

# Palabras

WORDS



Spring 2005



*Palabras* publishes original research, essays, fiction, poetry, and art by Clovis Community College students and residents of New Mexico.

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*Palabras* is also an academic journal and accepts submissions from students across the United States who are currently working on undergraduate degrees.

# Palabras

*Journal of Exchange*

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Submissions should be no longer than 5 double-spaced pages, or approximately 1500 words. If documented, then in MLA, APA, or other acceptable format. If you have an essay, paper, or story longer than the specifications mentioned, please contact the editor at **505-769-4906** or at **palabrasje@hotmail.com**, as excerpts may be publishable.

*If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please write to the editor at [palabrasje@hotmail.com](mailto:palabrasje@hotmail.com).*



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## ...from the Editor

GINA L HOCHHALTER

In the realm of the imagination lurks the ever-changing need to express itself as dark. Every once in a while, spooks and monsters come to remind us of why we spend our time making meaning. This issue of *Palabras* wishes to speak of such things for itself....



## CHOICES

JESSE HOLLAWAY

When someone tries to recall one particular instance that brought them to where they are now, they will get lost in a maze of memories, regrets, and triumphs. There's only one thing that gets someone where s/he is now and that's from the choices that were made in the past. The phrase, "We are who we chose to be" is true. People can choose who their friends are, people can choose what kind of education they want. There are numerous – and complicated – factors that affect our choices, but no matter the situation, choices are what cause people to end up where they are.

If a guy goes to jail for under-the-influence of cocaine, people close to him, who know he is a good guy, would blame the people he hangs around with, possibly because before hanging around with them he never did any drugs. In all honesty, it was his choice to hang out with those people who influenced him to take the drug. When a girl has to work as a prostitute because she dropped out of high school, people seeing her on the corner might think that she has a bad life, maybe because she has to 'sink that low' in order to get money. But it was her choice to drop out of high school, which caused her to make certain choices.

Everyone has the power of choice in any situation encountered. Big or little, every choice we have ever made affects who we are today. My advice to my friends is not to regret their bad choices because they are not bad; there aren't any bad choices, but only worse consequences, and those choices helped you become the persons who I know and care about today.

## SOLITUDE 5' X 7'

GILBERT LOPEZ

I am writing about a place and space I know all too well. The place is a super maximum security prison, the space is behind locked doors. The space is a tiny 5' x 7' cell that becomes a home, and way of life, for whatever amount of time that's being served. The way of living behind those walls and locked doors change everything; it changes a person's whole perspective of life, some good and some bad. From the time I wake up in the morning for breakfast at five o'clock a.m. to the time of ten-thirty p.m. when lights are turned out – life just stands still, and I, reflecting, hold strong.

Besides the one hour recreation time and a fifteen minute shower that is allowed each day, I am in my 5' x 7' cell (23-7-365), being locked down, solitary confinement. Twenty-three hours a day caged like an animal really starts to take its toll on the mind. A person has to be mind-strong to get through the time, or the time will get you.

In solitary, I'm allowed a TV, a walkman, 3 cassette tapes, a small amount of hygiene, and a canteen, 2 towels, 6 boxers, 6 pairs of socks, 3 uniforms, bedding, 1 mattress, 1 pillow, and a foot locker – anything extra is considered contraband.

The way that time passes is excruciatingly slow!

The only way to do time in solitary confinement is one day at a time.

I really miss the simple things in life that a lot of people take for granted, such as going outside and feeling the sun on my face, taking walks in the parks, eating good food, or enjoying somebody's company. Instead it's just me by myself, day in and day out, with really nothing to look forward to but my one hour of recreation, and my fifteen minute shower.

The frustrations of being a grown man and not having any freedom, no freedom whatsoever – Being told what to do, and how to do it, and even when to do it; not doing what I want to do or even close; the exhaustion from never letting my guard down because of the simple fact that no one can

be trusted, no one is a friend; the feelings of disappointment in one's self for being here at this place – one feels a sharp, stinging pain, like a knife twisting inside the gut from the loneliness, and despair, yearning for one's family. To feel a



touch, a simple touch, upon my face from my beautiful children. To see them laughing and playing, growing, and

learning. To smell my wife's cooking – the smell is so good I can taste it in my mouth without even sitting down to the table. To take a warm bath in my home, just to feel the warmth of the water on my body, the soothing comfort of a warm bath.

The simple things are what are missed most while being incarcerated: the funny little things that your children say while they are at play. The blue coconut shaved ice, on a very hot, nice, and beautiful day. The smiles on my loved ones' faces, the happiness in their eyes. The Sonic drive-in drink (silly thing! but cherry, lemon-lime Dr. Pepper with extra lemons) at happy hour. To go outside and watch the moon, to feel the nice cool breeze on a summer night, delicious plump steaks on the grill. To see my precious family all around me, the laughter on their faces, we are all so very happy. To hear their voices and see their faces is all I need and all I want: no more time wasted.

It's funny how when a person has his freedom, it's so easy to take it for granted. And you have your loved ones right there by your side, not realizing how very special and dear they are to you in every way imaginable. How important it is to be a responsible and loving, caring, and very understanding father, husband, and friend. To cherish life day by day and one step at a time, and to always strive for more, and for better. Because when it is all taken away, the misery and pain will prevail. It's better to be happy and free than it is to be lonely, miserable, and sad every moment that slowly, ever more slowly, passes by. And another day wasted, another day gone of life locked away in a 5' x 7' cell, solitary confinement.

## OBSESSION OF LOVE

SERENA LOPEZ

HOW can a love so true and so real tolerate so much pain and heartache? HOW can the heart and mind play such tricks on one's existence?

The world a person lives in everyday, the day-to-day lifestyle of an individual in the world – focused, ever so focused – creates in a person's mind the thoughts and feelings which linger inside the self, inside one's being, like a pot of boiling water ready to spill over and make a mess or like a fuse lit with fire on an artillery shell ready to explode into the sky for whatever design it was meant to make. All of the feelings of confusion, uncertainty, and fear – those are like shadows by the side throughout the day, driving the mind insane.

Why is it that we don't cherish every waking second together, to feel one another, to see his face, his beautiful lips, simply to hear his voice? To cherish every second of time spent together, the love felt between each other and a joyful peace. Just instead to sit and dwell in fear, sadness, and confusion thinking of all the ways it can be, maybe even sometimes seems to be, and not to destroy feelings so beautiful and so rare.

With thoughts lingering and clouding the mind like poison blinding the sight, leaving one in despair and wishing for non-existence, believing the only way to feel better is not to feel at all, the body numb, the mind thoughtless, and the soul free. Yet to grasp onto the love, feel every drop throughout my veins running through my blood like a drug shot through the mind, body, and soul. Holding on and guarding every droplet with your life, and to feel every bit upon your entire being. Cherishing, needing, yearning, and enjoying everything that love has to give.

The obsession of love so enormous can be a sickness, like a disease eating away at the health; the



obsessed mind can cause great pain and many misconceptions from the inside, from within the Human Being.

Obsession walks hand in hand with jealousy, one of the most dangerous destroyers of all. To be jealous is to be ill and unwell, a relationship in constant danger of over-assumptions. For who is right, who is wrong? Who is telling the truth, who is telling lies? The constant battle, one with the other, can be endless: the making up, the coming to an understanding always to know finally that the love is shared between these two souls, the mutual and heartfelt apologies. And yet the obsession once again comes down like an avalanche; the thick and white frozen snow rolling down the mountainside destroys almost everything in its path. The fighting between two partners, and the constant struggle from it all, from obsession of love.

To love so deeply can be as painful, as pleasurable. The need for one's love more than food to eat, water to drink, or even air to breath – the necessities to survive become less important than the love that is felt for one, and needed in return. So how does one deal with this obsession of love? Stop loving, stop caring, just to stop feeling altogether? How is obsession destroying all hopes and dreams and wasting the time that should be so precious and cherished? To be obsessed is to be ill, a sickness, a sickening.

Do not let obsession destroy all that is beautiful and real, all that is true, all that is meaningful, all that is life!

## MY SUICIDE

MELYNDA CROUCH

I have died many times in this life, all of which have been by my own hand. I know why I did it. I can distinctively remember what drew me to killing myself. Have you ever just been tired? Have you ever had to find a reason to get out of bed everyday? I have. And the reasons started to become so trivial that it just was not worth it anymore. "Well I have to get out of bed today because I have to do the laundry, or the dishes, or the shopping."

It was black in my world. I stopped working. I stopped dreaming. I stopped believing. I just stopped. At that particular juncture, it became pointless to even exist. Black is lonely. Black is cold, heartless, and it does not care for me. I was certain no one would notice if I were gone. No one would even care. When that realization comes to life, then there is no reason to live. And there was no reason for me to live. My life did not benefit anyone, and it did not hurt anyone. So why bother. I just wanted to kill the pain.

I began to contemplate how. How would I kill myself? What would be the best way, the way by which I could achieve what I wanted? It became my obsession. I would think about it all day, everyday. It became the reason I got out of bed in the morning. To contemplate how I would die. A drug overdose? Not painful enough. I must inflict pain upon myself of an impossible magnitude in order to kill the pain within. A gunshot wound to the head? Entirely too messy. Someone is going to have to clean up after me, and I would not wish that on any person. Not even my worst enemy, if I had one.

I could drown myself. That would be very difficult to do, if you think about it. I guess I could go out to a lake somewhere, tie a rock to my leg, and jump in. How long would I be conscious of what I was doing before I passed out? Probably not long enough. I need to see what I am doing, and I need to know what I am doing in order to feel as if I have done the job I set out to

### Perspectives

*Articles or essays of controversy are one of Palabras's favorite pastimes. If you'd like to write a refutation or an alternate perspective to any article herein, please do.*



do. I have to know the experience. I have to own it.

I could set myself on fire. I can see that happening. It actually might be rather comical. But it would cause me to try to find a way to put myself out. I think that's in human nature. If I am on fire, find water. I do not think that will work. It also brings up the messy problem again. That would really suck if I had to clean up after someone who decided to set themselves on fire. And the smell. No I don't think that is the way to go.

A razor blade. A razor blade could work. I mean, if I did it right I would be conscious enough for a long enough period of time to experience the pain of dying and the death of the pain. And if I did it in the shower with it running, then there would be no mess really. Someone would eventually wonder why my shower has been on for a week, and then they would find me. Not that anyone would care. It would ensure that I did not sit here, dead for a month waiting for someone to come and find me. I'll be dead anyway, so what would I care?

There has to be music, candlelight, and some wine involved. I am going to kill myself, so I should celebrate something, right? The pain is going to stop, and I will not have to wake up everyday knowing that there is only black. Or knowing that there is nothing, so why bother living? There is no point to living, really. People just walk around oblivious to everything going on right in front of them because they have a gallon of milk to buy. They obsess about that gallon of milk until they are done with that chore, then they move on and obsess about the next thing. There is no point to living, and I am tired of the black. I am tired of the coldness among people, and the chill within myself.

I went out to the store and bought a brand new pack of shiny razor blades. The man behind the counter told me to be careful with them, because they're sharp and I could cut myself. I smiled at him, and celebrated inside knowing it would all be over soon. I lit the candles in my bathroom, turned on the shower, stripped, and got in. The blades were lying neatly on a towel next

to my candle, waiting. Waiting for me to choose the one I would use. Waiting to taste the blood surging through my veins. I lay down in the bottom of the shower. I was sure the water would grow cold eventually, but by then I doubt it would matter much.

I took the package of blades and opened them. One caught the candlelight in a particularly pretty fashion, so I chose that one. I put it to my wrist to test its sharpness. I do not know why I thought I had chosen a dud, but I did. Little spots of blood began to appear when I had made a small cut. Now, it was down to business. I placed the razor against my arm just below where my elbow was, and I drew it down, cutting every vein there was in the process. And if that was not enough to kill me, I repeated the process with the other arm. I placed the razor on the edge of the tub, and I waited. The shower idea worked. There was no gathering of blood in the tub. I was glad to see that. I did not want a mess to be left.

It is funny what you notice when you are about to die. I had never noticed that the faucet in my bathroom leaked. It leaked a lot, and was dripping on the floor. The puddle worked its way back toward the wall. That is probably why I did not notice. I had put music on before I got in the tub, but I did not hear it now. I was sure I had put music on. Where was it? I watched the candle flicker. It was flickering as if it were in slow motion. I could almost see the molecules of air combusting at the tip of the flame. But that cannot be.

I was tired. I was sleepy, but I did not want to give in to the sleep because I was enjoying the feeling of nothing. There were no emotions, and there was no pain. There was no pain inside my heart, my soul or my arms. Nothing hurt. This is what heaven must be like. What's that? Everything is going black. No, I didn't want to fall asleep, not yet anyway. Soon, but not yet.

I looked down and saw myself lying in the tub. I looked at peace. I looked like I didn't have a care in the world, and I suppose I did not. I remember thinking I should hit the ceiling eventually, but it never came. I kept ascending, but my body never moved any farther away. It went on for what seemed like hours. I was hoping that death was not going to be an eternity spent look-

ing at myself lying in a tub. That may grow old after the first hundred years or so. But my body never got any farther away. Then, everything faded. It all faded to black.

Black. That wasn't even the color of what was around me. This was not black. What color was it? I have never seen that color. Where was the light? Where was the tunnel? Isn't there supposed to be something after dying? Why wasn't there anything here? I did not like it. I am supposed to see God or the devil, anything. I didn't smell anything. I didn't see anything. I could not even hear anything. There was no taste in the air. There was no physical sensation. There was no pain, love, regret, or anything.

What did that mean for me? Where did I go when I died? I should be going somewhere. I did not want this to be what death was. Surely I would go to heaven or hell or maybe even limbo. But there was nothing. It was cold. I remember it being cold. Cold and black. The blackest black I had ever seen. There is no reproducing that color. It sucked everything into it. Nothing lived there. Nothing was good there.

I do not know how long I waited, but it was long enough to fall asleep. I know it was sleep, because everything just stopped for awhile. It was like when I was alive and I could sleep to make the pain stop. That was the feeling I had. There was no pain, and for a time I was not worried about what would come next.

I dreamed. I dreamed about everything I had ever done in my life. There were also things there that I did not remember ever doing. But the person that was being shown to me was not me. I did not look like that. I looked much younger than that. So who was that person? I could not figure it out, but I think it was the "life flashing before my eyes" part of dying. Or maybe it wasn't, because that was not me.

My dream stopped, and I became aware of the blackness again. I became aware of the nothing.

I was waking up.

I smelled shampoo. That was an odd thing to smell at the time. Where did that come from? Do

they have shampoo in heaven or hell? At least I would be able to wash my hair wherever I was going. But I could also hear things. Cars going by and music. Where was the music coming from? I recognized the album. It was one that I had owned. I knew the song, it was one of my favorites.

I looked down because something pulled me to look down. I saw a blade in my hand, smelled the candle burning. I looked around at my bathroom. How did I get here? I was not supposed to be in my bathroom, I was supposed to be dead, and everything was supposed to stop hurting. I was supposed to be able to stop existing, and to move on to what was next in the grand scheme of the universe. Why was I still in my bathroom?

I put the blade to my skin to test its sharpness. Little spots of blood appeared where I had made a cut. It was sharp enough. I started just below my elbow and drew down to my wrist cutting every vein along the way. And if that was not enough, I repeated the same process to the other arm. I placed the blade on the edge of the tub and waited.

It is funny what you notice when you are dying. My faucet leaks in my bathroom, but the water runs into the wall. That cannot be safe. I am sure there are wires in there, or something that could burn the house down. I put music on, I know I did. Where is the music? I felt tired, and sleepy. I didn't want to sleep yet, but I could not help myself. The sleep came and took me.

I watched my body in the tub as I ascended toward the ceiling, which I never hit. And then everything faded to black. It's cold in here and nothing is left. There is nothing here. There is no emotion, pain, worry, or feeling. There is no light, and there is no tunnel. There is no God, and there is no Devil. Where am I? I do not know.

I dreamed. I saw everything I had ever done, and everything that I could have done. There was someone in my dreams that was not me. She was



Kerry Budding



older than me. Much older than me. All of the things that I had done and all of the things I could have done. I could have been someone of valor, and importance. I could have accomplished a lot in this life. I could have lived this life.

I looked down at a razor blade poised above my arm. For a moment I was lost again. I did not realize where I was or what I was doing. I know that I wanted to test the sharpness of the blade, and started to. Something stopped me. Something that was more powerful than me, and more powerful than the hurt. Something that was beautiful in size, color, shape, and the feeling it put into my heart.

I put the blade down on the edge of the tub, blew out my candle, and got out.

I don't know how long that went on. I don't know how many times I made the wrong choice. It feels like I did it for an eternity. I don't know how many times came before the first. Before I realized what I was doing, and that I had done it before.

I know that it is hard to believe. In fact I cannot even believe it myself. I understand what happened and I understand why it did not happen again. I chose to live, and by that choice I have gone on to do many wonderful things. I do not remember what I saw when I dreamed, but something tells me that I am doing what I was designed to do. I have kids now, and those kids have kids as well. I have not found the cure to cancer or anything, but I have found the cure to hopelessness. I have found the key to living, and there is no blackness here. There is nothing here that I am afraid of. I just had to decide to be, and to let myself be.

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in the Fall, 2005 issue is  
July 31, 2005.*

## THE DECLINE OF CIVILIZATION

ANGELA SUE MONROE

*April 17, 2003*

This week in Oklahoma City there was a riot in a middle school; children eleven to fourteen years of age were arrested for rioting, vandalizing, and assaulting fellow students and teachers. Children, in some cases prepubescent, were attacking adults. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident – nationwide we find schools filled with children who are unruly, disrespectful, angry, and hostile.

They seem to have been raised with no boundaries and so do not recognize or adhere to the limitations essential to creating a well-ordered classroom that facilitates a positive learning experience. The removal of corporal punishment from the public school system drastically impeded the teacher's ability to retain control of the classroom, thereby defeating the purpose for which we are sending our children to school in the first place: to receive an education!

In the sixties it was cool to rebel against the "establishment." Young adults decided they had the right to do as they pleased; with reckless disregard for rules of any kind, these young people protested against war, proclaimed their right to burn their bras, and declared that sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll were the embodiment of the pursuit of happiness. They turned their backs on the things their parents had valued and set out to change the world – and that's precisely what they did. Instead of embracing good, solid work ethics, they sat around the college campuses getting high, having sex, and generally corrupting themselves. The trickle-down for primary school was no longer a place for learning, but rather a place to "find myself," and a person couldn't do that if someone were punishing he(r) every time s/he made a mistake. From this attitude, corporal punishment was found to be abusive and hence was abolished.

Young women had a revelation that getting married and taking care of children was a high form of slavery; they chose to get divorced instead of working through their problems. So began the breakdown of family life.



With the advent of a divorced generation we were suddenly faced with another generation of children who came from these broken homes. Children who didn't have anyone waiting for them at home after school because Mom had to work to support them, they who only saw their father on the weekends and had to share that time with his new girlfriend: these children discovered one brilliant means of escape – television! They found that they didn't have to think about the realities of life for thirty minutes while their favorite program was on. *Life could be a dream* for a little while.

So dawned the "commercial revolution," where life could *only* be a dream if a person had the newest car, or the coolest toy, or if one smoked the right kind of cigarette, or drank the best beer. That generation learned that neglect plus guilt equals new stuff equals "love."

The problem with that equation is the remainder. The resentment generated from being pawned off on someone else began to fester in the hearts of those children and they resolved not to do the same thing to their kids. However, no one ever taught them how to grow a loving, healthy, whole family that worked out its problems instead of walking away from them. No one ever taught them that just because there's a commercial on TV doesn't mean the product must be owned.

This consumer generation doesn't know how to be happy with themselves unless they are the perfect size or have the right hair color or eye color. All that costs money, and we can't make money without working, and even if we manage to stay in a relationship with the first person we marry so our kids can have a better life than we did, we aren't able to afford for either parent to stay home and take care of the children because now it requires two incomes to survive!

Resentment and rebellion have turned into bitterness and disappointment. Without knowing any better, we park ourselves in front of the television to escape, and sit our children on the floor right in front of us.

Television is no longer a cozy place to sit and laugh; it is a dangerous, violent, scary place that portrays parents as stupid and ineffective. This generation is learning from that medium that no one deserves their respect; that they don't have to mind their parents because their parents don't

know how to make them mind. Parents today refuse to allow anyone else to discipline their children because it threatens their position (see Gibbs) and they might have to take a hard look at themselves and realize that they missed some vital step in rearing their children.

Children, today, can challenge any authority figure and get away with murder – literally, in some cases. We are now faced with a generation of children who have magnified our own bitterness to frankensteinian proportions.

We took away the teacher's right to discipline our children and we refuse to discipline them ourselves. But children inherently want boundaries; they need them. They will push until they find them. The Bible says "...do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in... He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him [Prov 3:11-12, 13:24]. Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from them [22:15]. Do not withhold punishment from a child, if you punish him with the rod he will not die [23:13]. The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother. Discipline your son and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul" (29: 15, 17).

Today, there is a child who equates freedom with violence; who believes that s/he has the supreme right to do whatever s/he wants to do, no matter what the consequences are because s/he has not been taught that there are consequences. This week, in Oklahoma City, there was a riot in a middle school, a school just like any other school in America. It was a school filled with children violently searching for something they need, but don't know what: the boundaries inside which they can't define themselves. If we don't do something to correct our current outlook on discipline – in the home and schools – we are the ones who will be held accountable for the devastation of the home. Historians will look back and mark this era as the beginning of the decline of *civilization*.

Gibbs, Nancy. "Parents Behaving Badly." *Time* 21 Feb. 2005: 40-49.

# FINDING A BALANCE

ANGIE ANDERSON

A space shuttle is said to have landed on the moon in 1969. Adults and children alike were awed and inspired. Children had lofty dreams of becoming shiny, new space astronauts as they dressed up to zoom around their homes, yards and neighborhoods re-enacting the roles of Neil Armstrong and the crew of Apollo 11. In the 2000's, young and old alike are still awed by NASA's fiery rockets. However, within minutes of witnessing the testament to human innovation, our "Techno-Babies" can be commanding their very own simulated shuttle craft through deep arrays and nebula – in the comfort of their Buzz Light-year bedrooms, tiny game controllers in hand. In this brief comparison, I would like to point out a few differences between the environments children of the 1960's and the 2000's lived in, as well some consequences caused by these differences.

The outdoors have always been a great learning playground for children. In the 1960's children spent a majority of their playtime outdoors. They flocked together in their little mobs, traveling to the deepest realms of their farms and neighborhoods, and to worlds that possibly existed only in their imaginations. This generation of children fell out of trees, and built forts out of what they could find. Children learned through tangible, personal experiences what to do and not to do (every action has an equal and opposite reaction). They developed socially, cognitively, and mechanically in the world by their own trial and error. An important note is that these children were strongly encouraged by their parents to play outside.

In today's age of technology, cyberspace, and plasma screens, children can recreate without ever stepping outdoors. They sit, staring google-eyed at a 1500-pixel, flat screen television (their virtual babysitter in place of their parents) at what is simply presented to them about the world beyond. It is rare that children venture – or are encouraged to venture – out of their own front doors to expe-

rience what life has to offer (in the absence of Dolby Stereo Surround Sound or Dreamworks technology). When they do go outside, how often are they not linked to a Nintendo Gameboy, portable CD player, or some other electronic gadget?

Children of our fast paced, be-all, do-all world today absorb and accept information presented to them without a personal (tangible) experience to relate the information to. Their rugged, adventurous, immortal-until-unplugged video game characters take most of the "risks"; if the character falls and is hurt s/he simply continues – or the character dies and the game simply resumes. Video game units may be shared, but today even video games are linked in the cyber-world so that even the social factor is reduced! In cyber-adventure, thinking skills are still utilized, yet the skills being developed most undoubtedly are those of hand/eye coordination and not skills of critical thinking or socializing.

In the 1960's childhood obesity was not a common problem, nor a household discussion. Vast numbers of children were not placed on diets and medicated due to their weight. Diet is a key factor not to be forgotten in this equation – yet the physical activity levels of the 1960's children (as mentioned prior) helped keep metabolisms balanced, bodies fit, and body fat ratios highly reduced compared to today's children. According to the October 18th, 2004 *American Medical Association Online News Journal*, "During the past 30 years, the obesity rate in the United States has more than doubled for preschool children and adolescents and more than tripled for children ages 6 to 11. Approximately 9 million American children older than age 6 are now considered obese." How alarming! The children of the 2000's are catered to by technology, pumped with high fructose corn catered by syrup (thank you 1970's) while their metabolisms slow, their immune systems decline, and overall health (outside of hand/eye coordination) decreases year by year.

As our children zoom off into their programmed worlds (game controls in hand) on their quest to conquer the ultimate virtual adventure, is it not our responsibility as adults to unveil that which still lies beyond the front door? As the parents and mentors of the 1960's did, we need to

make time and put forth the effort to help children of the 2000's regain a balance with social, physical, critical thinking, and mechanical skills by getting them up from the sofa and into the world (environment) that exists around them. Arms raised, head tilted upward as their legs once again race them down an imaginary runway – let us lift up the children of the 2000's beyond the fate they currently face.

## A MULTITUDE OF THINGS

**DAVID Z.**

Right now I could be outside, climbing a tree. I could be sitting underneath a tree, smoking out of a pipe. I could be doing several different things, but I am not. I am writing this. The proof is in the words that are here. Had I been outside, possibly chasing ducks around a pond or maybe lighting fires and watching them burn; these words would not be here. Therefore, I must be writing them.

I might want to be watching television instead. There are a number of good television shows on at this very moment, but I am not watching them, I am not being entertained by flashes of color and loud obnoxious sound effects, nor am I being entranced by a dramatic miniseries, nor am I laughing heartily as a favorite cartoon character sings a song about something stupid. I am, instead, writing these words. These words are spewing forth from my fingertips like lava from a volcano, and you will read them, just as they are written, and as you read, you will not be enjoying television either.

It might be said that I am not writing these words. It could be rumored that I am, in fact, playing video games instead. I could have rented a game from Blockbuster Video, put it in my Gamecube, and started playing it several hours ago. I could be mastering the art of rapidly pressing up and down on a directional pad, I could be looking up the secret invincibility code on the internet, or I could be struggling to defeat the boss on level seven. None of these scenarios are true, of course, because I am writing these words,

just as surely as you're reading them now.

Yet another possibility is that I am in fact not home right now. I am out of town, at the lake, enjoying the fresh air and the cool, wet water. I might be jumping off of cliffs, diving into schools of fish, or even roasting s'mores on a campfire as evening sets in. Of course, yet again one would be assuming incorrectly, as I am not at the lake, I am not enjoying the wondrous outdoors, and I am not roasting any delicious treats. I am at home, sitting at my desk, writing these words. I have written these words, and you are now reading them. All the thoughts that were once in my mind are now in yours, that is, if you were paying any attention, and the fact that I have written these words and that you have read them is now securely placed in your memory. I am hoping that now that I have written, and that you have read, this redundant cycle can complete itself and we can all get on with the rest of our lives. I apologize for the inconvenience. Good day to you.

## HOME ON THE PLAIN OF DISCONTENT

**RAYMOND E. ATCHLEY**

Nobody likes Clovis, New Mexico, not really. The relationship between Clovis and her inhabitants are much like that of two sweethearts who married too young, and as they grew older, discovered other peoples and lives and worlds.

Maybe we have grown used to Clovis, out of necessity, since we're all here against our own free will. The military forced us to be here, or we escaped other worse tragedies and hide here, or like myself, I was born and became an adult here.

I tire of trying to dodge the question as to the place of my birth, much as one tries to deny a doddering old family member who has become a source of embarrassment. People here, from other places, quickly answer that, though they are

here now in fact, they are from somewhere else. The words are spoken as if absolving themselves from a contagious disease, and by announcing where they are really from, they will be forgiven any shame or stigma by being here.

I've left this location, you know, and like some mysterious law of physical science, I'm continually drawn back.

Make fun if you will, but I'm safe here, in Clovis. The greatest danger is the hot dry winds that carry the sand across the plains and into my eyes and teeth. At least those same winds carry the stench of the remnants of this area's main source of income back into the ether, only too quickly to be replaced. Other parts of the country suffer terrible floods, but not here. Other places have terrible forest fires, but for the same reason we don't have floods, we don't have trees. No trees – no forest fires. No trees, no water, no identified culture, and no common fabric of time with the rest of the world. We are always 20 days or 20 years behind the rest of the country. I fear my death too much not to crave this sanctuary; so I remain safe – here, not there.

We import our culture from the world depicted on the television, and in the movies. We think that these images are real and believe me when I say, we watch too many re-runs. We all have an identity crisis; if we don't know who we are, there is no one to ask. We are the sons and daughters of a state named for a conquered nation and a city honoring an obscure ruler. Our language is unintelligible to some, and nobody has named a cologne in our exaltation.

We are a state without a country and a city without a state. Because we suffer the angst of purposelessness, we turn our frustrations on each other, and propel further backward.

I would leave, but I can't. I am home and I am safe; the misery of hollowness is my refuge. I have no fear of a conquering invader; even the conquered indigenous tribes shun this patch of ground. I only fear my complacency and resentment of those who fail to see the reality of this forsaken land.

Soon they shall see the blessings of being safe and return, or stay, or not.

## MI TO NM

CARL ANDERSON

Moving to a new area can be an adventure as it can open ones eyes to new cultures, landscapes, and people. The time that is spent to learn the multiple ways around an area makes the first few days interesting. Meeting new people also can change the way one would perceive the area which they are in. I can say that I have experienced these, but I have yet to determine if it has had a positive or negative influence on me.

Clovis has changed me or perhaps brought to light the person I really am inside. It's like when I am in Clovis I do more things for my benefit than I ever did when I lived in Michigan. For example, not even a week after moving to Clovis I had enrolled in college and had many job interviews. When I was in Michigan, I had problems accomplishing tasks, like paying bills on time or being able to balance the use of my time. My attitude was normally very negative and I started to do things that held me back from accomplishing anything positive for a few years. Now that I have moved over 1,500 miles from my family and friends I begin to wonder if the area or even the people in that area were the cause of my near demise; I am beginning to think that that area is filled with so much sadness and failure that it was like a plague sweeping through areas to effect thousands of people who once had the drive to succeed. It seems as though when I was there this "plague" had started to take its toll on me – bringing me down to the horrible level of failure and I was beginning to accept its toxic influence.

Now after being in Clovis for a few months, I see the people here are more motivated in comparison to those in Michigan. This city is beginning to grow in size and develop its own culture with different people from all over the world. This in my opinion, makes for a new, exciting, and ever-changing environment which is going to eventually change the way I think and see things.

At the same time, however, one will notice that even though this place is full of people, these people of this city are all sort of separated by some weird force. It's as if there is a group of people who are always together and are set in

their ways. For instance, if I were to walk into Wal-Mart I would most likely not see a cowboy talking to a computer junkie. It's not like they hate each other or anything, but they are totally uninterested in any other types of cultures.

Perhaps my view of this city is rather different than others as I am from a rather small city in the north. It makes me wonder if there is anyone else in this area who holds the same view of things as I do, or if there is any type of research being done to see how the people here are divided or something that could prove that my views of this place are totally untrue.

There are a lot of people here who are focused on a positive goal and there are the ones who are not. On a daily basis I see at least one homeless person who normally walks into the store where I work to buy liquor. I wish there were a way I could change this man so he would realize that he is just wasting away in the dry wasteland known as Clovis. Many times I wonder how an individual could bring themselves to do such sad things. Then it dawns on me that perhaps it is the place that makes them like that. If they moved to a different place they might be able to clean themselves up and be happy unlike the way they are now: bitter, unhappy, and confused with one general goal in mind which they succeed at quite frequently – to get wasted so they do not have to deal with the harsh reality from which they want to escape.

If an individual brings themselves to an area and all it does is bring them down as a human being, I think that the best way to change one's life sometimes is to move away from that area. Great things always are waiting to happen and sometimes the best way to find those things is to move to a different place and look for them. This is not necessarily going to work for everyone, but it definitely is worth a shot.

*Carl is studying Criminal Justice at CCC and is minoring in Spanish.*

## A LIFE OF LOOKING WITHOUT SEEING

CURT JUSTICE

Close your eyes. I want you to visualize a waterfall. Watch as sheets of water go cascading down a cliff, creating a great white mist that obscures the waters below. See the little rainbows that appear and disappear as the midday sun refracts through the beads of water. Now imagine trying to visualize this if you were born blind. I've learned a simple truth by imagining this scenario myself: I take the gift of vision for granted way too often.

The ability to see has been greatly appreciated throughout the centuries, although often without conscious realization. Visual artists, such as painters and sculptors, have attempted to expand the human mind through depictions of reality and unreality. Some use a bombardment of colors, whereas others utilize simplicity in form. All, however, take advantage of the viewer's ability to see. This allows the viewer to take the artwork and create a surreal world outside their own, or to develop a deeper understanding of the one they are living in.

Unfortunately, these intricacies of visual art are by nature lost on a person who was blind from birth. How can one describe color to a person who has never seen colors, or explain one of M.C. Escher's physics-defying drawings?

I, like many humans, lack the proper appreciation of this gift. On a daily basis, I see things that I have not seen before, but I rarely stop to think about what I'm actually seeing. When light refracts through a crystal glass, creating little rainbows everywhere, I never seem to truly appreciate this small piece of magic in my otherwise mundane world. These simple beauties of the world often go unnoticed simply because they're considered commonplace.

I am a perfect example of someone who doesn't appreciate or care for their eyes as they should. I spend hours upon hours staring at the computer

screen or sitting in front of the TV, and I don't spend near enough time outside appreciating the beauty of nature and the world around me. My eyes, in protest to this waste and abuse, don't work as well as they used to. My vision is slowly getting worse, and I am forced to wear glasses in order to properly view the world. I find myself wondering: if a blind person suddenly gained sight, would he abuse it as I have, or would he do everything he could to keep this newfound vision as clear as possible?

In the end, it's an issue of looking without seeing. Just imagine the billions, possibly trillions, of things that bombard one's eyes in a single day. One can look at a stream, acknowledging that the stream exists, or glance over at a maple tree, confirming that it is there. But by simply looking, one cannot properly value something. It is through seeing, that is, acknowledging the uniqueness of an object, that one truly understands the beauty of vision. When looking at a stream, one should see how the water flows, how rocks disturb or redirect that flow; the way water striders skip across the surface. And while looking at the maple tree, one should see the uniqueness of each leaf, the colorful birds nesting in its branches, the "J + L" lovingly scratched into its trunk.

It is this great ability to see the world for all its beauty that I have dulled over the years. As a child, this appreciation was a lot more prevalent, as everything is exciting and new. It is through the process of maturing and the loss of innocence that this sense of wonder becomes numbed. So the question I have to ask myself is, can anything be done to bring that wonder back? Do I have enough innocence left to stop looking and start seeing again?

As with all issues of the mind, the first step in fixing this lack of seeing is acknowledging there is a problem. I need to start recognizing that my vision, for all I know, could fail tomorrow. I need to start looking at things as if it were the last time I'd ever see them. By placing myself in the frame of mind of somebody who knows they're going to go completely blind soon, I can begin to see the intricate details of things that I wouldn't normally

notice. As with a person who is close to death, life becomes a lot more special, and the gifts we are given become much more important.

The second step to truly appreciating my vision is taking care of my eyes. I need to spend less time staring at objects that are a certain distance away (such as computers and televisions), as that causes my eyes to become lazy. I need to excite my eyes as much as my mind. I need to look at things great distances away, and at objects right in front of my face. Whether it's a small ladybug crawling across the table or lightning striking a distant peak, I need to try and watch everything, large or small. By exercising my eyes like I would any other muscle, I can better prevent them from growing weak.

The ability to see is one of the most precious gifts humans have been given. Nobody can better understand this than somebody who has lost this gift. By not using our vision to its fullest extent, and not appreciating all that the world has to show, we are squandering it. All beauty is interpretive, but without analyzing everything there is to see, the great hidden beauties of objects will remain unseen. One needs to consciously think like a kid again, as it were, for it is only by looking through the eyes of a child that we can truly see.

## IRONIC EVIDENCE

TAB BARNARD

Dear Editor,

This letter is in response to the building of the third Nuclear Power Plant within three miles of my home. The first two plants were, in my opinion, quite necessary and beneficial in a number of ways. For example, the production and sale of the lead-lined suits has created jobs and brought in revenue; also, the sale of what used to be our drinking water to that company that is using it in those little glow-in-the-dark pens has enabled us to provide bottled water for the entire community.

For me, personally, they have been a great boon. Just for starters I have had the same batteries in my flashlights and radios for the past two years and they seem to be getting stronger and

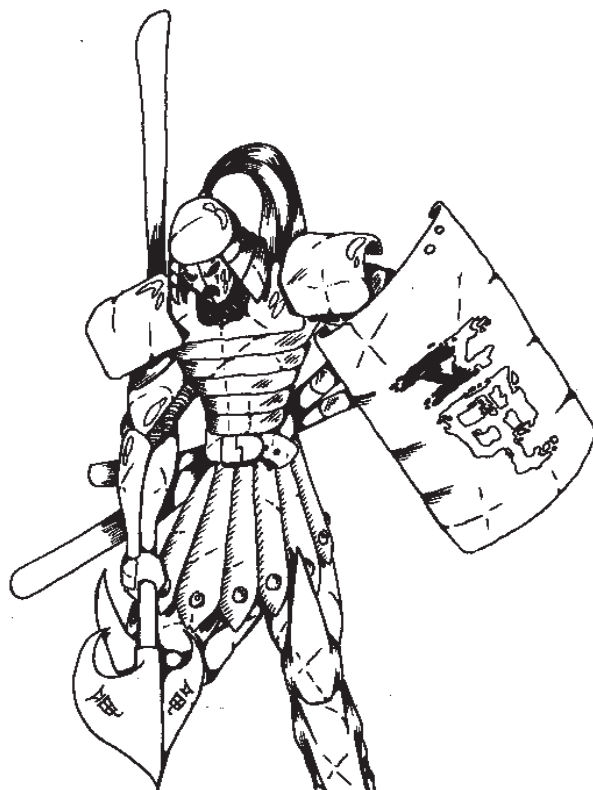


stronger.

Also, my financial situation has vastly improved since I started selling my cordless microwave oven on E-Bay. It is amazing that just a rock from my backyard duct-taped in a cardboard box will pop popcorn.

Our children have also benefited from the more varied and diverse flora and fauna of the area; their cousins from back east are quite envious of the two headed snakes and frogs that are quite common in the local ponds. Our youngest daughter has not had to turn on her nightlight since she and her friends started walking by the plant on the way home from school; the glow from her clothes' hamper usually lasts until well after dawn. Even with all these advantages, provided in such a philanthropic manner, my family and I are going to move.

I know this sounds crazy, with all the wondrous and wonderful things these fine people have done in our community, but it is true. The reason is quite simple: with the placement of the latest cooling tower, the signal from the translator that provides the Fox channel has been blocked. We tried it for the past two weeks but life without Homer Simpson is just not worth living. Not to



Kerry Budding

mention the reality TV shows. How can we possibly go on without *The Bachelor* or *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*? We tried to get "the powers that be" to change the zoning regulations and allow us to put up a taller TV antenna but they refused. This is understandable. They must draw the line somewhere. So it is with heavy hearts that we pack our things and head down that road to a new and exciting life in a different city. I hear Portales might be getting another Cheese plant. They say the odor from their wastewater is great for the complexion. We might try living there.

*Tab is a Nursing student at CCC.*

## METAL MUSIC: VIOLENCE AND SUICIDE

BECKY SENA

*The music is hard and the lyrics brutal. Some of the graphic violence is directed at women. Rape and torture are not uncommon themes. The genre is known as 'death metal,' and it is readily available to kids in music stores and over the Internet. Clerks will sell it to children without batting an eye...*

— Thomas Cole, "Special Report: Savage Sound,"  
*Albuquerque Journal*

Many people across America listen to music on a daily basis. Most people listen to it for the enjoyment. Music has a way of making people feel like there is nothing else around when they do not want to be bothered, or making someone feel extreme joy when they are feeling in the dumps. Metal music is one type of music in particular that makes people feel complete hatred to one another or even makes a person feel so corrupted that they would want to go and even commit suicide.

Listening to the lyrics of music is supposed to be joyous and make a person feel good, but not metal music. Metal music has some of the most explicit lyrics in any music genre today. One

writer says, "Death-metal music features some of the most extreme lyrics in rock 'n' roll. Many death-metal bands sing about suicide, murder, rape and other violence" (Cole, "Music" par. 10). Metal music lyrics are some of the worst words ever sung by any one person. Half of the time what the person is screaming cannot even be understood. Dr William Scott, chairman of the American Medical Association Council on Scientific Affairs says, "this presents 'a real threat' to the physical health and emotional well-being of especially vulnerable children and adolescents" ("Heavy Metal..." par. 9). Lyrics of a song are supposed to be understandable and enjoyable. Who wants to listen to someone inarticulate who screams at the top of his lungs about violence?

When it comes to the lyrics of the music it is one thing, but people should know what harm this music could potentially cause by just the name of the band. "There are at least 13 bands named after the male genitals, 6 after female genitals, 4 after sperm, 8 after abortion and one after a vaginal infection" (par. 10). Now who in their right mind wants to listen to bands with these kind of names? It is degrading to men and to women and should not even be put on the market for people to purchase.

These lyrics lead to violence and suicide. "Murders committed during the 1980s by kids 10 through 17 soared nearly 90%. Consider this: 90% of youths arrested for bias-related or occultic crimes are involved with heavy metal music, particularly the 'black metal' bands" (par. 12). Children (or anyone, for that matter) should not be exposed to this type of violence. Nor should they be able to purchase this type of metal violence. One report says,

Rouse, who was 17 years old and a high school senior, arrived at Richland High School in tiny Lynnville, Tenn., shortly before 8 a.m. on Nov. 15, 1995. He killed a teacher and a 14-year old girl with his semiautomatic .22-caliber rifle. He wounded a second teacher before being wrestled to the ground. Rouse, one of the first teen gunmen involved in a spate of school shootings that has shocked the

nation, is serving life without the possibility of parole at Tennessee's South Central Correctional Center. In an interview conducted over two days, he talked about death-metal music and its link to his crime. (par. 9-12)

In another case one family was broken when their daughter was killed by a group of "...killers, devotees of the heavy-metal band Slayer, [who] believed they needed to commit a 'sacrifice to the Devil' to give their garage band, Hatred, the 'craziness' to 'go professional'" (Horn par 1).

Suicide is another form of violence that happens when people listen to metal music. Many teenagers who listen to metal music at one point or another have more than likely felt the urge to kill themselves; in my own experience of listening to metal music there have been times when I just felt like destroying my own life and the life of others. "One type of media that has received important public criticism yet little attention from the scientific community is music, and more specifically, heavy metal (HM) music and its impact on suicidal risk (Martin, 1998; Stack, 1998)" (Claes, Lacourse, and Villeneuve par. 3).

Metal music is a growing problem when it comes to violence, suicide, and other acts of hatred. More people should focus on the fact that metal music makes people feel different when they listen to it. Parents should warn their children about this music and keep a close eye on what the stores are letting their children buy. By pulling together and doing this maybe one day they will pull metal bands off of the shelves and save a few lives.

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# LAWMAKERS, WHERE ART THOU?

DAVID JACKSON

*December 3, 2003*

A thirteen-year-old boy puts his trust and faith in the institution known as the Catholic Church. He prays every day and confesses his sins. He admires and respects the priest who guides him through life and teaches him the edicts of the Catholic religion. Little does he know his priest is a pedophile that was transferred from another parish after raping other boys his age. The priest carries with him the protection of the Catholic Church because he has confessed his sins. As well, the priest has no fear of law enforcement because he knows the law will not interfere with the Catholic Church. The boy will soon become the priest's next victim. He will experience betrayal; he will suffer damage beyond repair and he will lose faith in his religion and the judicial system designed to protect him.

This is the type of behavior that has occurred within the Catholic Church for many years. Priests have been abusing young boys for decades with little or no punishment from the church or authorities. The basic ideology that sexual abuse is a sin rather than a crime has prevented the Catholic hierarchy from truly dealing with predator priests. In an effort to conceal guilty clergy, priests are moved from parish to parish across the country and unleashed into another community to continue to prey on innocent victims. Church leaders, from Bishops to the Pope, continue to aid in the victimization of children. The ignorance of the Catholic Church's hierarchy continues to lead the way in what is now known as the Catholic Church crisis.

Coupled with the church's own indiscretions, Congress and lawmakers at every level of government have been ineffective in holding the Catholic Church accountable for their actions. Allegations of priests molesting children surface on nearly a daily basis. As well, the ongoing attempts to conceal and protect the perpetrators of these crimes have become a significant problem. It would appear that the Catholic Church officials

have taken it upon themselves to protect the offenders of these crimes. However, there are deeper issues concerning political policies and practices that at a minimum have allowed the Catholic Church to hide its criminals and hinder efforts to hold guilty parties accountable for their actions. Political agendas combined with church policies have enabled priests to continue sexually abusing children which perhaps may have been minimized if officials on all levels of government would do what is necessary to protect innocent children without regard to their political standings.

Courtrooms across America have, in the past, interfered with obtaining church documents and aided in concealing court records pertaining to clergy sex abuse. Cardinal Bernard Law, the Archbishop of Boston, was at the forefront of allegations concerning hiding pedophile priests, particularly John J. Geoghan who was accused of molesting over 130 boys in nearly a twenty-year period. Only in the last year, Superior Court Judge Constance Sweeney ordered church records pertaining to Geoghan unsealed and later ordered the release of records concerning any priest involved in misconduct. These records undeniably showed that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church knew their priests were sexually abusing children and priests were subsequently transferred to another parish and continued to molest children (Kasindorf, Bayles, and Grossman par. 16-19). Although the Catholic Church officials tend to conduct themselves in a veil of secrecy, American courtrooms must not provide a sanctuary for clergy. Had a judge ten years ago been brave enough to force the Catholic Church to turn over their records perhaps many children would have been spared from pedophile priests.

Many cases of clergy sex abuse have been successfully prosecuted on the civil arena or at a minimum hush money has been paid to the victim. Notwithstanding the importance of civil verdicts, they have had an effect on the overall judicial (criminal) process. After monetary awards are given, either by the court or by settlement, prosecutors seem to have problems bringing priests to trail. Typically church lawyers seek to have

records pertaining to civil judgments and settlements sealed. As well, victims are not as willing to testify at criminal proceedings. Courts are awarding multi-million dollar civil verdicts; as such we cannot continue to ignore the problem that generated those verdicts.

As multi-million dollar civil verdicts or the potential for such verdicts surface, the Catholic Church has sought bankruptcy protection. At this point, it is uncertain whether courts will allow the church to file bankruptcy; however, church leaders have allowed Cardinal Law and others to consider filing. If courts allow the Catholic Church to be protected under bankruptcy laws it would undermine the victims' ability to recover damages and reinforce the church's continued efforts to circumvent accountability. The church's decision to file bankruptcy is another attempt to avoid responsibility for their actions.

Accountability of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church remains, at best, illusive. Cardinal Law, Cardinal Edward Egan, and Bishop Thomas Daily of New York all played major roles in concealing pedophile priests, however, their actions remain unpunished. In the case of Cardinal Law, Attorney General Thomas Reilly refused to indict Law or any ranking official. Protesters of the decision were displeased and said the decision was politically motivated (Fuller par. 1-5). Both Egan and Daily had in the past refused to give names of priests involved in misconduct. In April 2002, the two leaders reversed their positions and decided to cooperate with authorities (Crawford par. 25-26). Although the church leaders changed their minds, their actions continue to go unpunished, but more importantly the victims of clergy sex abuse are not vindicated. State legislative laws have failed to be effective in mandating clergy to report sex abuse. Many professionals, including medical personnel and teachers, are required by law to report any kind of child abuse. The problem with including clergy is the sanctum of confessional. The church believes this right should be protected at any cost. When lawmakers attempt to change the existing statute, the church vigorously opposes and the legislature crumbles. According to Crawford, "The New York state legislature has been considering a bill that

would add clergy... However, the measure stalled at the end of the legislative session" (par. 27). Clergy have been afforded the protection of state laws nationwide, which in turn has made prosecution efforts extremely difficult if not impossible.

Since the Catholic Church crisis has surfaced, several states have made changes to their reporting laws. Although the laws may now include clergy, they still protect confessional in most states. As well, in many states, the laws assert there must be reasonable suspicion. Both of these factors will still allow clergy to continue to protect their criminals. If a report is made during confessional, a priest is under no obligation to report the incident. As well, if the priest is trying to protect a predator he can simply state there was no reasonable suspicion. These reporting laws have been changed only in light of the many allegations of misconduct that have surfaced, but they are not properly structured to force clergy to divulge information necessary to protect children from predator priests.

Lack of congressional action has added yet another facet to the Catholic Church crisis. "In the case of the sexual abuse scandal, members and analysts say Congress is influenced by two critical factors: the power of the church and a reluctance to get involved in matters touching religion" (Milligan par.3). The power of the Catholic Church is far reaching in congress as there are millions of Catholics in this country and the catholic vote is very prestigious. High-level politicians, particularly ones in power, are not willing to put pressure on Catholic Church leaders. When issues arise that the church wants resolved, congress not only listens but often favors the church; however, when action is required concerning clergy sex abuse, congress runs and hides. Congress uses separation of church and state to justify its position, but that is merely a crutch as congress does not hesitate to become involved in issues they can benefit from.

Ineffective leadership in all levels of politics has significantly influenced the Catholic Church crisis. Local courts, state legislatures, and congress have had major roles in the failure to protect children from predator priests. Political practices are taking precedence over our leaders' ability to distinguish between right and wrong. Policy leaders have left policing deviant priests – and the

people who protect them – up to the Catholic Church, which has not been effective. Congress has the power to create federal laws and enact measures that will mandate that the church cooperate with authorities and hold church leaders accountable for their actions.

As allegations of clergy misconduct continue to rise, very little has been done with respect to attaining justice for the victims. The victims of the Catholic Church crisis have suffered at the hands of the church and the judicial process. They have been betrayed by all parties involved. Undoubtedly, the Catholic Church will continue to maintain their secrets and little progress will be made to vindicate the victims. It is incumbent upon officials who have the power to make a difference, to act without regard to political agendas or religious beliefs. "New methods must be tried, not for the sake of the Roman Catholic Church, but for the health and future of the children" (Whelan par. 11).

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# THE KILLING SEASON

WILLIAM SENA

It could have been so nice  
 But it ended up like this  
 Life was so simple then  
 All those tears ago  
 but the world turned cold  
 And life grew hard  
 When you're born into the grave  
 You fall apart at the seams  
 Living life in the killing season  
 Someone tried to break into my mind  
 Someone tried to covet what was mine  
 But I fear no evil from the Demon Seed  
 I fear no pain from the Violent Breed  
 Because I learned how to play their game  
 Where there are no rules  
 All is fair in war and hate  
 And don't stray away  
 Too far from holy ground  
 When you're out in the killing season

They warned don't go out  
 Killing in the killing fields  
 But the wolves are always at my door  
 So I stray in the eye of the storm  
 Away from the evil of the outside world  
 Where the demons, they prey  
 Like pouring acid rain  
 On a perfect crystal clear day  
 In the killing season  
 They try to come into my world  
 They don't understand I'm not one of them  
 They try to pull me to the very edge  
 But my Soul is strong for their games  
 They want to pull me down the spiral  
 Sacrifice me like a lamb  
 But the damned could never lead me astray  
 So I'll take the long walk  
 Safe from the demons that pray  
 Out in the killing season

# LIFE IS CRUEL

ANONYMOUS

I know in my heart that you are the one.  
But life is so cruel

My life is so full of others  
Our love can never be

So now I live with a lonely heart  
One that cannot show true feelings

One that cries at night  
As I lay next to the one  
Whom I've vowed to live my life

I dream of your touch  
I dream of what life would be like  
If it were you lying next to me

Others have feelings more important than mine  
So I can only dream of a life of my own

The choices I made before you  
Have destined me to be lonely forever

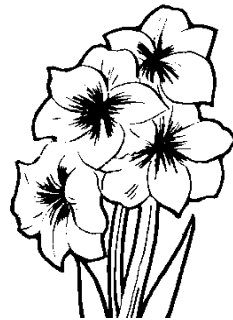
The only true love I can allow myself  
Is the love of the children sleeping soundly  
In the room down the hall.

I know in my heart that you are the one,  
But life is so cruel.

# FAITH

NAOMI M. VILLA

No matter how hard it is  
to live in the cruel world,  
All you have to do is kneel  
and pray to our good Lord.  
For he has all the answers,  
that one needs to understand.  
And if you ask him kindly,  
he'll reach out a helping hand.  
For we are all good children  
of this precious God we know.  
So if you have your faith in Him,  
he's sure not to let you go.  
And if your faith is strong enough  
you'll see the changes true.  
Though everything has gone so bad,  
through Him he prospers you.  
So if you do not know Him,  
please open up your heart.  
All the bad will come to pass  
and new things are sure to start.



# WHITE SANDS

WILLIAM SENA

White sands shifting in the winds  
Red skies over the horizon  
Eyes see the ocean for miles  
Lightning burns the evening sky  
In the Mind it's a time to live or die  
If you had wings you'd fly away  
To find the End of the World  
And make it to the other side

Days past are just days gone by  
Leaving no traces of reasons why  
The seasons change as the world turns  
The future is made of mistakes from the past  
And it's time to get away

Brutal memories break down the mind  
It's a killing kind of machine  
Like slaves bowing to the Pharaohs  
Where lambs being lead to the slaughter  
Cruel fate struck the world  
Even living life is death  
We're born into the grave  
But fear no evil and fear no man but God

Thunder in the mind's eye  
Echoes of the future to pass  
White sands and blue waters  
On the other side  
And it's a wave away

The other side of midnight  
Where the dawn brings new life  
Find a place under the sun  
Heat brings life to the dying  
There is a heaven in all this hell  
A place to cure the world's pain  
The healing power from Divine  
Just have to believe to get there

White sands under blue skies  
Clear waters deep in the eyes  
All the scars have been healed  
All the fears have disappeared  
To be ever after in White Sands  
The promised land

# WHAT THEY KNOW

MELYNDA CROUCH

I have to write myself into greatness.  
How does one do that? Which of me  
Shall I choose to be? Depends on what face  
I want them to see. Perhaps the serious me,  
Or the learned me, or the me that no one  
But me can see. Figure that out later.  
What accomplishments should they know of?  
Perhaps the ones of my intellect or the ones  
For others, (what ones for others) or the ones  
For her (they can't know about her). Tell them  
What I can and they will think I think  
Of no one but me. Let them see who  
I can be (who I actually am) and they  
Will assume me unworthy. Later.  
Later I will name my character and deeds. Now,  
What shall they know of my past? What struggles?  
What sins? What indignities? What impurities?  
Should they know about the ones that have been  
Betrayed? Maybe I will tell them about the ones  
Who have betrayed me. The more they know,  
The less they will believe in me. The less they know,  
The more I will cease to be.