Hastings
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