

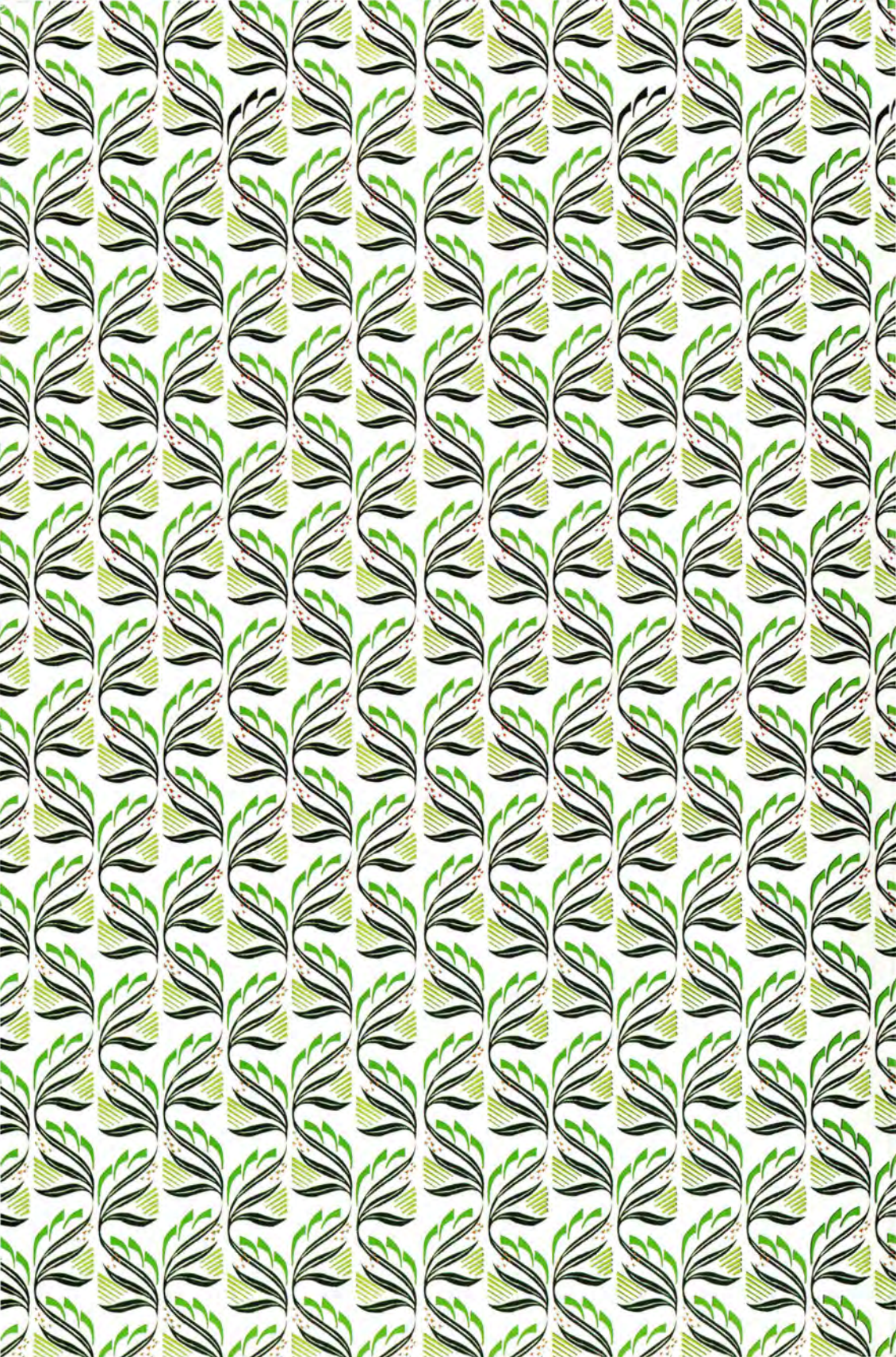
SPECTRUM

BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK

MAGAZINE

INTERESTING ESSAYS 2005





ON THE AGENDA



spectrum Magazine is long-supported by our readership. We, the publication's staff, appreciate your praise and advice regarding our efforts.

To those already familiar with our butterfly-themed 2004 Spectrum, consider this to be our sequel. We anticipate that you will enjoy this year's **Blue+Red** edition; in fact, the essays printed herein mirror the diversity of our campus.

For 2005, we have decided to focus on more visual aspects of storytelling. Each essay is accompanied with photos and illustrations that enhance, rather than detract from the overall reading experience.

To new Spectrum readers, we hope our new 36-page format eases its way into your heavy backpack. Yes, a thinner book is better and far more portable.

One more thing (a little innovation, or perhaps just a gimmick): feel free to detach our centerpiece artworks. They are great for framing.

*For the 2005 Spectrum Magazine,
Davin Kubota, Lianne Uesato and Vuong Phung*

Spectrum Magazine is published annually with funding from The Board of Student Publications. We can be contacted at 4303 Diamond Head Road, Honolulu, HI 96816. All contents are copyrighted by their respective owners. Any reproduction of these materials without prior written consent is strictly unlawful. Please note that the opinions and viewpoints expressed in *Spectrum* are those of the individual authors presented herein and do not necessarily reflect the views of this publication nor the Board of Student Publications at KCC. All submitted materials are subjected to editing for space, clarity, or to just to simply make us look good. Inquiries about submissions, employment opportunities, and other publications can be addressed to davink@hawaii.edu.

contents^{'05}

03
Dignity of Death
Holly Tammens

05
Hands
Derick Hada

07
Heads or Tails
Kenneth Quilantang, Jr.

10
My Father, a Japanese Imperial Army Soldier (part I)
Haruko Tsukayama

13
Poetic Feminism
Holly Tammens

21
Black Pot: A Joyful Sea of People
Mary Martin

25
The Bulbuls Wait for the Saturday Shower
Moriso Teraoka

27
My Father, a Japanese Imperial Army Soldier (part II)
Haruko Tsukayama

30
Escape Into a Musical Reality
Steven Clarke

33
Real-Life Stories
Kehau Engle

ACK! CROOKED TABLE!!!





Dignity of Death

The Terri Schiavo case ignited a nationwide debate about euthanasia. One author offers her opinion about this controversy.

HOLLY TAMMENS

Dying is a process that may be unique for everyone. This process may be dreadful with a severe loss of dignity, or it may be a tranquil experience with a slight loss of dignity. Loss of dignity is not defined only by pain; it may include a loss of independence with everyday functions like eating and bathroom privacy. If you were terminally ill with only six months to live and experiencing a horrendous loss of dignity, would you want the choice to legally end your own life in a dignified manner? When all traditional medical therapy has failed, and the incurable patient encounters death and unendurable misery, the choice to die should be granted. Death with Dignity is only legal in the state of Oregon, yet this precious choice should be the right of every individual.

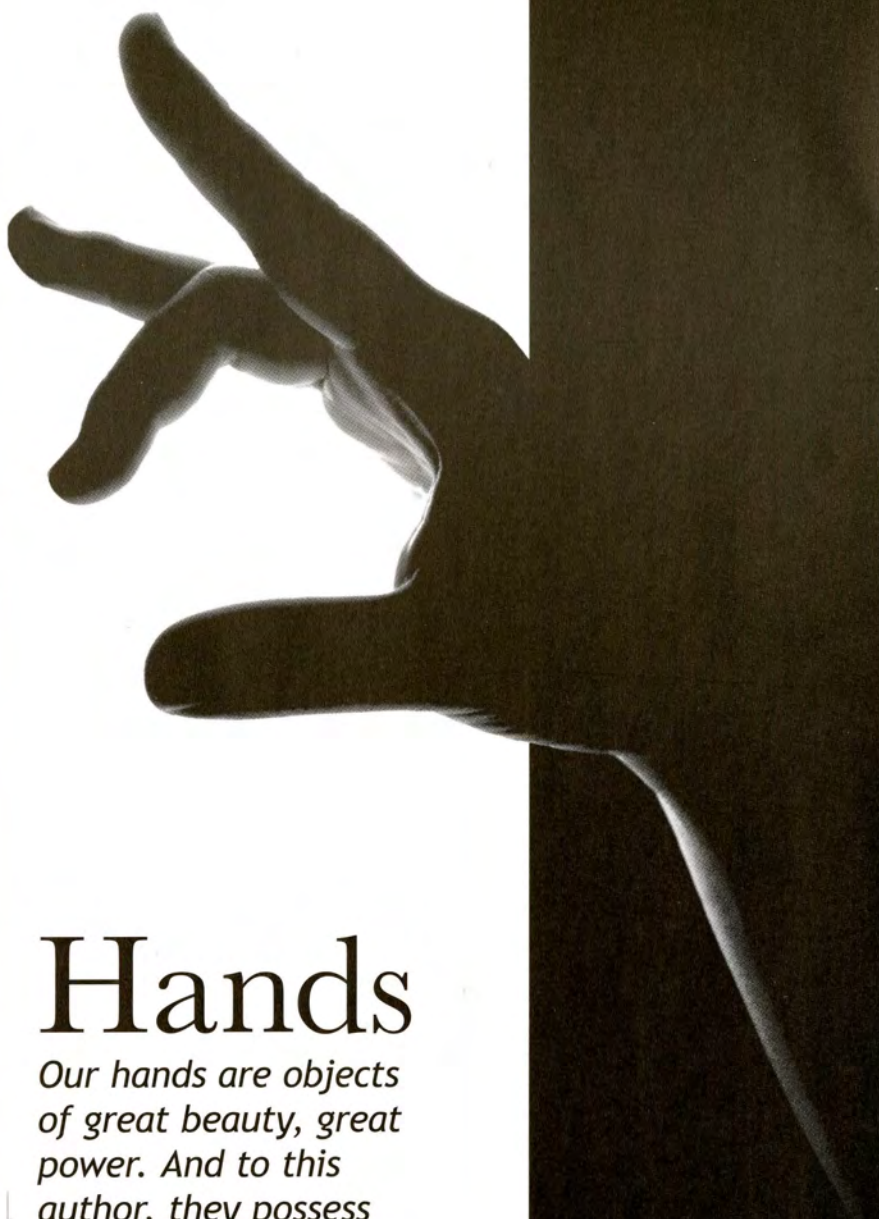
There are many concerns by opponents of the Death with Dignity Law, but I will only address two of them. The opponents believe the law will be abused, and that sedation and dehydration is a superior option. The Death with Dignity Law has strict guidelines; therefore, abuse of the law is absent. The terminal patient must have less

than six months to live, a written and oral request are mandatory, a two week waiting period for the lethal medication is obligatory, and the attending physician must consult with another physician to determine the patient's diagnoses and absence of depression. In the article "Physician-Assisted Suicide in Oregon: What Are the Key Factors?" by Howard Wineberg and James L. Werth Jr., both authors dispute the misconceptions of abuse: "that in the first four years of the law only 91 persons took medications to end their lives (0.08% of all Oregon deaths) suggests that this is a rare occurrence that is not done on a whim but only after great deliberation by the patient and the physician" (Wineberg and Werth 504). This quote suggests that abuse of the law is nonexistent and that active euthanasia is only used as a last resort. At the moment, it is legal in all states for the patient to halt eating and drinking while under sedation in order to end their life. Opponents believe this option is a better choice than consuming a lethal medication. This process may take a few weeks while the family of the unconscious patient is forced to watch as their loved one starves to death. Death with Dignity seems profoundly more humane. Most people would not pick the sedated and starvation treatment for their dog or cat, instead choosing to compassionately euthanize their pet. It is absurd that humans cannot make the choice to die with dignity for themselves.

There are no easy solutions with implementing the Death with Dignity Law in all states. Education on the law and careful consideration with the definition of intolerable suffering in death continue to be vital. Everyone's idea of the loss of dignity is diverse: "The first task for improving care at the end of life is to specify the components of a good death" (Agrawal and Emanuel, 1997). Agrawal and Emanuel's quote is ridiculous because it suggests that it is possible to produce universal guidelines of a "good death." This is not an easy task because some individuals may consider pain as the ultimate loss of dignity; other patients may perceive it as the loss of physical function. It is important to realize that everyone's experience with death is going to be distinctive; therefore, judging the perception an individual has of a "good death" as long as it is legal is excessive and wrong. The second solution is that individuals must become educated on the guidelines and use of the law. Educating high school and college students will enable them to derive their own opinion about the law. Ignorance to the facts of Death with Dignity is a

hindrance because knowledge of the law would force people to realize how important it is. It is appalling how many people are ignorant to the issue. This ignorance is due to the fact that most college students have not yet witnessed the process of the death of a close relative; therefore, the students could care less because a slow death process has not directly affected them. This callous indifference is disturbing because the only thing we can truly predict in life is death; we will all face death at some point in our lives. A change in the education of physicians is also crucial: "Saving the patient shouldn't be the sole measure of a physician's success" (Richardson 43). This quote states that physicians are trained to utilize every last medical resource to prevent death's intervention. Some terminal patients may consider certain medical procedures to be extremely invasive and these procedures may paradoxically terminate dignity in the process of death. Physicians and the public must be educated and sensitive to an individual's definition of intolerable suffering and the strict guidelines of the law.

The issue of Death with Dignity affects every single person because we all ultimately face death. One who is opposed to the Death with Dignity Law may change their views when encountering the anguish of death. Without a doubt, we must be sensitive to the dying individual's wishes, because we cannot truly understand their plight until we are also dying. The mystery of death generates fear, and people would rather repress the idea of death until they happen upon it themselves. Educating high school, college, and medical students on the success of Oregon's Death with Dignity Law, and the fact that intolerable suffering is relative to the individual may produce a breakthrough in controlling our own death. This education may abolish concerns of those who oppose the law. Direct implementation of the law in every state will not be immediate, but can happen if the facts of the issue can be openly discussed. With time, cooperation and education, the greater population will understand that the definitive choice to control our own death in a legal manner is crucial for every individual : :



Hands

*Our hands are objects
of great beauty, great
power. And to this
author, they possess
great insight about the
power of perspective.*

The class activity was called "Hands." It was a pedagogical tool to teach the class about the writing process. The main objective was to teach the class about perspective and why understanding individual perspectives was important in becoming a good writer. Along the way, the exercise also reinforced other writing skills such as gathering information, analyzing information, and drawing inferences from analysis.

The exercise started out with the class viewing a black and white photograph of a pair of hands over an assortment of leaves. The hands were of a dark-skinned person. They were obviously weathered and were holding something in between them in a Buddhist-like pose where the index finger and thumb are touching with the palms facing inward.

The class was asked to make their own individual interpretations of the photo. What kind of information was the photograph conveying to the student? As the students studied the photograph, they wrote down their interpretations on paper.

After a certain amount of time had passed, the instructor gathered the class into a large group. Everyone in the class was asked one at a time to share their interpretations of the photo.

The interpretations were fairly consistent, but there were slightly different interpretations of the photograph. For example, most of the class agreed that these might have been the hands of an older African individual who did heavy labor, but one person thought the hands could have been a Southeast-Asian's. One person suggested that the photograph could have been a very old one of an African-American slave since the photograph seemed rather antiquated and was filmed in black

and white. Regardless of the ethnic component to the hands, the class also agreed, because of the presence of the leaves, that the person did some kind of agricultural work. However, only two people suggested that the leaves were actually tea leaves and that the person worked on a tea plantation. Yet was that the correct perspective?

After the entire class had had a chance to share their interpretations, they were asked why everybody's interpretations were not exactly the same. Everybody had viewed the same photo, but the inferences drawn, although mostly similar, were not the same. The point the instructor was trying to illustrate to the class was that interpretations differ because perspectives differ from person to person.

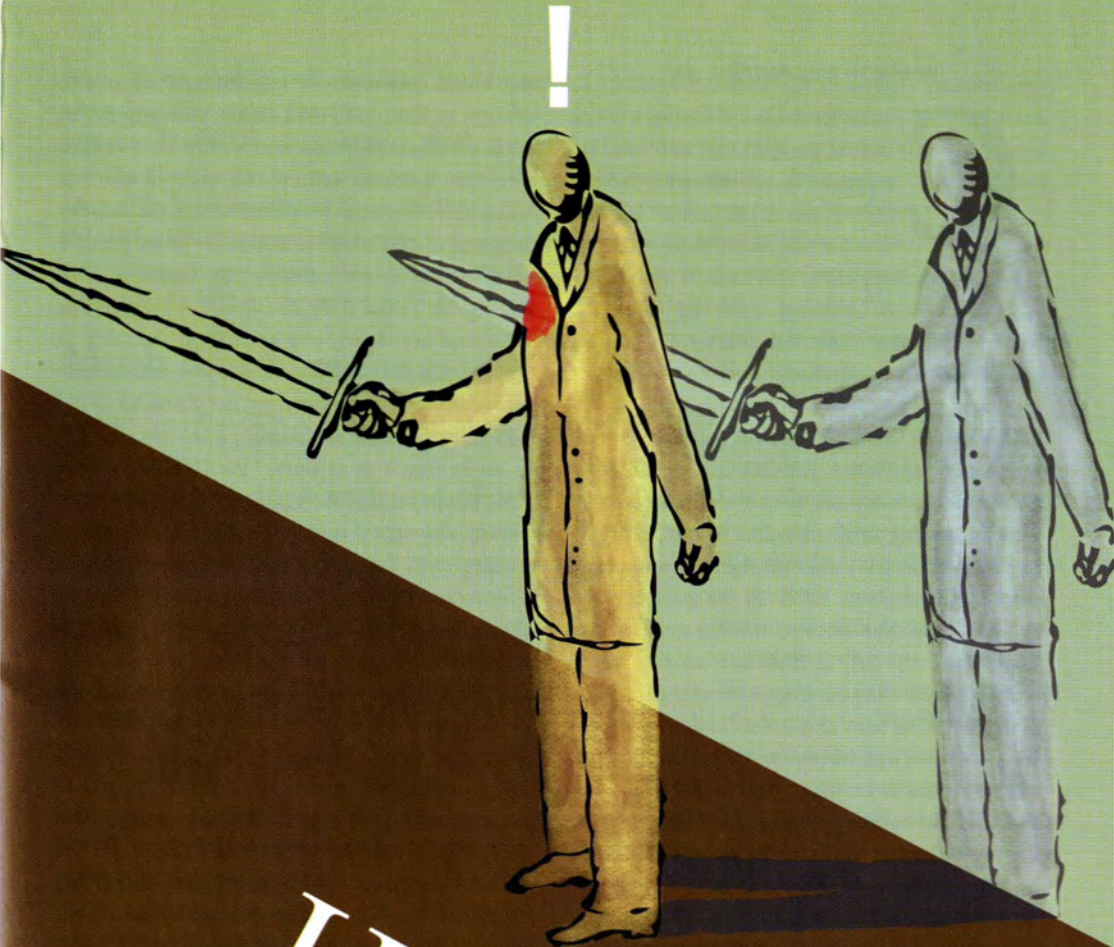
The instructor then led a discussion about perspective. Why do people have different perspectives? And why is this sense of perspective relevant to to a writing class? At first, the class listed reasons why perspective changes from person to person. Most of the reasons had to do with various aspects of an individual's life experience: religion, family

background, culture, gender, prejudice, political affiliation, to name a few.

The point of going through this exercise was so that the students could understand that understanding perspective, especially those of the reader, was an important job of the writer. If the writer failed to understand the subjective perspectives of the audience, there was a good chance the writer would not be able to get their message through.

Ultimately, this tied into the general purpose of any English class: being able to produce academically acceptable writing. The student-writer must understand, first and foremost, that professors and instructors have certain expectations of writing, both in style and in format, that originally came from an academic perspective :

**The point the
instructor was
trying to illustrate
to the class was that
interpretations differ
because perspectives
differ from
person to person.**



Heads or Tails?

In literature and in life, the hero and the scapegoat are perfect mirror images. One has redemptive qualities with which to save society—the other just suffers.

Coins are forces of duality. On one side is stamped the "tails" and the opposite face is stamped "heads." The essential difference between the two sides is nil. Neither side has more value than the other. Emphasis on a particular face of the coin is based upon the subjective importance of that face to the observer. Flipping the coin in the air does not change the coin itself; rather, it changes our perspective of that coin.

Like coins, this world and our existence in it are matters of perspective. An idea considered joyous and brilliant one day may seem crude and brutish the next, depending on all who observe and participate in that idea. Such it is that the theme of a scapegoat in literature depends solely on the perspective of the individual who discerns that theme. This crux is pervasive not only in literature but can also be seen in society—the polar opposite of the scapegoat is the hero. The hero also suffers and is exposed to the same sufferings, but due to perspective, is almost always viewed as having a positive effect on society or within the context of that piece of literature. The duality of the scapegoat and the hero is that they are one and the same. Much like a coin's being tossed into the air, the hero is almost always on the side of the coin facing the sky; in the meantime, the scapegoat is always pointed towards the dirt, never to be looked at, always to be forgotten.

Much in the way that coins are used as money in society, the theme of the hero and scapegoat is a necessary and vital component of society. Two short stories, Ursula K. Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" and Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery," illustrate society's need for a hero/scapegoat in that both stories highlight the cruelty that heroes and scapegoats must overcome; the stories also mirror how heroes and scapegoats in our society are equally revered and reviled.

Human beings are cruel creatures. No animal can decimate humanity more so than humanity itself can. With all of the claws, teeth, toxins and pestilence the animal kingdom can offer, these cannot compare to the havoc that humankind can wreak upon its own kind. In fact, the hero/scapegoat often suffers from

the brutal onslaught of humankind's aggressive actions. In Jackson's "The Lottery," such aggression takes the form of a public murder of a local woman who wins a strange lottery—the prize of which is being stoned to death. Mrs. Hutchinson, the unlucky recipient of this draw, is stoned for what seems a completely arbitrary reason, yet the reason is never highlighted in the story. She does not overcome or transcend her status, and her role in the story as scapegoat is thus reinforced. Had she been able to escape or overcome her stoning, her character would take on more heroic overtones.

In Le Guin's short story, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," the aggressive act is not overtly violent, although it is certainly cruel and shocking. In the story, the idyllic, utopian existence of the Omelasian populace is starkly contrasted against the conditions subjected upon a child from the town who lives as a pariah. Sacrificing one child for the utilitarian well-being of the rest of the population is a compromise that the townsfolk are willing to make. Through isolation, malnutrition and outright cruelty, the child takes on the role of society's wretch—yet were the child released from its terrible imprisonment, LeGuin notes that "in that day and hour all the prosperity and beauty and delight of Omelas would wither and be destroyed" (264). Nonetheless, this child displays a unique kind of heroism. Since the child's parents are not mentioned in detail in the story, and do nothing to petition the release of their child, I speculate that the child becomes the proverbial 'whipping-boy' for the entire village. The child is ironically seen as a 'hero' in taking on this role; this view contrasts well with Jackson's story in that the suffering child is held in higher esteem than Mrs. Hutchinson. Since Mrs. Hutchinson is killed for no viable reason that the township can provide and is stoned simply because "There's always been a lottery," her role highlights how the scapegoat's suffering seems inevitable and meaningless (Jackson 206).

Le Guin's characterization of the pitiful child still shares an aura of repulsion and wretchedness with Jackson's Mrs. Hutchinson. The feeling of wretchedness pervades Le Guin's story from the point of view of readers and characters in the story.

After all, some of the villagers leave the village altogether after seeing the child and its horrible living conditions: "They keep walking, people go out into the street, and walk down the street alone" (Le Guin 277). Their leaving reinforces the theme that the child, while being a scapegoat for the community, is a necessary component towards exposing the wretchedness within the community—the child

**Much like a coin's being tossed
in the air, the hero is almost
always on the side of the coin
facing the sky; in the meantime,
the scapegoat is always pointed
towards the dirt, never to be
looked at, always to be forgotten.**

is a hero in that it can endure all the pain that the community can muster up for it.

In Jackson's "The Lottery," Mrs. Hutchinson's wretchedness is externalized—stemming from the townsfolk themselves. The reader is usually shocked and empathetic to her plight by this point in the story, since her unlucky 'lotto pull' quickly marks her for death by her fellow villagers. Nonetheless, as I've mentioned before, there is no real purpose for this 'public stoning' in the first place—it just happens. So dehumanized is Mrs. Hutchinson's position that "The children had stones already, and someone gave little Davy Hutchinson a few pebbles." Mrs. Hutchinson is a clear scapegoat whose death signifies nothing (Jackson 268).

There are many parallels in today's society that are prime examples of this theme—the wretchedness that heroes and scapegoats must endure. My father and many of his fellow soldiers, upon returning from Vietnam in 1969, are personal examples. They were often reviled as murderous robots by many upon their return home. Due to heightened feelings

of resentment against them due to Vietnam, my father and some of his comrades suffered violence here at home. Many like my father turned to a life of isolation and rebellion, never feeling truly welcomed back by their country. Although he is my hero, a feeling of resentment against soldiers like my dad still lingers in the air—some would label him and his brothers in arms as scapegoats, making them take the blame for a government that was highly ineffective during that period of time.

Or look no further than downtown Honolulu to see our sense of revulsion at work—forcing us to see society's wretchedness. The homeless are often perceived as society's dregs, outcasts who cannot conform to social norms, and who are therefore blamed, like the scapegoats in the stories, for all of society's ills. The difference is that in today's society, the homeless are not killed outright like Mrs. Hutchinson or imprisoned like the

Omelasian child in LeGuin's story. They are slowly degraded in our eyes as subhuman and are seen as burdens by our communities—the homeless are our modern-day scapegoats.

Labeled as a hero or scapegoat, one must rail against immense odds and overcome these seemingly insurmountable obstacles with the ability to prevail, or either fail miserably in the process. The dual roles are allegorized at many junctures in both stories and in society. We tend to define the hero by what good actions they perform and the scapegoat by the bad actions they undertake. Each is like a coin: both are needed to define each other and represent themselves wholly in literature, society and the world. There is an utter simplicity to the coin, however. When debating which is the "better side," one can simply end the difficulty of choice by placing the coin in one's pocket. Human beings are priceless, having many facets of their personalities, inner desires, and points of view reflected as a spectrum. As such, they cannot be viewed in the rather 'flippant' way one views coins: heads or tails ♫

私の父：

大日本帝国陸軍の軍人

(My Father, a Japanese Imperial Army Soldier)

Part I

HARUKO TSUKAYAMA

Each time I look at the world map placed on my bedroom wall, I can't help but wonder at the size of Japan, compared to other nations such as China and the United States. At the same time, I am impressed as to how and why Japan believed that she would be able to conquer and dominate such enormous nation-states. Any individual with a normal mentality and clear judgment would agree that the idea is out of the question and an impossible mission even with the use of superb force.

Yet, as the world witnessed, Japan took on this task through the period of almost one century. For example in 1894, 111 years ago, the Japanese Imperial Army (JIA), backed by a strong military and the idea of ultra-nationalism, attacked China and successfully won the Sino-Japanese war. China recognized Japan's claims over Korea and as a result for the next half century, until the end of World War II, Korea remained a colonial territory of Japan's. This incident and many more later to come reflected the territorial expansionist policy of the JIA, one strongly supported by an ideology of nationalism.

(This paper will make it clear why my father and other millions of Japanese veterans fought and died for their country as a loyal member of the JIA. In part one, I'll focus on the development of the nationalist movement in Japan as I follow the war's events committed by the JIA. In the following part II, I will describe the impact of World War II (WWII) on my Miura family. Both in Part I and Part II, the center of my attention will be my father, a war

veteran and a nationalist who served in the JIA and who died during WWII.)

My paper focuses its attention on my father, a war veteran and nationalist who served in the JIA and who died during WWII. For that reason, I would like to dedicate this essay to my father.

To begin, let me start with the nature of Japan's nationalist movement, and at the same time, I will cover several events during the war involving the JIA. Ultra-nationalism first flourished in Japan in the late 19th century. At that time, Japan's closest neighbor, China, was under constant attack by Western Imperialists and many parts of China were already being colonized by Western countries. As a result, it was natural for Japanese policy to become defensive against aggressive Western powers. Unfortunately, when Japan began to form a strong military with massive manpower and advanced technologies, the original idea of merely defending the nation faded away. Instead, Japan chose to take the same course as Western Imperialism: conquering vast territories in China.

Once political leaders decided to copy Western aggression, the next step was to build a strong military to accomplish the mission. Through military propaganda, young countrymen and women quickly developed the idea of nationalism.

In 1894, Japan tested its military prowess over the already-weakened neighboring country of China and easily took Taiwan. Then, in 1904, Japan fought against Russia and as a result, Japan won and took Manchuria. These two victories created a lasting impact on the next generation of young soldiers. It gave them great pride and confidence that their country, as small as it was, could actually fight huge nation-states and win. "The more you gain, the more you want" was the attitude of a land-starved Japanese Colonialist mentality. In order to further build a stronger military, the teaching of Nationalism escalated, and was even directed towards pre-school aged children.

And, how was the idea of Nationalism ingrained in the mind of school children? To give you one example, my father grew up by singing songs such as: "Shoulder to shoulder with older brother, / I go to school today, thanks to the soldiers, / thanks to the soldiers, who fought for our country, / for our country." Through these types of songs and other carefully-produced propaganda, soldiers became children's idols, and once they reached adulthood,

these youngsters were ready to join the famous Japanese Imperial Army so they too could become heroes for the country.

In 1930, when my father was 15 years old, the JIA again invaded China and conquered the cities of Peking, Shanghai, Nanking and most of northern China. Each time the soldiers returned from foreign lands with a winning march of war, people considered them the country's heroes and welcomed them with enthusiasm by raising the Japanese Flag. After successful invasions into China, the nationalist movement was at its peak and the entire nation of Japan was colored with fascism. In addition, the military's propaganda further escalated the military's expansionist policies: Schoolbooks began teaching the old idea of the samurai spirit; the theories of Japan's divine nationhood and the emperor's being the Sun God were invoked; total obedience and submission to authorities was preached; and special emphasis was placed on Confucianism, which advocated respect to the powers-that-were in place. In addition, once joining the Imperial Army, soldiers were trained to believe that the most honorary action of a countryman was to "fight to the death."

While Japan was subjugating China and other Asian nations, World War II broke out in Europe after Germany invaded Poland in 1939. In the United States, President Roosevelt formally declared the U.S.'s neutrality in the European war, yet hastened towards rearmament back in the States. My father, 24 years old and already a member of the Imperial Army, was in training conducted by top militants of JIA. During the training sessions, soldiers were led to believe, through the military's propaganda, that the reason Japan had to fight with the enemy was to protect those poor neighboring nations from the threat of Western Colonialism. The famous slogan of, "A Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere", and "Asia for Asians" was rapidly accepted in the heart of young innocent soldiers—the war became racialized and polarized in scope.

During the war, no one was allowed to seek true motives behind the conflict and many soldiers died without knowing what they were fighting for, except that they were fighting in war to serve the country they loved. While enduring their rigorous military training, soldiers were taught never to question the affairs of the nation but only to follow orders given by top officials. The autocracy's blind



ambition used its devil-like arms to blindfold soldier's senses, and at the same time, strip them of their right judgment, emotion and free will, so they could become merely a cog in a vast and powerful war machine. By the time my father reached adulthood, he was already a strong ultra-nationalist and was ready to fight any enemy for his country.

With the Pacific War between the United States and Japan fast approaching, Japan's political leadership was already being run by ultra-nationalists such as General Hideki Tojo. Immediately, the entire nation was repressed. The military cabinet took total control of decision-making in the name of the Emperor. Any political, social and cultural activity run by civilians was strictly censored and regulated by the military. From the year 1941 to the end of the war in four years, the government, led by General Tojo, tortured and imprisoned thousands of "rebellious" groups, especially civilians who opposed the war. Top military officers performed the worst physical punishments and abuse daily in the Army, brainwashing and torturing young soldiers under the guise of proper military training. Only after fifty years in Japan, have some war veterans begun to speak out about the inhumane acts they encountered in the JIA. All the while, voices across Asia have trumpeted for redress and awareness of the JIA's horrific actions.

Despite the sacrifice of civilians and soldiers, the war continued. At first, no one believed that Japan could lose this war, mainly because the military government monopolized communication systems. Consequently, what the entire nation heard was that Japan was strong and winning over all of its enemies. Gradually, however, many intellectuals and especially some Christians in the country began to doubt the Imperial Government's policies and started to voice opposition towards stopping the war and ending the killing of people in nations throughout Asia. At the same time, harsh military training continued. The JIA taught soldiers the following duties: bowing to the photograph of the emperor, showing loyalty and obedience; committing suicide rather than surrendering; and following a superior's order as if they proceeded directly from the divine mouth of Emperor Hirohito himself. And most importantly, top military officers instilled in the minds of young soldiers never to question "why" they were fighting while serving in the military.

Finally in 1941, Japan declared war against the United States, initiating the attack on Pearl Harbor. And for the next four years until the devastating atomic bomb was dropped over the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, two great nations across the Pacific became enemies.*

(To be continued in Part II, pg 27)



Poetic Feminism

*Underneath the water, I see you.
Most times in life, you can't see
me; then again, perhaps you're not
looking hard enough. It's okay—I
can see you perfectly.*

Women's

rights have come a long way in the past 100 years; nonetheless, it is no secret that women are still subject to gender prejudice in society. Women are equal in intelligence to men; however, women are still shockingly paid less than men, and are often victims of physical and mental abuse from tyrannical men.

Margaret Atwood is a well-known feminist author who often writes about the oppression of women in society. In her mysterious poem "This is a Photograph of Me," Atwood utilizes several aspects of nature observed in a photograph to symbolize the dominance of men over women in our oppressive society. She demands society as a whole to see through the stereotypes placed on women and observe the true importance and significance women have in history and our pres-

ent lives.

Atwood's melancholy poem begins with a woman describing an old blurry photograph of a woodsy landscape with a house, a lake, a tree branch and a small hill. The woman seems as if she is viewing the photo for the first time as she points out the significant aspects of the photograph that have been distorted from either overexposure or the sunlight reflecting off the lake. The second half of the poem reveals that the photograph was taken shortly after the woman drowned in the lake. The woman informs the reader that if they look closely they will see her submerged beneath the water. The poem is rich with symbolism in its content and structure.

Atwood employs a great deal of symbolism in her poem to express the theme of female op-

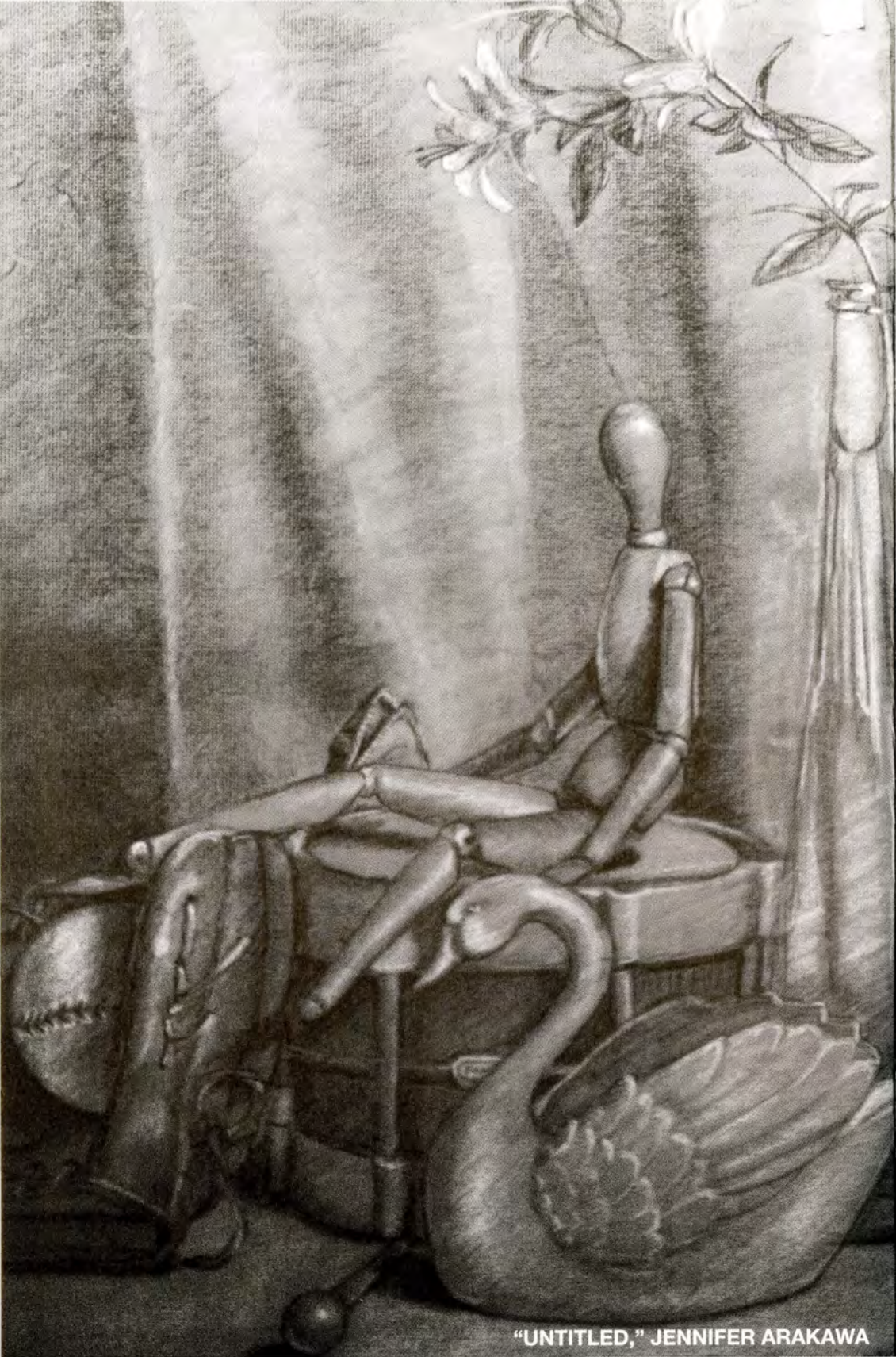
pression. This symbolism is perceived in the blurriness of the photograph, the tree branch, the slope, the house, the lake, and the reflected light off of the lake. The distortion of the images in the photograph represents the negative labels put on women. We have to look past this distortion to see what the images are, or to observe the real essence and importance of women. Everything in the picture, literally and symbolically, is affected by the photograph's distortion. The small hill that "ought to be a gentle / slope" (11-12), represents the challenges women have in overcoming female prejudice. This challenge should be effortless, but it is instead an arduous climb. The small frame house symbolizes women as a whole and women's place in society. Generally, women are physically smaller than men, and they are often viewed as the weaker gender. Also, the home is commonly observed as a woman's place in society instead of suggesting her ability to solve problems in the workforce. The emerging tree branch signifies the many problems or difficulties behind the unfair treatment of women. A single tree branch has one main branch with many equally significant smaller branches stemming from the main branch. There is one main problem with society's negative views on women and many other difficulties emerging from the main problem. The woman in the poem is hidden beneath the water of the lake; her spirit and voice are veiled by the lake's water: "The effects of water / on light is a distortion" (22-23). The water portrays society's male dominance that is warping the true voice of women represented as the light reflected off the water. Atwood urges us to look past the distortions of gender prejudice and see the true images or profound significance of women in our society.

Atwood also strategically places parentheses in the text to separate the poem into two halves. In the first half, she describes a landscape photograph that has been distorted for some unknown reason. The reader can assume that the photo is black and white and therefore very old, because it is described with "blurred lines and gray flecks" (04). The black and white photograph represents a time in history when prejudice against women

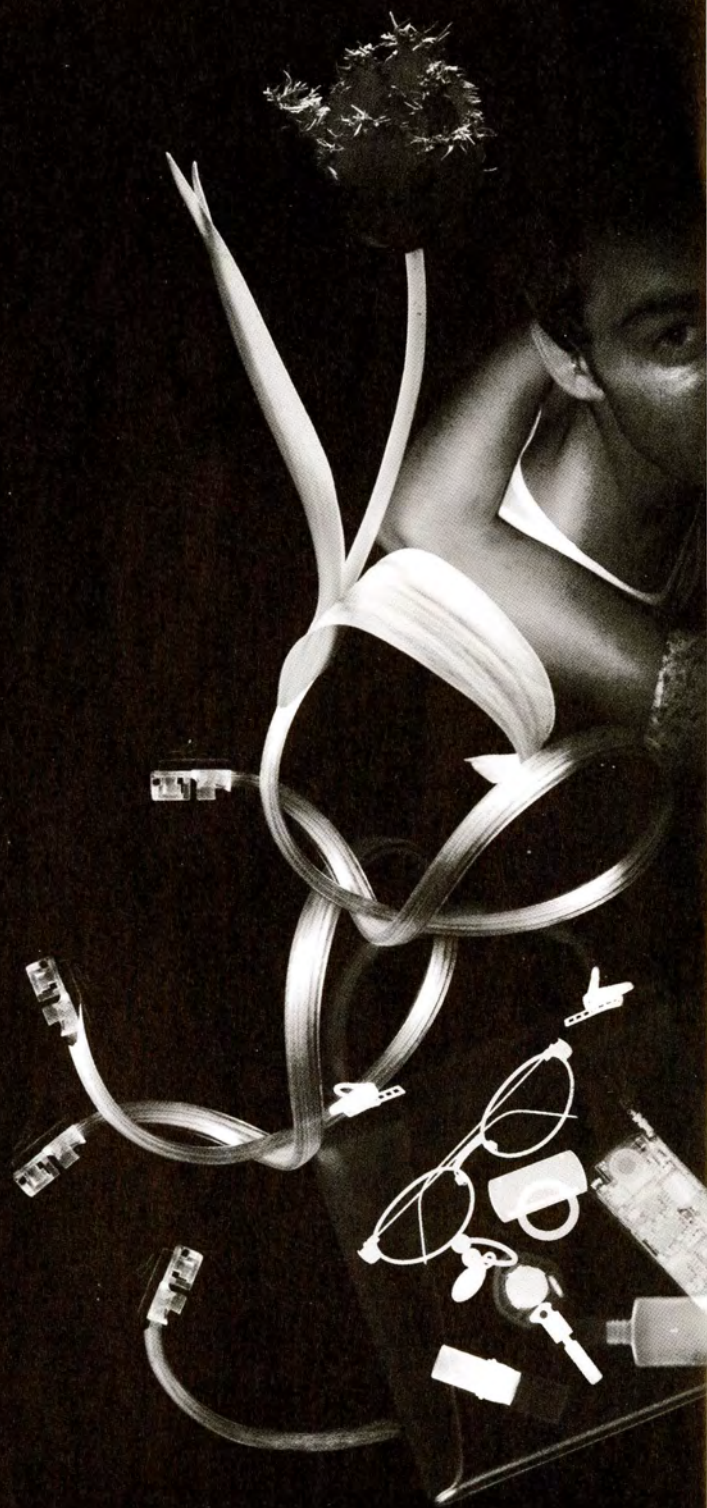
was astoundingly prevalent. The second half of the poem is completely enclosed by parentheses. This is the section where she reveals herself as the heart and subject of the photograph. The existence of parentheses often indicates that the contents inside of them are not as important as the regular text. By using parentheses in the description of the woman's spirit, Atwood is demonstrating how women are often viewed as insignificant. The poem is clearly divided into two halves with the description of the landscape in the first half, and the existence of the woman's essence in the second half.

The lake in Atwood's poem could also be connected with a powerful symbol of femininity. The art of symbolism portrays water as strongly feminine; in addition, water that emerges from the earth is interpreted as a gift from the womb of Mother Nature. This is reminiscent of Atwood's image of the lake; generally, natural lakes are born from flowing springs that are from the earth. The beginning of all life occurs within the "water" of the female womb. Therefore, the lake may represent the female womb or birth of life, and the submerged woman may symbolize women's strong voice and true nature that is eagerly prepared to be born into a male-dominated world. The striking connection of water to the female spirit is demonstrated through the gifted ability of women to nurture and produce life within the fluid of their uterus or womb. In Atwood's poem, feminine power is ready to be born into a world of gender equality.

Atwood's peculiar and strongly feminist poem is full of symbolism. The poem comes across as a morbid description of a photograph taken of a dead woman hidden underneath the lake she drowned in. Knowing that Margaret Atwood is a renowned feminist writer, however, leads me to believe that the poem's symbolically hidden main theme is the oppression of women in a male-dominated society. The fact that the photograph is blurred, the aspects of the landscape, and the use of parentheses to divide the poem could be interpreted in various ways; however, the underlying theme is overwhelmingly feminist in nature.



"UNTITLED," JENNIFER ARAKAWA





"WAR ZONE." GEROLD PENAFLO





Black Pot: A Joyful Sea of People

What does it mean to 'live aloha?' Can aloha be found in a place, or in a person? More than just the adage on the bumper sticker, aloha must simply...be.

From top to bottom, photos courtesy of Chris Petersen, Michael P. Schwarz and Nicholas Wilson

There's a certain area of Hanalei Bay known as Black Pot by the locals or people who have lived on Kauai's North Shore their entire life whether Hawaiian, Caucasian, or individuals of a mixed ethnicity. Black Pot is a place near the old Hanalei pier at one end of the half moon-shaped Hanalei Bay. This area sits next to the famous Hanalei River that constantly takes tourists and locals deep into the valley on canoes, crab boats and kayaks. Peaceful Black Pot has evolved into an essential aspect of Hanalei Bay, where everyone from visitor to local is welcome. Rich in culture, Black Pot holds a sense of the past, which gives me a feeling of contentment.

The name itself was established before the development of the park: "For many years, a group of Hanalei residents kept a large black cooking pot at the beach, which became a focal point for informal social gatherings and eventually gave the site its popular name" (Clark 29). The pot part of the name hints toward a bunch of people all together. This is exactly how Black Pot is. Everyone's always welcome. This name Black Pot also reminds me of the old style cooking on a fire that literally makes a pot black. Food and eating is a big part of Black Pot and the repetitive flavors of every gathering leave me feeling content with a stomach full of local food that has been eaten in the same area for decades.

Standing at Black Pot gives a view of the majority of Hanalei Bay to the left, Waikoko point, a vast ocean, the old Hanalei pier of the 1980's, and a variety of boats straight ahead (Clark 29).

The distant mountains resemble paper-thin ridges running along the lush valley. Gushing waterfalls are visible in almost every crevice or indentation of these steep mountains, especially during the winter. The abundance of water forced downward can be seen across the bay. The powerful movement of wind-caught spray is breathtaking.

Behind this area of the park, lies the paved and pothole-ridden sand and dirt road that leads peo-

ple to a green grass park. The grass is not a bright green fake color, but that of natural grass with some bare areas of dirt and sand from the many games of tag, football, frisbee, and flow of people. Small one-table and double bench pavilions are set sparingly around the edges of the park, which take the shape of a simple little hut with a roof.

To the right of the park are about five old iron-wood trees that reside near the edge of the grassy area with their roots crawling into the Hanalei River. Near these trees is an old silver trailer filled with cooking supplies and, most importantly, a variety of surfboards (long and short) available to whoever asks for and returns them in good shape. Further toward the back of the park, is a scruffy-looking permanent campsite with a square gray party tent partially ripped and frayed from the winter winds and salt spray.

A green picnic table, also worn from the beach weather, sits under the tent next to an iron wood stump and a rusty BBQ.

On the right side of Hanalei River, a slender earth, rock and sand mixture leads up to another mountain with a small beach area and piled black rocks leading around the corner to the Princeville Hotel.

My home on Kauai is just across the two-mile Hanalei Bay, so I often went by to visit all the uncles who spend their afternoons watching the younger ones and hanging around enjoying the sunset. A sunset at Black Pot is always magical. In the summer, a huge glowing ball, almost too bright to look at, of orangey-red hovers right above the ocean, giving the towering mountains in the distance a hint of hazy purple and pink. At this time of the day, the ocean looks calm and feels soft with mixed colors of orange, pink and purple dancing across the ripples. Other times of the year, wispy clouds of a soft pastel green mixed with yellow paints the sky after the sun goes down, and on certain occasions, dark purple clouds are left alongside the mountains, which create moving shadows across the water and white sand.

The people around Black Pot range from tourists from around the world whether first time visitors or those who return each and every year,

to locals who were born and raised on Kaua'i in Hanalei. The mixed ethnicities bring about a flavorful aspect of Black Pot, where people of all colors and backgrounds enjoy the beach, park, and river. On a typical day at Black Pot, the sound of crashing waves, repetitive melody of water washing over sand, splashes from kids jumping off the old Hanalei Pier and varieties of music from car speakers or hand-strummed instruments can be heard. The smell of BBQ meats, hot dogs, shoyu chicken and steak, pulehu fish and mixed scents of potato chips and turkey sandwiches left over

onto plates and scarfed down by kids who've been playing in the sun all day. Later in the evenings, the old timers will bring out their instruments. Ukuleles, a huge silver tub turned upside down with a wooden pole stuck through the middle and a piece of string attaching the two parts as a base, guitars, and whatever else is lying around at the time will be used. Even spoons were added to the casual late night kanikapila-jam session where people produce casual Hawaiian music passed down in history. Holidays like Thanksgiving, Fourth of July, and New Years seem to blend together because

each year, Black Pot continues to possess many comforting aspects with its people, food, and natural surroundings.

There are many places that I enjoy, but Black Pot has a feeling of the past. It's a place where people are living their culture whether Hawaiian or not, which puts me right at home. I hold many memories of Black Pot, but the recollections that stand out the most are those nights cruising on the weathered green park bench mentioned earlier, munching on poké and whatever else happened

Peaceful Black Pot has evolved into an essential aspect of Hanalei Bay, where everyone from visitor to local is welcome. Rich in culture, Black Pot holds a sense of the past, which gives me a feeling of contentment.

from lunch are carried in the wind. Hot sand, grass, or a dirt road with occasional splashes from tires dipping into the "out of control" mud-filled potholes is underfoot with wind, rain or hot sun beating on dark brown or lobster-colored backs. These familiar scenes bring back memories and experiences of long summers and stormy winters and the many casual family gatherings under the gray tent at the permanent campsite—a magnet that has attracted the old timers and many visitors over the years.

During the holidays, Black Pot is the place to be. Huge families camp for weeks, fishing, surfing, and enjoying the beach and park area. At night, the smell of pulehu meat or grilled fish and many other delicious and familiar dishes fill the air. Food like fish, poi, kalua pig and cabbage, squid luau, macaroni salad and varieties of meats are piled

to be on the table at the time, listening to the music of drop-in musicians, Uncle Jumbo, my dad, and Uncle Willie. Uncle Willie, a kupuna of the area, was one of the original old timers who created Black Pot's welcoming and content atmosphere. He was a Grandfather, a loving husband to Auntie Carly, and a man of wisdom and humble nature. As a Caretaker to the area, he gave his life to Black Pot and its people. He was the core of Black Pot.

Most people knew where to find Uncle Willie. The permanent campsite with the gray tarp was his second home. He loved to cook. In the late afternoons, he would stand over his rusty BBQ and cook enough food for an army. And sure enough, a group of surfers would come in from "The Bowl," a surf spot straight out from the park, and Uncle Willie would invite them over to eat, and this usually began the evenings that ended late into the

night. These simple but important values of sharing, caring for, and welcoming with no expected reward that Uncle Willie brought to the people in his life essentially indicated that the people of Black Pot loved my uncle with the same aloha he offered them.

Uncle Willie will never be forgotten, with his dark complexion, short partly gray hair with small bald spots (usually kind of scruffy-looking), and squid-shaped eyes with deep creases. His brown eyes had red areas and bumps that showed his many years of surfing and his staring into the glare of the glistening ocean in the sun. His hands were rough with thick nails. He had the hands of a hard-working man. He usually wore casual clothes: work t-shirts, loose jeans that were cut on the bottoms to suit his height, an older leather belt, and either rubber slippers and cowboy boots for riding horses. At first sight, a stranger may have walked around Uncle Willie, but as soon as Uncle smiled with soft, warm eyes and his missing front teeth, it was found that he was a special man.

Even though Uncle Willie's physically gone, I can still feel his presence at Black Pot and recollect the memories my family and I spent with him. The people who learned his ways like Auntie Carly, and the other old timers have taken on his work and, most importantly, his values. Knowing that Uncle Willie's way of life, with the joy he brought to people, continues, puts me in a state of contentment because I, amongst others, will always return to the same welcoming atmosphere that has existed for years.

Besides its historical value, Black Pot serves as a recreational site where people take part in cultural activities like throw-net fishing, surfing, body boarding and canoe paddling. Black Pot is unique and important to Hanalei's history and its people; this is a place that welcomes all and instills a feeling of contentment in my heart 🌺



The Bulbuls Wait for the Saturday Shower

Bulbuls, believe it or not, are beautiful. Whether you actively seek out such beauty on this campus or choose to ignore it, well, that's up to you. They'll still be around, eating chili peppers and having a good time.

MORISO TERAOKA

Although I have been coming to KCC Saturday afternoons to water the cactus, succulents, and herbs, it is only in the past year that I have come to realize that the bulbuls also wait for me.

On Saturday afternoons, I first turn on the sprinklers along the road from parking lot B to the left turn leading to 'Ilima before I start watering the herbs.

On this particular afternoon as I directed the sprinkler on towards the rosemary, there, right ahead of me, by the edge of the herb garden, a flock of bulbuls had landed on the branches of the kiawe tree.

Maybe 10, maybe 15—I couldn't get an exact count. There they were, clinging on the swaying branches. Each bulbul was bobbing up and down, swaying side to side, riding the wind as would surfers riding waves off of Waikiki.

What attracted these red-crested thieves to KCC—these raiders of the tiny Hawaiian chili peppers? Perhaps the birds were chased away from the backyard of an Alohea Street neighbor, after they were seen pecking and eating the tiny chili peppers meant for the making of delicious chili pepper water.

Within seconds after the sprinklers began their

360-degree sweep of the herb garden, the bulbuls got the word that the shower was on—faster than one's receiving electronic mail, they just knew.

As the rotating sprinkler swept swiftly over the herbs, I saw some of the bulbuls flap open their wings and fly up, like tiny helicopters lifting themselves off the kiawe branches, and as the spray passed by, they landed on the perches nestled in the upper regions of the tree.

Some preferred to remain perched where they were as the spray passed over their feathered bodies, as if daring each pass to knock them off of their swaying roost.

More adventurous ones would fly right into the approaching spray, braking into their forward motion, hovering in midair, and veering away for another go-around.

The bulbuls were like a bunch of happy kids frolicking in a spray from a fire hydrant during a summer heat wave in some mainland city street, happy as larks. No, not as larks—happy as only a couple of bulbuls could be.

I turned off the sprinkler. My afternoon was over.

The bulbuls, however, were off to find more chili peppers 🌶️

私の父： 大日本帝国陸軍の軍人

(My Father, a Japanese Imperial Army Soldier)

Part II

HARUKO TSUKAYAMA

Soon after war between Japan and the United States broke out, the entire nation, including my Miura family in Fukushima, felt the impact of the war. Every individual lived with a severe shortage of material goods. Before the war, 70 percent of Japan's oil was imported from the U.S., but when war began, the U.S. embargoed Japan. This embargo was a major blow—it did severe damage to the Japanese military and to the lives of ordinary people. The lack of oil affected the importation of food—food shortages were common problems, especially rice, which the common people were not allowed to eat. Instead, we ate potatoes everyday. A military order indicated that since soldiers fighting for us in foreign lands couldn't eat rice, neither could the people in Japan.

Especially for people in larger cities, everyone was on the brink of starvation. Children were deprived of sweets. Due to the lack of soap, sanitation was horrible, and everyone had to endure lice and fleas on their heads. I even remember, when I was about five or six, having to be sprayed liberally with D.D.T. I can still smell the strong odor of the white powder. Some individuals, who were forced to return from foreign lands like Hawaii and the Philippines, had to find places to stay; several of these lived below the poverty line and several did not survive.

In 1944, the year after I was born, my father was recalled and had to go to southern China to join up with the rest of

his battalion. My two-year old sister waved the Japanese flag while saying goodbye to our father, and that was the last time we ever saw him. Five months later, on November 1944, he was killed in battle. My mother received his remains from the government—a tiny bone, the size of a baby's little finger—and she buried it with deep sorrow.

For many years, my mother refused to admit that her husband was truly dead. She often lived with the story that her husband might still be alive somewhere in China, happily married to a beautiful Chinese woman, since he was quite a handsome man. Sometimes, it's difficult to put emotions into words when remembering my mother during these times. My tears come every time I think of her—the way she tried to console herself, the methods of which I couldn't understand for such a long time. Now, at my age, I now understand why she wanted to think about her husband the way she did. Her belief, that her husband was still alive somewhere on the earth (even though he would never come back to her), gave her hope, and helped to ease the pain and suffering she would face due to a desperate present and uncertain future. War had killed her husband, but it could never kill her hope.

After her husband's death and the end of the war, which came with the use of atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the misery and hardship of postwar Japan for my mother was hard to explain. First, as a widow, she had to raise three small children, while taking care of our sick grandmother as well as city folk who occupied our home. I was sent to my mother's native home for a half year. The heavy farm work she used to do with her husband now became her task. As I recall my childhood, I remember my mother who was only four feet ten, always working and crying alone at night after a hard day of labor. We used to call her "crybaby mom"; looking back, I consider my mother a true war widow—a strong woman.

We stayed at the Miura house until the year after my uncle married and had a child in the following year. Uncle Goro often consoled me by saying, "You know, it was sad to all of us, but also it was fortunate that your father never had to return

to Japan. If he had survived and come back to a defeated Japan, he would have lived life as a very unhappy man because he would learn about the true motives of the Military Government and the J.I.A. Your father was a very righteous man, so he would have lived the rest of his life with a guilty conscience; I knew him all too well..."

When I was fifteen in the early cold winter of 1958, my mother, sister and I boarded a ship at Yokohama harbor. Our destination was Brazil where my father's uncle, who owned coffee farm, offered us a permanent home. My mother, over forty years old at the time, wrote this short poem:

Over the rough water of the Pacific Ocean,
we'll take a long journey!

A long journey to the other end of the world,
where we are destined to live,
where an uncertain future awaits us.

Is this my destiny?

As old as I am, at an age over forty...

The writing of many more poems became my mother's hobby and her only solace. Leaving our native Japan and living in a foreign country would never have taken place if my father hadn't been killed in the war. The house in which I was born would still have belonged to my mother, and she never would have had to leave Japan unwillingly at the age of forty-one.

Last year, 50 years since the end of World War II, the world remembered all those veterans who died in action from all over the globe. As a child of a military man who died for his nation at the age of twenty-eight, I want to believe that he didn't die in vain. Yes, the war was cruel. All the scars caused by the JIA to the nations of Asia and to the other millions who suffered from WWII are hard to forgive, harder even, to comprehend.

On the wall in my dining room hangs my father's picture. He wears his Imperial army uniform proudly, looks straight at me with no smile, with extremely serious eyes and an emotionless facial expression. The photo was taken a little before he was leaving home to join other soldiers to fight for Japan. As I look at his picture, I often wondered what kind of war stories he would have told me. I also wonder if he ever wanted to question his su-

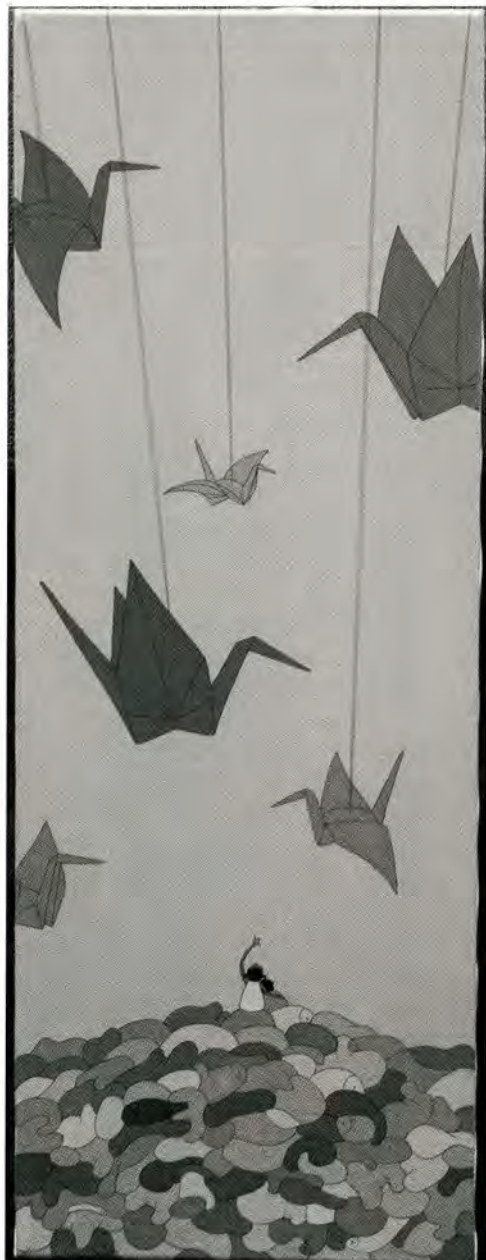
pervisors when this war would end so he could go back to his wife and children. Above all, did he ever want to know why he had to fight in China against the Chinese? What were his thoughts on a Greater "Asia for Asians?"

While musing on these thoughts, I wrote this for my father:

Deat Father,

You may never have known the true motives of the Japanese Imperial Army and may have died for the wrong reasons, but father, I am proud of you. I am proud of your showing courage and responsibility as a soldier. And I am also proud because you lived and died to fulfill your own belief of love for your own country. As I look at your picture of you in your resplendent military uniform, your strength helps me to be a stronger person.

Father, some of the questions that you wanted to find out, but weren't allowed to ask your superiors, were answered to your daughter and to the Japanese people. And father, please sleep in peace because your country, Japan, and its political system is much better when compared to the time you were



JENNIFER THORBJORNSEN

living 50 years ago. And father, I also have a dream that if the opportunity should come in the near future, I am planning to visit southern China with my sister where you proudly fought and lost your life.

Oh, one more thing I must share with you. Mother died exactly 20 years ago on your memorial day, on November 17. Would you say this is just a coincidence or fate? My mother always said that she wanted to go before she got too old because you might not recognize her since when you left her, she was only twenty-four years old, and you might not have liked a wrinkly-old wife. But my mother also said to me that "I must live at least to see you reach adulthood, the age of 20." And so she did, when I just reached twenty!

Father, are you happy now in heaven with your loved ones?

Are you and mother having pleasant conversations while the two of you watch over and protect your daughters? I've never heard your voice, so someday, I'd like to hear your answers...[?]

STEVEN CLARKE

When I moved to Hawaii three years ago, I had no

idea the sound lab existed. It's located in Aiea, a town which seemed to be just another residential creation of Honolulu, whose native soils have been coated with the concrete of all too human roadways and speckled with their homes. Aiea remained unimportant in my mind until I met Ryan Carne. He and I shared a common interest in music and decided to form a band. When I asked him where we could jam, he brought me to his work place in Aiea, a concrete testing lab known as Pacific Testing.



This building contains a small room, no bigger than my bedroom and bathroom combined, reeking of beer-stained carpet, sweat and inspiration. Jammed full of music equipment, the lab, as we've now become accustomed to calling it, is an outlet to release my greatest fears, to explore my deepest imagination, and to musically write exactly what I'm feeling at a specific time.

Often I refer to the lab simply as Aiea, which according to an encyclopedia source on the search engine GuruNet.com is,

A residential suburb of Honolulu, on the eastern shore of Pearl Harbor, that was once a quiet sugarcane town with a sugar refinery, and is now the site of numerous housing developments and varied manufacturing.
(GuruNet.com)

However, the lab is located is far from a sugarcane town, tucked away, as if it were a treasure to be hidden from the world, the lab is located in the outskirts of Aiea known as Halawa Valley. A mere stone's throw from a prison containing the convicts of Hawaii, the lab sits between a jungle of industrial factories, constructed of steel walls that tower like skyscrapers into the sky. There is only one way into the valley and one way out. Helicopters often patrol the airspace above the prison, and their rapidly rotating blades cut through the enduring echoes of Halawa's sirens as the prisoners are called back to their cells throughout the day.

Concrete samples, called blanks, form mounds of cement igloos outside the lab. The haunting smell of burning metal rises up through the floor from the auto body shop below. The whole property seems to be a spawning ground for mosquitoes thirsty for fresh blood. The walls are decorated with half-naked construction babes, various business licenses, and certificates declaring that Pacific Testing was started by Ryan's boss ten years ago and has tested concrete for government and public projects steadily. By day, this place ensures the durability of concrete, and at night it provides a musical outlet for my band.

Inside this room of fantasies, tragedies, and realities are words spoken true and clear straight from the inner depths of my soul and amplified through the instrument of creation that is my guitar. When playing, this small room is transformed into huge arena where my friends and I perform for millions of people, or sometimes the fantasy landscape created is more peaceful and serene like on the surface of the moon or in a catacomb deep within the earth's crust. The everyday tragedies, whether it is a sour relationship, the death of a close friend, or just the plague of feeling angst are reshaped and transformed into new realities. These new realities are less painful and easier to cope with. The lab is my sanity when the walls fortifying my reality come tumbling down.

This place is so integral to my character because it is an outlet to release my greatest fears, to explore my deepest imagination, and to musically write exactly what I'm feeling at a specific time. One of my greatest fears is to be rejected by someone I truly care about, so when it happens I can scream out this feeling through the microphone and forget the rejection for a short while. The lab is the place where music becomes a healing force greater than any known force in the universe. I am able to not only express my imagination musically, but also lyrically. A song called "Inside Me" demonstrates this lyrical power: "I'm traveling through a forest of madness, / the trees are made of sadness; it's so confusing, / the delusions are refusing a solution to all this pollution; / It's not amusing."

When people enter the sacred chamber in which our music is created, they can inhale the thick fumes of creation mixed with cigarette smoke and hear life's little secrets whispered into their ears, or whatever they want to know about me, even if they've never met me before. An audio voyage through the waves of distorted sound, when dug deep enough into, will reveal the contents of my exact emotions. Inside this room, I am able to express fantasies that I feel I could never act out in my life by painting the notes onto the canvas of continuation that is sustained through melodic



reverb. With the tips of my fingers grasped tightly around my pick which plucks out this creation, I envelop myself in rhythmic infatuation and tell it I love, hate or need it with the desperation of any particular mood I'm experiencing at the moment. I can also depict scenes of violence, rage, or revenge in which I take the pain caused by those elements and use the music to relive them.

This room often seems full of tragedy, and so do the lives of those immersed inside its chamber. One example of a song of sorrow created from that tragedy would be "Inside Me", a song about the heartbreak of losing a loved one. The words spoken in this song are reminiscent of poems about a relationship in which I still feel compelled to strive for, but I know is slowly fading away. While I am dealing with all this hurt, sweating it out inside the lab, my very close friends and band-mates survey my tragic scenario and add musical notes in an effort to soothe our sorrows and comfort them with therapeutic sound. Love isn't the only tragedy inside our music, but it does stand

out as something listeners can relate to.

The lab is a place to contemplate why bad things happen to good people, what it means to be alive, and many other quandaries. Though it may seem clichéd, this is the place where I seek out the truth to reality; for me, it is often an easier outlet to express my inner thoughts. Had I never discovered the lab, I probably wouldn't drive all the way to Aiea three to four times a week. The little room in which all our music is made has taught me to cherish what small things can help you get through the hard times in life. The music played at the lab is a journey through the days of my life as they are written page by page. I am able to venture into the past when playing what I've previously written, and analyze what it meant at the time, compared to how it makes me feel in the present. The lab is the one place that most defines who I am, because I can use music to bleed my fear into the air and explore the farthest reaches of my imagination 🎧

real { life stories

LET'S NOT TALK JUST ABOUT SEX

By Kehau Engle



KEHAU ENGLE

All teenagers go through some type of sexual education class during their intermediate or high school years. However, the information they learn is not all that effective in teaching teens the consequences about being sexually active and not properly using contraceptives. Hawaii's schools should create a volunteer program in which teens or former teens who had an unwanted pregnancy can talk to sex-ed classes about their real-life stories in dealing with their pregnancy.

Firsthand accounts on dealing with life as a teen when you have a child to raise would help other teens towards realizing the seriousness of unprotected sex. Teens would be able to see how much one mistake can change their future forever. The volunteer program wouldn't cost much because all of the speakers would simply donate their own time towards educating other teens so that their future might be better planned out in the future. The organization would be a non-profit one.

Realistic sex education programs that encourage students to wait until they're older to have sex

have proven to be effective. Many children are curious about their sexuality and want to learn more about sex, about ways to be safe, and about the consequences of leading a more sexual way of life.

You can have a positive or negative outlook towards any situation. This program should consist of people with positive and negative stories; after all, if there are only negative stories about teen pregnancy, it might frighten teens into never engaging in sexual intercourse and never wanting to have children. Yet if there are only positive stories, the teens may want to emulate the volunteers. Nonetheless, in the majority of the teen pregnancy stories I've heard, there is a fairly equal amount of positive and negative aspects represented.

I became pregnant when I was 18 years old and gave birth to my son at the age of 19. I am now 20 years old and I struggle with the demands of being a young, single mother. There are countless responsibilities that are required in raising a child. My social life hardly exists and it's difficult to find time for myself. Wherever I go, I usually have my son with me. I'm always tired because I watch my son all day long and sometimes go on errands with him; it's only in the evenings after he has gone to bed that I have a few hours to take

care of myself and do some schoolwork. Luckily, I have my boyfriend who helps me out financially and supports the both of us so that I don't have to work. Nonetheless, there is a downside. I don't have the luxury of buying anything for myself or being as independent as I'd like to be. Overall, my life has changed dramatically, but I have more of a positive outlook about my being a teen mother.

If there were a program that I could readily volunteer for, so as to educate teens about pregnancy, I'd volunteer in a heartbeat. Even though I might not get anything out of it personally, I would want to educate other students so that they could have a better and easier life than I. Not everyone is as fortunate as I feel that I have been and countless others struggle even more than I do. Yet I would be an eligible candidate in speaking to students about my everyday struggles with life and also about the positive things about having a child when one's life stabilizes enough to deal with the demands involved.

There are certainly various ways that we can decrease the number of teen pregnancies in the United States. A volunteer program such as the one I propose would effectively educate teens about the consequences of teen pregnancy and the cost is minimal. If teens were given firsthand accounts from real people about their struggles of being a teenaged parent, they might be encouraged to wait until they are married and stable enough before having sexual intercourse. I know that if someone had talked to me about the real-life struggles involved in being a teen mother, then I probably would have waited, too. I was only taught that it was morally incorrect to have sex before marriage and my mother told me that it would be embarrassing for the family. Yet I was never given a real-life story about the challenges faced when raising a child. Although I am happy with my son and do not regret anything that I've done, I still wish that I had waited a little longer so that I could give my son a better life and so that my life might be a little easier as well.

I chose to lead a lifestyle that reflects upon me today, as I now have to deal with the challenges added to my life with the birth of my son. Yet my son has impacted me positively, too. He has taught me responsibility and made me more mature. I learned how to be selfless and how to be more loving towards everyone. My son has brightened

up my life and I try harder to pursue more in my life than I once did. I feel the need to accomplish goals in life such as my schooling such that I can provide for my son. After all, he is the greatest joy in my life and he has shown me a love that I have never known.

Having a child at a young age can be tough, but you can make the best out of any obstacle and turn your situation into a positive one. If there were a program in which I could speak to other teens about my life, I would help them understand the pros and cons of having a child in your early years. I would help them to understand that having a child is a blessing, but having one at a young age can be challenging. Ultimately, I hope to teach them that teen pregnancies can place some restraints on their life; as such, until they feel seriously ready to start a family, they should wait to have sex [2]



SPECTRUM MAGAZINE



INTRODUCING

yet another year of **SPECTRUM**

with essays from...

HollyTammens

DerickHada

KehauEngle

StevenClarke

KennethQuilantang Jr.

MorisoTeraoka

MaryMartin

and

HarukoTsukayama



artwork from...

GeroldPenaflor

JenniferThorbjornsen

JennierArakawa

KariWright

Including...

designs and visuals by

VuongPhung

with models

IrinaFrancis

JaneWong & MisaMorita

Entries selected and edited by

LianneUesato and **DavinKubota**

