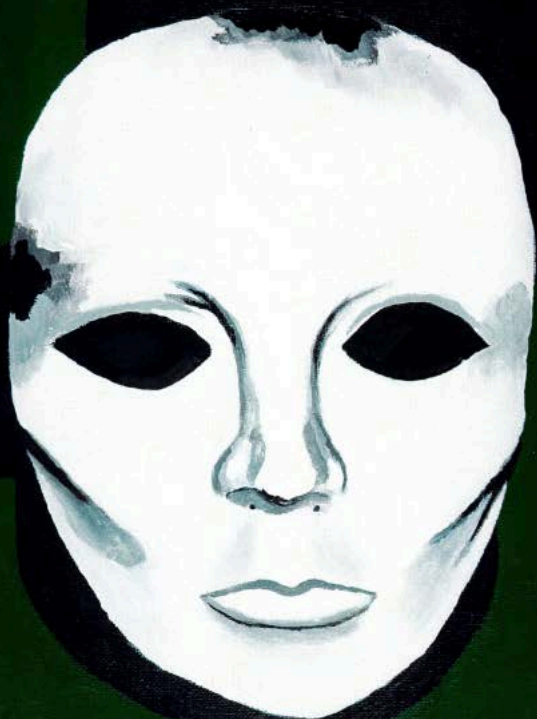


Ivy Quill



Volume V: The 5th Dimension

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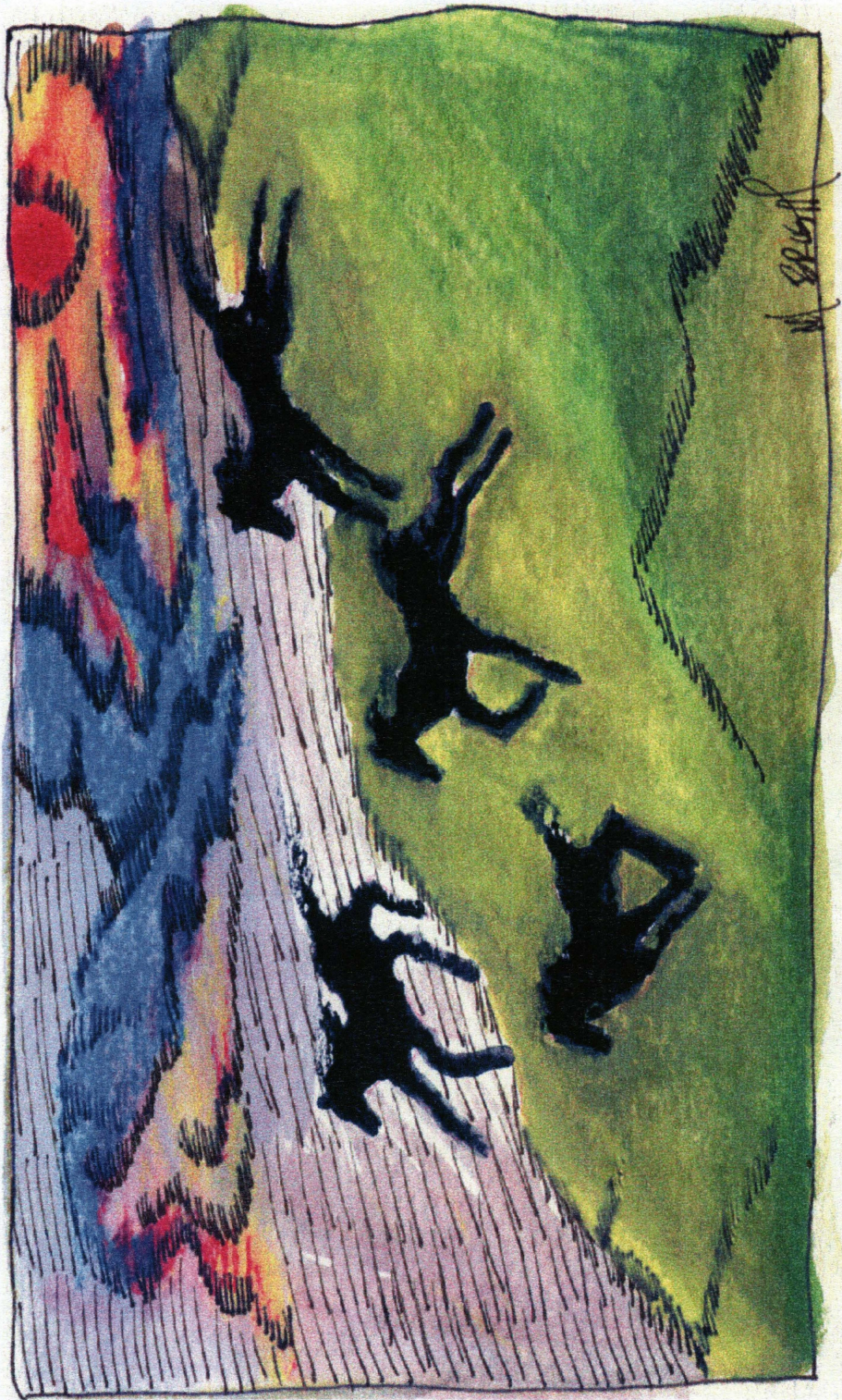
Special thanks to Apollo Printing, Dr. Jim Powell, and Ivy Tech Community College

Cover Art by Elisa Vanett



*"It is the function of art to renew our perception.
What we are familiar with we cease to see.
The writer shakes up the familiar scene, and
As if by magic, we see a new meaning in it."*

--- Anais Nin



Michelle Bright Sanchez

Season Haikus

By Claire Roof

Spring

The ground opens up

The brave crocuses arrive

Perfect purple dreams

Winter

Winter wind sings here

White designs fall from the sky

Dreams fall from the clouds

Fall

Fall blooms red and gold

Blushing leaves fall from the trees

Harvest dreams arrive

Summer

Summer slips in green

Blue Lake Michigan and dreams

Meet on the shore line



Bittersweet Symphony

By Duncan Kinuthia

Life is so bittersweet
A symphony of sound
With an endless repeat
Where melody will rise
On a hopeful seraph's wings
Until all the sound dies
With it my song-fading
Into time's simple scheme
Blurred into the shading
Of a deferred dream



Color

By Brittany Hazen

My body is that of my colors

A strong beating heart

Pumping rich heavy red

A brain questioning life

Vibrant colors rotating in circles

Organs keeping life

Sharing a dull shade of purple

Veins, thin, carrying life support

Breath, keeping lungs full

A wisp of frost white coming and going

A soul, the core of my colors

Swirls of burgundy orange, tendrils of lavender and sapphire

Sunshine yellow darting

Mellow pinks weaving

Colors consuming

They are taking over my body

Always going, consuming, never stopping



Michelle Bright Sanchez

Season Haikus

By Mary Ann Glover

Spring

Spring scents in the air

Every day nature provides

New discoveries

Fall

The wind has turned crisp

Brilliance of Fall abounds

Before the earth rests

Summer

Bright sun warms the heart

Lots of foliage provides shade

Fun long lazy days

Winter

Earth awaits long days

Season of hope, joy and peace

Contemplating spring

When He First Told Me

By Adrian Six

When he first told me, I ran out of the house.

Screaming.

I was in shock. Could this be true?

I can't believe I had no clue.

I soon was screaming at myself for not noticing this before.

I was screaming at myself for running out of the door.

I found myself getting angry.

Not angry that he was gay, but angry that I was the last to know.

How did I not notice this before?

I couldn't believe that I, his mother, was not aware.

Were there signs that I ignored?

I found myself worrying about how his life would be?

What exactly will everyone see?

Will society disagree?

Will my son ever be free?

Again, I am screaming at myself for running away.

The right thing would have been for me to stay.

I collect myself and enter the house.

I wrap my arms around my son and tell him as I cry

There will never be a moment that goes by

That I will not always be your mother and as your mother

I will accept you for who you are.

Today, tomorrow, and forever.



Michelle Bright Sanchez

Thirst

By Brittany Hazen

I seek knowledge

Grasping for the things that fly across my eyesight

Thirsting for the new

Desire to collect and order

Devour new words and vomit out theories

Digest old literature

My mind is bursting, turning and changing

My fingers long to touch wet dew and smell the rain

My heart yearns for the reasoning behind the tide

My eyes wish to see sunsets and the start before it rises again

The atoms in me want to soak up the world and learn its curves

Oh, the knowledge I can seek

All of the things I can learn

Season Haikus

By Peggy Stogdill

Summer

I don't like summer

The heat makes me unhappy

But my cats like it

Fall

Gardens nearly done

So tired of canning, freezing

But really, it's great

Winter

White, silver, sparkle,

Diamonds for free for me

God's beautiful gems

Spring

Tulips red, yellow

So welcome after white, black

My favorite time

The End of an Era

By Ben Musick

It's over. No more cheers. No more bright lights. Just a man. He is now forced into a role he has never been in before, a normal person. He has all the accolades in the world of football possible. They are now history. The trials and tribulations he endured throughout his career have gotten him to this point, on top. But what now? Football is so commonly compared to war and players to soldiers. So now as he begins his journey to citizenship he must re-adjust. He is still an athlete at heart so new goals will be set, different challenges will be taken on, but the stage is much smaller. How will he react? Some can't let the game go and return. But he is passed that. There's no going back. No more cheers. No more bright lights. Just a man. An athlete. Whose clock has hit zero.

Fast Enough

By Claire Roof

I cannot get there fast enough for my lungs...

We have all waited so long for the blooms on the trees

To spread like petal lush lips onto another's space

We cannot keep up with our desire for these miracles

We cannot get away from the marathon marauders fast enough

The news just replays their madness and we run the races everywhere in the winds

Of hope like lung filling wall of weeping don't forget the names of all who were

But we do not stop the spring cherry blossoms from bombarding us with a kind of heaven

Take me into your arms that exist across the continent of continents and let us be like astronauts

Who float in their space ships and ponder the ship we call earth as it spins like a slow gorgeous

Top in the silent black space except where the Milky Way strews forth the unending universe of life ...

Take all the revolutions of the planet earth and put those colors on our tongues,

And can we love again? Walk on the earth; embrace the swiftly coming of dawn,

Walk on the spinning earth as if you are an angel fell to earth on a mission.

See us as we are; exhale some hope our way...

My Point of View

By Duncan Kinuthia

Through my eyes I see a happy home

Inside my mind I'm alone on my own

Through my eyes I have loving friends

Inside my mind I know it's just pretend

Through my eyes my life goes by too fast

Inside my mind I'm stuck in the past

Through my eyes I have a secret weapon

It creates a lie that becomes my fake heaven

Through my eyes I see hope and love

Inside my mind I know I better give up

Through my eyes I see what isn't really there

Inside my mind is where I'm fully aware

If you looked through my eyes you'd never have a clue;

About what's on my mind in my point of view.

Season Haikus

By Terry Sue Helvey

Fall

Gold, orange, yellow, red

Let your senses sing

Summer

In the heat of day

Heat index of 104

Cool me, mint julep

Winter

Winter has arrived

Frosty, icy, sparkly, snow

Warm me by the fire

Spring

Give me warm, moist earth

Black, rich, moist and warm to grow

Serenade

By Anjali Sharma

Goddess by Day, Guardian by Night.

Nurturing Calm

Forever Giving

Forgiving

Tides of Serenity. Waves of Fury.

Boundless Blessing.

Your Moonbeams Quench the Soul.

My Moonshine.

High Priestess ISIS

Enchant my Spells.

Ordain me Sight. Inner light.

Wise Warrior ATHENA

Fortify!

Bestow me Clarity. Tenacity.

Empower Me.

Liberate my Sssssspears.

Sharpen my Ssssssword so I May Wield it with No Fear



Michelle Bright Sanchez

HERA be my Hero.

Eliminate my Worries. My Enemies.

Redeemer. Reward me all Treasures.

Avenger!

May your Passion,

May your Wrath,

Purge me.

Newborn am I.

This is me.

By Lisa Stump

I have a voice.

I want to be heard.

I am not rich, nor am I poor.

I am not famous, like a celebrity.

Although I am well known among my family, friends...even acquaintances.

I am a wife, married to a disabled Vietnam veteran.

I am a sister, the oldest of five.

I am a college student...late (?) in life.

I am a SURVIVOR! And this is my story.

I was a victim of incest.

I was a victim of physical abuse.

I was a victim – SURVIVED!!!

I thought I was “dumb”. I am not.

I thought crying showed weakness, but it does not.

I thought that asking questions showed a lack of intelligence, it does not.

I am an achiever.

I have goals.

I have found my strengths.

I survived.

I have succeeded.

And this is who I am.

I Miss You...Always

By Edward Smith

Oneness has many misgivings

One heart, one mind

Both equally betray the other in all forms of fanaticism

The battle wages a bloody war on the battlefield of thought

Strategically placing memories, both heaven and hell-and the feelings they brought

As invisible strings prevail with every effort to restrain the retrogressive

Tumbling backwards, face to face with the puppet master; a time of long ago

Here now, no going back

The memory must play out as I have lived

Like still frame photographs, each one ticks by like seconds on a clock

Counting down to the first moment I saw you; time has stopped

The seconds no longer tick

Transpiration begins as we ascend to become clouds

Not two, but one cloud floating among the earth

Free, with no restrictions-complete

Every thought of you has become my silver lining

Yet I did want it, or the dark cloud that came with it

As rain drops splash into the mud puddles that soak my feet; I then feel

One final memory crashes on my heart, like a violent ocean wave

The clock resumes ticking

Your favorite flower; white oleander

I gently lay upon, your newly dug grave-I miss you, always



Michelle Bright Sanchez

Season Haikus

By Diane Bright

Winter

I walk through the woods
To see what there is to see
The snow shields the ground

Spring

I walk through the woods
To see what there is to see
Bees on flowers thick

Summer

I walk through the woods
To see what there is to see
Bees on flowers thick

Fall I walk through the woods

To see what there is to see
The nuts are falling

The White Sandy Beach

By Edward Smith

When days are dark and your thoughts inside

Makes you feel like jumping out of your skin

There is a place tranquil and serene

That one can reside, if only it's within

It's an unknown paradise, the shore of dreams, the sea of blue

Clear calming waters so still, they mirror the fluffy white marshmallow clouds

The wind is brisk and the sun is warm

Like the hug from a mother, for the child she adores

The white sandy beach is pure as fresh fallen snow

Unfold the blanket, lay it down nice

Smooth out the wrinkles

Plae the wine on ice; wait for the show

For the best has yet to come, as the sun beings to set

Vibrant colors stream against the canvas of blue sky; turning to night

Slowly fading into darkness as the audiences of stars begin to arrive

Every sparkle amongst them is a wish to our delight

Wish for the moon and it will appear full-for your pleasing

When the night is the darkest; it is there for a reason

To remind one of light, and in sleep one finds peace

A great comfort to know, as the moon always watches over

-the white sandy beach

The Traveler

By Edward Smith

I am but a traveler, with my satchel-leather bound and torn
Collecting precious memories, that I have no time to mourn
The burden is mine to carry, as the frayed straps become so taut
My shoulders once like steel, have become merely rope with knots
The beaten path is one of which, I do not wish to tread
The signs that claimed direction, I have obviously misread

I stumble across an unturned stone, which sparkles in the sun
As I kneel down to pick it up, I then feel the urge to run
I can sense the remnants of dirt, so gritty within my palm
As I deep repeating t myself, that I must remain clam
I find a small brook, and then wash the stone clean
For what I held in my hands, I could have never foreseen

For it was not a stone I found, but a choice-to be free
So I buried my memories-beneath a dying willow tree
Then in the distance, a silhouette appears-and begins to approach
She was dressed in white silk, and wore a sunflower brooch
As she gracefully pranced down the flowery slope
She smiled at me, and ten said, "Hello, my name is Hope"



Peggy Stogdill

Reflection Of My Life

By Lucinda M. Jones

She reflected back where her happiness came from and within she began to bubble with JOY! For she knew at that moment with him she could do all things and without him she could do nothing. Her memory of a sound doctrine sermon pierced her ears with HOPE, FAITH, LOVE, JOY and KINDNESS!

She connected with the felling of her youth. Some good thoughts and some not worth remembering...The fire burning within my spirit is patiently waiting for me to understand its existence. When it becomes low the confidence in my pilot lets me know that soon I will be full-lit again!

Season Haikus

By Paula Deen

Spring

A frog jumps into

The pond and splashes silence

Once again

Summer

Robins fly home and

Nest set up ready for some

Summer family fun

Fall

Leaves falling cold breezes

Pumpkins showing and gourds so

Pleasing to the eye

Winter

Ice forming fish trapped

Shivering earth covered

Snow in snow

Friendship

By Duncan Kinuthia

Friendship is more than a gift, responsibility, privilege or a thing.

Friendship is Friendship

Friendship is something given, earned or formed.

Friendship can be taken, lost or broken.

Friendship is Friendship

No one can change that.

Racism is Past

By C. Raymond Wallace

In April of 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave one of his strongest and most important speeches...He took us to the mountain top...He let us know, that one day we would get to the mountain top...And we would enter into the promise land.

Sadly, Dr. King would not make it there with us; However, God would allow him to go to the mountain top, and look over into the Promise Land.

This Is What I Believe Dr. King Saw!

Today, at the turn of the 21st Century, we are on the mountain top...entering into the Promise Land...Looking into the valley below.

We see the peaks are not as high...And the valleys are not as low.

We are strolling through the vineyards of Freedom...Gathering Knowledge from the vines of education...And seeding for the future of our children.

Although, Dr. King has taken us out of the land of slavery...out of the hands of our oppressors...We still face the invisible shroud of racism.

Racism is like a fog...An invisible mist...That is always around us...Lurking, ready to attack.

Racists can only see the negative...They look at the shade of the color of man and decide that they are superior over all they can see...That is Racism...The shroud of ignorance.

Racism is alive and well as long as Black People are being profiled in the airports...The movies say White Men Can't Jump...or in life, we say "That White Boy Can't"!...That's racism.

Included in the realm of racism is another voice that has sounded throughout the thunderous spectrum of time: that of Gender; Woman! Genderism, as in racism, is the same slice of ignorance off the backside of an ass.

As Dr. King viewed the other side of the mountain, he saw woman walking along the side of man. Stride for stride; climbing the same ladder of success; taken off the pedestal of ignorance

"Genderism", as in racism, keeps man from seeing the beauty of Mankind.

God's love is the only cure for the two "isms".

The type of love you see in eyes of a child, when they are playing with children of other races, creed and colors. Only then, will our children, and our children's children be able to stand with us, in that unbreakable circle of freedom and love...Raise our hands to the Heavens...and shout to the generations of the past...Who have endured the pain...Torture...Trials and tribulations of slavery...Segregation, Genderism and Racism...

Shout to our Forefathers

At Last...At Last...Racism is Past

At Last...At Last...Racism is Past

Thank God Almighty

We are Free At Last

Racism is Past

Then, and Only Then, will we Truly Be Free

Truth and Mysteries

By G. D. Andrews

I would like to explore different cultures and societal groups in this world to find out if they have made it virtually impossible to find answers to the questions we may have toward history, religion, or general questions in life. I will pose a question in explaining a subtle reservation I believe point toward societies and various cultures in the world. This is a question of concern; and maybe without answer. I am confident that with or without an answer, it brings about a desire to find more understanding. It is only appropriate to quote Eugene Ionesco (Romanian and French playwright and dramatist) here; "It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question." So, my question is : I wonder how I can recognize the truth in life and how can I understand the mysteries therein if I have lived in such a narrow-minded surrounding? To explain the question, I need to give some history in my own personal life. I was brought up in a very "normal" family. My three brothers and I had the same parents (no blended families) and we lived with both of our parents through our childhood and well into our adulthood. We attended a conservative church on Sunday, all except Dad. Dad worked and Mom stayed home to take care of their home and children. We were not affluent by any means, but we never went without food, we always had a car that worked, and had clothes for school and the needed supplies. We were just "normal". According to the dictionary, normal is conforming to a standard or a social norm. Although, I would argue, that all of us have different and unique social norms and where do we go in this world to find the social norm that is common to all of us? These differences in our individual social histories will give each of us a unique and a completely different perception of truth and the mysteries therein. I say we have been culturally trained to walk through life without depth and we have a lack of understanding in anything outside our own small box. So, how can anyone begins to think of themselves as open-minded? The personal traits I hope to accomplish in my plight toward truth is to listen to all who will take their time to speak to me. I can hope I am slow to speak of those things I am not familiar with. I can hope that I don't judge every new premise by the way I perceive it to be. Here is the occasion to interrupt this thought with another quote. "The highest form of ignorance is to reject something you know nothing about." Dr. Wayne W. Dwyer, (American self-help Author). I find it hard to understand the mysteries of those that lived in some other part of the world, or the other side of the country, or even across town, as a matter of fact, across the street?

With that being said, it saddens me to see young people, educated and bright as they may be, follow after what is told to them from the leaders of their lives. It often is evident by their words, which are spoken in the context of opinions that are obviously not researched or educated. In my little box I have called life I have had people in role model positions with their ideas of

knowledge. Their knowledge was based on traditions and beliefs. I suspect most people have been taught from similar circumstance. Let's try to remember our teachers, role models, and Sunday school teachers were also trained to live and believe what was in their own small box for life also, so I can't fault them, but clarification between belief and knowledge needs to be made, which is beliefs are not knowledge, and beliefs should not be construed as evidence, proof, or solid information. There is just cause to be skeptical about the information received as gospel. Something was said about skepticism by John Dewey (Philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer); "Skepticism: the mark and even the pose of the educated mind". Taking in information should be given the same treatment as food. We need to taste it, and chew it up well. If it isn't good, then spit it out.

As a teenager, I heard dinosaurs did not exist, this occurred in the late 1950's, when evidence for dinosaurs was just surfacing too much of the public. I and many others in our class room at church were discouraged in inquiring about evolution. Evolution was such a controversial topic we were not allowed to bring it up in the class room. I have since seen the "light" about most of these mind blocking beliefs, but it took a large part of m life to completely convince myself that there is much more to all of these subjects. I have had many days of trying to prove or disprove some of the beliefs that have been planted inside me. It goes without saying that some beliefs in life are more weighty than dinosaurs and evolution, not meaning to down play either subjects, but beliefs in God is, to some, more substantial than dinosaurs. Having grown up in conservative churches where so many of the beliefs on fears over knowledge have given me reason to doubt even the basic beliefs of Christianity. As Ralph Waldo Emerson (American poet, philosopher and essayist) so eloquently stated "Knowledge is an antidote to fear." I have no doubt some of the ideas and beliefs being taught stemmed from fear, yet there were teachings that were true. Example: A man named Jesus was in the world and he lived around year 1 to 35. He really was the root of Christianity. Books have been written about Jesus outside the Bible and that gives credibility to him being a part of the human history. He was considered as rebellious to the ways of man and religion in his era. He was Jewish, born in Bethlehem, and lived in Nazareth. There are other points, although, being taught about Jesus that concern me. The main source of information in the Christianity belief comes from a book written by the religion's own leaders. The reason I bring this point out is because these writers have a common goal and common beliefs, which give to believe there may be biased information within the book of books. After all, they all want to promote religion by explaining their views on what has transpired in their lives that pertain to Jesus or their accounts the events of those times.

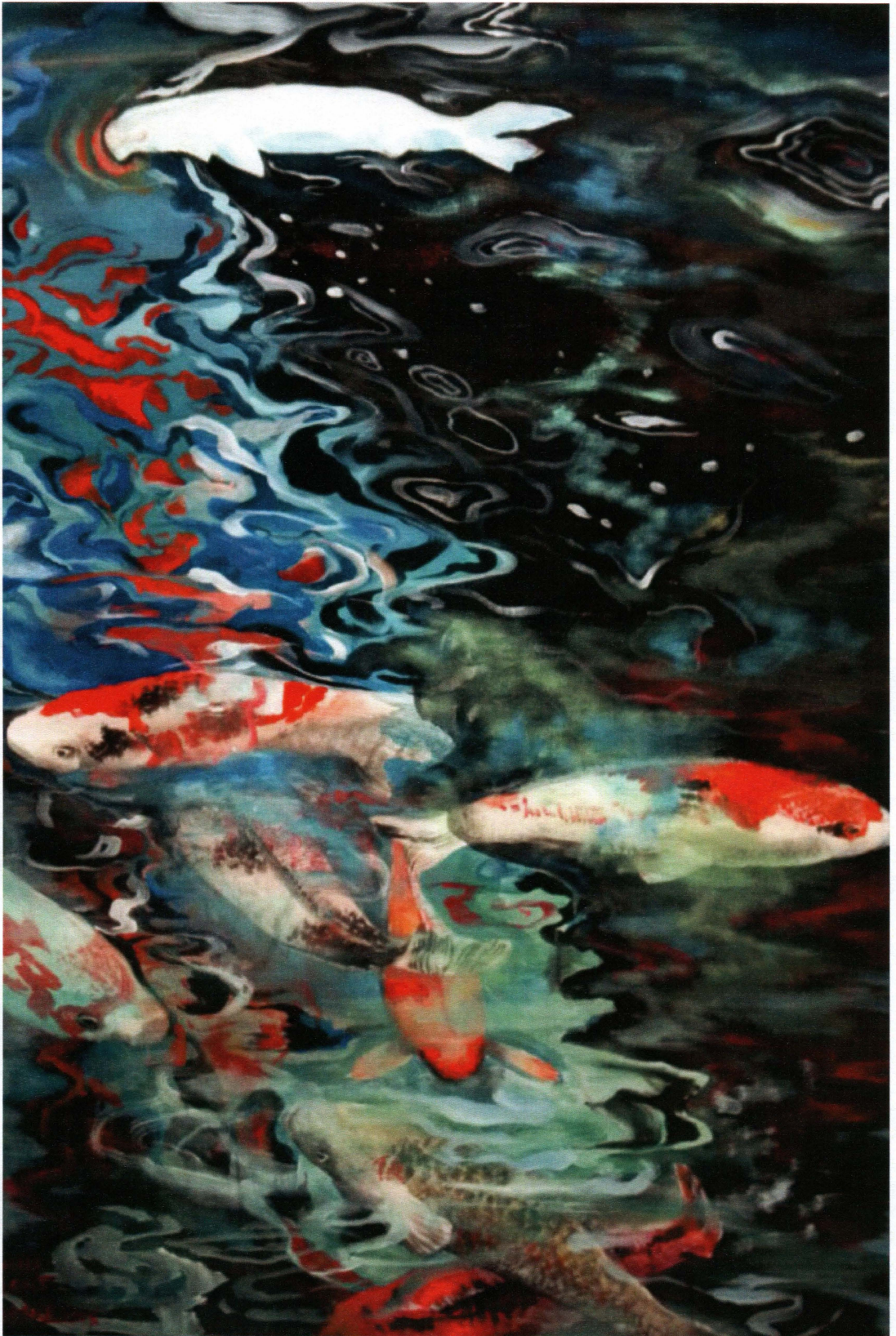
These days, a black shadow hangs over the Christians. Some of this shadow is due to the horrid crimes from within the Christian leaders, preachers and priests alike. With all of the negative publicity has come a focus on the doctrines and beliefs. Are the belief systems so complex that

people have a hard time trying to figure right from wrong? The beliefs are so varied non-believers can't figure how to choose and believers can't figure what to believe. It seems to me that an organized group as big as Christianity should be more uniform in their beliefs. Their beliefs are so wide-ranging; a newcomer will be overwhelmed with the decision of where to go and what should be believed. Not only minor beliefs, but some of the doctrinal beliefs have huge differences. I question the very thought that Jesus had the last name, Christ. Most Christians call him Jesus Christ as if Christ is his surname. His last name is not mentioned in any books I have read because he has no surname. People in the time period of Jesus didn't use family names. He was referred to in the Bible as Jesus of Nazareth, even though he was born in Bethlehem. Now if that's wrong in most people's understanding, it can only mean they just accepted past teachings of their elders and taken it for granted. I wonder if being "seekers of truth" has any precedent in today's world. So, how do we know the truth about life and its mysteries? This is a small, somewhat immaterial, and common mistake but if we're not getting little things right, how do we get the big ones right? The Bible says Jesus was a man and says it repeatedly. It also says, God has never been seen by any man. Now, if any man means; all men and all women then that can only mean Jesus never saw God. Most churches believe that Jesus was God or part of a Godhead. How confusing. Was anyone alive during the time of hunters and gatherers that believed in God? There had to be a time in the history of man that no one believed in God. It was at this time someone had to speak-up to say that there was a God and that He created all of us. Could this person have been wrong? How did he come to this conclusion?

The Christian society in America is so proud of Christianity that it has taken it to all parts of the world, sometimes through force. Yet, Christianity still only makes-up 33% of the world beliefs. When Jesus lived, Christianity was unheard of. It took more than 100 years to hear the world Christianity in the vocabulary of man. Contrary to popular belief, there was no pope for 195 years after Jesus was crucified. We also would like to believe that we have some insight on the appearance of Jesus. Many paintings were made of him, but none were painted before 400 AD. These are facts not beliefs. Yet, there are those that will deny the evidence for the sake of preserving their own belief.

With so many differences and huge gaps in the early history documentation of man and religion, it only seems fair to say that some of the things being taught could be wrong or at least inaccurate. My final question is this; has our society (or most of our society) created a box of cultural training that make us virtually fixed in our beliefs, unable to be truthful to ourselves, unable to research our life and its mysteries? I find it honorable and rewarding to uncover truth and not living by beliefs, feelings, and doctrines of men.

"For knowledge, too, is itself power." Francis Bacon (English philosopher, statesman, jurist, artist, and author)



Michelle Bright Sanchez

From a spring monologue written by Donita Gill

Girls are like Pearls

Mama Lena says, “Girls are like pearls, they need to be cultured and cared for by family and people in their communities. A girl learns how to choose a man by the example her father sets in the home; if daddy is a mean man, she will choose a man that will make her scream instead of having many sweet dreams.”

Mama Lena’s cozy little grotto style house sat directly in the middle of Rustic Village on Mulberry Lane, senior citizens lived on one side of the lane and other side of the lane is a gumbo mixture of people who fill the homes built for families.

Mama Lena is the sage woman of the village; a robust elderly woman of Jamaican and Irish descent, up high on the top of her head rest two thick auburn colored braids pinned down neatly in the center of her head; her round ruddy face is speckled with a few red freckles and sparkling jet black eyes that know every soul young and old in the village.

On a blistering hot summer day, Mama Lena is stationed on the front porch rocking in her rocking chair shelling peas or shucking a bushel of sweet corn to cook later in the week before guests arrive. Early one Saturday morning, Mama Lena heard a whimpering voice cry out from across Mulberry Lane, “Please, Oh God, please Jack, don’t hit me, you know I love you.” Mama Lena lifted her head up and stopped shelling peas, at the sound of Bella’s voice, Mama Lena knew it was Bella’s husband Jack beating Bella again because she did not have his catfish read for dinner Friday night, so he was beating her early Saturday morning.

The screen door on their tidy white house flung open with Jack’s big caveman hand planted on Bella’s pretty black hair dragging her down the dull gray concrete sidewalk. Jack yelled, “Come on woman, I’m gonna teach you a lesson or two.” Jack kept dragging Bella down the hot concrete sidewalk with blood dripping from her face.

Mama Lena couldn’t stand hearing Bella scream as Jack dragged her like an animal that he had captured. Mama Lena reached under her rocking chair and pulled a bolt action shot gun. Without hesitation, she fired right above Jack’s head. She roared, “Let her go Jack, you yellow belly coward!” With his head ducked low, Jack released his big hand from Bella’s hair and took off running behind the neighbor’s house. Mama Lena laid the shot gun down beside the rocking chair and slowly wobbled across Mulberry Lane to help Bella up off the hot concrete sidewalk; bloodied and bruised, Bella managed to hold on to Bella across the street to her house. After Mama Lena ushered Bella into the house, she helped Bella slowly ease into the chair in the living room. Bella’s sore body imprinted the bright floral print chair cover on the chair; Mama Lena said, “Wait right there Bella, I’m going to get my shotgun off the porch. I will be right back to

clean and dress those wounds.” Mama Lena walked back into the house like an armed soldier coming in from the battle field. She propped the shotgun up behind the screen door just in case she needed to use it again. The, she headed for the bathroom to get everything she needed to care for Bella’s wounds.

Bella sat there in the chair with tears leaking down her cheek on to her bloody lips that looked like two miniature inflated car tires, both of her eyes were swallowed shut and in the corner of her forehead was a knot the size of an egg. Mama Lena walked out of the bathroom with a wash tub filled with warm water. In the other hand, she held a fancy pink caddy stocked with bandages, gauze, scissors and all kinds of ointments along with a few of her own home remedies as well.

Mama Lena started humming as she sat the wash tub and caddy on a big square end table next to the chair Bella was sitting in; Mama Lena reached for one of the cushioned folding chairs that house guests used when they filled her living room. She sat on the right side of Bella examining the wounds carefully; Mama Lena said, “It’s going to be okay honey”, and she gently started cleaning Bella’s swollen face and singing, “this little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine.”

As Mama Lena wrapped gauze around Bella’s left ankle, she heard a knock at the screen door; she turned around to see who was at the door. It was little Miss Fannie Lou standing at the screen door with her nose pressed on the screen while her silvery tinted blue hair swirled around her face, she belted out, “Oh, Mama Lena, I saw the whole thang!”

“Oh aint that terrible what happened to a woman as sweet as Miss Bella. She don’t bother no body; I sure hope you feel better soon Miss Bella, you are in the care of Mama Lena. She will take care of you.” Mama Lena said, “Miss Fannie, Bella needs to rest. We will talk to you later.” Miss Fannie Lou responded, “Oh alright, I’m going home to look at my zinnia’s” Bella tried to mumble a word or two and Mama Lena said, “Bella, just try not to say anything, just rest right here, you are in a lot of pain. You can sleep out here on the sofa bed in the living room until you are well enough to move around.” Bella was still trying to talk but it hurt too bad and she hung her head down and started sobbing. Mama Lena said, “Bella, honey, you are better than that... I know it hurts but raise your head up girl, it’s going to be okay.”

Two days had passed and Jack still had not been home as far as Mama Lena could tell and no one else on Mulberry Lane had seen Jack either.

On the other side of the village, rumor had it that Jack was on a drunken bout on the east side of town where he worked as a shade tree mechanic. He just beats Bella even more and tosses her around like a rag doll when he is drunk and no one would call the cops because they just sided with Jack anyway.

Mama Lena continued to nurse Bella. After a week, Bella gradually began to look a little better, although the swelling around both of her eyes turned into black eyes. She regained her appetite and she to go back home. Mama Lena told her to be careful and if she needed anything, to let her know. Mama Lena said domestic violence is just silenced in the village and the world victimizing the victim all over again. Rustic Village residences on Mulberry Lane had their share of family problems that Mama Lena witnessed firsthand or she heard of the problems through the Village grapevine.

Within a stone's throw away on the other side of the lane, Ms. Ruby and Bobby Sue lived in a big yellow house. Ms. Ruby is a short brown woman who loves to drink coffee all the time. Bobby Sue is the oldest of four daughters.

Mr. Ruby is in sales. He lived in Missouri for some reason. He did not visit his family very often. Bobbi is a tall slender warm brown-colored girl with a knack for avante garde clothing. According to the neighbors, she is always doing something bizarre to her hair like shaving one side of her head and cutting the other side with Ms. Ruby's pinking shears that she uses for sewing projects.

Then she hangs a dangling earring in one ear that tickles her bare shoulder; Bobbi was just different than most girls her age that lived in Rustic Village.

One afternoon, Mama Lena was sweeping the front porch off. She noticed Ms. Ruby and Bobbie standing in their front yard as began walking down the steps to sweep the steps off. She could hear a lot of commotion coming from down the lane. She stopped sweeping and looked down the lane. Mama Lena took a double take and looked more intently. As she squinted her dark eyes, she could see Ms. Ruby and Bobbi doing a tumbling tango in their front yard. They looked like acrobats in a circus to Mama Lena.

She left the broom on the sidewalk near the steps. Mama Lena made her way down Mulberry Lane to see what was going on with Ms. Ruby and Bobbi.

By the time Mama Lena make it down the lane where a crowd had encircled Ms. Ruby and Bobbi; Mama Lena noticed how everyone was just standing there in silence. Mama Lena walked up on the crowd and peered through the circle of people; she seen Bobbi lying flat on her back with a butcher knife to her throat; while Ms. Ruby was sitting on top of her clasping both of Bobbi's wrists. Bobbi yelled out, "I hate you!" Ms. Ruby said, "I love you, Bobbi." Mama Lena drew back and gasped, saying a silent prayer, "Lord, please spare this child's life."

Suddenly, sirens could be heard as cop cars raced through Rustic Village down Mulberry Lane. Two officers jumped out of the car and broke up the crowd that encircled Ms. Ruby and Bobbi. One officer knelt down and took the butcher knife from Bobbi; the other officer pulled Ms. Ruby off Bobbi; then they helped Bobbi up off the grass, handcuffing her and escorted her to the police car. Bobbi screamed out "I hate you dirty cops. I hate everybody!"

One of the cops shoved Bobbi into the back seat of the car and locked the door. Then, both of the cops got in the car and cruised away.

The crowd that encircled Ms. Ruby and Bobbi dispersed and Mama Lena and Ms. Ruby were standing there. Mama Lena thought how sad for Ms. Ruby and Bobbi. She helped Ms. Ruby pick up the pieces of Bobbi's lucky charm bracelet that appeared to glisten in the war green grass that day.

Mama Lena offered to make a cup of coffee for Ms. Ruby. While they walked to Mama Lena's house, they talked about Bobbi's many trips to the center for the insane.

Ms. Ruby sat quietly looking misty eyed in Mama Lena's bright yellow kitchen chair; as Mama Lena put a heavy glass teapot on the stove. Afterwards, Mama Lena pulled a matching yellow chair out and sat down. She began speaking softly to Ms. Ruby saying, "Ms. Ruby, sometimes a child is born in a certain way and the mother knows it in her heart, but a mother loves to cover what she knows will hurt."

Ms. Ruby said, "I know Bobbi is different and I can't change that but I don't know what to do for her." Mama Lena handed Ms. Ruby a lucky penny handkerchief trimmed with white lace to wipe the tears from her bloodshot eyes. Then, Mama Lena got up and walked over to the counter and picked up a big bowl of peaches to slice for Sunday afternoon dessert.

She placed the bowl of peaches on the kitchen table. Then, she went over to the cabinet and took two coffee cups and big jar of Maxwell House coffee out of the kitchen cabinet and placed them on the counter near the steaming glass teapot. She carefully measured one teaspoon of rich brown coffee into each cup and poured the hot water into the cups.

Mama Lena walked back over to the table with two cups of coffee where Ms. Ruby was sitting sat down to drink coffee with her. Mama Lena and Ms. Ruby talked about Bobbi as they sipped from their coffee cups late into the evening; after talking, crying and drinking coffee with Mama Lena well into the afternoon.