

Baylorian

2006

Baylorian 2006

Staff

Crystal Williams (General Editor)
Emily Walther (Assistant Editor)
LeeAnn Hauser (Assistant Editor)
Jessica Roush (Assistant Editor)
Merideth Mullens (Assistant Editor of Art)
Marci Brentham (Assistant Editor)
Dawn Shands (Assistant Editor)
Julie Leiendecker (Assistant Editor)
Erin Everett (Assistant Editor)

Faculty Advisor

Dr. Audell Shelburne

The Baylorian is produced by students in the Department of English at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. Submissions are accepted from members of the UMHB community (faculty, staff, students, and alumni) each year.

UMHB Box 8008 • 900 College Street • Belton, TX 76513

Copyright © 2006
University of Mary Hardin-Baylor Press
Dr. Jerry G. Bawcom, President
Belton, Texas

Table of Contents

Sherrie Ward Murphree:

God's Contrast.....	1
Two Visitors.....	2
Beautiful Feet.....	3
Sacred in the Straw.....	4

Blake Martin

Karen.....	5
------------	---

Susan Pardue

The Great Divide.....	6
-----------------------	---

Bernarda Vargas

A Stranger.....	9
-----------------	---

Alicia Paulson

Untitled.....	11
---------------	----

Kathryn Johll

A White Christmas.....	12
Chad.....	16

John S. Hancock

Art's Dark Days.....	20
Clown Head over Weennie Dog.....	2
1	

Sandra Rodríguez

Double Standards.....	22
Estándar Doble.....	23

Isaac V. Gusukuma

Texas Haiku Collection.....	24
Lacy Leonards	
Pablaise.....	25
Laura Bulls	
If You Can't Dodge it, Ram It.....	26
Kim Purcell	
Willie.....	31
Josh Clements	
Blue-Collar Calling.....	32
Eddrea Philmon	
Chaos at the Beach.....	34
Robin McLaren	
Self-Portrait.....	35
Amy Lunde	
A Lack of Words.....	36
Karen Burges	
Me Likes Me Party Hat.....	40
Megan Lee	
Trail of Tears.....	41
Independent Connections.....	44
Katy Seals	
Jackie.....	50
Alice King Greenwood	
Alpha and Omega.....	51
Aspen Gold.....	52

Autumn.....	53
Indian blankets.....	54
Peach-Peeling Time.....	55
Jolene Pool	
Katy.....	56

Alice King Greenwood

Alpha and Omega

=

Before Earth,
matter lay in dormant mass,
formless, cold, dark. Divine hands
strung lights across vast
virgin skies and cast
the waters to their places. Blasts
of power dried up inundate lands,
holding their fretful edges fast.

Before life,
Earth lay still while God passed
over it, bringing forth as planned —
mountains, springs, and grass,
creatures of each class,
and man, His crowning work, was last.
Now all these things were very good, and
God, content, began His Sabbath rest.

Before rebirth,
Death harassed
creation with its dark demand
to die. But out past
that iconoclast,
God secured Death's death. Light contrasts
darkness! New heavens and new Earth span
eternity and sing Magnificats!

Kathryn Johll

A White Christmas

My mother's fingers danced across the yellowed keys of our Story and Clarke piano as "The Entertainer" sang in my ears. The notes were accompanied by the click of her fingernails against the ivory and I and my sister's giggles as we danced around the room. I watched my mother's feet as they pressed the foot pedals, and I listened closely to hear if it actually made a difference in the way the music sounded, but I could never discern any change.

The tempo changed from fast to slow, and my mother's face grew serious and her body swayed with the direction of her hands. As she forced the last deep note out I begged her to play a Christmas song. I wanted to hear "Silent Night," or "Little Drummer Boy," anything. It was, after all, Christmas time, which explained me and my sister's amplified laughter and unusual friendliness towards each other. The mournful melody of "Blue Christmas" poured out of the piano now, one of mom's favorites. She was usually knee deep in work or occupied with the demands that come along with being a single mother of five children, so I basked now in the contentment of having her relaxed and at home.

Since I could not dance very well to the new change of pace, I turned my attention to the Christmas tree that stood in the corner of the next room. The room was dim and the tree glowed softly. Red, yellow and green lights glimmered against the tin and glass ornaments that hung on every inch of the tree. I stepped in closer to take in the tangy, pungent scent. It was a stunning tree, standing a proud seven feet high; its branches thick and full all the way to the top. We had finished decorating the tree earlier in the day and I could not seem to detach myself from its presence. I picked out my favorite ornaments, the ones that I insisted on hanging myself every year. There was my little angel near the top of the tree that I had had since I was a baby, and the fuzzy pink snowman that I could never figure why was on the Christmas tree. The

foam apples and strawberries were all hung near the bottom so our cat could continue his annual destruction of them. We had given up trying to keep him away from the tree, and everyone was amused at our overgrown cat batting at the faux fruit until they stumbled helplessly to their doom.

The tree embraced me with its glowing warmth as I stared into its depths, mesmerized. There would be a night or two when I would insist on sleeping on the couch in front of the tree and fall asleep while its comfort penetrated my dreams.

“Katie, we don’t need a real Christmas tree. They just leave needles everywhere. What difference does it make, anyway?” My husband stared blankly at me from across the table.

“Because, I like the way they smell.”

“It’ll be cheaper to just go to Wal-Mart and buy one. Besides, a tree is a damn tree. That way we can just pack it up for next year—cleaner and cheaper.” He looked at me with that expression he always gave me when he thought he had just explained some obvious piece of wisdom to me.

“A fake tree? You’ve got to be kidding. No way, absolutely no way.” I got up from the table indignantly. “Look, Jonathan and I will just go by ourselves if you don’t want to come.” I walked out of the room to get my son ready to go. I didn’t want my husband to see the hurt on my face. No Halloween decorations, no Easter egg painting, and now no tree? How could I ever explain to him what it all meant to me?

I snuggled deeper into my thick coat and huddled against the door of my dad’s old Lincoln. The heater had not yet fought off the chill of the winter’s night, and I pretended that I was smoking one of my dad’s Camels as my breath froze in a smoky plume. The snow crunched grudgingly beneath the tires as the car turned into the grocery store parking lot. My sister and I already had our faces pressed against the window, staring intently at the trees lined up against the building. We had already spotted our favorites, but they would need to be checked carefully for fullness and dead spots before we could pick the winner.

Our father usually put up a small fake tree for the holidays but this year was different. This year all of us kids were going to spend Christmas Eve at his house and the next day at home with our mother. I guess it was just getting too strange to have Dad at the house on Christmas morning now that he had a new wife and all. It didn’t matter to us kids, of course, since that would mean two Christmases for us.

My dad held up the tree we picked out and spun it around to examine it from all sides. Nodding, my dad smiled with approval and gave my sister the money to pay for the tree. He then stuffed as much of it as he could into the trunk of the car as he held his back and grimaced in pain as he got back into the car. Of course we did not know at the time that cancer cells were ravaging my father’s bone marrow and this was the last Christmas we would spend with him. My sister and I teased him that he must be getting old and we all laughed. The tree was not near as tall as the seven-footer we had at home, but it was a perfect little tree with long needles that felt like feathers when you brushed your hand against them.

I kept watch out of the back window to make sure our new addition did not get jostled out onto the road. My sister rolled her eyes at me and my Dad smiled and told me to make sure it didn’t get away.

“I’m going to take the truck so the tree will fit.” I jingled the keys to signal me and Jonathan’s departure.

“Geez, Katie, how big is it going to be anyway?” My husband shook his head and disappeared for a moment and returned with a blanket. “Here, lay this down so you don’t get needles all over the place.”

I snatched the blanket from him and buckled my son into his car seat. My husband sighed loudly behind me. “Look, I’ll go with you guys if you really want me to, okay?”

“Whatever you want to do is fine with me,” I replied.

It was odd to be in Texas in December, picking out a Christmas tree in T-shirts rather than in the bundles of cotton and wool I was accustomed to in the mid-west. I scanned the rows of trees as my son jumped up and down excitedly.

“Let’s go look at the firs.” I walked towards the trees

I had seen when we came into the store and my husband reluctantly followed. Douglas Firs had always been my favorite trees. I loved their velvety needles and how they changed color depending on where you stood. My mother loved them too, but they were too expensive for her to afford when I was growing up.

“Sixty dollars? You can’t be serious, Katie. That’s just plain stupid and crazy. We’re only going to have the thing for a month! There ain’t no way in hell I’m paying sixty dollars for a damn tree.”

I ignored him and gazed at one of the trees I had spotted when we walked in. I turned it around to check for dead spots but found none. I put it down tenderly. “Alright, let’s go look at some cheaper trees.”

We walked to the next aisle just as a couple picked up the tree I had been looking at. I saw them smile and nod their heads with approval as they moved it to the end of the row and went on to find a stand. I studied the trees in front of me as Jonathan hid playfully in the prickly branches. I picked one out and looked at the price—twenty dollars. I turned to my husband and saw him walking hurriedly towards me with a tree already in his arms. His head was barely visible as he peeked stealthily around the branches, his mouth turned up in an anxious, sly grin. He had the fir.

“C’mon, before they see us!” We laughed crazily and ran to the register.