

# ARTIFACT

## 2006 - 2008

STUDENT ARTS AND LITERATURE MAGAZINE





ART BY: KAREN JOHNSON



## I NSTRUCTORS

CAROLE HANCOCK

PROFESSOR, EDUCATION TRANSFER

MICKEY KESSLER

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ENGLISH

J. DANIEL McMANNIS

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ART

## MAGAZINE DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY

JASON LOWTHER, STUDENT

## E DITOR

JERI S. KNOWLTON

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

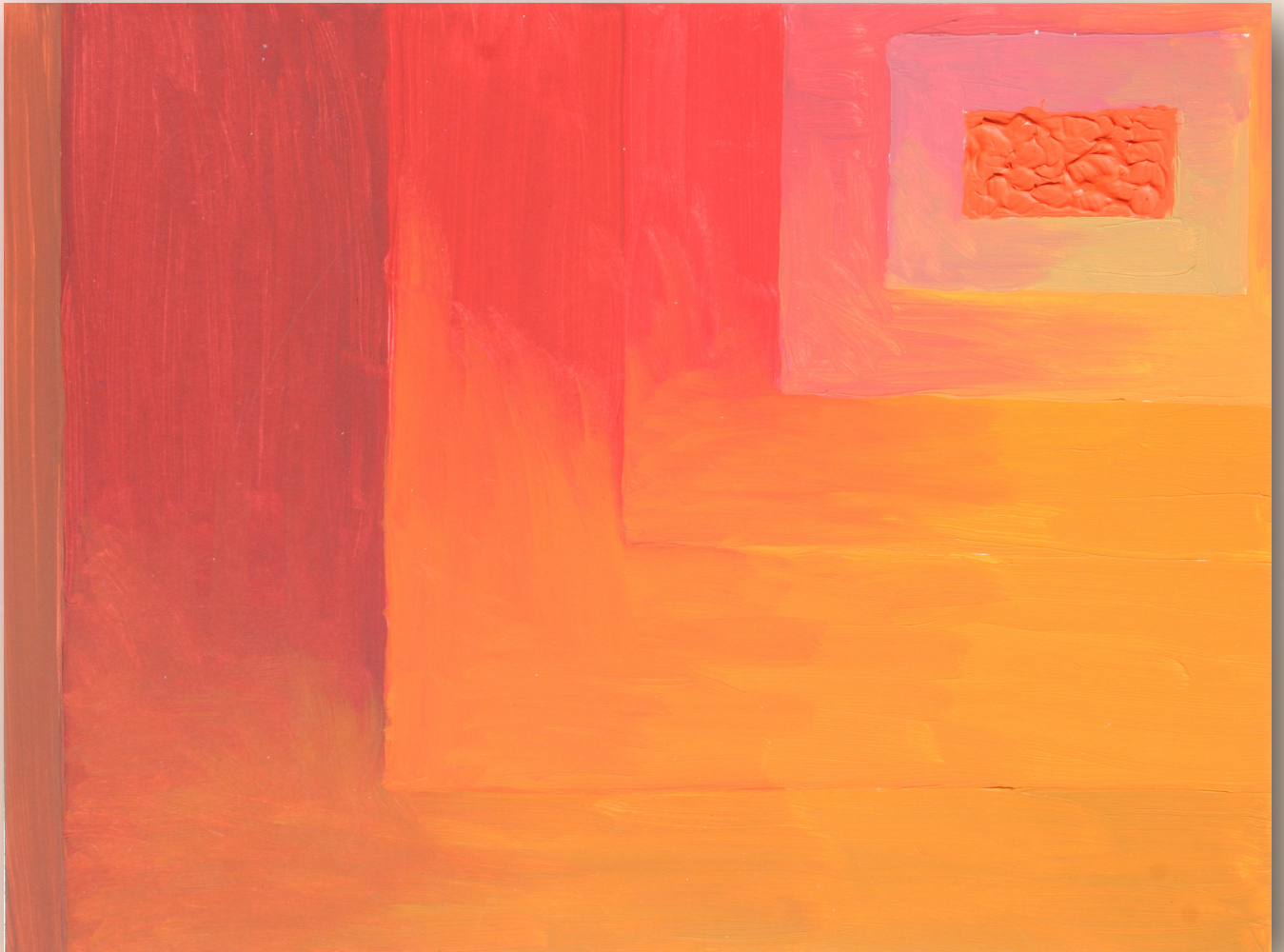
PUBLISHED BY WASHINGTON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

THIS MAGAZINE FEATURES THE CREATIVE WORK OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CREATIVE WRITING, 2D DESIGN, DRAWING, PAINTING, AND PHOTOGRAPHY CLASSES AT WASHINGTON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, STARTING FALL 2006 TO WINTER 2008

ARTISTS	PAGES
Antill, Kimberly.....	25, 29, 33, 43, cover
Crum, John.....	20
Green, Erin.....	7, 11, 15
Griesmyer, Don.....	43, cover
Hollis, Steven.....	3, 21, 22, 24, 31, 32, 34
Janison, Jeanine.....	30, 34
Johnson, Karen.....	2, 8, 13, 36-37
Kiefer, John-Paul.....	49, cover
Lowther, Jason.....	23, 27, 28, 35, 42
Martin, Jennifer.....	38
Mason, Lonnie.....	39
Name withheld.....	6, 7, 12
Steese, Kimberly.....	9, 10, 19
Whitacre, Rush.....	4-5, 16-17, 43 cover

AUTHORS	PAGES
CLARK, TAI.....	6
MEEKS, ALEX.....	14
PAXTON, KARA.....	26
SHEARS, JASMINE.....	22
SMITH, DAWN.....	37
VAKOC, SARAH.....	10
WATKINS, KATIE.....	32
YURCO, HEATHER.....	18

ART BY: STEVEN HOLLIS







ART BY: RUSH WHITACRE

# UNTITLED

BY: TAI CLARK

She worked at the Clark Music Co. in McConnelsville Ohio. In a town that, outside of her job, she really hated to be in. The many streets and alleys were filled with people that she detested. People pretended to be who they were not. What she hated most was the fact that these same people called themselves her friends. Every second until she stepped into the Music Shop, that is. Every weekend from five to eleven PM, Dolly went to work, and did so contentedly. Unlike many, her workplace was her favorite place to be. This was the place she came to get away from life, and all who were in it. Happiness had not come easy in her lifetime, and the shop had really helped her to develop a touch of it. Even though she had to deal with customers throughout the day, she was still in her own world, lost in everything music.

One of her favorite things to do was to open up a new instrument from its cardboard shipping box. Never failing, there was always the taste of cardboard in the back of her throat before she could ever place the instrument in its assigned place. The smell of the shop was amazing. It smelled just like a music shop should smell like. Mahogany...cherry... any type of wood she could think of was the aroma that filled the air. There was also a faint smell of varnish and polish that she only caught on a few instances throughout her day.

Although she loved the atmosphere of people bustling in and out during rush hour, this was not her favorite part of the job. She loved the time of day when she could see the customers thinning out. Only a few more people showed up after 9:30, and that's when she usually started to clean up and prepare for the next morning.

When everyone had gone home but her, left to clean, everything in the room was quiet, and seemed almost serene. The whole town seemed dead to her, only traffic was seen. That was when the music shop came alive. She would turn on the track lights that projected from the ceiling. She thought that it gave the guitars on display a sort of romantic glow. To everyone who saw the lights, their description would probably be anything but romantic. To her, though, the instruments in the cast of lights shed more than just their beauty. It shed a light on the potentially beautiful sound that could come out of each guitar, and to Dolly, that was certainly romantic.

When she was alone she would walk in every room, inspecting every instrument carefully. She looked at these instruments with passion, and in a stretch of imagination, she treated them like children. Everything in the shop felt to be here, if only for an hour or two. It was hers, and it was precious. Whether she had a

bad day or a good day, she expressed herself to the instruments. She would talk to them about her feelings as she tuned them and adjusted them. It was almost as if they could understand her. And yes, sometimes she did feel insane. This was all she had, and they listened so well.

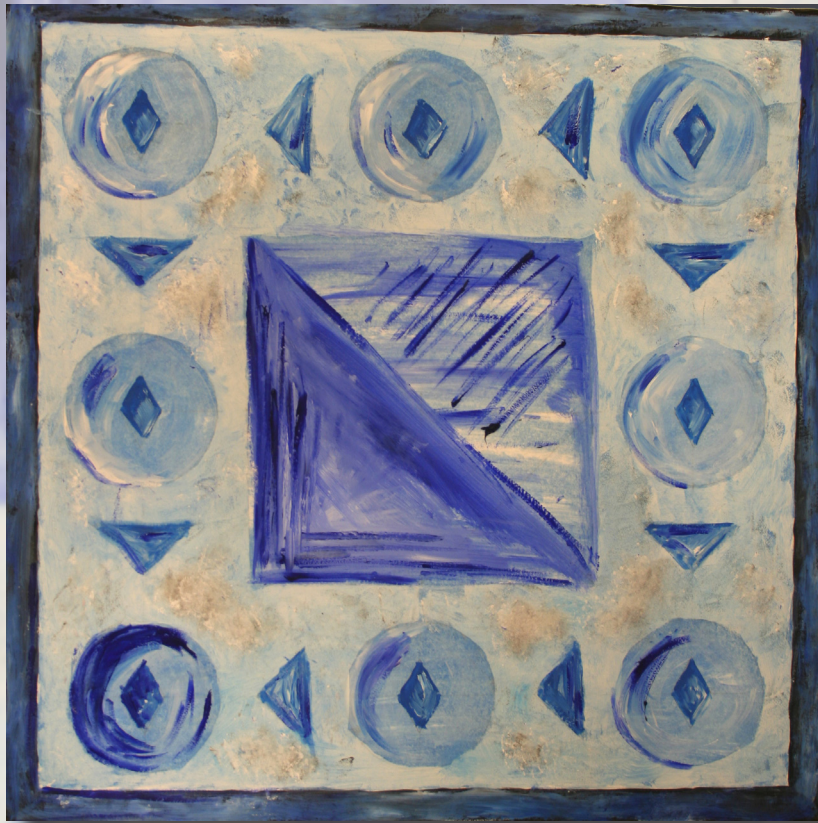
Her friends lacked in caring about her problems. In fact, her friends were her problem. No one would ever listen to her. When she spoke, of course they did, but they didn't listen to what she really was saying, what her insides were screaming. To her it was too obvious. Her friends did not care.

The music shop was the one place that gave her a sense of belonging and responsibility. She loved the way each guitar felt new in her hands. Although they may have looked the same in size and style, she could always tell the difference between them, by the way they intricately felt. The way that they all sounded different reminded her of the people she thought she knew, including herself.

All playing the same song, looking the same way in appearance, but when truly listened to, they are all different and unique. To her, each guitar had a unique story to tell, and she was eager to listen, in return for the gracious time they spent, listening to her.



ART BY: NAME WITHHELD



ART BY: NAME WITHHELD



ART BY: ERIN E. GREEN



ART BY: KAREN JOHNSON





ART BY: KIMBERLY A. STEESE

# UNTITLED

BY: SARAH VAKOC

The moist air filled my lungs as I drew in a deep quivering breath. I sit with my eyes closed but know that I cannot close them forever, not yet. I sit in this small dungeon cell seventy five percent underground with a small window that is the only eye to the outside. I am alone. I have no guest, only myself and the fear. All life is lost here. Even the smell breathes like death. It is dark and it is still. I know know what I have done. It haunts me, every day it haunts me and if these solid walls did not bind me, I might go mad. I feel her here...she is not alone, I sense the evil here. It waits for me. I look over and watch the girl sitting in the corner; she smiles knowingly of my terror and then is gone. I tremble. I look up at her picture. I start to increasingly shake from two things; the quilt of moisture that covers me and the immense and disturbed feeling I feel as I look at the small worn black and white photograph. It is taped to the wall. I do not know why I have it but I know that I am sick. It is a very small girl. She has golden blond hair that burns like the sun and her eyes flow into your soul. I pause at this because I am completely terrified. I dare not to explain it when I look at her. She has raindrops in her eyes, water in her eyes like water in

this room. Ice blue eyes that go right through your flesh and eat into your soul, but only because I have done her wrong. I lie on my cot and start to scream. I am alone and I am going to die. I look to the right. These bars forever enclose me.

The most wretched and fearsome thing in this room is the water. The water that slivers from the window and drips from the ceiling. The devil pours it here and I cannot say I do not deserve it, because it is the devil's water I do deserve. I find strength to lift my head and look over at the water. I feel the evil enter my body as I watch it slowly flow into my cell. It slowly, slowly flows until it creeps beside my feet. A dark puddle forms encircling them. I watch it frozen thinking that if I move it will follow. I know I will relive the nightmare as I do every night in a fit of restless sleep. I almost retrieve into blackness when I realize what is happening. It is raining. I shall pay.

I remember my beautiful Anna. I loved her more than anything this life could ever give me. She was my only source of happiness, my only love in my life. Her hair was white as the sand on the beach and her eyes blue as the sky above. Her eyes for a known reason had always given me a horrifying dismay. They seemed to



ART BY: KIMBERLY A. STEESE

drown me in her world and I would come back to reality realizing I was not breathing. I had an immense fear of drowning in her eyes. My mother had had those eyes and after she would have her spells and beat the bad out of me every night, water would fall from her eyes like they were escaping from the pool. But oh how I loved Anna so, death to us part.

I remember that day so very well. It was pouring rain outside and it leaked inside from the ceiling, there were puddles everywhere. Puddles of deep blue water. Anna lay in bed shaking and screaming. The doctor was there with her because I could not stand the sight. I heard her start to cry, that had never happened before. I glanced in and I saw the water dripping from her eyes. I saw the water dripping...the fear hit me so strong that I fell against the wall and clutched my throat. It was then I realized she was completely silent. I heard a new cry. I looked in and saw my beautiful Anna dead in our bed, tears still wet on her face. I saw the child. It was the first moment I hated that child and not the last. She killed Anna. That monster took away the only life I had ever cared for. I knew at that second I would kill her.

I had nightmares every night of Anna's eyes, my mother eyes, and the water. I would walk into the child's room and stand by her bed. I would desperately want to make her pay for the murder she had committed, but she would sit up quickly, slowly turn her head toward me, and open her eyes. The creepiness of her motions are unspoken of. I would not dare touch her for they were Anna's eyes. I lived this nightmare every day and night, until the night I realized it could not go on. I must get rid of those eyes.

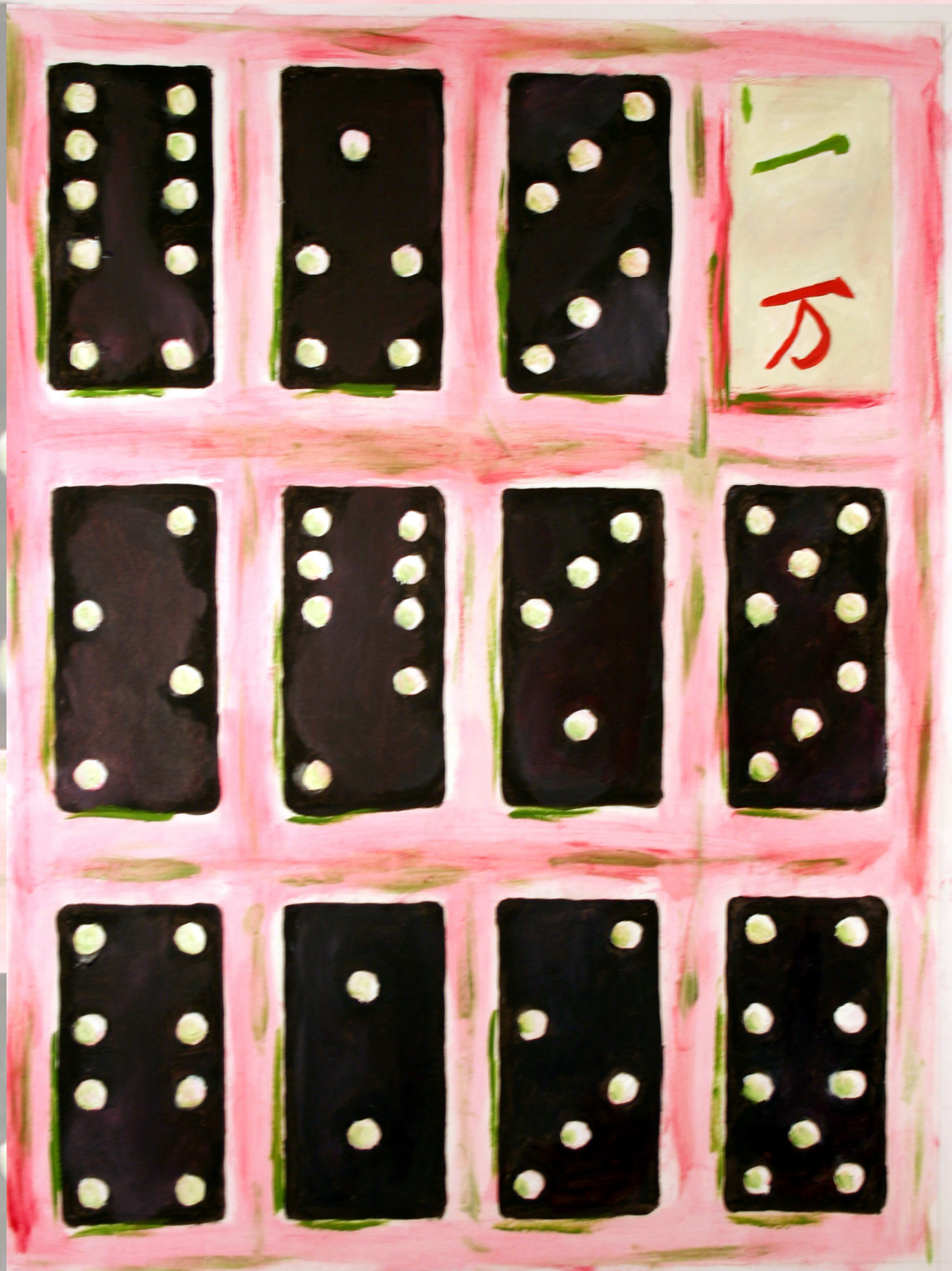
I lay down on my cot curling into a ball, sick with fear. The nightmare comes to me as always but this time it was a memory. She struggles away from me and I run after her, I seize her by the throat, and I see the water in her eyes. I only stop for a second until my body fills with the crazed repulsion that I swear the devil has put in my soul. I squeeze her throat until the water disappears from her eyes and I stare at an innocent face. I laugh to myself because she is gone. My daughter is dead. I have strangled her with my hate filled hands and I am glad. She took away my wife with



ART BY: ERIN E. GREEN

her birth and now I have took her away with my hands. I look at her body laying on the floor her eyes blank but I am suddenly incredibly frightened, I shut them immediately. They are gone. But the water remains. It was raining, and the puddles lay on the floor.

I awake by a voice; I look to my side and see the water. I am drenched with it. My cell is flooded and I am paralyzed with fear. I know I am to die. I look at the picture on the wall; the head turns slowly until she is facing me, and the water flows into my soul. It strikes me with a fear so substantial that I feel an immediate pain in my chest. I fall under water. I open my eyes and the terrible pain in my chest explodes. I cannot breathe. I killed the water and the water hath killed me. I look through the water and see her, her eyes locked on me. My eyes close for the last time. These bars forever enclose me.



ART BY: NAME WITHHELD

ART BY: KAREN JOHNSON



# THROUGH THE EYES OF THE INNOCENT

BY: ALEX MEEKS

**M**y name is James Henderson, and I'm fourteen years, two months and seven days old. I love the colors gray, blue, and red; I detest the colors brown, yellow and pink. I live with my mother in Waukegan, Illinois. Father used to live with us too, but he took too many of the blue pills and now he's in a wood box in the ground. Mother said he's in heaven, but I don't believe in heaven. It's not a logical fact, and I trust logic.

Mother and I were in a coffee shop one afternoon. It was a pretty nice coffee shop, but I had an uneasy feeling sometimes. There were two brown walls (which were right beside each other, so I just avoided that corner of the shop,) a beige wall and a dark blue wall. Mother and I sat at a table against the dark blue wall, because the brown part of the shop makes me feel bad and the color of the beige wall was too close to brown. Mother was drinking a macchiato (which I won't touch because it's brown) and I was drinking a cherry smoothie (which I love because it's red.)

This girl walked into the shop and she looked blue. Not the color blue, but sad and depressed. My teachers tell me that's called a metaphor. She was wearing a pink and yellow outfit, so I was immediately suspicious of her. She sat at a table for a little while and it looked like she was waiting for somebody.

Then a boy walked in. He was wearing blue jeans and a red sweatshirt, so I liked him. The girl in pink and yellow stood up and gave him a hug and then I didn't like him anymore because he had touched the pink and yellow girl so willingly.

The boy went to sit down but the girl asked him if he wanted to get coffee first. The boy told her that it sounded good to him, and they walked up to the counter to order. The boy ordered a mocha latte with some raspberry flavoring.

Then the girl said something about how that drink sounded really good, and she told the guy behind the counter, "make that two!"

The boy in the red shirt got a funny look on his face when she said that. Maybe he doesn't like it when people do what he does. If she had ordered exactly the same drink that I had, I probably wouldn't have liked it very much either; I really don't like it when people do the same thing that I do. They went to a table in the front window of the shop, but I could still see them from where I was sitting.

The boy still looked confused and he asked her, "no chai tea today, Anita?" (From this, I made the assumption that that was her name. Why else would he call her that if she were called Sabrina or Heather or Regina?)

That made her angry. She got really defensive and said, "I thought I would try a mocha today. Is that okay with you?"

Then he told her, "calm down honey, I was just asking. I just didn't think you liked mocha very well." I don't like it when people call other people honey. I don't like honey very much—it's yellow and brown.

Then she yelled at him for assuming that he knows her so well. "I suppose I should just let you order for me next time," she said. "And don't call me honey," she added. Through the Eyes of the Innocent alex meeks I'm glad she added that last part because I hate honey.

The boy looked really upset by this. He asked her what had come over her. Then he said, "I've known you for fourteen years" (that is how old I am!) "and you've never snapped at me. Plus, I've called you honey for as long as I can remember."

She told him that things change and people change, and then she said that she was tired of being predictable.

Then the guy making the coffee interrupted their conversation. I was glad because that was a sad conversation. He called out, "two venti mocha lattes with raspberry?" and the boy in the red walked up to get the drinks. While he was up there, she started crying, and he saw that when he came back to the table so he asked her what was wrong. "I'm sorry I snapped at you Brandon," she said. (I'm glad I learned his name then, it was bothering me that I still didn't know it until then.) "You know I would never try to hurt you."

He told her that it was okay, and then he said, "We all snap sometimes." Then she told him "I broke up with Jarrod last night." I assumed that Jarrod was her boyfriend, or else she wouldn't have said "broke up." He looked surprised, but almost happy, and said "Oh my god, I'm so sorry." I don't think he was being sincere though. He was probably just trying to protect her feelings. Then he hugged her.

"You're the last person I should have snapped at, and I'm sorry" she said. He put his hand on her back and told her that it was okay because everyone gets angry. Then the girl looked really happy. She grinned a little bit, and then she said, "I shouldn't have yelled at you like that, because, well, because you mean more to me than anyone else in this world."

The boy looked a little surprised when she said this; surprised and confused. Then he asked her, "what are you trying to say?"

Her face turned pink, like she was embarrassed. I didn't like that, because that put more pink on her, and she already had too many bad colors on. "You're a

smart guy,” she said, “I think you know what I mean.”

The boy looked surprised again, and he started to say “Anita, I...”

And then a man wearing blue jeans and a grey sweater walked in, and he was carrying a baseball bat. He looked really angry, and he started yelling at the girl. His face was red. Normally I like red, but this scared me.

“I knew I would find you here!” he yelled at Anita. “And I knew you would be with him!” Then he ran towards Brandon, and started beating him with the bat.

Mother screamed, and then I got really scared and hid underneath the table. I did not like seeing the man in the grey sweater beating Brandon. I was scared that he would kill Brandon, but I was also scared that he would

hurt Anita, Mother, the coffee maker or me. As I was getting under the table, Mother called the police on her cell phone. By the time the police got there, there was blood everywhere. This scared me, and suddenly I didn’t like the color red that much anymore. The police took the man in the grey sweater, and Brandon (whose sweatshirt was even redder, as well as the rest of his clothes) was taken in an ambulance. Anita got into another police car with other police officers, and I don’t know where they took her.

When we left, I told Mother that I no longer want to go to that coffee shop, and I had her throw all of my red clothes away.

I sure hope that Brandon is okay.



ART BY: ERIN E. GREEN





ART BY: RUSH WHITACRE



# MARRIAGE AND MUFFINS

BY: HEATHER YURCO

## Scene One

*[Kitchen: There is a table sitting to the side of the counter. A small stand is near the back door, visible from the table. On this stand is a small puppy kennel; inside it is a tiny wooden box, a picture of a white puppy, a rosary, and pink flowers. HUSBAND enters and pauses facing the puppy shrine.]*

### HUSBAND

(quietly, directed toward shrine)

Hey there, Miss Crocker. Still missing you sweetheart.

*[HUSBAND sits at table and glances toward the shrine.]*

### WIFE

*(calling from the next room)*

I made you some muffins. They are on the table. Fresh out of the oven, Dear.

### HUSBAND

*(mumbles quietly)*

Oh, yay... muffins. What about some dinner?

*[WIFE enters the kitchen]*

### WIFE

What was that Dear?

### HUSBAND

*(glancing back to the shrine again)*

Oh, nothing. I was just talking to myself, Darling. Will we be having any dinner tonight?

### WIFE

We always do, but you have been late coming home the past couple of weeks. I didn't want it to get cold again.

*[HUSBAND picks up a muffin and takes a bite.]*

### HUSBAND

*(stands quickly as he starts to speak)*

What the hell did you make these muffins out of? Are you trying to poison me or something Woman?

### WIFE

*(calmly)*

What are you talking about? If you don't like them, you could be a little more polite. You are always criticizing my cooking. I can never please you, can I?

*[HUSBAND quickly shifts his eyes back to the shrine as he begins to speak]*

### HUSBAND

This goes way beyond your normal cooking. Did you eat these, or were you just waiting for me to try them?

### WIFE

You know I'm watching my weight.

### HUSBAND

That's surprising.

### WIFE

What's that supposed to mean?

### HUSBAND

Never mind. These muffins belong in the trash.

### WIFE

*(growing more irritated)*

You know what? You have no idea what my day has been like. You are completely oblivious to the chores of being a house wife and keeping a nice home. I try so hard and you never show me any appreciation. I don't know why I put up with it.

### HUSBAND

I swear you're trying to kill me. You know what, let's just drop it. I really don't feel like going through this argument with you again.

### WIFE

Fine.

*[HUSBAND gets up to throw the basket of muffins in the trash can. He turns again to the dead dog shrine on the opposite side of the room, this time noticing the lid of the box is slightly crooked. He looks back to the basket of muffins, then turns to his wife who has a slight smirk on her face and turns back to the shrine again.]*

### WIFE

*(cooly)*

I want a divorce.





ART BY: JOHN CRUM



ART BY: STEVEN HOLLIS

# NOTEBOOK DREAMER

BY: JASMINE SHEARS

I deny your reality  
in favor of  
my own.

I create a piece of art,  
when I paint my words  
across the lines  
in a rainbow of inks.

I am still someone  
who goes on adventures  
with invisible friends  
to places that don't actually exist.

I keep the room  
in which I sleep  
filled to the brim  
with various odds and ends  
that I can't get rid of.

I am always wearing  
a silver band  
set with a red stone  
on my finger.

No one compares me  
to the sun, but  
instead to the moon  
bleak against the sky  
and not creating much light.

When it's dark, I pull  
the warm material  
close to my body  
and borrow underneath  
like a butterfly in a cocoon.

I scribble in there  
wire bound pads  
of lined paper.





ART BY: STEVEN HOLLIS (LEFT)

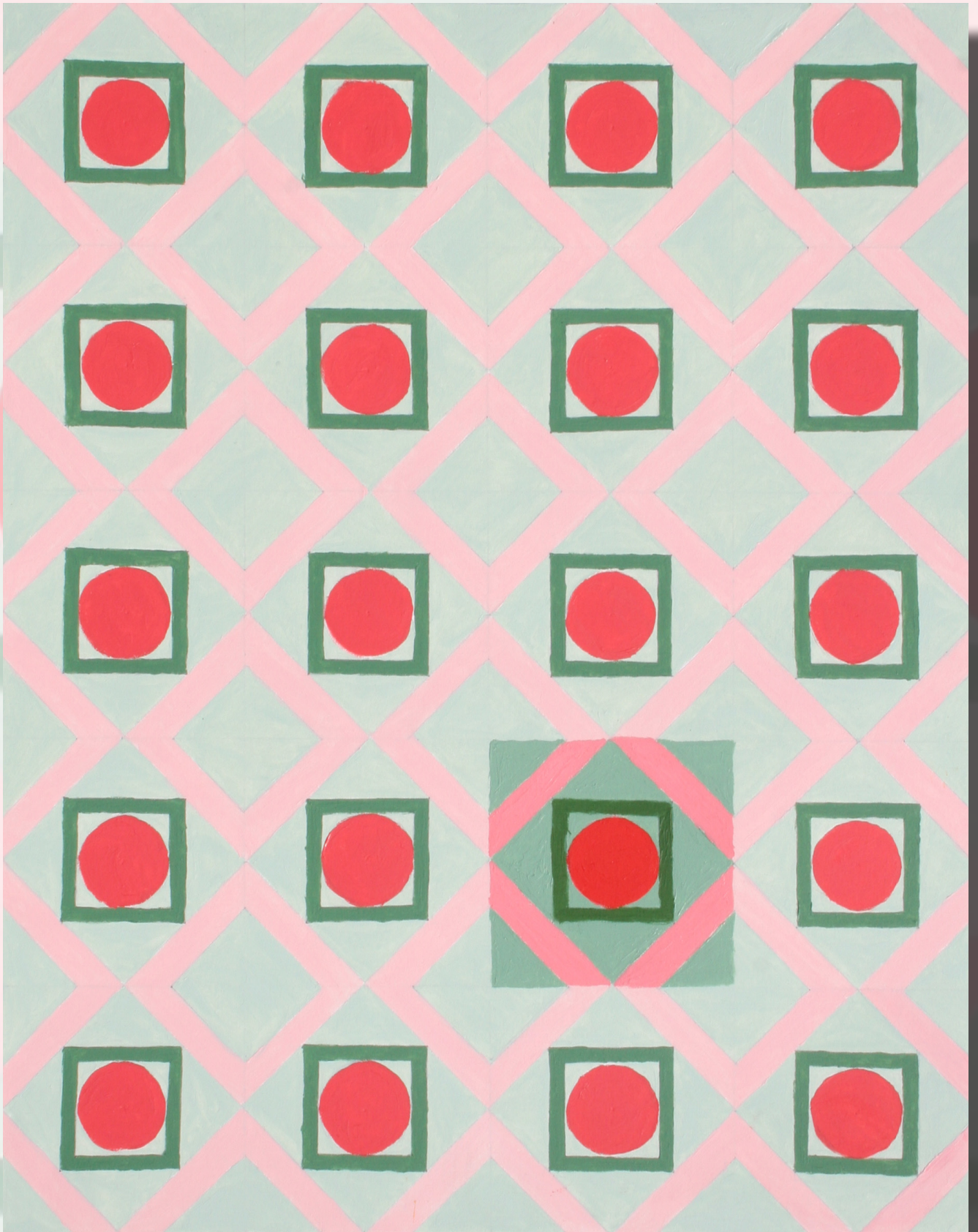


ART BY: JASON LOWTHER (RIGHT)



ART BY: STEVEN HOLLIS





ART BY: KIMBERLY ANTILL

# MEMOIR OF A DAUGHTER

BY: KARA PAXTON

While loading my things into my little black Grand Am, I kissed my mother on the cheek and reassured her that I was not moving away for good but was simply going to be about a half hour down the road, give or take a few minutes based on the slow pace at which my stepfather drives.

I was on my way to my father's house, getting ready to start my first quarter of college. I had spent the summer at Lake Erie trapped in a camping trailer with a dog, my mother and step father. I was ready to finally get to spend some time with the rest of my family.

The start of college was great. I was meeting new people, and the opportunity to live in town gave me a chance to experience new things. I was never one to enjoy the thought of a big city life, but I was excited to be able to go to places in just a few minutes. I also got to spend a lot of time with my father.

Often times, when I didn't have school, we would load up the car and find something to do. He would never tell me where we were going, but my father was not one to stay inside and watch television all day.

Before, when we went somewhere we would have to go on weekends because I was in high school and had school everyday of the week. My dad was sick so he couldn't fulfill the duties of a day after day job, and I had didn't have school on Fridays since I was in college. We were able to just get up and go without my sister or stepmother being there with us because they had to work. With just the two of us, I was able to learn much about my father, and many times I didn't care where we were going or how long it would take to get there, as long as I was with him.

I became "daddy's little girl." We did everything together, and in a way, we became the best of friends. I knew that my father was sick. It didn't stop me from allowing myself to become close to him. His illness, however, did stop me from telling him about one of the most important things in my life.

Ever since I was a little girl my father told me that a black person and a white person should never date, or marry. He always looked down on people who spoke another language if we were in a restaurant or a public place. He believed that if a person was in America they should be able to speak English. I guess I could say that he was not a person who enjoyed cultural diversity.

Well, a little over a year ago I met this guy, David, who just happened to be from Venezuela. He'd come to the United States about three years prior. While getting to know him, I realized that I liked him very much. I never told my mother about him until about three months into our relationship. When I took David to meet my



ART BY: JASON LOWTHER

mother and stepfather, my stepfather didn't take to him very well, and told the rest of the family, who had not met him yet, that he was stupid. I didn't care about the way my stepfather reacted; I really didn't care about what he thought of David, because we have had many differences in the past.

As David's and my relationship progressed, so did the relationship between my father and his sickness. There were times when I would not see my father for a week because he would be in the hospital in Columbus. Though two and a half hours away, this was the closest place to get the medical treatment he needed. I had to work and go to school, which didn't allow me to go to visit him often. I went on with my day-to-day activities, in denial of the fact that something was actually wrong with my dad.

While discovering that the relationship between David and I was progressing, I started to tell more people. I told my sister and stepmother, and even explained to them that he was, in fact, Hispanic. Upon telling my stepmother, though, I asked her what my father would think of the situation. She said that she wasn't sure and that I should probably wait. Based upon the way my stepfather reacted, I was sure that my father would react the same way. My father was dealing with enough of his own problems, and I wanted my father to get to know David before I told him about our relationship. I cared about what my father thought. So often times I would bring David around, and when I first introduced him to my father, David was just a friend.

Months passed, and my father was in and out of the hospital. In the middle of October, I began to realize what exactly was happening to my father. He began trying to talk to me about death, and how he felt, and exactly what was happening to him and his body. I refused to talk due to the bad mood and tears that I knew would for sure follow. One time, though, I couldn't avoid the situation. My sister was taking my father to the hospital in Columbus. We knew that there was a great possibility of him having to stay there. I rode up with them, so my sister wouldn't have to drive home by herself in the dark. My sister was driving and I was in the front seat. My father sat in the backseat behind my sister.

"Kara", he said, "would you turn around here and look at me?"

I thought that I had done something wrong because of the tone in my father's voice. I turned around to face him, and noticed that look of concern on his tired face.

"Yes Dad?" I asked.

"Kara, while in the hospital, you will hear things being said by the doctor. There are things that you don't know about, and whatever you hear, should not be repeated to anyone."

"What kind of things, Dad?"

"Kara, I am just asking you to not say anything to anyone."

"Okay, Dad," I answered while turning back around to face front, wondering what I was about to find out.

When we got there, I grabbed a wheelchair and then went to the car to grab my computer bag off the back seat, and to get my dad. I insisted that I wheel my father into the hospital, and he laughed at me because I kept hitting the sides of the doors with the legs of the wheelchair. When we arrived at the front desk, the secretary told us the news that let us know we would definitely need my dad's overnight bags. We got settled into his room, and I started up my computer and found a game to play. To me this was just another hospital visit with my dad.

The Doctor eventually came in and started asking the typical doctor/patient questions. To my dad, these questions were as familiar to him as they were to the doctor. I was hearing the doctor but not listening to him, until he said the words "lung cancer." My stomach dropped, and I could feel myself becoming nauseated. When we were leaving, I asked my sister how long she had known about the cancer. She said that it had only been about a month and that my dad was just trying to keep me from having to worry and deal with it.

I was unable to talk about what happened at the hospital not only because my father didn't want me to, but also because I was emotionally unable to do so. David kept me close, and understood that I couldn't tell him what was wrong. While my father grew sicker and sicker, I grew more stressed about the end of the quarter and finals, and the thought about telling my

father about David and I had not even crossed my mind. The week before my finals, my father went back into the hospital. He was in there for a week, and I was unable to go up to see him. Again, I thought that this would be just another weeklong hospital stay, and he would come home again and everything would be like it was before. I was wrong. He went into the hospital on a Friday. That Monday my sister came home and told me that Dad was not doing very well at all. We had plans to go see him, but we had to change them to get the house situated for hospice coming up on that Thursday. My sister also explained to me exactly what hospice was all about. She told me that it was when home nurses come into the house to take care of a terminally ill patient who was not expected to live longer than six months. I didn't know what to say, and I had never felt so scared in my life.

My father was so drugged up that he couldn't talk on the phone and kept falling asleep while talking to my sister. My sister just joked with him about falling asleep; I think to just keep the tears held back. I never got to talk to him or see him during that last hospital stay.

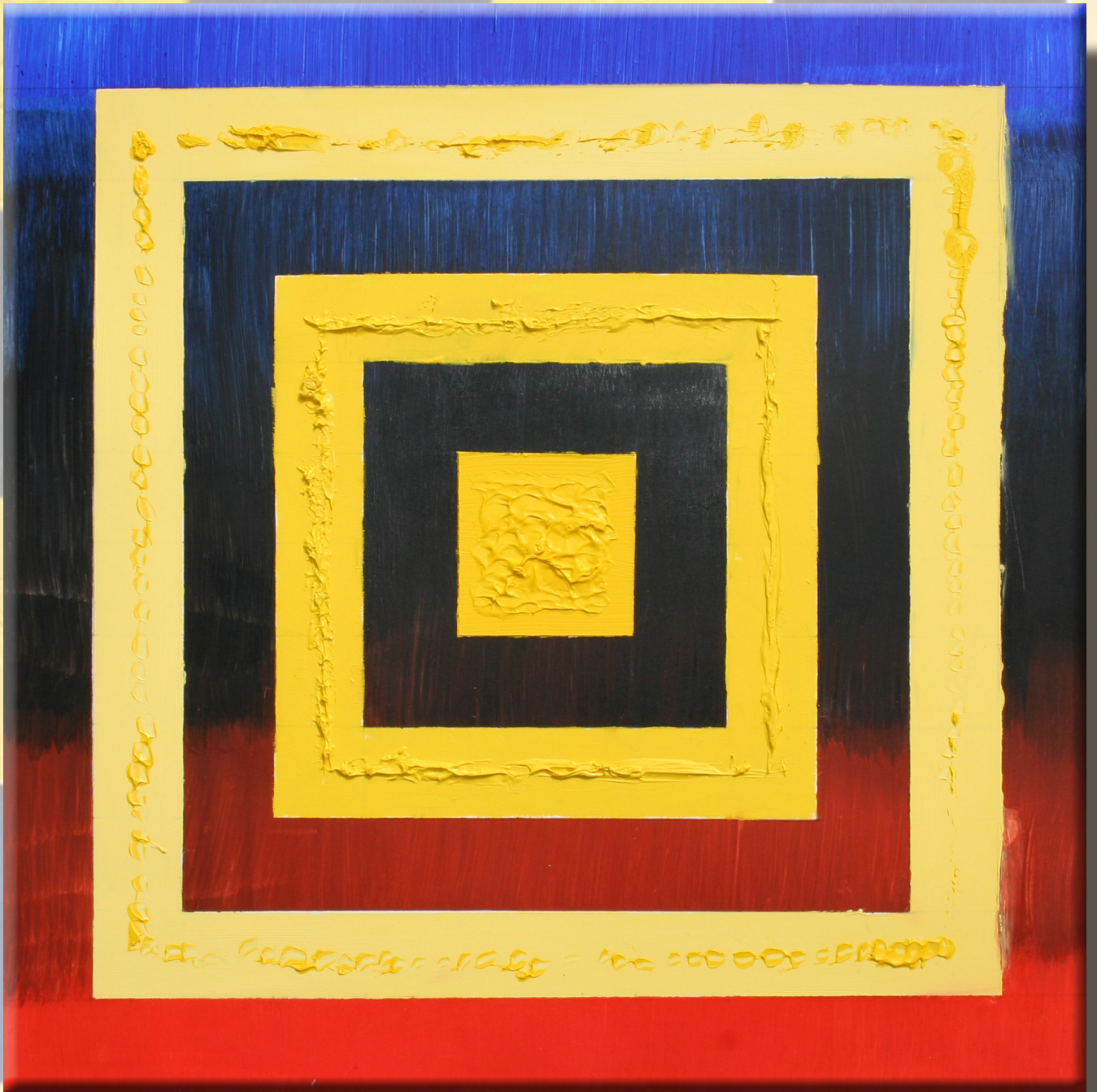
My father arrived home that Thursday in an ambulance. My father was taken into the house when I was getting home from school. I stood on the porch crying. My aunt from Georgia had just arrived that day, and she came out to comfort me. I was able to go into the bedroom after hospice left, and talk to him. I knew that he wasn't completely in his right mind.

The first words I said to him were, "I Love You, Daddy." He turned to me and said, "I love you, too." I gave him a kiss on the forehead and walked out of the room to get a better understanding everything going on around me.

That evening, I stayed with him as much as possible. He was not the father that I knew, nor the father I wanted to know, but I stayed for the sake of my sanity. My father passed away the morning of November 9th, 2007.

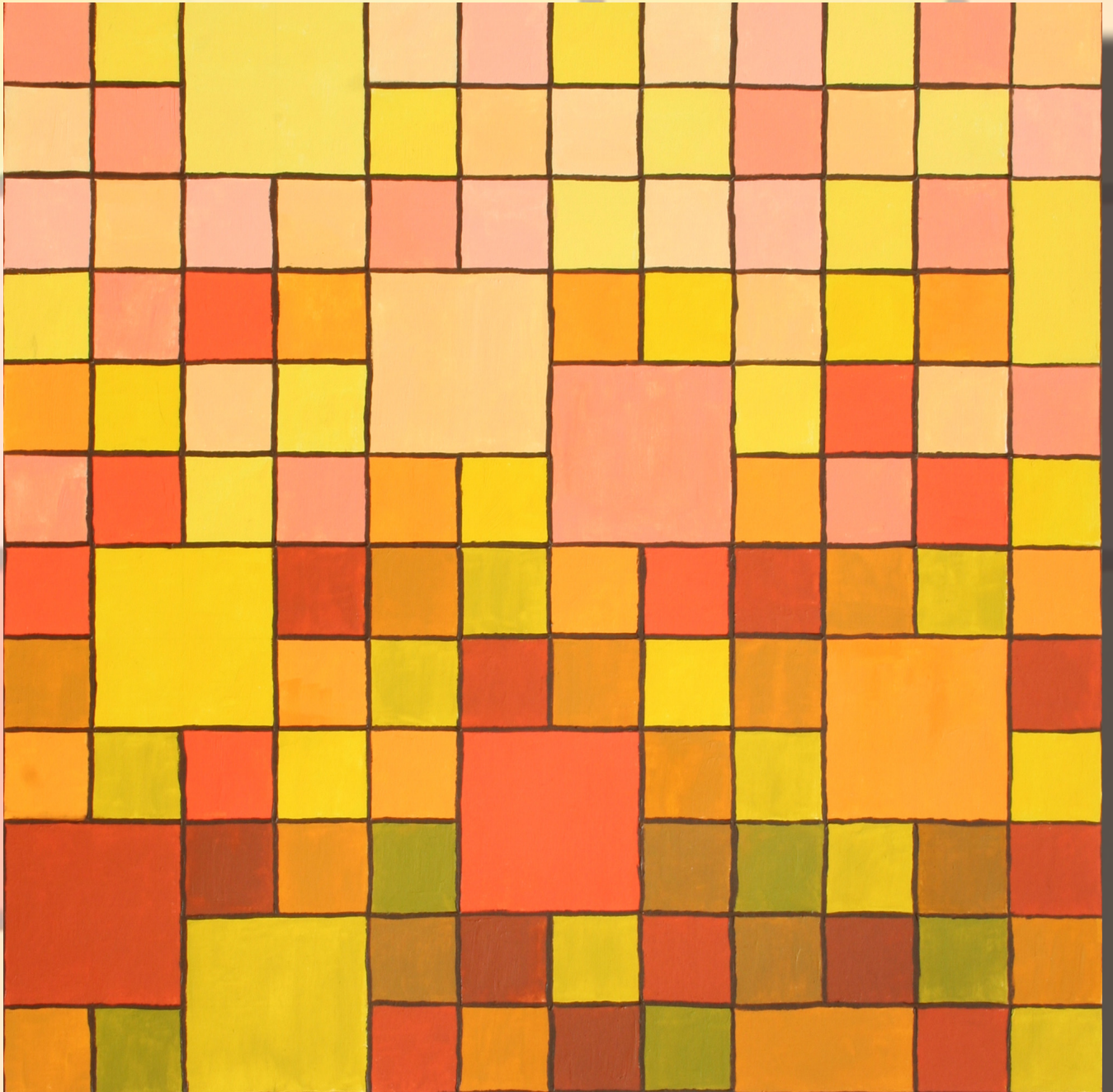
Later I learned from my friend, Hanna, who is our preacher's daughter that my father knew about David. The preacher and my dad were close friends and had talked a lot the few weeks before his death. She said that her father told her that my dad knew that David and I were dating, and he had said, "If my little girl is happy, then I want her to be happy and not worry about it."

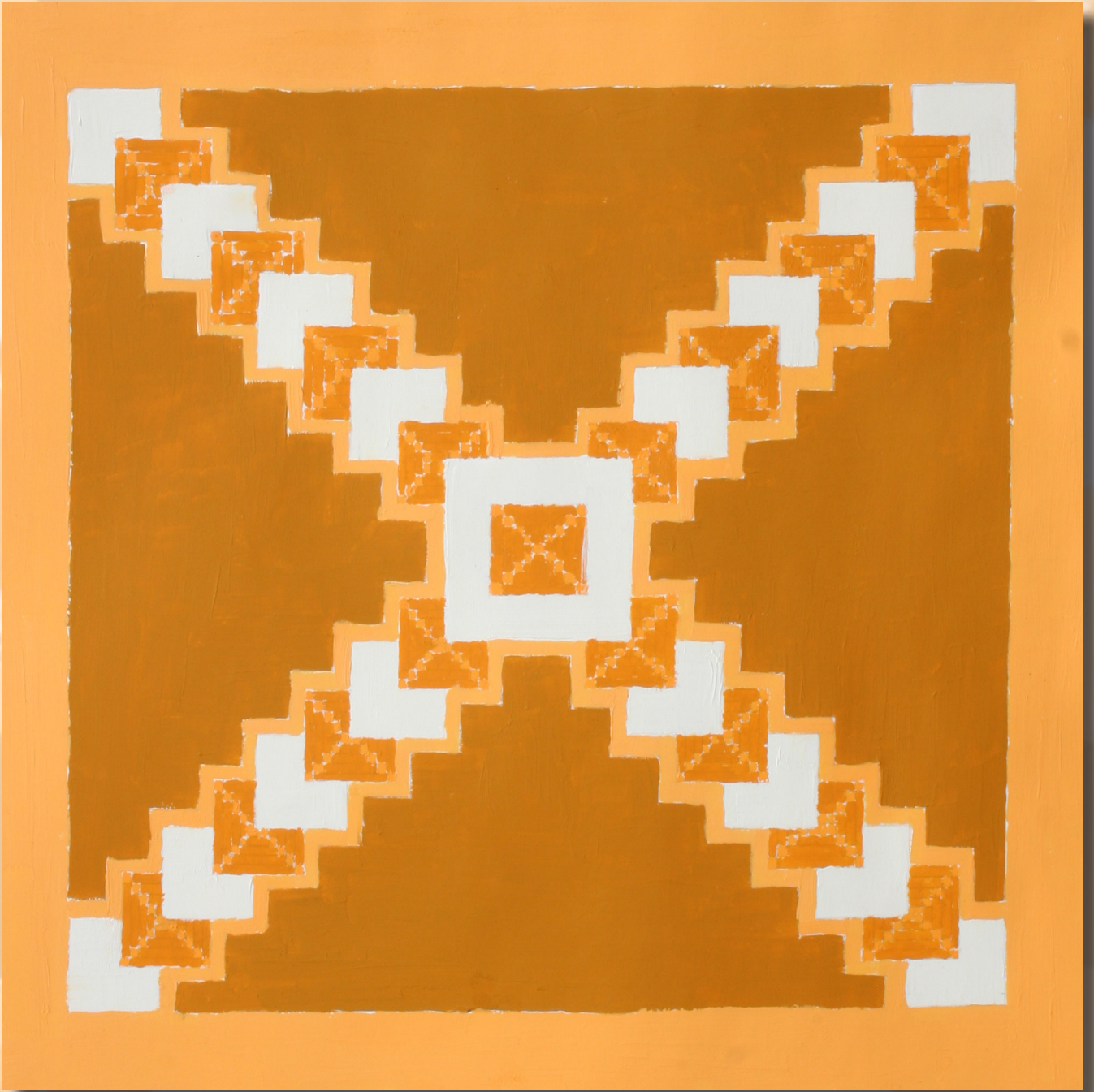
I learned that never again would I keep things a secret. What I thought would be just another relationship with a guy, turned out to be something more than that. It turned out to be an engagement. Although my father's sickness did stop me from telling my best friend one of the most important things in my life, I still was able to give my dad the chance to know the type of person David was and the chance to show him the man that I would someday marry.



ART BY: JASON LOWTHER

ART BY: KIMBERLY ANTILL





ART BY: JEANINE JANISON

ART BY: STEVEN HOLLIS



# PRESSING ON

BY: KATIE WATKINS

Dew drips down my face, like raindrops on a window pane.  
Cool crisp air bites at my cheek like needles.  
Autumn leaves blanket the sidewalks.  
My sneaker clad feet slap against the concrete.  
My lungs fill with air, heavy and thick, leaving my chest full of pain.  
I pull my polyester hood up over my soggy,  
dirty blonde hair, lift my chin high and press on  
into the future toward the red shuttered houses  
and the white fenced-in lawns.  
Past the friendly neighbors adorned with umbrellas.  
I keep running faster, harder.  
No fear in my eyes.  
No fear in my heart.  
I am flying.  
I am a bird.



ART BY: STEVEN HOLLIS





ART BY: KIM ANTILL

# LOVE ALONE

BY: JASMINE SHEARS

This love dances  
and sings; amazed,  
she paints the truth on her canvas.  
Soon she'll try to tell you  
you're living dishonestly.  
She'll want to tie your arms to your back, so tightly  
you can't move, and walk away  
to the cracked sidewalk in the city  
Where she can find a club and get messed up and then  
dance on the top of the tables in her high heeled boots.  
You know she'll wake up alone,  
though she wasn't before, and then she'll be broke.  
She'll have a headache and no aspirin.  
She will come back to you then  
untie the ropes around your arms  
and beg you to forgive her for leaving you  
alone.

ART BY: STEVEN HOLLIS



ART BY: JEANINE JANISON





ART BY: JASON LOWTHER

ART BY: KAREN JOHNSON







ART BY: JENNIFER MARTIN





ART BY: LONNIE MASON

# EIGHT INCHES OF SALVATION

BY: DAWN SMITH

When you have hit rock bottom, there is nothing left for you to lose. You would be surprised at some of the places you can find your salvation. It does not always have to be a church. Usually it comes in the most unlikely of places. For me it was a dark hole in the wall. It came at a time in my life that was so dark; I was contemplating ending it all. To me it seemed like there was nothing left for me to live for. My mother and I were fighting; we had not spoken without screaming in over two months. My sister and I hated each other. I had lost a job that I loved, by sabotage. Someone that hated me had set me up; and I had fallen right into his little trap. My boyfriend left me for another man. It felt like god abandoned me.

I started hanging out with friends that I knew were bad for me. They partied all-night, sometimes until the next night. They drank and did drugs to the point that they were insensible. I sank into a stupor that felt wonderful. When I was that way, I forgot all the pain and all the troubles that threatened to engulf me. In a way, they kept me from the path to perdition. However, they were not helping me out of my hole. They were throwing the dirt in on top of me.

I met a man through one of these friends. I could not understand why she was his friend. She was into drugs and drinking every night. Whereas he liked to drink and do drugs, but it was not necessary for him to have fun. It was beyond my comprehension. He was funny, interesting, and a nerd. I started hanging out with him because he bought me cigarettes and made me laugh. It was what I needed at that point but it was not helping.

We had been hanging out for a few weeks when one night he took me to his friends' house to play cards and drink, I had no idea what was in store for me that night. We were dating at this point, but I felt absolutely nothing for him. He was the means to an end. That was all it was for me. At this party, they introduced me to a game that was part fantasy and part bloodthirsty strategy. It became an obsession for a short time, which alleviated my need for distraction. They also introduced me to two men that would help me climb a short way out of the hole I had fallen in.

The game was Magic, and the men that I met that night had to have a little of the magic running through their veins. One was a musician, not a very good one, but a soulful one. The other was a bouncer. He was big and meaty, and wonderful. To this day, I care for him, for showing me the way out, for taking me to the place that I met with my salvation. The musician taught me all I needed to know to play the game; he bought me

my first deck and gave me something to focus on. The bouncer gave me a challenge, he was the best player in the group, and he let me know straight away that he was not going to let a novice win. He did not.

I stayed at the musicians' apartment off and on for about two weeks. We only went out in those two weeks, three times, once to get new CD's, once to go bowling, and once to go to the club. Other than that we played Magic, drank, and smoked. One night we got a huge tournament going that lasted for two days. I played the whole tournament. The funny nerd I was dating ended up leaving with his ex-girlfriend. All I thought was more power to him. The bouncer showed up to the last half of our tournament to play the last three people in it. That was the musician, a strange girl, and me. I had gotten good at that point so I smoked the rest of the people left, except for the bouncer. I was getting confident in my ability to play, but I forgot to take into account that we had been drinking for two days. The bouncer was sober. He asked me if I wanted to make the game more interesting, I could not refuse at that point. I had trash talked excessively much. So I agreed to his terms. If he won, I went out with him everyday for a week. I had run out of cigarettes at that point so all I asked for was some cigarettes.

I lost the game by a landslide. I did not want to pay up my part of the bet, but I did. That night he collected on his first day of the bet, in my liquor induced joviality, I couldn't understand why he would waste one of his days on a night I was about to pass out on. He dragged me into his car and made me get in it. When I woke up twenty minutes later, I was at me mothers' house. I asked what we were doing there, and he informed me that I had been drinking for two days and needed to go home, take a shower, and go to sleep. I understood enough to know that he was right. I looked at him for a moment, then jumped out of the car and slammed the door.

I do not understand to this day, why he was so nice to me. He could have taken advantage of me and I would not have been able to stop him. He was just one of the wonderful people you never hear about anymore. He left me alone for three of his six remaining days. When he finally called me to collect on my debt, I was getting a little pissed. Why did this unattractive, fat man not want to spend a week with me? When I questioned him, he let me know right away that it was not that he did not want to spend time with me; it was that he did not want to spend time with me when I was drunk or high.

He told me that today he wanted me to ride with him to Charleston to pick up the paychecks for the bar he



worked in. I agreed, not because I had to, but because I wanted to see where this could lead. I mean he WAS nice, and although he was overweight, he was attractive in the fact that he cared about an eighteen-year-old girl that did not care about herself. We talked a lot on the ride to Charleston; he even stopped and bought me something to eat and drink and some cigarettes. He actually listened more than he talked, but he seemed to enjoy hearing me talk.

On our way back to town I asked about the bar he worked in, I have to admit I was a little naïve. I did not understand until much later why he did not want to talk about it. I nagged him until he talked about some of the girls he worked with; I thought it was strange that one bar had fourteen girls working there. Nevertheless, if they were that prosperous, maybe I would like working there. He said no at first, but apparently he did not like telling me no. Therefore, when we dropped off the checks, he asked his boss if I could have a trial run at the bar.

His boss said I was hot enough, but that if I wanted to work there I would need to show up early so his bartender could fix me up. He told me that I looked like The Crow. I was a little upset. However, he was telling the truth. I told him that I could start the next day. He said that was fine that I should be there at about one o'clock in the afternoon. On the way to my house, the bouncer told me that if I was going to work there that I needed to get some new things from the store. He also informed me that he would be at my house in the morning to take me shopping.

He showed up at eleven in the morning on Friday to take me to the store. I asked him what exactly I would need from the store. When he told me, I would need new underwear, bras, lingerie, and some stilettos, I was a little embarrassed. I had not really ever had a man see me in my underwear. How was this bouncer going to help me pick out underwear, and why would he need to? Why would I need new underwear to work at this bar?

I did not understand, but I let him help me anyway. However, if he said I needed them I probably did. We looked for about an hour before we settled on a few thongs on various colors, some boy shorts with matching tank that had my initials on them, and a couple of little pieces of lace that I didn't even consider underwear. Nevertheless, he said they were perfect. On the way to the bar, I realized that I forgot the stilettos. He told me that someone would give me a pair to borrow. We got there at exactly one o'clock; I noticed that there were already cars in the lot. As I walked in I was a little surprised to see several girls sitting around in there underwear and nothing else. The bartender looked a little surprised as well to see a girl dressed gothic walk into her bar.

"This is not the new girl is it?" the bartender asked.

"Yea, the boss said you need to fix her up a little bit.

She has some new things, but she will need some shoes" he replied.

"I can see that she needs fixed. What the hell was he thinking this time?" she muttered loud enough for the girls at the bar to hear. "You can go outside; I can handle her from here."

I felt forlorn as I watched him walk away and leave me with the tiny woman that seemed to have more attitude than someone did twice her size.

"You need to go scrub that black shit off your face or your not working here. You look stupid. Get your clothes on and I will find you a pair of shoes. Hurry up. Summer will do your makeup when you're done." The tiny bartender snapped at me.

I hurried into the room she showed me and started to scrub my face clean. Who was this girl telling me what to do? I get my face clean and change into my boy shorts and tank top, then I walk out timidly to see if the bartender approved. She tosses a pair of eight-inch white stiletto boots on the bar and ignores me. A skinny tattooed, pierced, bald girl walks up to me and jabs her red claw into my stomach.

"What the hell is that?" she asks.

"I just got it done a week ago." I tell her. I had gone with the girl that had introduced me to the nerd to get our belly buttons pierced together. I thought it looked fine.

"It's infected and looks like shit. I'm going to clean it or I'll pull it out." She tells me." These girls sure like to intimidate people. It irritated me, but I let them do it, because I was a little frightened of them.

"Whatever, I don't care." I tell her with more bravado than bravery. She cleaned it with some sea salt and a scrub brush, It burned like hell, but I did not say a word. I did not want this girl to think I was a baby. She finishes up, tells me that the big, busty, blonde-haired woman is Summer, and that she will do my makeup, and would make me look good.

This beautiful woman seemed capable to me so I let her do my make-up with a begrudging look on my face, until I turned to look into the mirror. I knew that in my life I had never looked that good. The face that looked back at me mesmerized me. I was glad that I was shown what I could be.

I was terrified when it came time for my first dance that night. The eight-inch stilettos scared me. They made me feel like I was going to pitch over at any second. I heard the songs I had picked start playing and the bartender yell for everyone to move to the stage, that they had a new girl that needed their support. I heard whistles and shouts coming from the area outside the curtain.

I went out there and did what came natural to me. I danced until the music stopped. When I walked off the stage, I realized I had made more money in fifteen minutes than I had in two weeks at my last job. It was also a heady feeling to know that all those men out

there wanted to see me naked. It was empowering.

After that, I worked 12 hours a night 7 nights a week. It was lucrative, and I had more fun than I ever remember. I had men pay me to do some crazy shit. I made five hundred dollars for peeing in a mans beer. They paid exorbitant prices to buy me drinks, to get a private dance, or even just to talk to me. After about a month Christmas was rolling around. My mother knew what I was doing and she did not mind. I was paying her bills. I was shopping all the time. Why complain and shoot herself in the foot?

I remember the day I went out to buy my first pair of stilettos on December 12, 2007. That night I realized I had found something worth living for. Something more than alcohol, drugs, and parties. I bought the coolest stilettos I had ever seen. They had eight-inch heels, black patent leather, and two inch spikes across the toe straps. They were awesome. I strutted all night in the hottest shoes ever. I thought it was amazing how these shoes made me feel.

About midnight, a group of people walked in while I was on the stage dancing. I was already naked, which to me, was bad luck. If you are already naked, they will not tip. At the end of this group, I saw a shorter blonde man walk in; he looked up, caught my eye and gave me a smile that was gorgeous. He had dimples that would melt the heart on an ice queen. He walked straight up to the stage and put all his money into my garter. I was astonished. My music was done. I was not even dancing.

After I had gotten dressed, again I walked to the back of the bar and sat to watch the man that had given me all his money. It looked to me like all the girls in the bar knew him. He talked to just about all of them. I

was going to go sit with him, but the tiny bartender had walked over and sat down with him, you did not poach on her customers. Therefore, I stayed put.

She got up to get some change and walked in front of my table.

"Hey, who is that guy you were sitting with?" I asked.

"Why? Do you think he's cute or something?" she smirks at me. I did not answer her because that look worried me just a little bit. "Hey Bub!" she yells across the bar. "This girl thinks you're cute."

"Tell her not to be shy, come sit with me."

I was mortified. Everyone in the bar knew that I liked a person I had met only twenty minutes ago. Not even met, a man that had given me all his money twenty minutes ago. I walked over and sat down next to him. He asked me my name and I told him. I asked him why he had given me all his money. He said he could never resist a beautiful girl in eight-inch stilettos. He bought me quite a few drinks that night, and we talked for hours. He seemed too good to be true.

As I was leaving he walked out with me. He leaned forward and kissed me. I felt sparks that I had never felt before. Suddenly I heard a door open and slam shut. The nerd I had been dating stood there glaring at me. I forgot to tell him that I did not want to see him anymore. Now it looked like I was walking around behind his back. I thought about explaining, but I did not care what he thought about me. I just watched as he walked out.

The next night when at about midnight the blonde man showed up. He walked in and came straight over to me. He informed me that it was his birthday and that he wanted to buy me a drink and a lap dance for his birthday. I obliged. It was a special day for him and he was amazing. After a lot of alcohol, I decided to go

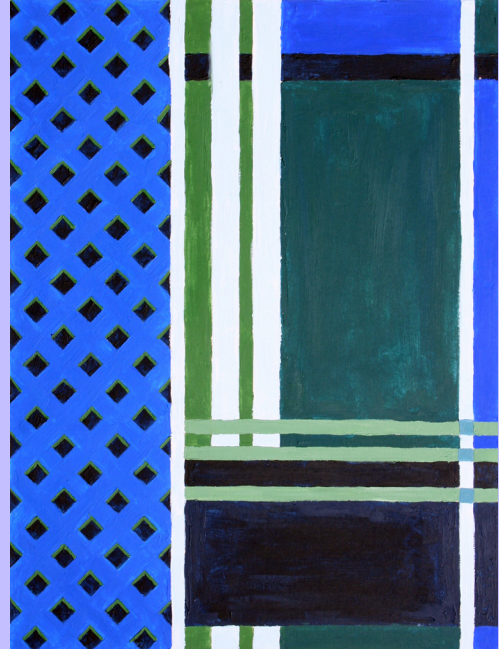
home with him. It seemed like a good idea.

About two months later, after we had been seeing each other almost every night since that night, I asked him to take me home. I had something I really needed to talk to him about. I worked at the club for about eight months after that. Then nine months after his birthday I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. My blonde man asked me to marry him, and he took care of me. He still takes care of me.

It still amazes me to this day that it took a hole in the wall bar to give me some salvation. If it were not for a nerd, a game, a bouncer, and a birthday, I would not be here today. I would not have what I do. I have a beautiful daughter, a wonderful fiancée, a house, a car, and the opportunity to be in school.



ART BY: JASON LOWTHER



## COVER CREDITS

JOHN-PAUL W. KIEFER (TOP LEFT)

KIM ANTILL (TOP RIGHT)

DON GRIESMEYER (LEFT)

RUSH WHITACRE (BOTTOM)





**Washington State**

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

710 Colegate Drive  
Marietta, OH 45750  
[www.wsccl.edu](http://www.wsccl.edu)