**Geoffrey Michael Latham: Journal Excerpts and creative writing selections**

Slipping into the Maelstrom - 8/9/2001

Let Agony and Death perfect my song.

I have tried to cleanse the hurt within by hoisting to the light, but to no avail.

I am resolved to seek my comfort elsewhere, if not purging by light them by smothering in darkness.

All that I love scorns and mocks me, and so I shall no longer love. All my ambitions and deeds will find fruition through hatred. Victory or Death. Either would be as sweet. If the devil does take care of his own, then let him come prove it.

My blood is rancid ichor that envenoms everything I touch, so if I am damned to endure, I shall not endure alone. I will drown the cries of my own suffering with the tears of those about me.

I dream of love I dream of hate I dream of death and pain.

The rest...is silence.

another day - 8/9/2001

The first day on my new feet has made them sore and tender, though I know that in time they will callous over and my muscles will grow strong. The first day of the resurrection of the part of me that I have repressed for so long has been one of relearning my bearings. My rage is fresh and beautiful and though it squints and grimaces in the face of the light it revels in knowing that it is well rooted in the deep dark rich soil of hatred, jealousy and anger and it is destined to grow. A strong rich blossom of despair whose aroma is sweet to me and poison to all...

My only hope is that someday I can make someone feel the hurt that wells within me. To forgive is most certainly divine, but only a fool forgets.

Engines stabalizing, cabin pressure restored - 8/10/2001

Well, I feel oodles better than the past few days. I'm so glad that my fiery haired friend is there to catch me before I hit rock bottom. She might not have the love of Napoleonic Brandy that Raljar has, but no one could ask for a better priest of Lliera. I'm so thankful for her.

I talked to 2 of my ex girlfriends today; one online and one on the phone. I never realized that they were BOTH from Arkansas. Talking to April really made my day. I miss her, she was a real trooper. And lately I've begun to Miss Lauren as well, I don't think she and I were destined for a long lived romance, but I will always admire her and think of her as a true friend. Sara is getting ready to be a mommy and I know she'll be a great one. All in all, considering the girls whom I've had the privilege to be snuggle buddies with, I am truly very lucky and think more of each of them than they will likely ever know. Any girl I ever go out with will have high standards to live up to.

Musings on a relaxed gathering. - 8/11/2001

Well, in spite of the invitation to a random party at Lee Street Liquor and the invite to Melanie and Glen's last night, I decided to stay at Becky's soirée and try to breathe a little more life into it. I hate that Liz came. Damn, I can't stand to be around her and I was a little wary of the other two unfamiliar faces as well, I guess that's just princely paranoia. Overall the evening was fun. Deon drew a neat pig orgy in a sketch book for me, I stuck my hand down Amanda's bra to retrieve a goldfish (Hey I know what you're thinking, but let's face it boobs are fun, even if they are hers!) And I think that the fierce game of trivial pursuit (Which the QMA men won, of course) was pleasantly competitive. Things started slow, but they ended up alright. Right up to the point when she hugged me goodnight. I can't help but feel like a kid with a cone and no ice cream. I'd give anything to spend just a few more minutes holding her. I'd sell my soul to kiss her like she deserves to be kissed. But, no sense in making myself melancholy. There is always hope. There just has to be.

I want to wrap her up in my world and be the hand that helps her up the social ladder in my domain. I so want to be her knight in shining armor, but I'm almost resigned to the fact that I'll never be more than a squire in her eyes. I hate seeing something so perfect and having just out of my grasp. I truly am a modern day Tantalus. Where, is my Orpheus, to make me forget MY thirst?

up too early - 8/16/2001

The cold wind bit at his face and stung his exposed hands. The storm had taken him by surprise and he had been unable to find better shelter with such short notice. No stranger to living in the outdoors among the fruits of the land and subsiding on the bountiful abundance of Mother Nature, Absalom quickly managed to find some sanctuary from the bitter torrents beneath the exposed roots of a great cypress which extended out from the edge of a riverbed, now long since dry. He shivered in the cold as the solitude and quite chaos of the weather steeped him in his own isolation. Absalom's hand instinctively reached for the pendant around his neck that held within a reminder of his greatest treasure, Drusilla. As his cold shaking hand grasped the small round silver pendant that was now dark and rough from wear he recalled the sweet smiling face of his beloved on the day she had given it to him. He had loved her from afar for so long, and even after he had driven her away, he longed to see her, to feel the wonderful warmth of her embrace, and to hear that laughter the caressed his soul like billows of gossamer running over his face. "Drusilla...." his broken and gruff voice softly cried as the weight of the distance between then and the longing to hold her close once again welled within him and proved more that his heart could bear. The rain stopped, but deep within Absalom, the storm raged ever on.

I can feel my muscles twitch, as already the weight of my mantle is recognized. I am somber but optimistic. I need a gentle hand to hold but none reach out to meet my grasp. Lonely? a little, but only for those trappings that romance provides, not for companionship, not for friendship, not for love, for those I have in abundance.

As I sit and sharpen my sword, polish my armor and think about the coming fray, I am comforted by the prospect of victory, and made quick by the danger of loss. There is work to be done, children, and the Prince must gird his faithful

this was supposed to be yesterday's - 8/16/2001

It never fails; my imagination and perception always make me wind up feeling like a fool. I push away and crave the presence I pull closer and push away. Love is like a swing set that doesn't want to play.

"As the cool sweet water dripped in rivulets down the back of Absolom's sun scorched neck, the gentle flood washed the grime and grit from his hair and he was born again into a world of beauty and grace. The birds, for the first time, sang. The wind for the first time blew across his face. As Absolom placed the small blue and white speckled tin cup back into his knapsack he noticed the hard loaf in his pack and a small length of summer sausage beneath it. Absolom thought of his home of so long ago and how he remembered sneaking into the woods to play in the streams the flowed from the foothills when he was a child. He decided not to eat, for he knew the road was long and his heart was already weary. Food was only a distraction that would slow him in his search to find her again. Absolom knew that no amount of time and no amount of distance would tarnish his love for Drusilla, and that she would realize eventually that fate has entwined them in a way that not even they could unravel."

Don't know why I wanted to write that. Creativity leak, or something. Sometimes I can't help but stare at her. If she only realized how beautiful she was. How perfectly she fits into my niche. How right it all seems to me. Can't push her away, without dragging myself along, can't pull her closer without pushing her away. Still and evermore at exactly the wrong distance.

Why my fraternity is special... - 8/25/2001

Why my frat is special in 350 words or less. My fraternity is one based around a universal art and the sharing of an exalted experience. We live our virtues and the message of our ritual in our everyday lives. We exist for the uplift of mankind through Music, not for frivolous revelry. We are special because our Greek influence is meaningful. We are special because of Music and TRUE brotherhood. :)

Now, for the extended version… My fraternity isn't just special, it is BEAUTIFUL! I know I complain and joke about the mechanics and the "business" part of the Greek experience, but when it comes down to it there is a reason that we put up with all the garbage we have to put up with. Phi Mu Alpha S-I-N-F-O-N-I-A MEANS something. And I mean that both figuratively and literally. I can tell you about what it means figuratively...

It means that unlike most "typical" college fraternities, we base our brotherhood on something of profound meaning that is both, at the same time, very personal and very universal. Our virtues, our goals, our ideals all stem from our Greek Myth.

"And there lived and walked among them one whom they called Orpheus..."

We are different from most college fraternities. We do not haze our probationary members (what most other frats call pledges). We do not pour our efforts into parties, swaps, or seeing how big a flag we can wave at an event. We don't care about competing with other fraternities, and we do not use our resources for frivolity.

Our primary concern is building a meaningful bond of true brotherhood through the sublime art of music. We live our ritual everyday because we know how touching, how wonderful, and how uplifting Music is. We are special because unlike the rest, we prefer substance to form and quality over quantity. Our Greek letters aren't just three funny symbols that grace our caps and shirts to show who we are. Our Greek letters are three words inscribed on our very hearts the remind us of our obligation to help bring light to a darkened world. I could sit all day and tell you why SINFONIA is good, tell you how we are different from the stereotype, tell you what we do right and others do wrong, but instead I'll simply say, my fraternity is special because it really does MEAN something.

echoes linger - 9/9/2001

Echoes linger

Sometimes when the rain is pouring

Sometimes when my heart is soaring

Sometimes when life's too boring

Echoes of you still linger.

Sometimes when the twilights falling

Sometimes I can hear you calling

Sometimes I when I feel I’m falling

Echoes of you still linger.

Sometimes when the darkness moves me

Sometimes when the music soothes me

Sometimes when the moon speaks to me

Echoes of you still linger

Sometimes when there is no magic

Sometimes when life seems tragic

Sometimes above all the static

Echoes of you still linger.

An alcoholic may give up drinking but he never forgets the taste.

A sprinter may give up running but he always remembers the race.

A lover may leave the girl that loved him but he always recalls her face.

Echos of you still linger.

"Make Sure you're right, then go ahead." -Davey Crocket

The past is always in the past and the future never turns out quite like we like. Life is too short to live in the past, but sometimes it is good to reminisce.

Rebleegra did SO many funny things tonight....

But she'd beat me if I wrote about it (and not in the “Thank you ma’am may I have another” way!)

I love her so much. She is the icing on my cupcake and the jam in my jelly roll!

My Melody is growing up and I am so happy for and proud of her.

My new job starts Monday. Time for me to upgrade OS, we will now be adding Employee 1.0 in addition to Student 6.3

Lordy... it has been a long and interesting night. Tomorrow there will be Veggitales!

YAY!

Goodnight all. Ciao!

The Temptress

As she entered the room the sweet aroma of her femininity wafted along the floor and walls creeping as a thief in the night to steal the resolve of any man it encountered. She glided delicately along as if carried by the thick, humid, pine sweetened winds of the Deep South, each movement an expression of grace and beauty rivaled only by the motion that followed it. She raised her smooth mahogany arm to the frame of the door with serpentine grace, revealing not only poise, but also a glimmering of the deceptive strength she hid within her rounded womanly form. With her hand resting on the frame of the door and her arm flowing from her hand to her body, like a snake outstretched in the sun, she shifted her stance to better support herself by rolling her hips in a manner likened to cobra that sways to the unheard incantation of ethereal tones and then, brought her right leg deftly to rest behind her left, which peeked teasingly from the thigh high slit in her wrapped skirt. She stood there in the doorway to the room, her bathing suit still glistening with the waters that had been fortunate enough to lap at her flawless skin. Her slitted flowing skirt revealing her legs that were tapered so effortlessly into pillars of such graceful perfection that they only could have been spun from the lathe of the devil himself. She could have easily been mistaken for an island maiden just returned from her midnight ocean swim, a nymph climbing back to her den of reeds after a long day of coaxing the flow of a stream, or even a muse drying her Olympian form from bathing in the fountains which flow with sweet ambrosia. I stood paralyzed as I gazed upon the deity that stood before me.

Every part of her both invited me to partake of its forbidden fruits as well as commanded me to fall in absolute adoration and worship of the immensity of her wiles. I was spellbound, hopelessly enraptured by her arms, doomed to eternal torment by her thighs, ceaselessly enthralled by her bosom, ensnared by her waist, imprisoned by her hips, captured by her eyes, tortured by her lips. The shape of her legs extended from the ground and drifted upward like flowing smoke into her thighs which beckoned me to kneel and pray at their alter of carnal bliss. To feel that thigh against my cheek, to have that hand brush against my face, to feel her talons scrape across my skin was all that mattered to me. I was overcome by an irrational reverence that erupted within me such irreversible irreparable erosion to my resolve that I knew the battle was over without a fight. Her glance aroused in me a rare interruption of erotic arrangements that made my muscles tense, my knees tremble, my hands tingle, my mouth water and my neck twist in anticipation of drinking the sweet nectar that dripped from her glistening cleavage. She stood there pretending to be unaware of the fact that she was sex incarnate, but she knew, oh God how she knew. She knew what I was thinking, pondering, fanaticizing, dreaming. She saw all the visions I had of tenderly caressing her, kissing and biting and exploring every inch or her with my tongue, kneeling at her feet in obedience, licking her feet in absolute submission, being her lover, her lapdog, her slave. My thoughts and emotions were hers to read, exploit, flaunt, and trifle with as she pleased. This was no woman of chastity and virtue, this was a pagan goddess worshiped with mystical rites of blood and fornication; the Daughter of the Father Moon and Mother Earth; a witch, a sorceress, a worker of magiks, an invoker of spirits, lustful and swarthy, she was something all to inviting because she was forbidden. She was a zaftig priestess come to lead me astray and I was all to willing to be led.

Without so much as a word I was enslaved to this voluptuous succubus. I, a titan in my own right, had fallen helplessly in willing subjection to the seductive temptress that stood before me, and my only hope of salvation was that she would be benevolent enough to bestow upon me the slightest of her affections.

Geoffrey M. Latham 6-11-00

Mighty Mighty

Aphrodite

Taunting and teasing my resolve nightly

You sing your siren song so lightly

Arousing and igniting my libido despite me

You cause my manly urges to fight me

And you do it all just to spite me!

Geoffrey M. Latham

10-9-98

damn you. - 10/18/2001

I hate this.

I can’t be around you anymore.

I can’t stand seeing you and not being with you.

I can’t stand wanting you, having you close, and not having you.

I can’t stand the things around that fuel my imagination that I might win you.

I can’t stand the things that make my hopes soar only to be dashed against the rocks once reality sets in.

I can’t stand this proximity.

I love you

I don’t want to be with anyone else but you.

I am not going to ever let myself settle for anyone else but you.

I don’t want someone like you. I want you, only you and no one else but you.

How dare you bring something up like you did today?

How dare you stoke the flame I try so desperately to quench?

How dare you force me to think about “what if?”

How dare you twist the knife?

I pray to God that IF you ever find someone else, they are NOTHING like me.

That is the greatest insult, the greatest injustice you could do me.

In or out! Quite standing in the doorway of my heart!

What do I have to do?

Who do I have to be?

What will it take?

This is killing me.

Do you know how much it hurts to tell you goodbye?

Do you know how many scenarios I’ve run through of how to make things different?

Do you know how many times I’ve told myself maybe now?

Do you know how seeing you with someone else would kill me?

I cannot imagine myself with anyone else but you.

I want to die.

If I’m not with you I know that I will.

No more D&D, no more hanging out, no more. I can’t take seeing you all the time.

I don’t want condolences; I don’t want to be consoled; I want you.

I’ll give you whatever you want.

I’ll never sing another note, I’ll never again dawn the golden triangle, I’ll betray everything else I hold dear if it means I can have you.

Seeing you hurts so much.

I can’t stop crying

I can’t sleep.

I can’t make myself stop loving you.

You have destroyed me.

You have laid asunder everything I’ve tried to make myself.

You are the only one capable of putting the pieces back into place.

We can’t be the same. It will never be the same. I can never be just your friend.

Why do you have to be the ideal? Why are you unattainable? Why do I have to love something I can’t have?

I’ll never give up hope on you.

I don’t want you to be happy without me.

I hope you NEVER find anyone that satisfies you if it isn’t me.

I don’t care that I am selfish.

I feel ill.

I hope and pray for only things that will bring you closer to me.

I read my horoscope and everything good echoes of you.

All my hopes are rooted in you.

I know you miss being held. I know you yearn for affection. I know that you have desires.

I know that no one will ever appreciate you like I do.

I know that I can make you happy.

I know that if you’d just give us a fair shake we’d be peachy.

I know we are right for each other.

Why can’t you see that?

I will die trying to achieve whatever it is that will flip that switch in your head.

I hate what you do to me.

I beg the heavens for what you can make me.

You are the only reward I’d ever desire in the entirety of my life.

You are the reason I get out of bed , bathe, go to class, go to work, and do anything more than survive.

I cannot, shall not, and must not ever give up hope. I wish I could. Life would be easy. Life would be meaningless, but easy.

I cannot, shall not, and must not ever give up hope. I wish I could. Life would be easy. Life would be meaningless, but easy.

I hang on every word you say hoping it is “yes”

It burns me every time you say you love me because I know it is followed by a silent “But,….”

Everywhere I turn; there you are, mocking me, throwing my affection back in my face.

Every flirt makes me hate someone.

Every glance makes me want to weep.

Every time you smile at me it makes me want to scream at heaven for its cruel sense of humor.

Every time I read your diary I pray you’ll say. I want to be with you, I love you and I’m yours!

Every time you call I pray it’s you asking me to come and hold you close.

Every time you hug me I pray that you will kiss me.

Every time I make a wish it is for us to be together.

I can’t be just your friend. I MUST be more or I must perish.

I will never stop. Never give up. Never surrender.

I will do any and everything in my power to see you happy, content, and at my side.

I love you more than anyone else ever has or ever will, please accept it as a gift.

The only thanks I require is the same kind of time and attention you’ve wasted on people who have hurt you, used you, neglected you, failed to appreciate you.

Kiss me, Hug me, hold me, let me be your slave, your servant, your genie in a bottle, your attentive priest of Warden.

LOVE ME!!!

PLEASE!

I am a fucking asshole. - 10/20/2001

I hate what I have become. I hate the loss of my innocence. I hate that I cannot control my emotions any better than I can. I hate that I lash out against those who mean the most to me. I hate that I am not the good person I used to be. You cannot go home again.

You get no second chances.

When you are dead, you stay dead.

If you don't believe me, ask Wearing Hudsucker.

I am a dickhead, and an asshole, and a cock, and a jerk.

I just want my life to be simple again.

Where is that bright eyed boy who climbed down riverbanks to fish out crawfish with twigs to use for bait at the pond down the hill from his house?

Where are the days of boy scouts and B\*B guns?

Where are the days when all I needed for a full day of fun was a slingshot, a magnifying glass, a can of sardines, a pocketknife, a walking stick, and the endless acres of woods on Granddaddy’s farm or behind our house on the hill?

Where are the days when girls were pretty sweet smelling people that you were afraid to talk to?

Where is Beauregard, that puppy of my youth, whose cold wet nose and playful demeanor were all the friendship and love that I needed?

Where are those days of gravel scrapes, and wasp stings, grass stains, and lightning bugs?

Where is that green warped porch, my tire swing, the hills I used to roll down as a lad, fresh deer tracks in the mud, and picking honeysuckle and wild blackberries from fences?

I was a boy of the country. I remember when my grandmother would lead me by the hand to the rotted fallen oak in her front yard and we would dig for night crawlers. She would pack nabs and cokes and I would throw out the dead minnows and put the cane poles in her car and she would take me to fish at Granddaddy’s farm in Duck Hill. I'd romp around the pond for hours while she fished and talked with mama. They'd make me be quite and I'd wander off to be noisy and not scare the fish.

I remember crawling into hay lofts and over rusted tractor equipment, daddy showing me how to climb through a barbed wire fence while carrying a shotgun, eating persimmons, stealing apples from Granny's back yard, that she told me would make me sick, but I'd eat anyway just cause they were so sour and good. I remember walking to Mr. Ship's to play with his grandson, Eric. I remember the hogs they raised and the fun we had throwing sticks at them. I remember Mr. Ship, who stood about 5 foot 7 and weighed about three hundred pounds, smoking his pipe and making corncob wine. Countless time I walked, rode and ran up and down that gravel road whose ditches were always filled with tadpoles, bullfrogs, and water moccasins.

I had the BEST childhood, raised by people who love me, taught all the things that a southern boy should know, like how to fish and hunt, the importance of baseball and football, to take your hat off in the house, say yes ma’am and no ma’am, yes sir and no sir, please and thank you, how to whittle, whistle, and while away the hours just doing nothing.

Where am I now? A jackass, whose heart is filled with anger, hate, dissatisfaction, and bitterness from loves lost and gone. I loved Lauren because she wasn't Sara. I loved Sara because she was a girl from the country. I loved Sara for the same reason that I love Becky. She is like me. We share a common history. We can talk about our memories and we know right away that we are similar fruit sprouting from a common tree. We have a comfortable silence that is rare and beautiful. I don't know any other girls like that, and it makes me feel lonely.

It makes me cry to think that someday I'll love a girl who is everything to me and I'll never get to introduce her to Granny Dot and she will never know the angel from God, that we called Granny.

I am so ashamed of myself. My Granny didn't raise me to be this way. I wish I had her here to dry these tears.

I miss her so much. I wish that I had someone to hold me like Granny did. To take away all the fear and make me feel loved. Every time I find that, I reach for it but fail to grasp it. I apologize to everyone for being crazy. I'm sorry that I can't let go. I apologize to you, Rebecca, for not being everything I ought to be, for wanting more than I have, for being selfish, and envious. I apologize to you, Lauren, for not loving you like you loved me, and for hurting someone so wonderful. I apologize to you, Sara, for not being the man you needed me to be and for not fighting harder to keep you. I apologize to you, Melody, for not being able to shelter you from all the dangers and evil of the world. I apologize to you, Sinfonia, for not being the crusader that you wanted me to be. I apologize to you, Granny, for not being the sunshine I should be.

Must stop bawling.

Must dry face.

Must seriously seek professional help.

Must pick myself up by my bootstraps and face the day with a song in my heart.

Must remember my personal trinity. Jesus, Granny, and Orpheus.

“Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so, little ones to him belong, they are weak but he is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes Jesus loves me; the Bible tells me so.”

“You are my sunshine, my only sunshine, you make me happy when skies are gray. You’ll never know dear how much I love you. Please don’t take my sunshine away.

“Oh Orpheus may thy spirit ever live on in all Sinfonian’s hearts; following where they footsteps lead us, Music beloved of the arts; Music beloved of the arts.

Keep us Sincere in things fraternal; help us to live by truth, eternal.

Spirit of Orpheus, thy emulation, ever Sinfonian’s inspiration

Ever Sinfonian hearts inspire.”

"Dream Soaked Pillow"

Fond memories float within me

without the tinge of bitterness and pain

bliss and harmony and a sense of peace

well up and give me hope again.

I'd never know a love the same

love returns and its scent has changed

different hearts but no less lovely

than the one with whom life began

morning sentimental half sleep musings

remembering smooth sweet smelling skin

another holds the keys to the door now

if only she could open and come in.

G. Latham 10-25-01

I'm an asshole with no balls. How about that? - 10/29/2001

I had an awesome night of sleep. I woke up fresh and ready to tackle the day ahead of me. I got up, showered, dressed, and went to work. I taped the Alumni foundation banquet and then left just in the nick of time to set up the PA for the National Anthem. The anthem was great, my men sang as I have heard them sing. We lost the game but it wasn't all that bad. After the game I got to talk online to someone who is growing on me as the days go by. I hope she doesn't find out "I'm an asshole with no balls" that might ruin my chances.

Beulah was one of the feistiest I've seen since Marshall and Karen squared off. All the familiar faces were there as well as some strange ones, some new ones, and some old ones from days long passed. The Alcohol flowed (Though I didn't even get a buzz from the quarter bottle of Everclear I drank; maybe ball-less assholes are drunk proof...)

I was so pleased to see so many of my wonderful friends around me having a good time. There were some, who instigated some friction, but no one was hurt and all in all it was a terrific evening. I thought Wes, and Angela and I were about to go, so I started making my rounds to say goodbye to all my friends, but I mistook someone for a friend by accident and instead of returning my olive branch with a kind word or gesture, I was rudely pushed back and informed that I am an asshole with no balls.

Wow...I'm glad someone finally told me. Here I was thinking that people, who profess to be my friends, think well of me. I could have sworn I had balls just moments before when I went to pee in the woods. Maybe I dropped them. I should probably go back and check. As for being an asshole, well, I guess I'll just have to take some "how not to be an asshole" lessons. I mean, I've tried to be nice and civil and friendly, but apparently those are the actions of an asshole. I tried to extend a hand in camaraderie, tried to feel empathy for people I've hurt, but apparently that's what assholes do. Well, thank GOD someone let me know I was an asshole with no balls! Now I can begin to do everything different. God knows, I don't want people to think I'm an asshole with no balls. I guess it’s high time I started airing peoples dirty laundry for all the world to hear, that I be cold and hateful, that I should forget trying to be people's friend. Shame on me for feeling remorse, shame on me for missing her, shame on me for trying to see things from her perspective, shame on me for wanting to be her friend, shame on me for thinking well of her, shame on me for still trying to welcome her into my circle of friends, shame on me for trying to hug her and wish her a safe trip home, shame on me for having good intentions, shame on me for wanting to ease her pain, shame on me for being an asshole.

I have seen the error of my ways, and I won't be making any of those kinds of mistakes with her ANY more. Now If I could just find some balls...HEY! I have friend, BECKY!!! She has "balls!"... Maybe I could borrow them for a while. Better yet, maybe "balls” would sound off on my behalf. Becky's balls are great, but then everything about Becky is great. My friends genuinely like and accept her, she is pretty, she is funny, she doesn't surround herself with societies outcasts, she is polite even when she doesn't want to be, she knows the value and depth of true friendship, she has gorgeous, perfect, unblemished hands, she has wonderfully smooth legs, she make me happy, she can feel good about herself without having to find fault in others to do so, she doesn't talk every waking second of every day, her mom is a warm friendly person, her brother is a little rough around the edges but by no means mentally instable, and she, of course, is never ever petty.

So, what do you say, "Balls," what do you make of all this? How can I not be an asshole anymore?

I love Becky's "Balls of Inspiration," they are just one of the MANY reasons you are one of the FAVORITE new Phi Mu Alpha Sweethearts. God Bless you, Rebleegra!

Oh well, maybe tomorrow I'll wake up not an asshole and with a pair of balls to call my very own. In the meantime, I guess I'll just have to be happy with my loving warm family, my plethora of loyal brothers, my circle of NORMAL friends, my WONDERFUL angelic sibling, my happy home, my happy life. Oh, and a special thanks to you, CrashAndBurn, you have made my past few days indeed special. It is very benevolent of you to think well of me...An asshole, with no balls.

I hope all of you (except of course for one in particular) have a great day and rest of the week.

To the ONE exception from above:

I'm glad you got that out of your system. I hope you received some form of catharsis from it. I suppose there are worse things one could be than an asshole with no balls. And how poetic it was to have "Becky" tell me you wish you didn't say that drunk. That's ok, I know I've never said anything drunk that I didn't mean sober. And as far as the irony of saying it online, I’d be more than happy to express myself to your face, and I will next time I have the chance. I’ll give you a REAL reason to hate me. I thought maybe I’d give you the benefit of the doubt since you were drunk and there was no point in making a scene where people are trying to have a good time, but I guess emotional outbursts and a lack of general civility shouldn’t be surprising, considering your life. I really did hope to be friends. Oh Well. Cest La Vie!

Sunday Morning Poetry Written During Church - 1/6/2002

"A Few Women"

The Temptress

The Vixen

Appealing to the senses, but lacking in what counts.

The Harpy

The Bitch

Fierce in determination but wanting in loving compassion.

The Diva

The Shrew

Wondrous in determination but failing in peace.

The Harlot

The Slut

Carnal and vivacious, but empty of real passion

The Model

The Doll

Pretty on the outside, but hollow and cold at heart.

Real women are warm blooded and aren't afraid of love.

-GL 1-6-02

"A Prayer"

Forgive me for all shortcomings

Forgive me for inequity and ignorance

Forgive me for Pride.

Thank you for my friends

Thank you for love and joy

Thank you for humbling me

Thank you for teaching through trials

Thank you for all the blessings of life

Teach me patience and temperance

Teach me gentility

Teach me to find joy in simplicity

Teach me to find beauty in the banal

Teach me forgiveness and love.

-GL 1-6-02

"Southern Summer"

Long shadows linger on the hillside.

I sit on the hilltop with Bo in my lap

The sounds of Crickets and tree-frogs

of my dog panting, of my own heart beating

The smell of freshly cut grass

of honeysuckle, pine sap,

and dust from the gravel road

The feeling of grass prickling my legs

of the warm setting sun on my back

of the cool evening's breeze

The tastes of Mississippi

summer on my lips

Blackberries and Lemonade

Bologna and cheese crackers

Southern life is never boring,

it is, even in the most innocent

and simple of moments,

Sensual and Sublime.

-GL 1-6-02

"Tantalus"

Transcendence of space

distance the thief

That steals kindred souls

Holding those I love close

to my bosom is the water

to quench my eternal thirst.

I am become Tantalus.

Always out of reach of that

which I most desire.

Always too far from happiness.

Always inches away from Joy.

-GL 1-6-02

Grandaddy turned 75 today. Happy Birthday!

Went to Church with the Family at Sparta, small churches always glow with a charm all of their own. I was distracted from the service by thoughts of past relationships. What I used to look for in a woman and what I want in one now.

Everyone is coming back today. It will be good to see all the faces again. Good to pick up my distractions again.

It will be good to have noise.

No profound titles. Just touch my monkey! - 1/9/2002

"7:51"

Those eyes that burn

The soul that yearns

The heart that Learns

to love and be free

The search for stars

the healing scars

The rage of Mars

that keeps one breathing

The faces fading

The closeness waining

The malice grating

on the bearing of a soul

Time and Motion

Swelling Oceans

eternal devotion

waiting for you.

-GL 1-9-02

Love comes and love goes

emotions rise and fall

ideas swell and fade

spirits ebb and flow

flesh is born and dies

but life lives on eternal

-GL 1-14-02

A Fairy Tale. - 1/15/2002

The warm summer air was met by the costal breeze and they mingled as the ocean waves brought the cool mists inland to settle over the shores. The brilliant silver moon shone brightly on the surface of the pulsating waves and gave an otherworldly sheen to the dark flowing mane of Perseus's ebony hair. He filled his lungs with the cool moist night as the crashing of the waves bade him climb higher towards the chamber that hung high above the coastline of Auronpur. Andromeda waited in silent slumber as her returning lover made his way toward her cloistered chamber. Perseus rounded the last step of the spiraling stone stairway and passed by the large bay window that overlooked the Cliffs of Wailing Sighs, those cliffs which had tragically greeted so many an unwary vessel, but he saw them now not in sorrow, but in joy, for he knew he was once again home; once again in Auronpur, once again near Andromeda.

He crept silently into her chamber. The room was filled with the scent of lilacs and honey. He hung his pack on the wooden peg near the door and slid off his worn knee boots and felt the cold stone floor through his white silk stockings. The crispness of the air and the presence of his beloved took him aback for a moment. He thought of the wars, the battles, the long hours of blood and death and of the singular image that had helped him persevere, the single thought that had seen him safely home; Andromeda's face.

He untied his sleeves and loosened the laces of his billowing white shirt. He pulled at the material to cool the warmth of his glistening chest, beaded with moisture from the sea and the long journey home. He grasped the corner post of the large canopy bed and glided silently to the side where he saw her veiled figure sleeping. Perseus delicately pulled away the wispy sheer curtains that surrounded the bed and saw the icon of his passion, Andromeda. The moonlight danced off of the silvery satin sheets as Perseus stood silently and drank in her beauty as it were the very water of his life. Her body under the sheets lay still, like a wave of quicksilver frozen in time. The soft curves and valleys of the sheet gave the indication of her smooth supple legs crossed at her ankles and grew forth in a flawless taper to her strong calves and thighs that seemed to have been sculpted by Aphrodite herself. Her hips moved inward toward her waist and outward again towards her soft bosom as if pulled by a master at a potter’s wheel of pure white porcelain. Just above the hem of the satin was her smooth neck that bloomed into her divine face. Her face, though sleeping, lit the room with beauty. Framed like a goddess from Olympus by clean cloudlike pillows and the cascading curls of her flowing auburn locks. Perseus wept at her beauty. She seemed to frail and fragile to touch as if she would vanish into the mists of the sea if her delicacy were to be broken by his strong tanned warlike hands. Andromeda sighed deeply as the lids of her eyes peered open like the rising of the sun. Perseus was struck with awe at her gaze and dropped to his knees for the love in her eyes had cut him to the quick and made him search for his breath. Andromeda sat up in her bed and let the satin sheet fall from her alabaster breasts and she reached out her hand with angelic grace to Perseus's weathered face and pressed her succulent plum lips to his and kissed away the scars of war, sorrow, and doubt.

This was the moment they had waited so long for, had suffered so diligently and had crossed oceans of time and worlds of distance to enjoy. As they held each other there in the intimacy of that anticipated embrace all their fears and doubts washed away in a flood of well-being. As they cried for joy in each other’s mouths, they felt their spirits join and form one soul; one soul, conceived in love, bound in joy, and blossoming in the grace that had finally see them together.

And They Lived Happily Ever After.

What would an ANGEL say, The DEVIL wants to know. - 1/24/2002

Thursday, January twenty-fourth, two thousand and two, a day that will LIVE in INFAMY!...For SOMEONE, I'm sure.

Today someone's life will be forever changed, today someone's life will begin, today someone's life will end, somewhere it will rain, somewhere it will be sunny, somewhere someone is getting married, somewhere someone is getting divorced, somewhere someone is finding themselves, somewhere someone is getting lost, somewhere someone's faith is blooming, somewhere someone is turning their face from God, somewhere someone is falling love for the first time, somewhere someone is harboring hatred in their heart, somewhere children laugh and play, somewhere children huddle in despair, somewhere someone is giving up, somewhere someone will persevere, somewhere someone is you, somewhere someone is me.

1-24-02 G.L.

Life happens to us. Not to other people, we rarely consider the magnitude of another person's existence. We see people with whom we have things in common and with whom we have differences, but rarely do we truly try and put ourselves in their shoes and even when we do, we see things from our perspective. It is possible to empathize, to sympathize, to feel kindred, and to understand, but we can never truly experience life from someone else's perspective without becoming that person.

We blessed spirits live entombed in these bodies of flesh isolated by its limitations and bound by its inadequacies and frailties. Only when our souls are released from this mortal coil can they fully understand the beauty and depth of existence only then can they know the entire depths of love, for it is then that they become love.

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I really should be getting ready for work, but it is flooded outside and the weather is as nasty as a splinter in your ass!

Today is the beginning of DSU Honor Band; the day that all Sinfonians drea...uh...LOVE!

Wesley is coming up and Palmer is here and there will be some big mooky role-playing tonight.

Yes, those of you who don't know me personally, I'm big time into role playing games...well a few role playing games, not all role playing games, some games are just stupid and wholly a waste of time (\*cough-magic-cough\*)

I play and run Advanced Dungeons and Dragons (2nd revised edition ONLY! 3rd edition sucks goat balls!) and Vampire: The masquerade (again 3rd edition sucks, but we use it anyway.) I've played lots of other games, but those 2 are the gold standard as far as I am concerned. I'm intrigued by Call of Cthulhu and MERP but never really got a good chance to experience them. I also can appreciate a good game of live action Vampire, Jihad, and Marvel. Why? They're fun! Role playing games foster creativity, problem solving skills, literary development, as well as communication skills and they are an inexpensive way of getting together with friends and hanging out!

Ok...enough on the good merits of AD&D...

I have SO much I want to put in my new diary but nowhere near the time to sit down and pour my soul out like water from a pitcher that I need. Perhaps this weekend I will find time to put down all my feelings about people and things and it isn't to bash them, just to put into words my ideas and emotions in a place that keeps them away from those people who actually know me. Why is it so easy to share myself with complete strangers? Why is it so easy bear my soul to the entire world save those whom I know? Because it doesn't matter what the rest of the world thinks...and it matters what my friends think and how they perceive me.

\*le Sigh\*

Well, I suppose it would be financially wise of me to get in the shower and get ready to walk to work in a flood and monsoon.

MY DEFFECTIVE HEAD MEAT - 1/26/2002

There is a dizzying amount of things I have to say in one diary and little fit for public viewing in this one.

Honor Band Weekend...I used to love this weekend. It used to be a real chapter event, we were excited about the opportunity to meet high school kids, recruit them, take them out and let them experience the debauchery of college and it gave the chapter an excuse for HUGE sleep-over in the chapter room. We'd rent movies and watch them all piled up on our couches and we'd buy food and live like a satanic cult in hiding all huddled together on the second floor of Bond.

Those days are gone.

Am I old school?

I used to be "cutting edge"

I used to be "progressive"

Now, I just feel like I'm in the way, sometimes.

I looked really hard at that "change to alumni status" form in my personnel reports last semester...

It felt like looking at a life raft and a tombstone all at the same time.

Marshall told me over the break, that I fall in love too easy. He is right. I fell for Sara, Lauren, Jacki; all before I'd even met them. I fell for April, Heather, Tori, Becky, and Dawn after they showed me the most innocent of friendly affection.

What is wrong with me? Why can't I control myself? Why can't I purge myself of this love? Why can't I exchange passion for prudence?

I wind up hurting people because I fall in love too easily. I dive in with both feet. Like with Lauren and April...I still have warm feelings for both of them.

The fact that I have hurt people because of my own desperate need to feel loved and to love someone is one of the greatest regrets I have about myself.

Someone asked me tonight what I looked for in a woman. I told her about all the personality traits I admire, all those things I find endearing, all those qualities I find attractive, but I neglected to honestly say those that have proven to be the most enticing: availability and willingness to love. If I saw that in another person I'd say they were desperate...I don’t think that is PATHETIC or SAD...but I think it is somewhat of an unhealthy urgency, a neediness that demonstrates my personal weaknesses. I abhor that about myself and yet I am powerless to truly change it. I can put my foot down and say, NOPE! Not this time...not going to fall for it! But, I know that is a wall made of paper built on shifting sand.

Sometimes I wish to be devoid of passion, free from emotion, detached from the world, but I know that is only sour grapes. Christ I am introspective sometimes...

Does that make me self aware or self centered?

Or just an egocentric egomaniacal bastard?

I look at the lives of my married friends and wonder, "Is this what it will be like for me? Partners whom lose interest in me, dissatisfaction with my life? Clinging to someone out of fear and familiarity rather than love and devotion? Are my ideas about Love and commitment too idealistic? Am I not jaded enough for my own good?

I don't think so.

I probably shouldn't have referred to some people by name...they might get upset.

Fuck it...

They'll just have to get over it or bite me.

I think I must have writers block. I sit here trying to think of something beautiful, evocative, poignant, and meaningful to say, and all I can seem to write about is myself.

Bleah!

I need a vacation from love.

\*Sour grapes moose\*

\*To voice in my head\* "Fuck you!"

\*Voice in my head puts thumb into ocular nerve and twists\* - BE NICE!

\*Me blinking uncontrollably\* "OW! Fucker...You just wait. I'll get a drill and dig your preachy ass out of there..."

Uh...ok. I'm psychotic. Please take me to a facility for psychiatric treatment until I'm fit to re-enter society.

The Romulans seem to be uncloaking...I think I'd better raise shields and get the fuck outta here.

When life gives ya lemons tell life to go to Hell - 1/29/2002

A browser with a blank text box and I sit pondering what to put in it and why to put anything there at all.

"No Longer"

There is no longer a shelter

There is no longer a home

Only a cold little room

Of a man who stands alone.

There is no longer a hero

There is no longer a star

Only the smoldering embers

Of the fire lit from afar.

There is no longer beauty

There is no longer grace

Only the dry empty husk

Of a soul who's lost its place.

There is no longer laughter

There is no longer joy

Only the virulent coughing

Of a voice from a dying boy.

There is no longer truth

There is no longer vision

Only the lies and rumors

Of a heart killed by derision.

There is no longer happiness

There no longer a smile

Only bitter consternation

Of life that wreaks of bile.

There is no longer love

There is no longer passion

Only mad relentless rage

Of a sage that's lost his ration.

There is no longer strength

There is no longer charm

Only limp undulations

Of a withered warriors arm.

There is no longer reason

there is no more a goal

Only the wait for mortal death

Of a body with a departed soul.

G.L. 1-29-02

Ok… That was a little morbid, but that's how I feel. I have been shit on left and right the past couple of days and I don't know how much more I'm willing to take before throwing my hands into the air and giving up on everything. I talked to Marshall today. It was wonderful to hear his voice. He truly possesses a special magic that keeps me from sliding a filet knife across the side of my neck.

I want to lie in bed forever. I really wish I didn't have to go to work.

Seven years of hard work and diligence...it is time to lay down my lyre and join the rest of those on the other side of Styx.

I just don't have the energy to care anymore.

I feel so useless...so impotent...so antiquated.

I don't feel like I should feel.

I am not satisfied with what I am but an either powerless or blind to change it.

Where is my cocoon? Where is the transformation? Where is my catharsis? Must find release.

Must stop talking like... Captain Kirk!

Captain's log: star Date 473.30307- We've.....landed on some strange alien planet..................Our.......................Crew has been affected by some virus and worst of all..................Gay Klingons have kidnapped McCoy and Sulu (Klingons in rainbow uniforms feeling up Bones and Sulu who are strapped to chaise lounges) and Spok has.....................................................................................somehow gotten separated from the.......................rest of the away team.....

...God........Help us all! Kirk out.....

OK. I feel a little better now :)

ahh....just have to remember what Frank used to say: "When you feel yourself falling...DIVE!"

Thank god for insanity.

I sat down and went through my ENTIRE OD and took all the poetry and put it into a word document. I'll be posting it on my web page soon, for those interested at all.

Moo.

:)

Swim the warm waters of sins of the flesh!

Turn those feathered wings to dark skin gliders

Toss away that halo and adopt these lovely horns

Only those who forsake thier dependance on the chairity

Of the divine are allowed entrace to this party.

Here's you trident, your flaming scourge, and your tail

Welcome to the kickingest part this side of unholy hell!

G.L. 2-2-02

Like a Bridge Over Troubld Waters - 3/4/2002

I haven't been able to find the time to write, I have also lacked the motivation. Writing is still important to me, it is so important. It never used to be, but now it is; now that I realize the imminent reality of mortality. I have to constantly reaffirm my belief that existence isn't so fragile and finite, that there is something of us that transcends our physical bodies inability to withstand the tests of time. I sat at Chiclet, Jen, and Ashley's tonight and watched a movie. The movie was rat race and it is one of the funniest damn things I've ever watched. But shortly after the movie started, I sat in the chair and looked down at Usry. She is so beautiful, both inside and out. She is kind and loves to laugh. Jennifer has a wonderful laugh and a gorgeous smile. I sat and looked at her and realized that someday, hopefully after a long life full of kids, grandkids, great grandkids, and more that she will eventually, like all of us close her eyes and never open them again. No more will her wonderful laughter and beautiful smile fill the world with song. I thought about it again as Melody got out of the car tonight to take her laundry into the dorm. I think about it every time I drive her to her dorm and she walks into that building and lies down to sleep in that place only a few hundred yards spatially, but almost a world away from her room in our little house. Someday my sister will die. That fountain of joy and delight, the fuel that feeds the flame in my soul, the most important girl in the world to me right now, that incarnation of the joy and light of heavenly assurance will be silenced. I pray that I am long since gone before that happens. I cherish life so much, I'd never do anything to endanger it, especially mine, but to think about life without her dimpled smile, her bounce, her hugs, her calling me bubba, is something that would make my life more of a hell than hell could ever be. It is almost a year ago that I began to realize this. Granny Dot....

Melody talked about her tonight; talked about how much she liked Mr. Bean. I remember the faces she would make at me when I was a little boy, funny faces like his. I can't think of anything that could have darkened my disposition like her death did. She was everything wonderful about life. I miss her so much. Christy is lucky; she got to see her child bounce on Granny's knee. She got to see those faces again. Those funny faces that lighten the life and hold you through the bumps and scrapes of childhood. My sole consolation is that someday, my children will get to sit on Granddaddy's knee and see the love in his eyes, in Daddy's eyes in mine and Melody's eyes when we remember her. Someday my aunts, my sister hell, even MAYBE my mother will mean as much to my children as Granny did to me. They will be the light in the dark room, the sweet smell of perfume and sweet tea. Though my screen is blurry behind my tears and my heart cries out in pain I can't think of Granny without feeling comforted, without feeling joy, without smiling. Mom is concerned because I sit here typing and crying. Someday I will pass from this life into whatever there is after this life. That is the reason I write this. This diary is partially for my own catharsis and my own reflection, but more than anything I hope that someday someone may read these words and think fondly of me. I've done some rotten things, I've been wrong, but I still stack my heart and soul against any man that's ever lived and do not feel ashamed.

Death. A plague? or is it a reminder that life must be lived to its fullest while we are here to live it? We aren't suited to immortality yet. Life needs a conclusion to ensure that we do something with it, otherwise, we'd waste the incredibly gift of existence.

My life? So many things seem so important, but eventually what I want out of life is to not be bored, to be loved, to give love to others, to help others realize their potential, to help others live life. Life is hard on all of us, and though in the end we stand as individuals, but in the meantime, it is a team sport. Play it to win!

Chapter meeting, Pa set ups, Rehearsals, Bills, interest rates, time sheets,

All circumstantial, all material, all temporal.

Love...friendship...joy...service...music...art...beauty...fraternity...smiles...laughter...

all subjective, all timeless, all priceless.

Ok...that was a long and painful entry. Heh heh heh...

I think I will conclude and begin anew before discussion my "greedy lusty desires". Hate to cheapen something so spiritual with something so earthly.

Goodnight.

my house smells like clorox and malaise - 3/14/2002

"fugue"

fugue

cold shivers

rhythmic rocking

shaking from pain

mind shattered

teeth clenched

damp terror

despair flooding

struggles for air

gurgled choking

drowning and thirsting

flinching paranoia

curled in the corner

tears flow streaming

recoiling in horror

terrible dripping

mouth dry skin cold

shake, rock, cringe

fugue.

3-14-02

"theycome"

whentheycometheycomeandtheytellmethings

theytellmeyouhatemeandtellmeeveryonedoes

theytellmetheyhatemeandtheyhitmewithbats

thepaincoursesthroughmelikebloodpounding

bloodspilledteethbrokenfistsclenchedhelp

theyeneverstaylongbuttheyalwayscomeback

theyaregonenowbuttheywillcomeandbeatme

theywillcomeandbeatmeassoonasthepaingoes

3-14-02

"deon"

Everything he paints is pigs

some paint people

some paint figs

but not he

he paints pigs

Everything he paints is swine

some paint lakes

some paint lines

but not he

he paints swine

Everything he paints is pork

some paint flowers

some paint New York

but not he

he paints pork

Everything he paints is bacon

some paint bridges

some paint naked

but not he

he paints bacon

Everything he paints is hogs

some paint lakes

some paint frogs

but not he

he paints hogs

Everything he paints is pigs

some paint fruit

some paint wigs

but not he

he paints pigs

3-14-02

"Her Picture Rests"

her picture rests on his bed

he looks upon it dreamily

wishing: she were real,

close enough to touch him,

that he didn't know better.

her picture rests on his bed

he looks upon it tearfully

wishing: she would kiss him.

near enough to hold him,

that he could let down the wall.

her picture rests on his bed

he looks upon it skeptically

wishing: she wouldn't hurt him,

here to drive the knife in,

that he could just finally die.

3-14-02

"trail of worms"

Hoodwinked

hand upon shoulder

blind shuffled steps

a pathway in secret

walked by the novice

flames of candles

muffled whispers

guided by the sighted

shuttled to chairs

palpable darkness

baited silence

waiting on the unknown

a stern voice echoes

NOVICES YOU MAY REMOVE YOUR BLINDS!

3-14-02

OK, for those of you reading, no, I'm not depressed. I'm actually quite content at the moment, thank you. There is no need for concern. I just didn't feel like writing happy bubbly flower stuff today. I didn't go in to work Monday like I said I would and I think I was missed, and I don't mean in a sentimental way. Shit...I was feeling so good about being on top of things and then I go and fuck it up. Oh well, it isn't the end of the world and things could be worse. WW is on my mind a lot. I can't help it; I'm attracted to her in so many ways. I realize I've been letting myself be too open with her. I know that I should keep my guard up and not become attached. I know I'm cursed and that women have a history of showing me kindness and then leaving me a crushed shell of what I am and I am determined to do me best at avoiding that scenario if at all possible. I look at her, and talk to her and I know that she is the type of girl who I could give everything for. She's the type of girl that I would fall for if I loosened the bonds that I've put in place for my own protection. She's the type of woman that I doubt I could deny any wish within my power to grant, and that is what makes her dangerous, that is what makes her lethal, that is what draws me to her so completely. In the past I have progressed from kindness to affection to interest to infatuation to love to obsession. Right now I am trying to nail my feet to the ground somewhere between interest and infatuation, but I feel something pushing me forward. I’m thinking about all this too much. I need to shake my head and take a step back and put everything back into perspective. I need to make sure me feet are on the ground. I can’t afford to start floating again.

She is wonderful, beautiful, funny, and she has a demeanor that makes me smile with satisfaction whenever we talk. I like her a lot. I like her more than I’m willing to admit.

She is the woman with the matching robe and sigil from my dream.

(Yes… I dream in D&D get over it)

I can see her so plainly and it comforts me and makes me smile.

Ok. Now I need to get off my ass and do something. Ciao!

And Still, Orpheus Wanders. - 3/16/2002

Sigh..........

A real entry. For some reason as of late I haven't been motivated to pour my heart out in this little text box. I've done surveys, posted song lyrics, wrote poetry, but have not really put down my life. I suppose it's because I may have lost some perspective, lost some motivation, lost part of myself. My life is consumed with work now. When I was a student I had time to socialize, to play, to sit and talk, to wax philosophic with my philosophical type friends, to go out to lunch and eat where I could sit and enjoy the conversation. I miss that freedom, but I also desperately need the money I am making; such a vicious cycle. I'm not usually the type of person who whines about "the good old days" or at least I thought I wasn't. I remember hearing Daniel and Heather drone on and on about how things used to be at DSU before I got there, I remember thinking they were antiquated and stuck in the past. Now, I have much more sympathy for them, because I understand what it is to see friends come and go, as if I were some immortal construct of the campus. It is as if I were a stone bench on the steps of Ziegle that provided a seat for countless friends who have now graduated, gone, and moved on with their lives, leaving me behind because I belong here and aren't supposed to leave. I stood in front of the mirror last night and looked at myself. How did I become this monstrosity? How did I become so big?

Why have I been unable to conquer my weight? I set my mind to become a musician and I did. I set my mind to become a technician, and I did. I set my mind to become an artist, and I did. I have set my mind time and time again to become thin...and I have failed.

My weight is the bane of my existence. I feel so ashamed and worthless. I make light of it a great deal. How am I supposed to raise a family one day if I am going to die at 45 of a heart attack?

Yeah.. Ok, so I'm depressed...whoopty shit, everyone knew it was coming...I've been far to blindly content for too long now.

Last night was...enlightening.

That's all I will say about it, because I said I wouldn't talk about it.

I need a hug...I'd really like to fly to Baltimore for one.

Stop being pathetic, Moose...

Ok. You’re right...

I have to find something to fill my life with besides work. I have my friends but I hardly ever see them outside of chapter meetings and instances where I FORCE myself to leave my house and go and sit in a-double-j's floor.

What happened to the time when we had parties?

God, KNOWS if I had a house of my own I could throw a HELLACIOUS party...too bad, "knowing how to throw down like a mother fuck" isn't a more marketable skill.

I think I need to pull out my "R" and read it.

That always helps to reaffirm my faith in the human spirit and the ideals that I cling to.

WW is concerned that I was turned off. I was and I wasn't. I was in and open relationship, of course it worked out where she was open and I wasn't. It killed me. she would tell me of her escapades with other guys and I would try to be happy for her. I would try to be into it. But, the truth of the matter was that it was probably the second most emotionally painful thing I've had to endure. Of course, I loved her like I've never loved anyone before, and only one person since. I could give a shit what society thinks of monogamy. Most of the animal kingdom isn't monogamous (save for wolves, bears, and few other critters) and the human animal may never have been intended to be monogamous...But I am more than mere animal. Call me a humanist, but mankind isn't just another animal. It is as close to being divine as a creature can be and not be immortal.

"... What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason!

How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how

express and admirable! In action how like an angel!

In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the

world! The paragon of animals!..."

Orpheus's supreme gift was his music, but Euridice's was her fidelity. I've tried to divide my affections and I wound up not being able to love either of them. And monogamy is a choice; it is also a sacrifice. (And all the Sinfonians go "Ahhh") a sacrifice of one's base instinct as a symbol of one's devotion to another.

BUT... these are all things related to a relationship. A committed relationship based on mutual love, trust, honesty, and desire to be together. A relationship is what I crave, but I know that I do not have. at one point in my life I would have confused flirtatious affection with love, but I have been able to make that distinction for quite some time now. I'm not asking for a relationship. I am comfortable with being a casual distraction until something more stable becomes apparent in my life. I've always considered my loyalty, devotion, and ability to love completely the best gifts I could offer a woman. But when those gifts fail to mean much, them I have to wonder what it is I can bring to the floor. Oh well, I guess it doesn't really matter. I have more important things to worry about. My job, my health, my education, my financial independence, my need to play a halfling thief with a magic sheep....

"Where oh where has my percival gone?

oh where oh where can he be?

with his coat so white

and his back so strong

oh where can my percival be?"

I think maybe I should clean my room. Maybe that will help me deal with my depression a little more constructively than sitting here in front of this computer typing the contents of my soul for all the world to mock and jeer at. The last thing I want is sympathy, and for some reason whenever I tend to get a little "less than perky" people tend to get sympathetic.

So, enough of this.

Ciao.

reflections on an evening with the girls. - 3/18/2002

Now I sit me down to write

I pray my words contain insight

And if I should die whilst I compose

I pray that that wisdom shows through my prose.

G.L. 3-18-02

Stormy Monday by T-Bone Walker

They call it stormy Monday, yes but Tuesday's just as bad.

They call it stormy Monday, yes but Tuesday's just as bad.

Wednesday's even worse; Thursday's awful sad.

The eagle flies on Friday, Saturday I go out to play.

The eagle flies on Friday, but Saturday I go out to play.

Sunday I go to church where I kneel down and pray.

And I say, "Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy on me.

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy on me.

Just trying to find my baby, won't you please send her on back to me."

The eagle flies on Friday, on Saturday I go out to play.

The eagle flies on Friday, on Saturday I go out to play.

Sunday I go to church, where I kneel down, Lord and I pray.

Then I say, "Lord have mercy, won't you please have mercy on me.

Lord, oh Lord have mercy, yeah, won't you please, please have mercy on me.

I'm just a-lookin' for my sweet babe, so won't you please send him home,

Send him on home to me.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I have a real craving to drink some early gray and wax philosophic about love...

I sat around at A double J tonight. I love sitting around with the girls and talking about love, sex, relationships, men, women, and everything associated with it. I love hearing their perspectives and I often times wind up being the devil's advocate, the spokesmen for the male gender, and the dispense of sage wisdom and warm understanding hugs. This is a role that suits me. I think with a little classical education in the field mixed with my demeanor and ability to empathize and comfort others I'd make an excellent counselor. Of course, I used to think that about being a musician, a photographer, and a number of other things that I showed aptitude for but had no real drive to accomplish.

Someone recently told me that I seemed larger than life...I wasn't sure what that means? Am I over the top? Am I outrageous? Do I exceed the self-imposed limitations of normal society and excel at some aspect that makes me stand out among the crowd (and I do not mean physically, THAT is obvious to all who observe! hahah!)

What is it about me that is magnetic? What draws people and set them at ease? How do I make friends so easily?

I sat on Jen's bed tonight and looked at Chiclet. I looked at what she is and who she is. Chiclet, whose beauty reminds me of Anne of Green Gables. I remember in Anna Karenina, she looked so natural in her period dress. Her delicate thin features, her feminine smile and gestures, and the apparent frailty of her petit form are so doll like. I pictured her lying in a casket many years from now as friends and loved ones gaze over her in tears and comment on how beautiful she is. I almost cried as I sat there and listened to her. God knows I love her truly like a sister and would never wish her harm, but for every person I love I must face the sad reality that someday either I before they or they before me will die and not know them until the mysteries of what lies beyond the cold dark grave are revealed.

DAMNIT!

When did I become a morbid fuck?

I used to revel in the joy of life and was assured of my fate when life comes to an end! Death is far too permanent for my liking...I think I'd much rather live forever. That may be why creation and creativity are so important to me...they used to just be signs of intelligence but now they are manifestations of man's ability to produce something that outlives himself; an extension of his own life through arrangement of the inanimate.

Michel Pope used to write in the books of pledges, and I believe on our pledge class paddle a quote that I didn't used to understand, but now holds real meaning for me.

"An increase in Wisdom is an increase in sadness" - Mike Pope

But I refuse to waste my brief flame on earth moping about the fact that someday it will be extinguished.

There are smiles to smile, laughs to laugh, women to love, friends to hold, battles to win and obstacles to overcome.

It is stormy outside and my throat is raw. I've been taking some Nyquil cough but if it keeps on being so persistent I will have to go get some prescription.

All my friends in chorale and wind ensemble have a busy week ahead of them, while mine will be spent getting ready for renovations and doing my regular duties as DSU's Production Specialist.

I have been thinking a lot about my future and what I want out of life. As per usual I am dichotomy...I dream of a simple existence yet crave complicated things.

Marshall may be coming home sometime soon for a visit...I miss him so much. I'll be so happy to see that Scalawag!

And Palmer will be here Wednesday, I miss the HNIC TOO!

I love him so much...Palmer and I are racing each other to see who dies first...I think with the way he smokes, he might have a head start on me.

I sure hope not though.

I feel like being held and having my hair stroked by a woman who is sweet to me and kisses my forehead and understands that even though I am often fierce and resilient I take great pleasure in being mild and quiet.

I love the rain… As long as I don't have to work in it! hahah!

Ok. Time for bed. Ciao!

A REAL entry for those that read - 3/21/2002

Toss Turn Toss Turn

Sleepless dreaming

Waking visions.

A vision of unhappiness

A vision of loss

A vision of entrapment

Too hot too cold

Too moist Too Dry

Deafening Silence

My mind fills with muted rage

Regret, fear, anxiety

Anger, resentment, terror

Must make my brain stop

Must make the chattering

Cease….

I awoke at a quarter till one Tuesday night and went to the bathroom, and peeked in the den at mom playing solitaire on the computer, grabbed a snack from the kitchen and went back to my room. I ate my little snack and crawled back into bed. I turned out the lights and that’s when I began thinking…

I should have know that was a dangerous thing to do but it was too late. Sometimes I lay in bed and my mind cycles through things and analyzes events, makes prospects for the future, and reconfigures my emotional and intellectual bent on my life. This night was one of those nights and the subject was relationships. I had talked to Lauren that day and the night before and was replaying all of the pros and cons of our relationship, what I admired about her, what I wasn’t so crazy about, when she made me happy, when she made me miserable. I replayed my relationship with Say and how we were different, the same thing with Heather, Tori, April, Becky, Jacleen. I recalled what I loved about each of them. I also thought a great deal about loves lost. Which they all were with the exception of Lauren and April. They were loves that I left behind for whatever reason.

I began to think about how much I wanted to marry Sara and how afraid I was at the prospect of marrying Lauren. Then I began to realize that both relationships were based in insincerity. On my part in one and on her part in the other. I began thinking about Jacki and how betrayed and hurt I felt when I found out she was in love with someone else and was making plans to be with him. I began to think a lot about commitment. I’ve never been afraid of commitment, in fact, I’ve sought it out, but now, I’m not so sure. I am reluctant to let myself love someone without commitment, but I am afraid of commitment because of relationships that made me feel miserable and trapped. What if, in my search to feel love again, I make a commitment to someone who I wind up resenting? I began thinking hypothetically about the two main objects of my affection; neither of whom am I committed to or are they to me. They are both strong women but one is far more modest and meek in comparison to the other who is very forward and resolute. I imagined commitments with each. Basically I found that I was scared of both prospects I imagined. One that seemed very safe but didn’t seem to let me indulge in my darker side and the other one that wouldn’t let me enjoy the simple innocence I try to maintain. I think more than anything I am scared of losing my identity in a committed relationship. I want to be me! I know sacrifices have to be made for committed relationships, but I don’t want to sacrifice my personality! I have a strong independent personality. I can handle girls that are clinging vines because us=me+them instead of us=me\*them or us =them+(me-x)

Christ…I just turned my fear of commitment into algebra…

Actually my fear isn’t commitment itself, but the loss of self through commitment. Not that I would want any woman committed to me to sacrifice her personality for me or for us. I am not committing until I know it is right, until I know it can work, until I know she (whoever she may be) is willing to commit and that I can live with my commitment to her.

 But. It’s not really a problem…don’t have anyone knocking down my door to have me in a relationship. I’ve considered the possibility of some of those past loves working again with the advantage of hindsight and the comfort of history, but I’m just not convinced that things could actually be different; that things could work. Of course.. Once again, this is all hypothetical; there are no applications or resumes currently in the girlfriend mailbox. Just a few names in our files that bear watching for recruitment purposes!

Hahahaha!

Ok enough seriousness. And if your name was mentioned here and you didn’t like it…uh. .tough noogies! Get over it.

(I also came to the realization that I have in the past tried too hard to project myself as the perfect boyfriend and in the process neglected to be myself, so no more insincere affection and sensitivity. So, if you get it you will know it is genuine)

Busy day at work tomorrow. Have to get Art Gallery video done and set up at the country club.

I’m in bad need of some hair pulling angry ass slapping rug burn sex…

If there’s a booty call out there, call collect! I’ll accept the charges!

Hahahah!

:P

One of my favorite Stories put in print pt1 - 3/28/2002

One of my favorite and funniest tales laid down in the email that I sent to friends and family the day after.

It happened long ago at MTSU...

Let me just tell you about the day I'm having.

To begin, I’ll first say that I'll be going with the local PMA chapter on a retreat to a cabin out by a lake this weekend,

So, Last night I get back to my room around 10:00 p.m. so I can call "my ride" to the retreat and get things squared away. I call. I leave a message, I call back. I leave a message WITH a person. Finally I can't wait any longer because I have to get some laundry done, because my clean wardrobe consists of a sports coat, and some shorts that are too small for ass of fatness +4 (that's mostly for spot and bone-daddy). So I put on my too small shorts, lie down on the bed to zip and button the things, take ALL of my other clothes and go to the 24hr laundry next door. I separate my clothes, put them in their respective washers, pour in detergent, and run out of detergent before I get to the 3rd load. So I collect detergent in the bottle cap from the other 2 loads and manage to get a pretty even spread. Close the lids, set the temp, and fabric type, walk over to the card machine to swipe my ID and pay for laundry with my "Raider Funds" (like I always do) and what do I behold...but the card swipe is NON FUNCTIONAL! Every stitch of clothing I own is in a washing machine, covered with Wisk, the card machine is broke. I have no change, nor cash on me to make change. After a couple of futile attempts to find someone in my dorm with a car, i finally bite the bullet and begin my trek to the Texaco...about a mile and a half away.

So I leave the laundry, clothes in washers, and start to hike to the Texaco. The campus is littered with construction, that just happens to be DIRECTLY in my way and would add another good 15 min to my walk to walk around. On the way there I check ever door on the GOD FORSAKEN campus, but to no avail. So, over by the music bldg. i find an open gate in the construction fencing. Not your regular fence gate, but I didn't look close enough to realize that beforehand. I push the unlocked gate open walk through, and as i turn to keep walking hear a click-ka-click! The gate is now locked, via magnetic time lock. OH FOR JOY! I wander around the construction site in my sandals and too tight shorts until finally, I find ANOTHER gate. Just a plain old fence gate, chained up, but with an gap between the gates of about 15 inches. I decide I can squeeze my gigantic rear through this thing. So, I study it for a moment, and the only way to get through is to lie down on the gravel and red clay of the construction site and wriggle through. Well I do, and in the process, rip the crotch of my too tight shorts WIDE open, put a MASSIVE gash in my arm from loose wire fencing, and scratch both legs horribly on the gravel as well as cover the right side of my body in DIRT! After I squeeze through, I walk out to the sidewalk near the road on the campus's west border and am in sight of the Texaco. I finally make it to the Texaco after using the 300 yards or so from where I appeared out of the construction site to curse everything I could think of. I get to Texaco.

---------------------------------------------------------------------------

omg! i remember you first telling me about this...shit...i think i still laughed as hard...well, lemme finish the story... [monkey:o)] 4/3/2002 5:51:26 PM

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One of My Favorite Stories put in Print pt. 2 - 3/28/2002

All I want to do is use the ATM and get a roll of quarters. Rolls of quarters as you well know, come in $20 rolls. So, just so I'll have some extra cash, I get $30 out of the ATM, which isn't one of MY bank's ATMs so it charges me a buck for the trouble. I get the cash, make myself a slush puppy because I'm tired and hot, go up to the counter ask the attendant for a roll of quarters. He won't give it to me. Because he has only so much change to work with at night (its 1:30 in the morning when I get to Texaco) so finally I get $2 in quarters and the rest in 10s, 5s, and 1s. So now I begin the trek back. Not to the laundry, not to MY dorm... but to another dorm about 200 yards east of mine to the nearest change machine. So I start back and decide, "to hell with the sidewalk" I'll cut across the big Lawn of Murphy sports arena.

Well everything is kosher. My feet are cold because they are now wet from the grass of the lawn, which happens to be about 6 inches deep, but I can deal with that. As I’m walking, one of the straps on my sandals breaks, sending me to the ground at a tremendous velocity. Now I have twisted my ankle, ripped my clothes, cut myself, destroyed some old shorts, broken my sandals, gotten filthy and am now soaking wet, covered in morning dew and coca cola slush puppy. I lost it! I lay on the ground and screamed so loud it hurt MY ears "SON.. OF... A.. BIIIIIIIIIIIITCH!!!!!"

Once I got my grip on reality back, I picked myself up, brushed myself off and was off again. Now I've made it to the center of campus, and late night people are driving by, honking their horn, pointing and laughing at me. I hexed them all with eternal flaming trots. I finally made it back to Ezell Hall, got the needed change, walked over to the laundry and did my clothes as I was leaving. I saw a little Kappa Alpha pledge pin someone had left in the laundry. A present for ME! I clip it to my watchband and walk to my dorm. I actually managed to get in the bed by 4:00 this morning.

I awoke at 8:30, made it to my 9:00 fine and realized, "oh shit!" I’m supposed to do my final today. I didn't go to the bookstore to buy a tape to record my intro to studio final on. Well my partner lets me use a side of his tape, which I didn't use anyway, because as son as I stepped in front of that console and the Prof. clicked his stopwatch 5 years of audio production experience and knowledge said, "see ya!" I have 10 min to make a 30 sec radio ad. I have to, patch the cables, set up the que sends so the talent can hear, himself, the music,, and me. I calibrate the tape machine, set my mix levels, set the control room so I can hear everything going on, run through the commercial, and then record to tape. I did fine, till I made 1 little error, and it totally hung me up. i stood there staring at the console. "Everything looks right!" "What’s wrong?" suddenly the Prof. goes, you got a little less than 2 minutes. Everything goes into slow motion. I recheck everything. Recheck again. Prof.: 15 seconds. I just look at the mixing console and say under my breath, "fuck"

Prof.: TIME

I didn't get the first thing put on tape. I had the highest average in that class till then, and didn't get the first thing put on tape. So then I have to go into the studio and read the commercial I've written for my partner, who does everything perfect without a hitch and has 2 min to spare. So I just turned on the public address voice and made one hell of a good commercial.

The profs told me I set everything up really well, but just got hung up. They said it wasn't a total disaster. They were being nice.

I was mortified. I showed my pledge pin I found and strapped to my wrist to my partner who happens to be a Sigma Nu. He said, "you should bring that out to the house, we could have some fun with that." I gave it to him and said, "here.. Keep it"

Him: "you don't want it?"

Me "What the hell am I gonna do with a KA pledge pin? I HATE Kappa Alpha!"

The moment I took it off, I felt like my intelligence rose 30 points. Its like I was cursed by wearing it (KA pledge pin -3). Oh well, thems the brakes.

So, tonight, I'm going to the lake and I'm gonna party like there is no tomorrow.

Curse Murfreesboro, Tennessee,

Curse Middle Tennessee State University.

Curse the Otari series 54 mixing console and studio lab A.

They have messed with the WRONG Bruthah!

MU-HA-HA-HAAAA!

The Circle of life - 3/30/2002

Well today I went to Grenada to see my maternal grandfather in the hospital. He seemed to be doing better. I suppose as an elderly diabetic man with no teeth and one leg CAN be. He is ornery and wants help from no one. I pulled his nurse aside and thanked her for her patience and professionalism. I want him to get better. I lost my paternal grandmother a year ago this weekend. I'd like to hang on to the other three for a while longer, yes, even my mother's parents. We went to pediatrics and mom talked to one of her cousins for a while. The cutest little girl came out and talked to My Melody. it was so funny. She was adorable. Then she and I went to the nursery to look at the babies. There was only one out; a little boy; he was in the window under a heat lamp, to which Mel and I equated with fast food lamps. Hahaha. We just watched him sleep he wiggled like a piece of bacon sizzling in a skillet. His little toes, toenails, the tender look of his skin and his face...

He had an adorable little face. Staring there at that baby I was able to put myself into perspective. There, in that little bed, was the freshly born human animal. He will have no memory of the people staring at him through the glass. This beautiful little tiny creature was made from the love of two people. He was carried by his mother and born into this world. He is ignorant of the heights of wonder and beauty that life has to offer and thankfully is ignorant, as well, of the hatred, and horrors of the world. He is helpless, completely dependent for his very life on those who love him. He was so beautiful. I envisioned that little boy growing up, learning to speak, walk, read, and reason. I imagined him learning from his parents the things that would carry him through life and the things from the world around him that would shape and mold his personality and perspective into a unique person. This infant, about 18 inches long and around 9 pounds or so, will have friends and enemies, laugh and play, work, cry, love, hate, think, grow, and become a real person. He will grow up live his life, likely grow old, and then die. He may share his love with someone and create another child with her. It is a reassuring thought that even though from the moment we come into this world, our candle has an end that it will eventually burn to and be extinguished, somehow the flame will be passed and life will continue. There is no doubt within me, that the human is truly the most wondrous animal in God's creation. We Toreador are enraptured by beauty and my clan weakness was all too evident today, as I stood transfixed on the wonder and beauty of this tiny little person. Death is part of life. It is our mortality that makes us the incredible, passionate, semi divine creatures we are. I was helplessly in awe of that baby. Not because he was cute (though he was as cute as a button) but because in the same day I saw the ends of the candle of the human life. My grandfather, this child, and myself. It was a contemplative and enlightening day. Melody thought I was silly as I stood there gawking at the little child. I had to explain how umbilical cords worked after birth. hahaha! I know that someday I want to be a father.

I had a good day at work Thursday, got some things accomplished, got a very nice compliment from the lady in charge of the crosstie arts festival. We are going to Sparta for Easter with Granddaddy. Dad wants to put some flowers on Granny's grave. I think he will be looking for butterflies, like the ones that were at her funeral. I hope he isn't disappointed if he doesn't see them, but truthfully, I hope they are there. I know that it will be a hard day for my dad and granddaddy, and even though I miss her so much, I have faith that she is happy and she will always be a part of me. I love you Granny Dot!

Goodnight everyone.

Say goodnight, Gracie... - 4/9/2002

Tonight was a milestone for me. It was the end of an era. It was a passing of the torch, a changing of the guard, a rebirth of a chapter. I, the last true vestige of “old school” Sinfonia concluded my presidency, and my career as an active member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. On November twenty ninth, 1995, on cold and wet fall delta evening I walked the long “trail of worms” (as it was still referred to in that day) and through the mystic trial, I was transformed into a green, wide eyed, vibrant Sinfonian. I learned all the secrets I had sought out for. The mysteries to which I had sacrificed so much for became the truth to me. I was forever changed. My journey as a Sinfonian has been one of literal blood, sweat, and tears; it has taken me across the country, and it has let me touch many lives as well as allowed so many great lives to touch and influence my own. I have seen things at their worst, and I have seen the splendors of brotherhood and the sublime art of music in their highest and most exalted state. I have poured my love, my joy, my commitment, my money, my time, and my passion into those three mystic letters. I have been a warrior for Sinfonia. The road was not always easy, and the battles were not always won, but never did I look back and say, we did not try.

I look at other fraternities and I see their members and I feel a swell of pity for them, for so many of them pass by the way side and don’t experience what FRATERNITY is about…They cling to their illusions, their misconceptions, their hollow brotherhood, while I have grown rich and full on the sweet nectar of the uplifting power of brotherhood through music. I have been a voice of reason and a screech of mayhem, a level head and an impassioned rebel, an angel and a demon, I have cherished Sinfonia like almost nothing else in my life. Sinfonia is by far and away without a shadow of a doubt the best damn fraternity in the world, bar none, no exceptions, undisputed forever.

And though I lay down my gavel, and I hang an alumni key from my pin, I am STILL and EVER SHALL BE a member of Phi Mu Alpha. A brother. A man. A musician. A SINFONIAN!

Once a Sinfonian, Always a Sinfonian, Long Live Sinfonia…

The fire that burns within me is still hot and kindled, the love that makes me bleed red black and gold is still pure, and the joy that swell within my soul every time I hear the beginning cord of “Hail Sinfonia” is still a flood that drowns all fear…My journey is far from over; just my road has changed. I still tread, “On and ever upward, foreword never backward, onward ever all together, onward ever all together, let us strive for ever!”

Tonight were elections and those officers who will assume the reigns of the chapter next week will be:

President – Will C. Love

Vice President (and Priscus) - Michael Mooneyhan

Secretary – Brad Oxnam

Treasurer – Jason Moody

F.E.O. - Michael Shuman

Warden – Jimmy with the chops

Historian – Scott Trapalino

Alumni Secretary – Benjamin Douglas

Song Director – Mark Seitz

Social Chair – Brent Wong

Ritual Director – Jed Cochran

Congratulations to the chapter’s new officers; I have the utmost confidence in their abilities and an optimistic outlook for the future of Theta Upsilon.

Good luck, you salty dogs!

Finally, thanks to all the brothers, sweethearts, and alumni of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, past, present, and future! I love you all!

And Special thanks to, Bart Macmillan, Dr. Ed Bahr, Sean Keady, Shane Miller, Dell Trotter, Andre Hall, Pam tilgman Keys, Karrie Rose Trotter, Tim Parkman, Abe Morriss, John Patterson, Krista “Spot” Boand O’neil, Lynn Weaver, Marshall Crutchfield, Steven Palmer, Wesley Lollis, Shawn McGee, Lyndsey Lamm Bobo, Kimberley Wareing, Jed Cochran, Will Love, Michael Shuman, Jamie Morris, “Godfather” Brian Stratton, and all those brothers from Omicron Tau! You have made Sinfonia what it is for me! Thank you!

the wymens! - 5/14/2002

Oh to be single and looking...

I feel somewhat torn, but I'm trying to give all avenues equal consideration. Lets run down the list. There is JH who still has a large part of my heart. There is little doubt in my mind that we'd be firmly cemented together if we were in any kind of close proximity to one another, but as for now, we might as well be a world apart. She knows I love her and will always keep and consider her a friend, but there is so much more that I think we could share.

 Then there is TM...A charming, attractive, witty young lass from my neck of the woods. She is career driven and a self admitted prude, but I like her nonetheless. I could easily see myself falling for her, if she were interested in me. We hang out on occasion and do things together. They're not really dates. at least, not in name, but they are something much akin to them. I find her stimulating and I love spending time with her.

 Of course, there is EJ, who I have secretly admired from afar for a long time, but she is FAR too young for me and thnks of me in that older sibling fashion as so many others I have cared for have. Maybe someday when she is older and the stars are right, till then, I'll have to cherish the few stolen moments we've shared that so few people know of.

Then there is LM who is the friend of one of my exes. She seems so very nice and my ex seems to really want us to hit things off. I'm intruiged by her because she is new and I love the idea of meeting new people; especially when those people are witty you women who don't have boyfriends! She, from what I've gathered, is somewhat inexperienced in matters of the heart (and other parts of the anatomy) and the thought of romancing someone who is unbruised by harsher side of love seems exciting and arouses my curiosity. I'm somewhat of a pedagogue, and the thought of having a pupil in amore thrills me.

But there is also KG, who I met online and have discourse with often, she is a cute playful impish lass with sexy shoulders and a lovely smile. I could easily see her head on the pillow next to mine, but don;t know her well enough yet to predict how well we'd get along..or if she'd be receptive to my advances, for that matter.

Perhaps I am too amorous for my own good. I am not reluctant to commit, but I have never been good at making decisions when presented with a variety of choices. I am to be faulted for wanting the best or failing that wanting EVERYTHING? I am by no means a player and I have no intention of stringing anyone along, but if given the choice, I would smell the roses before I plucked one from the vine to place in my cap.

I know some of those I've talked about may read this and know that I think highly of all of you. Love is wonderful but can be cruel and my burns have healed but they have taught me discretion and made me somewhat shy of leaping to quickly into the fire. I do have a lot of love to give, I just have to find someone who's right and ready to receive it.

though danger may threaten and doubt may enfold - 5/30/2002

At the edge of the precipice I stand, looking into the murky fog clouded depths of what lies on the other side and still able to gaze at the desert I've traveled. there were oasis, there were moments of shade and the occasional cool breeze as I trod alone over this wasteland of fear and self loathing. The climb wasn't as steep as it looked, but it was tall enough that I had to lay down part of what I was carrying at the bottom before I began my climb. Now that I have reached the top, I stand bewildered and ponder to climb down the other side, to leap into the mists and see what fate befalls me, or to turn about from whence I came and dash myself upon the craggy rock face below. Was she right? do I sabotage myself? And these ropes I employed in my ascension, are they safe, are they reliable, or will they snap and send me reeling back into the dry desolation that I struggled to survive in. I feel numb, unsure, and for some reason increasingly reticent. I should write more, but honesty feels so tiring these days. I used to expel here. I used to expunge the things that well up within me and use this white tablet to wring the darkness from my heart and gain purity and catharsis, but now, it seems that I write more from obligation than from the therapy of confession. As hard as I try I cannot feel bleak. I sat the other day and raged as I remembered th things about her I despised. I remembered the feelings of frustration, or invasion, of loosing myself. The thought of it made the bile in my bowels churn with disdain. I was cold and callous and indignant to those who would smile upon me. I felt poisoned, befouled, ruined, damaged. Right now I feel...nothing. I the only emotion is confusion at my inability to care about so many things that used to seem so important. There is so little zeal for anything within me. I have not forgotten who I am but I have forsaken what I once was. I want to be held. I want to break and cry and sob on someone’s shoulder and let them smooth my hair and whisper into my ear. I must remember to be who I am and not what is right, not what is expected, not what fits the situation. I must be me.

It is time for work and I can write no longer. I shall return after further reflection.

Ciao.

ok. this is a REAL entry...for a change. - 7/4/2002

I feel ashamed that I haven't written sincerely here in so long. I suppose it is a commentary on my ability to remain consistent in my endeavors. All of my relationships, my friendships, my pet causes, and other things I've thrown myself into are similar in the respect that I often approach them with incredible zeal but after a time, my enthusiasm and consistency tend to fall off. With some things they swell again and fluctuate in a pattern, which in itself becomes consistent. Sinfonia is an example of this fluctuating fervor. In the beginning I was a gifted officer and a catalyst for change and growth but after a couple of years, my love for the philosophical aspects of our myth remained and grew, but I began to tire of the tedious infighting and lackluster commitments of others and so my commitment and drive to improve things waned. Later, as others came in with new zeal and a vision for change my flame was stoked once again. My commitment has always been there, but I have certainly had my times of impassioned participation and my times of casual involvement. I see this as one of my many flaws and I strive to ensure that this cycle is broken when it comes to friendly and romantic interpersonal relationships. I'm not what one would call a heartbreaker, though I have broken a few. Those that I have broken were due in large to my habit of establishing intense and passionate intimate connections very quickly and then growing disinterested over time. I am trying to correct this behavioral pattern so that my relationships are more consistent and live a longer and more fruitful life.

Sometimes it is hard for me to fight the urge to run headlong into something as fast as I can. Now that I say that I realize how that is a metaphor for who I am. It is how I got my nickname. I ran headlong as fast as I could into something. In that case it was a door, but I can see now how that scenario has paralleled so many other things in my life. I suppose it may be the folly of youth to lack the foresight that experience gifts us with. Foresight is just hindsight that you put in front of you. I have to admit I'm a little anxious about this move. I want everything to go well but like any good Sinfonian I am plagued by the voices of doubt.

So many things to consider in this move. It’s maddening. I’m thankful there’s a Becky, a Lacy and all my bruthas in my corner to keep me from climbing to the top of the union with a deer rifle and picking people off of the quad.

I had an INTENSE dream yesterday and I blame it on something that happened as I was paying the deposit at the gas company. I walked in and got into one of the shorter lines and from the corner of m eye I saw one of the tellers. She’s lady that I used to go to church with. I recalled her because I have thought on more than one occasion of how much she reminded me of Granny Dot. As the line moved forward I stared greedily at her hoping to catch a glimpse of those things that reminded me of Granny. I couldn't stare hard enough at her, couldn't consume enough of the memories that her familiar appearance awakened. I shook it off. I had to. I couldn't do that there and then. Yesterday, just before I got off work I developed a KILLER headache. I came home and crawled into bed after taking a handful of ibuprophen.

I dreamed. It is hard to recall now but I remember standing behind her as she made biscuits there on her kitchen counter. I watched as she made lunch with the care that she always displayed. Her skin was wrinkled and ALWAYS dark and her hands lovingly rolled dough into a flat cake that she cut with a hunt's tomato sauce can to form perfect biscuits. It’s odd what you miss about someone when they're gone. I miss going and sitting in the dirt by her side as she sat upon the banks of granddaddy’s pond and ate nabs while she fished. The way she smelled, they way she never left the house without looking her best. I remember as I grew older I'd walk behind Granny while she sat at her chair at the dinner table and as she was playing scrabble I'd peer over her shoulder at the words I could make and I'd offer her suggestions which she'd never take because it was cheating. I'd play with Granny's soft hair; mashing it down and watching it pop back up into place. I experienced all of this as I was dreaming. I saw all the things I loved about her. All of those wonderful things that I'd want my children to see someday. I couldn't understand how all that beauty and that special magic that she possessed was gone. I couldn't understand why. I saw Granddaddy sitting in the dining room eating. Not in the kitchen not at his chair that sat perpendicular to hers. I walked up behind him and put my arms around him and began to cry. He just said, I know son.

I woke with a jolt. I didn't want to awaken. I wanted to stay in the dream forever. Wanted to stay there with her as long as I could. I wanted to sit again at her feet and marvel at the wonder and joy that was Granny Dot. She was so special in so many ways that all of the entries of all of the diaries could never convey the marvelous thing it was to know her. She has been in heaven for over a year now and every time I think of her my heart is transported as I feel the indescribably joy of her memory and the unspeakable loss of her passing. Today Granny would be packing a picnic basket to take to Rosebloom to watch the fireworks. That is a comforting thought to me. Though I weep as I write this and recall these things I cannot help but smile for I know that death must not be the end.

Hail Music bastion of Joy

Jubilation in harmony

Joy in concord

for the tones move all men

to that goal which the soul seeks.

The rhythm drives all who hear

to the point at which they must dance

the point where love and light and laughter

are one

music is love is good is right is life is

not the opposite of death

for death is the veil that covers our ears

so that we cannot hear the

myriad notes of the universe

but beyond death we can hear all

and we become music

the power to ignite the air into a flame

a flame that burns within us all and

consumes those whose hearts beg to be burned.

and to coin a phrase,

a solution of dissonance towards

the final progression of harmony

of love with love seeking the best

in others for the good of all.

Ok. That was cathartic. I feel better for having put into words the visions that float about

~Crash and Burn~ - 9/3/2002

Have you forgotten about me? Call, write me an email, something.

~Crash and Burn~

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I have always had a real problem with staying in touch, even with my closest and most trusted friends. Wesley and Angela berated me for it in New York, I don't call Marshall as nearly as often as I should. I hardly speak to Say at all anymore. Frank has become more of an idea than an actual person, and my best friends from high school, Steven, Todd, Shaun, Tommy, and others... I haven't talked to or heard from in years.

And you...I know I haven't been the dependable kind of friend you've needed me to be. I haven't been available, I haven't written like I said I would, I haven't mailed you the things you've asked me for and I feel so guilty. I know that apologies without actions are cheap and that my promises must seem hollow to you now for my failures as your friend. Please forgive me. And be relentless in you chastisement, don't let me get away with not writing and sending you stuff, cause if you aren't dogmatic, I know I will fail. With that said, let me answer your question, "Have you forgotten me?" with a resounding and emphatic "No way in this world, baby!" You, whether you realize it or not, had a profound effect on me. And as of late, I have begun to reminisce about our hours spent together on the phone; hours spent imagining the warmth and tenderness of your embrace; of those nights of lying in bed and talking till the wee hours of the morning with you about everything from communist cable modems to our deepest desires and most character shaking fears. I recall all the joy and pain in a fond glow as I envision you and Shakes sitting on that giant bed with the phone on your pillow next to your soft cheek. I recall how wonderful the thought of you holding me made me feel and how it made me long to be able to rush to you. I recall with great clarity talking to you that night as I stood on Marshall's balcony. I recall how alone and weak I felt and the bitter cold of the New York New Year's air and how it didn't matter because of how warm and wonderful the sound of your voice was. I recall the tears of joy and pain, the laughter of love, the visions of you that helped me remember that there is a God that loves me, that there is goodness in the world, and that love can transcend all distance. I have not nor shall I ever forget you, JH. All my memories of you are fond ones and I have never completely given up hope that someday we will meet face to face if only for a brief exchange and a warm, sincere, and long overdue hug. I've been in love TRULY in love with 3 women in my lifetime. And I've never really stopped loving any of them, and yes, you are one, but more than that, you are special because no one has so inflamed me, no one has ever moved me so effortlessly with just words, as you have. I think of you fondly and often. I miss you and though I'm in love with someone else, there is always a warm spot in my heart just for you. I'll call. You take care and remember...GRAPE NUTS!

hahha!

Ciao!

Bitches ain't nuthin but hoes and tricks... - 9/12/2002

I want to be mad at her. I want to be enraged and hate her. I want to shake with fury. I want to rail against her scorn. I can't seem to feel anything about it except regret for what might have been and pain that we couldn't really be friends afterwards. That's the part that sucks the most. I'm sort of ok if a girl doesn't want to be attached or more specifically attached to ME, but to be brushed off when all I was seeking was a little company and companionship is both uncaring and insulting. It never fails that when I begin to feel confident or when I start to feel those romantic feelings of closeness for someone they tell me to take a hike. Conversely however, when I’m involved with someone who I don't really love, they latch on to me like a blood flute and it takes a titanium battle ax for me to break things off.... Why am I only loved by women who are inaccessible, unavailable, or simply just not what I want?

Well, I'm not dwelling on the subject. It really didn't bother me till the other day when I asked this girl out and she blew me off. That shit pisses me off. I’d rather someone tell me that I'm an arrogant, self righteous prick who is too fat for them to fuck then for them to blow me off like I can't tell. Just say no, not I'm busy or I can't, or some other lame ass excuse to get me out of your face without having to do the hard thing and reject someone.

Ok... I feel much better. I just had to get that off of my chest.

Marshall would always tell me what I really needed when I get like this is to get my dick wet; which doesn't sound like a bad idea at all. I'm not looking for a rebound girlfriend, just some naive little girl who is pretty enough to be seen with in public and slutty enough to suck my cock without being asked to do so. I need a quiet little freshman who is shy but is dying to be wild underneath, a girl whose self image is based on her ability to make me cum really hard, a girl who will worship me and love whatever meaningless trinkets and scraps of affection I throw at her as if they were life itself. Don't get me wrong, this is NOT what I look for in a woman, at least not one I intend to be with for more than a week or two. For a mate, I’d much rather have an equal or at least a worthy adversary, but to just get my rocks off, I want a girl who will beg me to fuck her, let me fall asleep, make me sandwich when I wake up, leave when she's done, and keep her mouth shut while she does it.

I just realized that I am truly an evil asshole sometimes...

Oh well, everybody needs a hobby.

Moose and Boo part 1 - prologue - 10/7/2002

"I am not as independent as I would have myself believe me to be...I do need to be taken care of too...and I want to be taken care of...I want somebody who wants to take care of me as much I want to take care of them"

Words of the monkey froggie lovin' roommate of mine. She is a wise one sometimes, of course, sometimes she's wise and doesn’t listen to her own wisdom, but so am I, and I think that is part of our charm.

Becky is someone I haven't written about in a while and that is a mistake because she is such a big part of my life. Here's a brief history of Rebecca and I.

We met in high school. She was a grade ahead of me and at the time was a friend with a mutual friend of mine, Tommy Nichols. I remember the meeting vividly. She was standing with a group of girls outside of the boy’s bathroom window near the cafeteria and Tommy and I walked up and he introduced us. Becky was one of the girls that sort of ran in the crowd with Tommy, Scott, Clay, Greg, Rick, Brandon, and me. She was socially and economically right in the middle at CHS, (along with the rest of us) which meant she was in the minority. Cleveland high's population was pretty much 48% wealthy well to do, 48 % ghetto/trailer park poor, and about 2% average. Not long after meeting her, Becky started dating a friend of mine Named Scott Russell (god knows I've never spelled his last name right) Scott was a little different from the rest of us. Scott was not the most brilliant of our group by any means, but Scott came from money. Whatever Scot wanted, his parents or he himself bought. (I'll always love that Bonneville) Tommy, Scott and myself all went to First Baptist Church together and were involved in the youth group as well as just about everything else we could get ourselves into at that time. Becky and Scott date for a long time and somehow the three of us become a unit of sorts. We did everything together and hung out ALL the time. We would ride around Cleveland for hours in his truck. Scott and I on one side and Becky sandwiched between us. This was pretty much how it was all through high school. Fast forward to college. Becky graduated before Scott and I and went to MDCC. By the time Becky had gone to college, Scott and I had sort of grown apart. I had begun to move in a different circle of friends because I had no interest in the things that Tommy and Scott did. I changed and found a new circle to move in. This is where the story looses focus a little. I'm not sure when it happened but Scott and Rebecca broke up. Scott meets Ann Marie at Rumors and promptly impregnates her (here's a lesson for you folks, don’t give your REAL name to a one night stand and run a background check if you plan to date them on a continued basis). Scott tries to be friends with Becky, though I suspect it was from a desire to have his cake and eat it to, so to speak. Anne Marie proves to be a psycho hose beast. Becky began seeing and later become engaged to Jason (some poor bastard I've never met and whose acquaintance I have no inclination to make.) I have been gone for some time and Becky and I have lost touch for a little while. She and Jason were having problems just as I arrived back in Cleveland. We started hanging out together, I introduce her to some of my friends, we play some D&D, hang out, and I began to recall the more than friendly feelings I'd had for her all along. I could see that she wasn't happy with her relationship and from what I heard; this jerk was not treating my friend with the love and respect she so rightfully deserved. Well, I being single, having always liked her and seeing her relationship with a real JERK on the rocks, I decided to drive a wedge between them and free her from his clutches ( of course I was hoping that she'd turn to me in her hour of need after the fact, but my initial intentions were truly altruistic). In a moment of ignorance and complete loss of manners I made and improper and inappropriate advance towards her. She was shocked and hurt and instead of driving a wedge, I drive her back into the arms of some asshole.

Becky and I spend three years without speaking to one another. She had no use for someone so forward and I had no use for someone so prudish.

Moose and Boo part 2 - Refrain - 10/7/2002

Many moons pass and she becomes engaged and moves in with the asshole whose name shall not be mentioned because to do so would be to bestow a micron of humanity which he does not deserve. I settled back into the groove at DSU, met Sara, dated and was dumped by Sara, hung out with Marshall just like old times, met and began dating Lauren. I was an Art education major, I had a girlfriend, but wasn't happy in the relationship. I was in school, but I wasn't any closer to graduation, I had a job but wasn't really making any money. Becky, at this point freed herself from the clutches of "him" and moved back to Cleveland. One day whilst walking across campus, I hear a horn honk. I turn and see Rebecca in her infamous blue Honda (which used to belong to Scott's sister). My first thought was, "Oh shit, she's going to run me over and I will be dead."

She pulled up and offered me a ride. I gladly accepted, but was still uneasy. We had parted on bad terms with harsh words and bitter feelings. But luckily, the adage proved true and time had healed all wounds. I had my Becky back. Becky and I were like peas and carrots again. One night as I sat watching the summer arts performance, I had a religious experience. One of those moments where music so moves me that my goose bumps give birth to goose bumps. I looked over at Becky and realized the difference between her and Lauren. I realized that she was everything that Lauren was lacking (in my eyes mind you, this is not to disparage Lauren because I know she truly loved me which was why I did what I was about to do in the manner that I did it.) I decided then, that I was in love with her and wanted to be with her and was going to pursue that as my goal. I went home that night and composed a letter to break up with my girlfriend (and almost fiancé) of eight months. I broke up with her through email. Cowardly I admit, but I could not handle (or was unwilling to handle) the emotional scene that would have transpired if I had done so in person. I also thought it best to strike while the iron was hot and I had a chance to sit down and talk myself out of it.

Lauren was out of the picture (or so I thought) and I decided to pursue Becky with a full court press and not be a stupid dickhead about it this time. I confessed my love to her at Wesley’s trailer and she told me that she kinds suspected it. That summer, I was around Becky constantly and she was appreciative, but reluctant to return more than friendly affections. Finally one night I quite dropping hints and just kissed her. It was a wonderful head swimming kiss (at least for me) but it did not last long. About that time I began this diary. It seemed like a good avenue to bitch and moan about my unrequited love. And I did. From that point on our history has been documented here. Eventually we overcame the awkwardness and she become involved again as did I. Our friendship has stood the test of time. We have seen each other in our finest and most wretched moments. In July we moved in to a little house together. She’s a wonderful roommate. Neither of us are as tidy as we could be but we’re only human. Her cat is annoying when she’s in heat, but she’s adorable the rest of the time. She is a wonderful roommate and the only complain I could even have is not getting to see her as much as I’d like to. I’ve had 4 friends in my life that have been true “walk through the ghetto naked” companions. Steven Prather, Krista “Spot” Boand, Marshall Crutchfield, and Rebecca Lee Grammer.

I loves me some Becky and I could not ask for a more perfect friend!

MOO!

The Chapter Can Blow Me. - 11/26/2002

The more things change, the more things stay the same.

I am beyond saddened.

I am past disappointed.

I am more than uneasy.

I am completely ashamed.

I am giving up.

I am going into details when I calm down.

I am never going to let it go.

I am going to provide a reason to be treated like I don't belong.

I am homicidally mad.

I am leaving.

I am officially and unsupportive embittered alumni.

The circle is complete.

The curse lives forever.

The Good The Bad The Scarlet Elves with Scimitars - 11/27/2002

Well fate has changed my travel plans for the holidays. I was hoping to take a little vacation next week, but apparently, my division chair has other ideas. So, instead of relaxing and basking in warm glow of friends long unseen, I will be spending next week running around looking in offices and closets and rooms all over the campus trying to locate lost inventory items. I hate inventory. I despise it.

I am in charge of an inventory of around 500 items or more of audiovisual equipment that move from place to place room to room often without my consent or knowledge. It is ridiculous. and there are 25 items yet unaccounted for and so, instead of taking a vacation from his stifling and cold work environment, I will be running full tilt chasing after items which I'd wager simply aren't there. Thieves don't usually send us emails telling us to delete items from our inventory when they steal them. Inconsiderate bastards. And this means that I CERTAINLY won't be able to make it to Florida, which, as Jed now says, "Stinks like greasy butt sex"

To top it all off my little brother, Daniel, wasn't accepted into the chapter, which is disappointing. I had my hopes that "The Curse" would finally be broken, but apparently it is forever. They tried to justify it with some bullshit reason about his book being incomplete, but from the books I saw, they were ALL incomplete. I know that only 2 of the nine had my signature, and though that doesn't mean much now it used to mean a great deal. I love Sinfonia, I cherish Phi Mu Alpha with great affection, but the Theta Upsilon chapter in its present incarnation can lose its charter and rot in hell for all I care. I will never go out of my way to support them again. Let them get their own PA system for the national anthem. Let them find some other way to make money in the spring besides Crosstie. My job is a necessary evil and things will get better, it was just the timing of things that sucked. Of course, despite my Dad's advice, if another job came along making the same money I'd probably take it in a heartbeat.

Life goes on, however. I ran the first game of the "new" campaign last night. I ended the vampire chronicle with a Gehena game in which everyone was eventually sent back to their plane/time/universe of origin and then we said bye bye to Vampire for a while and HELLO to the Forgotten Realms. First level adventurers...They had to tackle a band of brigands and a pack of wolves and did so fabulously. They even captured a runaway prince (who was traveling with the Brigands) but they proved to be somewhat ineffective to the Scarlet Elf bodyguard of the young lad who had been following him all the while. If they'd have know who and what he was they would have handed him over and pleaded for forgiveness, but, ignorance is indeed bliss. I have been in need of some good D&D for a long while and I think we have an excellent party. It's a mixed alignment group that is forced to work together and try to be tolerant of each other. They are constantly fighting among themselves. It is terrific. Once we get some character personalities a little more defined and their details and styles fleshed out then we will have one heck of a little game going :)

It is a glimmer of happiness in this dreary month.

Oh well, time to get back to feigning interest in work. My evaluation is today and I suppose I'd better make myself at least look busy ding something in the mean while.

Ciao all!

Random Essay!!!! - 12/21/2002

When one says the word “hero,” many descriptive terms may come to mind; valorous, bold, courageous, selfless, self sacrificing, and noble. In some cases some may even associate the terms foolish or impetuous, and rightly so, for it is often hard to discern the reasoning behind the actions of a hero. All of these terms however have a common strand and that is that a hero is one who for whatever reason takes action that puts him/herself at risk for a greater cause or the greater good. Heroes place their own personal welfare beneath that of a cause or an ideal or in some cases simply the safety of others. Heroic deeds need not be dramatic or impulsive to be considered heroic, but they must involve taking an action that puts one’s personal safety, possessions, or well being at risk in order to achieve a goal. So, the question arises, “Who is the hero of the Iliad?”

At first glance one might suggest that the hero or heroes of the Iliad are the great king Agamemnon or the mighty Achilles or perhaps even one of the gods who involves themselves in the war of the Achaeans and the Trojans. The Greek deities, Agamemnon and Achilles feats are all magnificent, but not necessarily heroic because what they risk is in relation to what they intend to gain is inadequate. The true heroes of Troy are those who put themselves in harm’s way for their cause and their fellow soldiers. Among these, two named spring to mind, those of Diomedes and Odysseus. Diomedes is a hero because of the personal risk he takes upon himself in physical battle and by placing his fate in the line of fire by his bold physical battle with the gods. Diomedes places his lineage, his life, and the god’s will for his life in a place of sacrifice in order to achieve victory for his king Agamemnon. Odysseus too placed his throne, his life, and his family in jeopardy by fighting for the Achaean cause. Both men volunteer to fight Hector and champion the Greek’s cause in this war, as well as serving as spies behind enemy lines to further the advancement of the armies of Agamemnon. Odysseus shows Agamemnon the dishonor and shame, not to mention the danger of retreating from Troy after the Trojans breach the Achaean’s wall. The collateral that Odysseus and Diomedes put on the line, the types of chances they take, and the fierce and brutal combat in which they engage in so often (like those of lesser social standing) compared to the rewards they would reap, proves that they are true heroes compared to the Agamemnon who fights for his reputation and for Achilles who withholds from the battle because of his pride.

another RANDOM essay... - 12/21/2002

In Clyde Edgerton’s The Floatplane Notebooks they way characters are portrayed concerning their class, their gender and their roles in relation to other characters provides a great deal of depth to the story and makes many of the characters more defined and therefore more believable and realistic. One of the most interesting aspects about the depiction of these character and they roles they play is the fact that some of their roles evolve into others by the novel’s end. This paper will examine the gender, class and social roles of five of the main characters in the story. We will examine Meredith, Rhonda, Thatcher, Bliss, and finally The Vine.

Meredith Copeland in the novel is the younger son and middle child of Albert and Mildred Copeland. Already we see one of Meredith’s roles forming; the middle child. Meredith’s pattern of mischievous behavior starts with the very first account of him in the novel when Noralee states, “Meredith puts me up on his shoulders and runs with me till Papa hollers.” Bliss describes Meredith as “always having something up his sleeve” Meredith later fulfills this role as the mischievous middle child when he starts the well digger and falls down in the well. Meredith’s place in our society’s version of the caste system is that of his parents. His family seems to be typical of middle class old southern families, both rich in tradition and history, with a strong background in family values, but not without its skeletons in the closet.

Meredith, as we see later, is a real man’s man. Meredith tends to see religion as hypocritical and on the other hand thinks of war as a glorious thing and a great adventure that are yet to be had. So, from a gender aspect, we see Meredith grow from a rambunctious boy, to a strong virile man, and then finally, after his accident in the war, he begins to mature mentally and emotionally as he faces the trials of living as an invalid.

Rhonda, Meredith’s wife and mother of his child, differs greatly from her husband. The most obvious role difference is that of gender, of course, Rhonda is a woman, but what kind of woman is she? Rhonda is a proper match for Meredith early on because she is adventurous. Rhonda goes against the grain in the fact that she is not the typical well behaved, church going, southern lady. Rhonda is a rock singer. Rhonda’s family background places her lower on the social ladder than the Copelands. Her family life was not pleasant like Meredith’s. Rhonda is also sexually promiscuous which we see throughout the novel when she puts the kitten in her blouse, goes skinny dipping with Mark, and eventually leaves Meredith and has an affair with Mark because of Meredith’s inability to satisfy her sexual desires due to his war wounds. Rhonda’s role in the novel always revolves around another male character. Ronda is at one time Meredith’s girlfriend, fiancée, or wife or Mark’s late night distraction or one-night-stand. Rhonda represents the lower class in Southern society. Rhonda is a little forward, a little wild, a little loud, and yes, a little trashy. None of these characteristics makes her a bad person, but they do show a sharp contrast to other characters in the novel such as Thatcher.

Thatcher Copeland is a character I can personally relate to in some ways, but not completely. Both Thatcher and I are the oldest male children in an above middle class old southern family rich in history and tradition. We both have younger siblings and we tend to be the offspring that is, or at least is expected to be, the most responsible and mature of the children.

Bliss, Thatcher’s wife, comes from a slightly more prestigious socioeconomic background as the Copelands, but her family lacks the traditions of the Copelands, such as the grave cleaning. Bliss views her family as much less interesting than the Copelands. Bliss also loves Thatcher, but not in the fashion that Rhonda loves Meredith, she instead feels a sense of awe and respect for Thatcher as opposed to a fiery passion. Bliss has a certain type of innocence about her. She views the things that the Copelands see as ordinary and familiar, such as the grave cleanings and the trips to Florida, as something special and something to be cherished. Bliss is genuinely concerned about Mark and Meredith when they get ready to go to war. Bliss plays the role of the concerned wife as well as the daughter-in-law that feels more at home in her husband’s family than she does in her own. Bliss exemplifies her caring nature when she eases Meredith’s sexual frustration after Rhonda leaves him in Florida. Bliss, Thatcher, Rhonda, and Meredith’s roles in the novel from gender and social class are all very well defined, but The Vine in the novel is unique because it doesn’t specify any gender or any social or economic distinctions, but somehow becomes a living breathing character in the novel.

The Vine is a wisteria vine that grows by the back steps of the Copeland’s house. The Vine speaks on the emergence of every blue moon and servers as an omniscient narrator and observer of the Copeland family from its planting as a seedling before the Civil War all the way up until Meredith passes away at the novel’s end. The Vine sees the tragedy of the baby that dies during birth, the murder of Zuba for being blamed for William Copeland’s crime, and the deaths of most of the family throughout the years, but the Vine does not grieve, because it sees these things in the perspective of a natural cycle. The Vine purpose is to give insight into the family’s history as well as a glimpse of how things may be after death, but in so doing, The Vine becomes established as a character in itself. The vine is the eternal observer of the Graveyard and the monitor of all that happens in the Copeland’s world.

All of the characters fulfill certain roles, whether they be gender specific, related to society as a whole, socioeconomic, or even as literary devices. Most of these roles evolve throughout the novel as well, such as Thatcher, Noralee, and Meredith’s father. In the Beginning of the novel, he fulfills the role as head of the household, but near the end of the novel when he begins to help care for Meredith. He begins to take on a much more maternal role in relation to his family. Each role that each character fulfills lends itself to the depth and realism of the novel and gives the reader with a more heightened sense of empathy with the characters themselves.

Thoughts - 2/7/2003

Blinding Searing Scorching Joy

Blistered Burned Scalded Love

Withering Whimpering Crying Smiling

Visions Dreams Premonitions Doubt

Hate Pain Death Salvation

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Letters are hollow

Words mean nothing

Squiggled lines in familiar shapes

Stabbing in the dark

Scratching on the walls

Trying to give reason to the madness

Shapes put in an order

Trying to convey the depths and breadth

Of the conscious human soul

A joke a lie futility

Like trying to drink the ocean

By sipping dew from a lotus blossom

Words are inadequate

Writing is a fallacy

Speech is a cozy lie that we tell ourselves

To believe someone might understand

But they never truly can

Welcome to my nightmare - 2/8/2003

It was awful. It ruined me for the rest of the night. I was walking down the stairs at the BPAC with the rest and from the corner of my eye I saw her and the moment I did, I knew she had seen me. It has been at least 3 years since I'd seen her and for that I was thankful. About three days ago I had a dream about her. It lasted forever and it was one of those you just can't shake no matter how hard you try. I dismissed it as a bizarre blip in my subconscious, but tonight, there she was; staring at me; mocking me with her presence.

I looked away and prayed she hadn't seen me, but alas someone of my distinct size and shape does not blend well with the crowd. I looked away from her direction and quickened my pace. I was descending the stairs as fast as the cattle in front of me would allow.

"Moose!" I hear from behind me...

I dismiss it. Moose sounds like so many other things and I must have imagined it...

"GEOFF!" I hear a brief moment later. No mistaking it, she had spotted me and moreover she was seeking me out.

I swallowed hard, bit my cheek as hard as I could and plastered on the widest most blatantly synthetic smile I could and turned to meet her.

She was just as I remembered her. Beautiful, inviting, warm... I could taste the bile rising in my mouth. I looked into her eyes and felt the urge to touch her cheek cancel the urge to tear out her throat. I hugged her. One f those hugs that you give to people at the family reunion that you don’t really know or the kind you give to someone overly affectionate that you wish to avoid. I feigned surprise; I portrayed meeting her with glad tidings. I lied to her face. I patted her back as I hugged her and tried to pull away, but to no avail she wasn't going to let go. How awful. If only there was someone there who remembered, someone who knew and upheld the code of silence against her, someone who could save me. It all came flooding back as she reached out and took my hand. As she drained the life essence from me with her grip I saw again the adoration I had for her, the embarrassment I endured for her, the sacrifice I gave to her and the way the led me along like a carrot dangled before a steed and how she snatched it all away and left a used empty defeated shell of me. I thought I was going to throw up. What was she doing here? Why?!?!

dammit. I thought I'd at LEAST never have to see her again.

Moi, "Oh it has been so long!"

She, "I'm so glad to SEE you!"

Moi, "you look great, how are you?"

She, "doing wonderfully, I have two students here and I'm EXPECTING!!!"

Oh joy, it has bred and its unholy spawn is due the day after my birthday. I've always believe in God, tonight I learned to believe in the devil.

There she was staring me in the face.

I tried to keep the conversation brief. I could tell she wanted to catch up, I tried to look in a hurry, I tried to convey that I was busy; I tried to demonstrate that I needed to run. I DID need to run... to run screaming as I tore out my hair and clenched my teeth.

I felt revulsion, shame, defeat, and at the same time, regret, longing, and the scariest of all a twinge that asked me..."what if"

That is some Radiant Pig! - 3/13/2003

From whence do the words come and whither do they go?

I had a splendid evening swapping stories with my dad. I have a wonderful family. I made some soup that turned out almost perfect (according to dad, which is HIGH PRAISE indeed coming from my father) I brought them about half of what I made at home and the rest is sitting in my refrigerator. Dad gave me a wonderful bottle of white wine. I’m sitting here with the moist frosted glass in one hand as I listen to Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata. (A favorite of mine, it usually puts me in a rather expressive state of mind, but then the majesty of Beethoven can not help but evoke the human soul. Ever since I was a small child I’ve loved the work of Beethoven. People speak of the genius of Mozart or the brilliance of Bach, but for passion, for emotion, for pure musical empathy there are few who can contest with Beethoven, of course, that is just my opinion.)

 I sat with my sister today and watched part of Charlotte’s Web. After Melody left my house I kept watching. It stirred within me the notion of my mortality, of death, of the inevitable fate that awaits us all without question or exception. It touched me. It is a book for children, in that, it reaches and appeals to the young but it addresses a very adult subject, that being life, death and the continual cycle thereof. It made me see the story in a whole new light.

 I feel nice tonight. I feel like myself. Or at least like one of my shades that I haven’t felt like in a while. I feel pacified, contemplative, introspective, and serene. I love this feeling. I find that the right music and beverage help to facilitate this type of mood. Sara, one of my ex girlfriend’s calls it the “fifty-cent-word” Moose. I suppose that I enjoy the opportunity to think on a higher plane than I normally do. I love “highbrow” as much as I do “earthy.”

 There are so many flavors to who I am. There are so many voices that sing all at once. Sometimes I think that I lose my identity within myself; so many faces and aspects to who I am. I am not suggestion that I am unique in this way, but it does give me pause to think of the complexity of human nature and the countless possibilities that exist in each one of us. I once heard it said that it is not out limitations that frighten us, but indeed it is the possibilities of our potential.

 Sometimes I wish I had the discipline and the fire to sit down and truly write like I believe I have the potential to, but I’m not sure what concerns me more the fact that I might not possess the ability and discipline to do so or that if I do it will be in vain and will mean nothing. Sometimes I wish I could expunge all of my emotion onto the page and share it with mankind in the hopes that it would at the very least give them something to distract them from all there is within the world to be terrified of and to dwell on in gloom.

 Well, my music has taken a much brighter air and my wine has begun to grow warm, so, I think I will see what, if any, entertainment and distraction television can offer. I will finish this entry, post it, save my diary on my hard drive for posterity, consume the remainder of my glass of aromatic fruity Zinfandel and watch some television. Ciao all.

complain about champagne in front of the thirsty - 3/17/2003

So much Drama in the LBC its kinda hard bein’ Snoop D O double G.

Drama. Relationships. Couple-hood. True enough I don’t have a girl to call my own but I do know something about what it takes to make a relationship work.

It takes honesty with one’s self as well as ones partner.

It takes commitment to the union as well as one another.

It takes sacrifice of one’s self for the other.

It takes communication to get things all on the same page.

It takes time apart as well as together.

It takes an honest appraisal of desires and goals.

It takes the realization that it is the journey not the destination, so stop running.

It takes patience with one another as well as within yourself.

It takes concern for one's partner as well as one's self.

It takes love.

Now some miscellaneous advice for all those couples and all their drama out there: I will use the indefinite pronoun "they" so if you take offense and think I'm talking about you, well maybe I am and maybe you should consider why that hit close to home.

They are their own individual.

They are entitled to their dreams.

They are thinking of you.

They need you to need them.

They want you to anticipate them.

They want to know you give a damn.

They can take care of themselves.

They have a phone to.

They aren't perfect.

When they screw up it doesn't mean they don't care.

They only worry because they care.

They care about you as well.

They have to want it as much as you.

They have to grow up.

They have to not take things so seriously.

They have to take other things MORE seriously.

They do not define you as an individual.

They are not the end all be all.

They can be replaced.

They love you.

They are loved by you.

Now then, for all of you who whine about the problems with your significant others think about this.

YOU have someone who loves you.

YOU have someone to hold you tight.

YOU have someone to hold.

YOU have someone to dream about.

YOU have someone who cares enough to call.

YOU have someone who wants something more for you.

YOU have someone who CRAVES YOUR AFFECTION!

You whine and bitch and moan and complain, my boyfriend doesn't understand me, my girlfriend wants a different future than me, my girlfriend is too far away, my boyfriend never calls, my girlfriend is getting fat, my boyfriend is too immature...

Maybe, but at the end of the day, you have someone to whisper goodnight to, you have someone to kiss and cuddle and stroke, you have someone who wishes and hopes for your future together. You are loved and have someone to love.

You want to KNOW relationship problems? Having some relationship problems it a lot better than having NONE!

In the words of Ms Apple,

“Full is not heavy as empty my love, not nearly my love, not nearly”

sorry, if I seem a little jaded. But it makes me all the more aware of my own solitude.

I’m your friends. I’m here for all of you. I’m here to support all my friends individually and as equally as I know how. I can tell you what is best for you (singular) but only you(plural) can say what is best for you(plural).

excerpt from an email... - 4/16/2003

 I am terrified of giving you a bad impression about my spiritual life and my philosophical ideology. I don't want you to get to know me and decide I’m morally reprehensible and therefore a bad influence or that I'm spiritually lax and in need of some ministerial intervention.

I am a creature of duality. I am at the same time, sinner and Saint, angel and monster, crusader and coward. I believe in the duality of man and I see that aspect of human nature as a vital and important aspect of what makes us what we are. It was said (I don’t recall by whom) that every evil deed, every lascivious act, every despicable sin ever conceived is the product of the human imagination; and it is true, but so is every noble, holy, righteous, and blessed concept. I am vastly different than most Baptists in my concept of God. I believe in a God that is very hands off in the universe, not completely, you understand, He (or rather it, since assigning a gender to God would be sexist and blasphemous in the fact that it limits the divine being) intervenes from time to time through his own will or at the behest of those who worship him. I suppose my biggest differences come into view when people interpret the Bible literally. I don't. I have felt the hand of God upon my own heart and I take joy in knowing that there is a loving, forgiving, and gracious God. These facts I hold without question, but everything else presented about God, Religion, and man's (and the universe') relationship with them I approach with a great degree of intellectual skepticism. Call me cynical. I am also very entrenched in my beliefs. They work for me and whether people agree with them or not they in large satisfy my personal thirst for answers about the mysteries of existence. I'm not trying to change your point of view if it is different, but I am trying to show you my point of view so that there will be an understanding between us and not a rift based on differentiating opinions and beliefs. I suppose the real reason I'm saying all this to break it down to its simplest reasons are 1. Because I want you to like me. 2. Because I believe logic, reason, love, and faith should be our guidelines for all things. 3. Because you might not have thought about it that way and if you consider them with an open mind you might feel similarly. 4. Because I want to impress you with my smarts so you understand I’m not just some horny bastard looking for a good time. (Not JUST that \*wink\* ha-ha)

OK. Enough with the psycho-spiritual-philosophical stuff.

I'd like to meet in a neutral location because if I go looking for your house I will invariably get lost, be late, and have to take someone hostage... (ALWAYS take a hostage!)

I'm a little nervous about meeting your mom/ parents. Parents can be unpredictable. They aren't afraid to say what they think.

"Chrsit your huge!"

"How much money do you make a year?"

"You planning on porking my little girl?"

"What do you mean you're not a republican?"

I'm sure my paranoia is unjustified... But I hate being put on the spot or backed into a corner. Ha-ha. But then, who doesn't?

I'm also concerned that you will think I’m a Nancy boy.

I don't hunt, I don't like sports, I've never owned a truck, I know little to nothing about engines, I hate NASCAR, and ONLY my sister calls me Bubba (and lives to tell the tale).

I paint, draw, read, and sing. I am a musician, an artist, a poet, and a thespian. I like quiche, fondue, classical music, the food network, and Will and Grace. I have lots of friends that are Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Wicca, pagan, and then there's Frank! (Frank is...a whole story into himself. ha-ha.) I know about the fine arts and humanities, I LOVE Star Trek, and only my coworkers call me Geoff.

I am the Moose. Not moose, not a moose, THE MOOSE! :)

I'm egocentric....in case you couldn't tell.

I’m also lazy.

And I cry at really sad tragic movies...

So there.

: P

Ciao!

:)

Sara Grace and Hana Melody - 7/11/2003

4:00 PM

JHengst79: you around?

deltamoose: yes!

deltamoose: how are you?

JHengst79: not good. i'm on from my friend's laptop from the hospital. the girls were delivered early and they aren't doing well

JHengst79: i tried to call but my cell doesn't work here

deltamoose: you HAD them already?!

deltamoose: oh no, what's wrong?

deltamoose: are you alright?

JHengst79: don't know but they're on life support and everything i haven't even seen them since they were born

JHengst79: i have to go the nurse is here

deltamoose: ok love you bye

deltamoose: keep me posted

6:00 pm

JHengst79: hi

deltamoose: an

deltamoose: hi!

deltamoose: any word? how are you?

JHengst79: sarah died...I'm not handling it well

deltamoose: how can I contact you?

deltamoose: oh god. I'm so sorry sweetie.

JHengst79: i don't want to talk to anyone right now. I only wanted to let you know what was happening

JHengst79: they're releasing me soon so I'll call you when I get home

deltamoose: ok. love you sweetie. I'm here for you.

deltamoose: i'll keep praying.

JHengst79: love you too. I can talk for a few minutes.

deltamoose: how is Hana?

JHengst79: I'm waiting for the doctor to come back

JHengst79: Hannah is not doing well. She was the larger of the two but she's still very small. If she wasn't a twin she would probably live, but because twins are smaller, she's not as developed as she should be. She probably won't make it

deltamoose: i wish i could do something to help you, at least something to concole or comfort you.

deltamoose: i don't know what to say, I wouldn't dare try and tell you something trite to futily try to ease your pain. i can't imagine how awful ti must be.

deltamoose: all i can say is i love you and i will do anyhting you need me to

JHengst79: my friends from church are here

JHengst79: I'm gonna put the computer off to the side for a few minutes

deltamoose: ok.

deltamoose: whatever happens, I know that God will see us through. And though we face trials, He watches over all of us. I thank God for you Jacleen and I thank God for helping you to be the woman you are. I pray that God's will be done and that we have the strength and wisdom to follow the path that is chose for us for us both and for each of us.

JHengst79: I'm going to go see hannah ok?

deltamoose: ok

7/13/03 - 7/13/2003

"Sarah Grace"

Innocent helpless needing

we are thrown into this world

our parents the only ones to

protect, help, and give to us

they are our life

we become theirs

they are our hope

we are their legacy

we come when we are called

we leave just the same

the joy we bring is a blessing

our life is a gift of God

and God sometimes saves

us from the evils of this world

by bringing us back to him

as soon as we arrive.

Some souls are too good

for this world

I know hers was

I pray that she knows

how much I love her

her sister, and her mother.

I feel so impotent to act sometimes. I can't stand not being able to help, not being able to be there with them. I have been trying to envision er lying there in ICU. How small she must be; how frail; how beautiful. Her mother is a pillar of strength whose determination makes me take pause in awe and so I know that with God's help she will become everything God has intended for her. And if God has other plans in mind, then I pray for the strength to accept his wisdom and the love to help her mother with her loss.

All I can do now is pray and tell them I love them.

7-30-2003

"If You Know How To Use Them"

a little satin a little lace

can put a man right in his place

and make him fall flat on his face

if a girl knows just how to use them.

a little tickle and a little slap

can put a man right on the map

and make his bones dissolve into sap

if a girl knows just how to use them

a little leather and a little whip

can make a man do a back flip

and cause his sense of decorum to slip

if a girl knows just how to use them

a little smile and a little wink

can cause a man to simply not think

and drive his passion right to the brink

if a girl knows just how to use them

a little shake and a little shimmy

can make a man reach for his jimmy

and need a wheelchair like that kid, Timmy

if a girl knows just how to use them

a little work and a little persistence

can wear down any man's resistance

and he will beg for your assistance

if you know how to use him.

ponderings about past ponderings of the past - 11/4/2003

 Four after four and I feel I need to write. It is funny how music can move one to think, to recall, to reminisce. I often find myself musing at the oddest things from hearing a song that somehow reminds of me of the past. Every time I hear "Shadowboxer" by Fiona Apple, for instance I am always transported back to that lazy hot stick summer that I spent with Tori and Spot. The three of us were inseparable. We were a odd little cell huddles together out of mutual need and mutual boredom. I recall sitting in the chair which had no legs and so sat flat on the hardwood floor of Tori and Spot’s duplex. I was in love with Tori and I was enraptured with Spot. Let me see if I can paint the characters before I set the scene. Spot was a Phi Mu Alpha Sweetheart who was hard core old school when I was but a pup, but more than that, Spot was my dark mentor. Spot was like the older sister I’ never had. Spot was a tall pale raven haired sleepy eyed mistress of all things sensual and sinister. Spot was the serpent who guided me to the tree and bid me to take of the fruit and open my eyes. I reveled in her shadows. She was a gypsy, a worker of magiks, a weaver of spells and a mixture of happy wit and worldy wisdom that drew me to her like a moth to aflame. Tori was Spot’s friend and roommate. Where spot was excessive (at least as her means would allow), lazy, and seductive, Tori was pragmatic, planning, and had a cold logic and a dry wit that set her apart from other girls. Tori was also the first lesbian I’d ever met. We all three were birds of a feather who were stranded in Cleveland with nothing much else to do but to enjoy each other’s company and find things to occupy ourselves until school would start again. Spot was tall relatively thin with pale ivory skin large expressive eyes, large firm bosoms, curvaceous hips and a waist that I was just shy of being able to wrap my hands around so that my fingers and thumbs met. Her droopy gaze was one of humor, pleasure, intoxication and wisdom of the world and her face was framed by the long straight locks of coal black. Tori was as tall as I, plump, with short thick and very curly strawberry blond hair. Tori wore overalls and bandanas and employed a wit that was sharp, cold, and sarcastic. They were both initiates of the drug culture and I was an innocent boy who was mystified by their knowledge of those things I was raised to be inhibited about. They lived together in a small white duplex on 5th avenue. Neither of them had a job, both lived on money from family or school refunds and often what they could borrow from me. I was glad to contribute to their cause, however. For roughly all but one week of that summer my day consisted of waking up around noon and either getting a ride, driving or walking over to their place around 3 and staying there will 1 or 2 in the morning. We would sit there and talk, or listen to music or watch movies. There was no cable, at first no phone, and for a while no air conditioning. I had met Tori at Spot’s apartment once and found something intriguing about her. I later found that those qualities I admired in her were those that helped to define her sexuality. She wasn’t like the typical girls I’d known. She was real, she was down to earth, and I found her almost masculine determination and point of view inspiring. But, I digress; Shadowboxer. I had gone by and gotten spot to get me a bottle of champagne and I had procured dinner for us both from Pig Pen. We went back to the apartment and sat down to enjoy open faced chili slaw burgers and a bottle of Korbel. I had drunk most of the champagne when Tori came in with her new CD and proceeded to put it in and raise the volume so that the sound shook the walls. Their air was out and even though it was after dark, it was still close to 85 degrees or so in the house. We turned off the lights and lit candles and I sat there almost on the floor in the chair I’d broken a few days before and I watched them dance with serpentine motions and emotive imitation of the songstress that conveyed a true identification with the song. I sat there, drunk, in the candle light, soulful angst ridden music blaring in the unbearably muggy heat and watched them dance to this song. Every Time I hear it I am transported back there. I can smell the house, see them swaying to the music, and feel only the cold nearly empty bottle of bubbly bringing me relief from the oppressive heat. It is one of fondest memories. There was something magical about that moment. We were for all intents and purposes broke, bored, and burning up but we found shared ecstasy in the truth of a song.

Spot is special to me for so many reasons. She ranks among the greatest, most trusted and most loyal of my friends. I do not have many friends. Some people insist I do, but when I say friend I mean someone whose friendship isn’t transitional, conditional, or in any way incomplete. I mean someone for whom I would charge the gates of hell wearing a gasoline soaked speedo. I consider myself lucky in the fact that I can name at least 5 people who I call friend with such conviction and absolute unrelenting, unwavering, and unending dedication. Tori was special to me for it was she that made me a man.

Before you assume that she gifted me with some sexual favor that served as some coming of age focal point in my life let me set the record straight. It was not her sharing her affections with me that made me a man, but it was her denying to do so that made me a man. For, you see, boys can love and know love and enjoy love in its physical trappings but no boy ever becomes a man until he has suffered the pain of heart break and come through it to rise again. A man must be a phoenix; he must be destroyed and rise from the ashes before he can call himself a man. Tori was the first girl to ever break my heart. It wasn’t a disappointment, it wasn’t a letdown or regret of a missed opportunity or failed conquest. It was having the love I craved so much from someone who understood me as well as I understood her and then having paradise ripped from my grasp and expelled from the Eden that I knew. For three days I did nothing but cry I spoke to no one save for my parents and only then to demand my solitude. After three days of tears and seclusion and prayer I picked up my ashes and with blood sweat and tears molded them back into a form that resembled in physical appearance my former self, and though at the time still tender and weak having lessons of love and pain yet to learn, I was forged by fire and stronger than before.

I stand looking at my life and I see the odds and the struggles and the adversity that I face but it is the strength I have garnered from surviving the storms that allows me to keep my head up and to believe that even though it must be fought for with tooth and nail, there is a future for me and I may yet carve a deep enough groove on the face of the world so as to be remembered beyond the years of my life here.

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pondering past ponder.. ah screw it, part 2 - 11/4/2003

Beulah was this weekend. Becky wrote about it in her opendiary and I those words spoke to me profoundly. Beulah is wonderful, not for the drink, the fraternization, not for the fun, but because of its simplicity and timelessness. It is a tradition that ties one generation to the next. Beulah is as much a ritual as any fraternity’s or group’s. Beulah has bound us in a way that all can understand but few can see in the scope that I have seen. I have only missed one since my college career began in 1995. The fire, the waters, the seclusion, the fellowship, the frivolity and the beauty of having our own place for a while where we are all that exists is what makes it what it is only in part. I drank more than I should. I sang, told dirty jokes, made off color comments, showed off, let loose, and for a while found myself once again; just like always.

Beulah: irresponsible trespassing, careless bonfire synonymous with drunken misconduct, sexual promiscuity, loud talk, lewd humor, and borderline heathen like hedonism. God Bless IT Forever and Always.

Work to be done today. Ducks to be put into rows, "I’s" to be dotted and "T’s" to be crossed.

Jacleen may not ever understand my darker passions, my lusts, my zest for the rebellious, uncouth, and reckless, but even if she doesn’t I pray that she will never forget that as much as I love those things, they could never compete with the love I have for her.

I may never forsake those things that make me who I am and I won’t ever stand for having someone trying to change me, but I will love her forever regardless of what else life deals either of us. I have been thinking about her a lot lately and of the obstacles that life seems to keep placing between us. Sometimes I feel that the closer to her I come and the more determined I become to close the distance between us, the more length, laps and hurdles are added to my race. Love keeps me running, though.

I love her and ever shall.

It was good to see everyone this weekend. There others I’d wish that could have been there to share in the festivities with us, but they are missed and loved and we remembered them in song and tale.

For some reason as of late, I have been recalling things from "all the girls I’ve loved before" to coin a phrase. A song on the radio tonight made me recall Heather making fun of me in particular, but Sinfonians in general about a bizarre compulsion to find and sing a harmony part to almost anything. I have also thought about Barbie, April, Sara, Lauren, Lacy, Dawn, and few others who I just loved from afar. It think it was the libation consumed Saturday night. I have a philosophy about drinking. Never drink when you want to forget; only drink when you want to remember. I think I have become one o those reminiscent souls who lingers in the past too long for his own good. I hope I don’t live there, but I never want to be so focused on the road ahead that I forget the path I took to get there.

Well, it is 5:30 and my play list is up. I shall retire and write again when my soul is moved to put my heart into words again.

A real pain in the A$$ - 3/8/2004

Aight...So, what’s going on in viva la moose? Well, student teaching is going alright. My midterm evaluation is due this week and I feel pretty good that Katie is going to give a decent evaluation. Just a few more days till spring break and I am all kinds of ready for it to be here. Katie tells me that after spring break the classes will be a lot better because it will be comprised of students who WANT to be there, not just the ones who were forced to be there. I am excited about doing my STAI and I have come to the conclusion that I want to be a teacher, after all. There are still other career ambitions and someday I may get a chance to give them a try, but I have found that I am somewhat suited to being a teacher. It is a 7 hour a day five day a week job with 2 months of paid vacation and I spend the whole day telling people what to do? What could be more perfect?!?!Love life is at this point nonexistent. I still love Jacleen and I know she loves me, but I think both of us have come to the point where we know we have to explore our options and seek companionship from others. She will always be one of my best friends, but we both need to find someone we can be with. Neither of us really have any prospects on the horizon that I know of and we are both lonely. I just have a hard time MEETING women. It is so hard to find woman I like. I mean REALLY like, not just find physically attractive. Sometimes I think I have impossibly high standards. Life in general is good, except for this pain in my ass. I noticed it in the middle of the week last week and it has gotten progressively more painful. It feels like a hard knot about the size of a large strawberry lodged right in the flesh of my right buttocks just inside the cleavage of my butt. It is no fun, I assure you. Dr. Walt told me that he thinks it might be some gland abscessing. He gave me a couple of prescriptions, one for a powerful antibiotic (well, for $95 it better be goddamn powerful!) and the second for darvocet (for the pain). The area around this knot is swollen, red, and feverish. If the antibiotics don’t work, then I will have to wait and let it come to a head and then drain it. Eww. Dr. Walt told me these are somewhat common in diabetics… especially those with high blood sugar. He all but shook his finger at me and said, “No biscuit!” I got the point and got my glymperide and avandia refilled today as well. I’ve taken a sitz bath and started the medication as well as kept a heating pad on the affected area most of the day. I hope by tomorrow it will hurt a little less. Going back to school tomorrow and I think Dr. Nicholson is planning on stopping by. I printed out a couple of lesson plans for lessons I did last week so I could have something in my notebook for him to look at. Hopefully he won’t slash them to pieces like Katherine like to do. This past weekend I got to spend some time with Granddaddy and Miss Jane (my grandfather’s second wife) She is a nice lady and she makes granddaddy happy. She has received some resistance from my aunts and uncles, but I like my dad, feel that granny dot would have wanted granddaddy to be happy and have some companionship and treat her like family. I have to admit I like her because she finds me funny and I had a hoot telling them some stories of high school high jinks and what not. I also learned something interesting about my family, as well. After Uncle Bull died, granddaddy got this big briefcase that holds hundreds of pages of meticulous research and careful documentation on our family ancestry. As it turns out, we have ancestors who fought for the confederacy, fought in the revolutionary war, came over on the MAYFLOWER, and what I thought was most interesting served as a knight to King Edward the first (Longshanks from Braveheart) and happened to be related to the royal family. So, We really do come from aristocracy and I have seen the paperwork to prove it. Hahaha. As I said earlier, I am eager for spring break to get here, but haven’t decided quite how I am going to spend it. I am waiting for some money to arrive that will facilitate my travel plans, but I am torn between going to Wesley and Angela’s, or trying to make a last minute desperate trip to Maryland to see Jacki. Of course the other variable in this equation is this knot on my behind. Well, hopefully the money will come in and the abscess will go away and let me enjoy my spring break one way or the other. Well, it is late and I need to get in the bed. I’m sure tomorrow will be a long uncomfortable day.

"Have you ever considered the possibility that people who worship the devil aren't really evil, but are just real big fans of the underdog?" - Me 9-6-03

Geoff Latham’s Inner Child

deltamoose@hotmail.com

Permanent Address

Old House Out in the Country (References at bottom)

Grenada, MS 38901

(662) 226-0526

Objective: A position that would allow me to utilize my creative, organization, communication, and leadership skills to pick the marshmallows out of lucky charms, watch cartoons, and dig holes in the front yard for no reason all day.

Education:

Sesame Street

Mister Rogers Neighborhood

The Electric Company

Work Experience:

(1985 – 1988): Commander in Chief of the United G.I. Joe - Transformer Alliance. Responsibilities included: defending the universe against the threat of decepticons and Cobra, compilation of comic book propaganda, maintenance, repair, and modification of all plastic military operations, burning things with a magnifying glass, assault of anything moving or fixed with high powered "stealth B\*B" artillery

(1983-1985): Chairman and CEO of Big Brother industries. Responsibilities included: fetching things, carrying diaper bags, project manager of "socket set buried in the back yard." Salary: Generous stipend of Halloween candy with oranges and nuts as Christmas bonus.

(1980-83): Served as chief offspring for Latham family incorporated. Responsibilities included, keeping toys picked up, licking the mixing bowl clean, and loosing Dad's tools. Salary: liberal and regular allowance of cartoons and all the dry cheerios I could handle.

(1978 - 1980): Purchasing Director for Latham family incorporated. Responsibilities included acquisition of any and all Star Wars merchandise, toy vehicles of all sizes, and puppies of various types.

(1976 - 1978): Primary Grandchild of Idineycute enterprises. Responsibilities included: production of various odors and moist secretions and master of ceremonies at all family functions. Salary: Pro bono.

Honors and Activities:

Number One Grand Son

World Champion Inter-cousin wrestling league

Honorary Doctorate in Domestic Food Service Chemistry

Skills:

Experience with un-powered carpentry tools; Barrel walking, impromptu landscaping, all terrain bike riding, beating stuff with a metal pipe, covert orchard produce acquisition.

References:

Captain Kangaroo – Captain Kangaroo Show

Twiggy – Buck Rogers

Han Solo – Millennium Falcon: Star Wars

 “It Waxes And Wanes”

And so I descend. Once again into that dark place where no sound is uttered and no light yields color.

Fumbling through the darkness relying on touch and smell, waiting for my eyes to adjust to see the muted tones of gray in limited contrast but perfect clarity.

Here in this place that I know so well. It is like home to me and the bitter nectar that drips from the petals of flowers withered with neglect is as familiar and sweet as honey from the comb.

Always full circle does the road wind and I wend my way o'er it and travel the endless cycle as is my fate to do so. The weary sorrowful circle of life turns left and right crosses valley and hill but always leads back to the point it began.

The lamenting shades infernal call me and their hissing chorus is the song of the sirens. Powerlessly an wander near waiting to embrace my fate with a smile. All that surrounds me are jaws clenched in angry looks of muted rage the din of the bell that tolls eternal hailing Charon's coming.

I stand on the barge, the coin from out my mouth, clothed only in regret and lamentations, my only food pain my only drink tears.

Acheron laps as I pass beneath the great six eyes of the beast to the other shore and stand before the great gate for eternity never to know damnation nor bliss.

Only Lethe can ease my soul, only to forget that which all have already forgot. Only to see myself and remember nothing.

Nothing.

12/8/2003

dream a little dream

I am walking down a hallway of a cinder block building with tile floors. it is a school. I come to a door on my right and I enter. Sitting in front of a very sick looking class is my old vocal instructor, Mrs. Beckham (a woman I always found sweetly innocent and dangerously attractive) She welcomes me to her class and asks me to introduce myself. As it turned out this was not an Art classroom, but an English class and there was no explanation as to why I was here. A few moments later 2 of the children stood up from their desks and promptly grabbed a plastic trash can (exactly like the ones at our house) and threw up like plague victims. I stood by in horror. Then two other students stood up and asked to go to the bathroom. Mrs. Beckham nodded and then one student took a pass and left the room while the other took out a large plastic tea pitcher, set it on top of his desk and began to pee in it.

As this is going on Mrs. Beckham begins explaining to me some classroom policy (none addressing the vomiting which is now spreading to other students) as well as District regulations and other officious rules. Now several students are peeing in their respective tea pitches and a couple of them beckon me to come and pee with them. I refuse. Several of the students who have filled their waste cans with puke walk over to a much LARGER garbage can and fill it up. 2 large apparently older students begin dragging the can out of the room and down the hall all the while sloshing vomit hither and yon out of the top. I stand holding my nose but mouth agape in shock. Mrs. Beckham calls me over and I approach.

She hands me a form with some writing on the first half and then a 2 column list with food items placed in between small blank lines. The plank lines represent price ranges for the food items listed. Beckham instructs me to take this sheet and go to the cafeteria and confirm several of the prices, milk in specific, and to report back so that the class could go to lunch. I walk out of the classroom and notice several students standing in line to use the bathroom, several of which appear to have stomach cramps and a few who are overly bright and chipper. I begin walking down the hall and I see the trail of sloshed puke running the length of the hallway and the two larger students returning with an empty and apparently clean garbage can. I walk down near the main office and I come to a gigantic magazine rack. It is the length of two cars placed end to end and it has magazines of all types. I keep seeing comic books and things about computers and Entertainment industry magazines. I go to a closet and pick up what appears to be a fifty pound bag of that sawdust stuff they use to cover vomit in school and carry it to the nearest end of the puke trail. I cut open the corner with this menacing looking pocket knife that came from out of nowhere and I begin to pour. Out of the bag comes not sawdust, but finely ground black pepper. I am compelled to finish covering the puke trail which runs the length of the hallway with ground black pepper. I am disgusted, but can seem to smell nothing. when I return to the room, there are no children at the bathroom line but there is one student standing in the middle of the hall talking to himself pushing a tape recorder and an old single advance film strip projector on a metal cart.

I walk back into the classroom to see ALL students peeing and then closely examining their urine in jars and bottles and pitchers. Mrs. B asks about the lunch and I tell her I haven't made it there yet, she nods and waves for me to go back. I head down the hall and see no one but an old thin black janitor sweeping up the puke and black pepper. He smiles and I nod and keep walking. I pass the Giant Magazine rack and come to the lunch room. I approach the cafeteria manager and hand her the form and ask if any of the prices have changed since yesterday and ask her to WRITE DOWN the price of milk. She does and makes some small talk about it being a busy day. I see children walking by with trays of lunch room food and I see a teacher walk up and order beef Wellington which she is given, and to my surprise, is prepared complete with wine and garnish as if she were being served in a five star restaurant. I take the price list out of the cafeteria and spend several minutes staring at the corner of the magazine rack trying to decide whether or not to stay and read or to return to B with the list.

Finally I continue on my way to the classroom. When I arrive the students are lining up for lunch and counting change out of their pocket. Beckham takes the list and tells the children that Milk is the same but the food is more expensive than yesterday. A couple of children who are now dressed in rags (looking destitute) sit down with sad looks on their face. The rest of the children walk towards the cafeteria. I walk out of the room and out the back door of the school. I wake up EXACTLY at 4:00 am.
12/9/2003

Adventures of Kitty Fantastico

7 A.M. and my day has begun. It is not an easy life here in the big house, it is easy to get stepped on and danger lurks around every corner, but then, I’ve already proven that I’m a survivor…
Me?
The name is Galatea. Kitty Fantastico.
\*Theme from Peter Gun\*

It is just past seven and things are all a bustle the hairy faced one is ranting loudly at the crazy blond one sitting at the computer. He seems pissed because she has made breakfast for herself and left everyone else to scavenge. I wander into the room with the cold floor and all the soft things to sit on and I rub myself against the legs of the crazy blond one at the computer. Her feet are cold and so I get no satisfaction. Time for a pit stop. I bound to the room with my box as if my ass were on fire just to keep these creatures off balance. You never know when one will pick you up and hold you helplessly in odd positions. I do my business and wipe my claws on the box and mosey into the room they just rearranged.. I sit in the window looking to see if that poor bastard who used to live here is hanging round outside. Pathetic dork. I see my bowl as I hit the ground and think a snack might be good. As I finish eating I hear the fat one walking out of his lair. I creep silently like a ghost in the night to the hallway and see a small glimmer of light from the bathroom door. What is he doing in there? I nudge the door open and hear the sound of water pouring into water when BAM! Right in the kisser the door smacks me squa in the face!
Rotten bastard… I’ll show him.
The fat one leaves and I quickly bound into the room just in time to see all the water in the giant bowl swirl away into the mysterious dark abyss.
Christ, now my head itches. The fat one always scratched me when I come sit in his lap. I will go find him.
There he is, lying down on the bed in front of the big loud bright box.
FANTASTICO LEAP!
I pounce to the top of the bed and begin to move my head in a scratching motion against his hand.
Take the bait, you big lummox!
YEAaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah! There we go….
THAT’S the stuff.
Mmmhmmm ooh yeah, under the chin….
That’s right down the back.
Well, that felt good.
Well this black sweater on the youngest one’s bed isn’t going to cover ITSELF in hair.. I’d better get to it…
Till next time remember, always keep on your toes and buy more tuna…

12/12/2003

A letter to granddaddy, preserved ofr posterity. - 4/7/2005

Hey Granddaddy. With you going into the hospital soon for surgery, I thought that I should sit down and write to you to let you know some things. I’m hopeful and confident that you will pull through just fine and everything will be great, but I’m also not so naive as to think that there aren’t risks involved and that the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry. SO, just in case, I think it is important that I tell you a few things. First of all, I want you to know how much I love, respect, admire, cherish, and take pride in you. You are one of the most significant men in my life always have been and ever shall be. You are more of a hero to me than any costumed comic book character or historical figure I can recall. My hard drive has not the memory, nor are there trees enough in the world to make pages to contain the love and sentiments I have for you. I know that you have not always been the shining example that you may have wished others to see, but only one man I know of has ever been perfect. I think back on the countless hours that I spent bounced on your knee, sitting in your lap in a tractor, riding in the bed of a pickup, lying on the floor eyes glued to the television just a few feet away from you. You’ll excuse me if I refer to you in the third person while I recount some memories. My happiest moments were those spent at Granddaddy’s house. All of my childhood joys are built upon the cornerstones of Granddaddy and Granny Dot. Before I ever knew how to articulate my love for then, I could say “Granny-n-Granddaddy’s” and when I did, pleasant thoughts filled me. I always listened with eager anticipation to hear Aunt Liz, Uncle Al, Aunt Carolyn, and Dad talk about the adventures they had growing up and I see the image of Granddaddy from photos taken long ago and I can’t help but lose myself in the vision of those tales of days gone by. I think back to my earliest of memories and I think one of the most vivid was the first time I rode in the back seat of that ENORMOUS silver gilded burgundy upholstered luxury chariot of a Lincoln. As Granddaddy sat at the wheel I marveled at how the car would go without him touching the pedals. I recall the time later that he, Granny, Christy, and I would spend exploring the great expansive west of the United States. Granddaddy was a magical genius who knew everyone and everything and whose pockets were filled with endless dollars, whose grin made everything right, and whose deeds were guided by charity and wisdom. Granddaddy was a towering man who others respected, who dressed sharp, and who held me captivated with magnificent toys and a house full of dark dusty corners crawling with brown recluses and filled with treasures and wonders begging to be discovered. As a teen I recall Granddaddy as man of ingenuity, a man at home behind the desk holding the reigns of Grenada Video as well as driving Little-John pulling a bushog and bailing hay. Though less towering in stature by then, he was still a statue standing tall, always jovial and smelling of Aramis. I recall the times I bathed in cologne after a shower because I wanted to smell just like Granddaddy. Granddaddy was a man who was never defeated, who was wise beyond measure, and good beyond question. As I became a man I learned of some of Granddaddy’s flaws, of past times not so happy, of the darker side of the hero that I revered; but those things only made him more real and to know who he was to me and from whence he had come, made him all the more amazing. It is our flaws as well as our merits that define us, that provide us with contrast, for our light shines so much brighter when viewed juxtaposed to our darkness. As I look at my father and at his father, I swell with a pride that makes my heart glow. To know who and where you come from, to stand with them, even if in their shadow, is an honor that all good men should know. I have known it. I have stood with my heroes, I have walked in stride with demigods, and I have sat in fellowship with men so great and remarkable that if they did not exist, I would have had to invent them. Nothing would bring me greater fulfillment than to see my children staring up starry eyed at Granddaddy’s smiling face on some chilly Christmas morning. There is no greater blessing that I could ask of God that the warmth of his heart shines on great-grandchildren he has yet to know and that his smile, his love, his kindness, and his generosity will be with us for many years to come. Granddaddy, I pray that God will watch over you, be with you, and guide those who care for you. Your doctors have in their hands a treasure more priceless than the grace in my tongue can describe and the world would be a darker and colder place were it to leave us. With all the Sincerity and Love in the World, The Number One Grandson - Geoffrey

first update of 2006 - 1/2/2006

Melody got home around 12:30 am Christmas morning. I had been spending Christmas Eve with mom and dad and was waiting to see my precious little sister before I headed out.

 Melody came and we opened gifts. Mom and dad gave us both a VERY generous card full of presidential portraits as well as a few stocking stuffer things. I think my most prized was a little red book entitled The World according to Mr. Rogers. For those of you that don't know, Fred Rogers is one of my personal heroes. His temperament and demeanor were so respectful of others, good natured, and forthright. His meek kindness and simple, though crucial, lessons were a wonderful example that more of us should take to heart. I managed to make it to my place by three in the morning and quickly got the rest of my packing done and managed to get into bed for a couple hours of sleep. I arrived at the Memphis terminal with plenty of time to spare. I expected a large crowd, but Christmas morning proved to be a very light travel day. I sat around the airport browsing through Hudson

news and had a couple of bagel dogs before time for my flight. I had a pleasant flight to Chicago O'Hare.

Once in Chicago, I called Jacleen to let her know I was well on my way. I stopped by to get a burger and I managed to spill a copious amount of mustard on the pocket of my white oxford shirt. Too, giddy to be mad, I laughed for a moment and though how typical that was of me. I decided that I was not going to have a giant visible mustard stain be the first thing my beloved would see of me in our first face to face meeting. I quickly went by a tourist shop and bought 3 exorbitantly priced heart shaped I love Chicago pins. They didn't exactly cover the stain, but they would do for the moment. While On the plain I took a sales receipt and pinned it over my pocket, using the buttons to fasten it. It hid the stain sufficiently. As we came into the final approach for Baltimore/Washington International, I saw Buddy Holly's life flash before my eyes as we encountered bad weather and some pretty alarming turbulence. Since this was only my third time to be in an airplane, I imagine that it seemed much worse than it really was, but it seemed bad. I gripped the seatback in front of me tightly until the 757's wheels screeched at the touch of terra firma.

I got off of the plane and went to a restroom for a quick appraisal of my image. It was sad; hair unkempt and matted with sweat, an odd piece of paper pinned to my pocket with tiny metal hearts, my pants looking slightly off due to the fact that I managed to lose a button tucking my shirt in on the plane, and generally looking several hundred thousand dollars shy of a million bucks. I did what I could with my hair, un-tucked my shirt, tightened my pants (thank goodness for drawstrings), and looked myself in the mirror and said, this is what you are, love it or leave itI summoned all the bravado, overconfidence, and machismo I could to walk boldly out of the concourse with my head held high and my chest swelled to its fullest. I don't know if it was she that saw me first or if I spotted her before she caught a glimpse of me. It seemed simultaneous, but that might be a little too fairy tale to be real. The instant I saw her, the past five years of all the ups and downs, emotional moments, conflicts, passion, longing, and love came to its culmination. I cannot remember any joy, any rapture, any religious experience, or any moving moment so poignant. I looked out and saw a vision standing before me. I must have stood there with my mouth agape for several minutes as I marveled at how she could possibly be more beautiful in person than she appeared in pictures. As soon as I passed security we met in an embrace that felt timeless. The rest of the world melted away and in that moment she and I were the only people on earth; Adam and Eve standing arm in arm amid the paradise of God's creation. She quickly brought me back to reality and commented that I was looking at her like I couldn't believe she was real. I almost couldn't. I felt like Columbus spotting land.

Suddenly my dreams and fantasies stood before me in flesh and blood. What else can you do when your dreams step out of your mind and come become tangible? We went down and waited several minutes for my luggage and then we made our way out to the parking garage where her big blue dodge pickup sat. We drove to the hotel holding hands and forsaking each other’s grasp only long enough for her to shift gears. I was giddy; visibly giddy. I checked in to the motel six near the airport and freshened up with a shower. We sat and talked and for the first time I was able to give that kiss that I had promised her so many years ago. We stole a few brief moments and held each other closely. We touched foreheads and starred into each other’s eyes because there was not enough time nor words beautiful enough for language to convey what we felt. Time, being the cruel taskmaster, that he is, prompted us to gather ourselves and leave for dinner. Once we arrived, I promptly realized that I'd left the tickets at the hotel so we returned, collected them, and made it back to the castle in time for the beginning of the games at Medieval Times. We had Royalty seating so we were given our complimentary banners, programs, and DVD's and were escorted to our seats on the third row of the Green Knight's section. We enjoyed a sumptuous feast of vegetable soup, garlic bread, roasted potato, spareribs, and half of a baked chicken (all without the encumbrance of modern utensils) We each got souvenir ceramic steins and enjoyed an evening of horsemanship, theatrical fantasy, and skill at arms. We cheered and hollered and sat closely as we watched the entertainment unfold. We drove back to the hotel and spent a few more hours being close to one another. I made it a point to trace her features, her scent, the sound of her voice, the smell of her hair, and every other sensation I could attain, into my memory. I knew our time would be brief and it would make the time between then and our next meeting seem all the more vast.

Our plans for the Edgar Allen Poe house and Aquarium on Monday did not come to pass because of the weather and other logistical considerations, but I was not the least bit disappointed. I called her early the next morning to find that her grandmother had fallen and had been taken to the hospital. She was up all night and had only gotten a couple hours of sleep when I called her. I woke that morning at five thirty and decided that it would be indecent to call her before six. I walked over to the McDonald's by the hotel and ate a breakfast. After stuffing myself on hotcakes and McGriddles, I came back to the hotel and called her around six-thirty. She informed me of the night she'd had and I told her to go back to sleep, get some rest and come on over once she was awake. I tooled around the hotel and watched some TV until around nine-ish. Once there we spent the morning lazing about in each other’s arms, watching TV, laughing, and showering each other with year's worth of affection. We went to The Cheesecake Factory for lunch and had a feast of eclectic cuisine. It was wonderful. I even got to enjoy a Mojito! After lunch we returned to the hotel for more time basking in each other’s presence. She thought that I might have been disappointed about the events we had planned, but all I cared about was spending time with her. I didn't go to sight see, I went to spend Christmas with the woman I love. I told her that I didn't sacrifice Christmas with my family for just anyone, but as soon as I said it, I realized that I hadn't. I hadn't sacrificed Christmas with my family. I had taken the leap and made 2005 the first Christmas with my new family. She is family, if not yet official, then certainly in my heart. I want all of the Christmases from now until the time I leave this world to be with her and with our children and our grand children and great grand children. I want her standing there in my arms as we watch our kids unwrapping presents, playing with toys, and experiencing the bright eyed joy that Christmas means to those who believe in its miraculous truth.

We ate dinner at a Japanese steak house. It was a hibachi grill-style place and was tons of fun. The food was scrumptious and we laughed, ate, and took joy in the fun had by the children of a couple seated with us. We did not linger after dinner. She dropped me off at the hotel and didn't come up. She was exhausted and we both had to get up well before dawn to get me on a plane. The next morning was all business. She had managed to talk me into not being sad when I left that morning. As she pulled up to the terminal to drop me off, she got out and we said our goodbyes. I was surprised that I wasn't overcome with longing and sadness for leaving, but instead I found myself filled with an overflowing hope and a renewed resolve that she is most certainly without question the most remarkable woman I've ever known and that God's own hand brought us together and that same providence will see us together. I suppose you might say that I am convinced, but I have been for a long time. Pam Tilgman once shared with me a quote of Davey Crocket's “Make sure you're right, then go ahead!” To me this has rung true. I may be cautious in making decisions, but once made I am steadfast and resolute to see them completed. I am sure it is right and I am ready to go ahead.

So where does this leave us now? Well from my best understanding of her goals and my best understanding of my own I can imagine things going like this. She'll move to Chicago and work there for a year while working on her degree and getting her broker's license. I shall teach in Memphis and we will see each other as often as our schedules permit since Chicago is only about 7 hours away from Memphis

She may move to Memphis in a couple of years (her firm has an office here) I shall teach until my car is paid for and then investigate the plausibility of graduate school. Once she is here then we will give serious consideration to things like marriage, house, kids, family, retirement, old age, and blissful golden years. Yeah. That's a long term plan with few details filled in, but that's my concept of our future. I don't have a rosy view of things. I'm too cynical for that,. But God help me, if it doesn't make me smile to think about it anyway. I know that with her by my side and me by hers and God's hands upon us both that there is no obstacle that we cannot face.

Last night I spent New Year's with Will, Chiclet, Peeps, Usry and James. We went out to Shogun and I returned with Chiclet back to her house to ring in the New Year with her.

I slept there since I saw no real purpose in driving back to my house. I awoke early and left. I got to Aunt Liz's house and got to spend New Year's Day celebrating Christmas in our traditional family get together. It was so good to see them all again. I wish mom had felt well enough to join us, but she wasn't up to travel and rich food. I managed to walk away with sleep sounds machine from the annual game of “Dirty Santa,” and tons of leftovers and groceries thanks to the generosity and stubborn insistence of my WONDERFUL Aunt Liz! She is so sweet. She reminds me so much of Granny Dot.

Now I have 2 days to get my apartment back in order and get ready for another 5 months of trial by fire at good old Frayser High School. I am considering looking into finding another school in Memphis, but it may be too soon to make any decisions about things. There are a few good reasons to stay at Frayser, but there are also many good reasons to go in search of something more ideal.

In the meantime I am going to just try and keep on doing the best I can with what I've got to work with. I am going to try and procure the finest furniture that the Salvation Army has to offer, to expand my circle of friends, run some good Vampire, and find a way to make headway in the never ending struggle against the voice of doubt and the darkness that I know stalks me without end. I am hopeful and I think that 2006 will be a year of change, of growth, of prosperity, and may prove to be the groundwork for all the wonders that the future will bring. Goodnight and God Bless.

I need a hug - 10/8/2007

I need a hug.

feel so lonely and scared right now.

I have been thinking a great deal about past loves, regrets, things I should have said and did and fantasies that will never come true.

During the day there are distractions to keep the dark lingering terrors and solitude at bay, but after the TV is off and the lights are out and there is nothing left but the white noise of my bedside fan then they all come flooding back and waves crash against my happiness and wear it away like a sandcastle consumed by the surf. AS if the ever present struggle between rationale and faith wasn't enough, there is the looming specter of my financial woes, my struggle to find companionship and lasting love, fear for the wellbeing of those I love, and my desperate need for affection. I am a child again, trapped under the tree branch in the snow struggling to free myself while all that I know and love is just out of earshot from my screams and cries for help. I am alone. Jacki is a lifetime away and she has her own struggles to contend with. She loves me, but she can't commit to me in the way that I'd like and I love her, but the fact that we know each other so profoundly, yet so limitedly always makes me wonder if pledging myself to her and ask her to pledge herself to me is anything more than the two of us walking hand in hand to our own personal hell. I used to be sure. I was never surer of anything. But now when I am alone and hug my pillow tight and try to envision my lover embracing me, I am unsure of her face or what name to whisper quietly into the night. My prayer life hasn't been one of consistency in recent years, bet I have begun to pray for wisdom for strength, for patience, for peace, and for forgiveness. The nights are cold regardless of the temperature and when the room is dark I press my face into the pillow and breathe in deep the sweet aroma of my linen spray. It smells sweet, innocent, and feminine. I cannot describe how I long to be held and kissed and have my hair stroked gently by angelic fingers. I yearn so deeply for soft skin on my cheek, for smiles and little pecks and the soothing rhythm of a beating heart and breathing besides my own. I think back to the sweet tender innocent moments of affection and I thirst for the feeling of being loved. I thirst for it and it makes my heart feel dry, cracked, and wind burned. When I was certain of love I felt a greater purpose. I had a goal, a mission, a great quest to perform and now I have lost my way. I feel as if there is no fair maiden whose affections and charms are there for me to win, no damsel for me to rescue, no princess awaiting my triumphant return. And as I am now, I am not fit to woo another. I have been laid low and could not bear the weight of my own standard, much less feel the right to carry it with pride.

Life isn't all woes and lamentations. I am working in a local shoe store. The

work isn't what I'd call mentally challenging but it is constant and very taxing on my feet above all else. I hope they will toughen up and adapt. I am looking for something better, but in the mean time it is something to do to make a little money and every little bit helps at this point. I am thankful for the chance to make some coin, but there is something that concerns me about the entire situation that I can not quite put my finger on. I hope that is just my paranoia and that this does not become a self fulfilling prophecy. I find that my writing has once again become my emotional bar rag. When I am overcome I write and wipe up all the muck and wring it out on my keyboard. Writing used to give me great catharsis, but now it doesn't seem to go so far, but it does help and I should do it more often. My sister is far away as is my father. Dad I shall see periodically, but I won't see Melody again for months. I worry for her. She is so special to me and the thought of the evils of the world being inflicted upon her terrify and enrage me. No one knows me as well or as little as my sister. We have grown apart as she has grown up and become the woman she is. I am proud of her beyond description and the well between us saddens me somewhat, but I know that it also gives definition to who she is. Mom concerns me as well. I worry that she will descend further in to the microscopic world of games and books and her established routine and let the world leaver her behind. I cannot abide her turning into her mother and I will do whatever I can to help her, but so much that she does just does not make sense to me and when I try to understand it, I become frustrated and angry. I don't know when it was the mother changed or what it was that changed her so profoundly, but she is different from how I remember her in my youth. But, so is everything else.

For those of you that read, I love and appreciate hearing from you. IT is half the reason I write at all. &frac14; is for the historical record, &frac14; for the emotional sort and stack, and &frac12; to share with my friends those parts of me that are too important and personal for off the cuff remarks. Writing forces me to take the noise inside and sort it through, order it, and arrange it in a symphony of thought and feeling that, I hope, moves you and lets us better know each other. I thank you for reading. I love it when you respond. I pray that it means something to you as well

I feel quieter now.

I don't feel panicked.

I might be able to sleep.

been a while, I know - 11/11/2007

 I love the mechanical efficiency of my anti-spyware cleaners. If only there was such a device for our lives; a program that analyzes one's existence in thirty minutes and automatically identifies all of our errors, shortcomings, and mistakes and then fixes them all simultaneously. I always pride myself on the relative cleanliness of my hard drive it is a shame that my life seems so cluttered at times. I stopped working at the shoe store a couple of weeks ago because being on my feet for six hours at a time was too painful and just not worth minimum wage. Mr. Allan tried to help by letting me spend my time working on his web site, but by the end of the day, I realized that I was either unwilling or unable to do pretty much everything that he wanted done with his web site so, I told him that and we parted company as amiably as could be expected. I am going to substitute teacher orientation Tuesday and I am looking forward to being in a classroom again. The Cleveland school district pays their licensed subs fifty five dollars a day. I will need to work at least 10 days a month in order to meet my major financial obligation. I am praying for the most miserable of health for all of the district's educators and or any dependants they might have which might require them to make use of their sick and or personal days. I am also investigating the possibility of being a rural mail carrier associate, which pays well, but it isn't something that I would be able to start until after the new year (in all likelihood) and there is somewhat of a problem (or there may be) of using my vehicle to deliver mail or obtaining some other means of doing such.

 I am concerned about keeping my car, but financial woes are not at the forefront of my mind. I am very concerned about my dad. He has an elderly friend who has been in bad shape for some time and dad has been bending over backwards to try and do everything he can to help him. Dad is the executor of his estate and after losing consciousness for about 72 hours, the reality that his friend may be near the end has set in. His friend begs for death because of the constant pain he is in and between seeing him in agony, dealing with trying to see that he is cared for and the looming thought of having to deal with his friend's family should he pass on is taking a terrible toll on dad and he has not been able to work for a week because he has been here working on all of this. I went to help dad move a couple of beds at his friend's house the other day. As I walked in the first thing I hear was his friend calling out for help. Dad responded and I entered the back part of the house to get a look at what was going on. His friend was lying on his side with a pillow between his knees and his legs half drawn up towards his torso. He jerked involuntarily as a wave of pain shot through his body and I saw such agony in his face that it made step back and take pause. I could see the pain that it caused dad to have to know that there was nothing he could do for him. Every few seconds his friend would shriek out in agony” Aaahh!” or he'd yell out my dad's name. The hospice worker was buzzing about mostly getting in our way as we disassembled a mechanical hospital bed and moved it into the bedroom where his friend was on a regular bed. After fighting with the heavy bed frame and getting it in place, we had to move him and negotiate with the bag and tube tied into his bladder. Dad slid his arms under his friends and I grasped his legs under the knees and like a sack of flour we lifted and moved him from bed to the other a gingerly but as quickly as we could. His friend shrieked out in pain as we moved him and began to cry out “Moose! Oh Moose! Oh God, Moose!” My heart broke and I prayed for him silently as I attempted to maneuver him and get his urinary tubing out from under his legs. “Mike, why didn't this kill me?” he asked dad several times. Then he began to ask for a cigarette. Dad said he could have one later, to appease him, but had no intentions of letting him smoke in his condition. Dad and I then disassembled the regular bed all the while plagued with his friend's screams of tortured pain. We moved the mattress; box springs, headboard, and frame out of the room and re positioned the hospital bed. I walked out of the house and got into my car and sat there silently for a minute as the echoes of his pleas and screams resonated in my mind. I couldn't help but think why weren't his children there for him? They were in town, or so I had heard. Were they circling his broken and infirm frame like vultures waiting for an old animal to die? And what kind of life was this for his friend? Robbed of his dignity, every second a hellish spasm of wracking anguish, forced to be a burden to those that love and care for you and those that are paid to attend to your needs when you can't, if there is no real hope for his improvement, then is prolonging this hell on earth really the humane and loving thing to do?

It is one of the things that I have witnessed in my life that I wish I could forget. The thought of wasting away in a hospital bed is not how I wish to depart this world. The stress on dad is terrible and I hope that he will find the strength to bear the burden for as long as he must.

On a positive note, I got the chance to see my sister perform an adaptation of Treasure Island this past week. Seeing her play male parts was something new to me and I couldn't help but notice that she exhibited a range that surprised and pleased me. She was so expressive. I can tell that she grows each time she performs. I am so completely proud of her. It was also nice to meet her friend DJ and help him out with his computer. He seems like a nice guy and a very talented performer, as well. And it was wonderful to have a chance to eat lunch with Emily again. I am so glad we got the chance to hang out for a little bit. I miss her. I also got the chance to go through Grenada and see Granddaddy and Jane and not one but two of my favorite aunts! The folks are now in the process of making plans for Thanksgiving and I am trying to think of some sculptural project for Christmas presents. Last year it was hand engraved glyphs in limestone with wood bases, this year, I think I'm going to try something like a small wooden carving roughly the size of a large drinking glass, but what should I make? I thought about boxes or goblets, but I don't think I'd be able to hollow them out properly with the tools at my disposal. It will take more thought. Perhaps I shall find something that inspires me. In the mean time, I shall continue to live life day by day and keep my eyes on the prize that lies beyond the far horizon.

What does it all MEAN? - 11/15/2007

Dreaming makes no sense to me sometimes.

Here is what I remember. I was walking along what looked like a street in Cleveland and I came to a giant lawn with a walking track around it and benches spaced periodically around that. Chris Barnes was on a red bicycle and rode by me. We waved and he rode over parked his bike nest to the road, and then went over and went to sleep on one of the benches. I noticed his bike standing all alone and unguarded, so I went over and picked it up and brought it over to where he was and attempted to place it close enough to the bench that anyone moving it would alert him to the fact. I then found myself in a hallway. I was lying on my stomach and there were 2 bedrooms in front of me, a bathroom to my left at the end of the hallway and an opening to my right that led to a large living room. It was just like Granddaddy's house, but somehow not. Eileen was lying on the floor to my right in the doorway perpendicular to me. We were quietly discussing the necessity of opening the door to the bedroom in front of me (the one farther from the bathroom)as quietly as possible and I began pushing the door in infinitesimal increments the my two index fingers. Eileen nodded in approval and stood and walked away. The door creaked open and revealed a darkened room with someone sleeping, but I could not make out whom. Then I was standing in a kitchen, but not Grandaddy's. It was Aunt Bobbie and Uncle Tommy's house and there were dozens of girls arriving. I was informed by Aunt Bobbie that I needed to help get everyone situated and that Geoff (whetstone) would be by tomorrow to take everyone somewhere. The girls were all there for some kind of video game tournament or convention or something and there were many familiar faces. Chiclet, Jennifer (Usry) Bagley, Kim Creekmore, and some faces not so familiar. There was a girl that looked a lot LIKE Jennifer in many respects, but also somewhat different. Now that I think about it, she was a girl that I went to high school with, but I cannot recall her name. All of the girls were gathering in the living room (which was now somehow adjacent to granddaddy's hallway) and they began crawling into sleeping bags and watching cartoons or playing video games and tiny hat box sized televisions that looked like miniature computer monitors from the early 80's. I was called in to the kitchen by Bobby and asked to help force open a door to a laundry room filled with dirty linens and clothes everywhere. I was pushing on the door with all of my might when Kim came up to me and we began talking. She was flirting with me while I was trying to force this door open and I was struggling to enjoy it, flirt back, but still get the door opened. I finally opened the door and then Bobby told me some of the girls had some questions for me so I began to navigate my way through the room filled with girls in sleeping bags. Some were still away and watching TV or playing video games and others were fast asleep. I found an open spot on a couch at the back of the room and began making my way there. Just as I was about to sit down I bumped the foot of one of the sleeping girls. I knew her name was Katie, but her face was unfamiliar and not any Katie that I know of. She said something like

“Not even got to say excuse me after you woke me up?”in a half flirtatious half kidding way and I apologized profusely as I fixed her sleeping bag back. I sat down between Chiclet and some girl I didn't recognize and they began asking me questions. I can't recall what they were asking me about only that I felt very knowledgeable and confident in my answers. I could feel myself falling in to that pattern where I begin to exude charm and make myself the lovable, smiling, customer service type. I recall Jennifer placing a pillow over her face to stifle an uproarious laughter at something funny that she had seen on TV. I was then asked to get something out of the car, outside and so I stood up and walked out leaving the girls that were watching me with an almost smarmy wink. I got outside and just as the trunk of the car was opening I was awakened to a knock on my bedroom door.

That is all the imagery I can remember and as best as I can describe it as it fleets away from my conscious thoughts.

One thing did stand out to me, but not until I just posted it here. Two of the girls in the dream that had some significance or direct interaction with me were romantically involved with my friend, Jed.

Mind spooge - 4/25/2008

My mind is abuzz with things I want to say and things that may need to be said but I can't seem to find any logical way to piece them together that would make sense to anyone else

Sometimes I really am concerned about how I let things affect me emotionally. I was watching television just a little while ago and saw a segment of a show on food network talking about a peach farm somewhere in Texas. The clip depicted a bunch of families picking and eating peaches in an orchard and I saw a little girl of no more than three or four being hoisted upwards into the branches to reach out and pick a peach from the vine. I was overcome at how sweet and tender an image it was.

My childhood was filled with peach trees, plum trees, apple trees, blackberry bushes and honeysuckle vines all bearing nature's sweet fragrant fruits that I would pluck and eat as if go had made them grow there just for me to enjoy. I can recall the satisfaction of finding the biggest blackberry on the bush and popping it, unwashed right into my mouth and crushing its dark juicy cluster between my tongue and the roof of my mouth and letting the dark purple love spill over my tongue and tingle the sides of my mouth with its gorgeous sweet and sour ballet. Occasionally I'd pick a green blackberry and bite in to it just to feel my whole face draw up in a wonderful pucker.

I'd stand for hours by the sweet growth of honeysuckle near the eastern fence along our yard at our old country home and gently pluck the blossoms, being sure to leave the little green bud on the end so I could break it with my thumbnail and pull the stamen out ever so carefully and catch the tiny transparent drop of nectar on my tongue.

Honeysuckle and magnolias are what heaven must smell like. I think that's why death means so much to southerners. Why would you want to leave some place that is so much like heaven already?

There is something truly magical about the south. It is a land of extremes, of intensity, of passion, and of pride. Nowhere else is a land and a people more teaming with dichotomy and contradiction than the south. Nowhere else do the tunes of sorrow, heartache, suffering, and pain blend to weave the peculiar optimistic harmony that resonates in the hearts of its children and dances on the lips of those who have been there, who have seen it, and who have lived long enough to tell the tale

All my ambitions point towards being able to relive those days of innocence and wonder through the eyes of my own children when God blesses me with them. I dream about teaching my children the important things that babes of the south should know; teaching them about tadpoles and crawdads, whittling and whistling, about being polite and how to act in church, how to bait a hook, shoot a bow, how to be quiet and still and feel the presence of God in seeing a deer walking in the morning mists or listening to the joyful chorus of tree frogs and crickets by the lakeside at dusk.

Of all the things that I cherish, it is the dream that those visions may come to pass that mean more to me than any other. My life has lead me here, to this time and place, and has made me who I am to see the challenges that the roles of husband and father will present me with

It is for these things that I would sacrifice all. It is for these things alone that I harbor a secret zeal. It is for these things alone that I look for as the truth of what joys existence holds

My loneliness is profound and I have come to know the missing element of myself is a woman to adore and be my helpmate and children to love and be my legacy. And though I am sad now, my faith comforts me that all things happen according to God's plan and that my suffering now will help me to know patience and make me a better man.

There is something wonderful about the quiet. As I pause to think of what to write next and how to say it I can clearly hear my wristwatch ticking as it sits on the table beside me. Its steady crisp tic tic tic drumming on as if to say time stands still only in your mind and the rest of the world keeps spinning while you ponder. Its light soft clicks layered over the low steady thump of my heart beating in my chest provide the rhythm section for a delightful simmering jazz beat that my mind solos over like Charlie Parker wailing and moaning as he redefines the rules and leaves the blues scale in the box and plays what the mood tells him to play

My chest hurts. It could be my posture as I sit at my keyboard like an oaf at the dinner table showing no manners with my elbows planted atop the desk in front of me, hunched over staring at my keys to betray my lack of typing skills. Every few words I look up at the screen to fix a misspelled word or forgotten punctuation. The rest of the time I watch the little white letters on black keys in front of me play peek-a-boo as the words stream out of my mind and down to my fingertips. I have been accused of writing like Faulkner. Not necessarily with his skill for painting a mental picture, but surely for echoing his disdain for over punctuation. I think the run on sentence and the fragment are proselytized as evil by academics too concise and unimaginative to appreciate their ability to transport the written word back into the realm of conversation, which is where all great ideas and poetic sentiments are shared. Proper writing isn't nearly always good writing because it is so over processed and too thoroughly thought out to be authentic and truly representative of the author's train of thought. Writing should speak as much about the author as it does about the subject about which they choose to write

When I write, I usually put words on paper or screen as stream of consciousness and my revisions rarely include more than grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and the occasional rewording of something when I find I've overused an adjective. My writing is my mind at work and is always a genuine picture of my thoughts and how they flow from one to the next. It is not unlike works of art that Dali referred to as spontaneous drawings. These were works of art without planning or censorship that stream from the artists thoughts of the moment on to a medium for permanent archival preservation of the images born from the instance of inspiration. Real genius can never be planned. It must boil forth from the soul like a geyser bursting forth from the earth. Creativity must spurt out from our minds as mental semen ejaculated in moments of quaking revelation in to the womb of reality, desperately gushing forward to seek out the confines our existence, penetrate them, and impregnate them with our unique perspectives and give birth to new creation as if we were striving to mimic God's genesis in our own limited way

I have to pee

And my chest still hurts.

I think that's enough skimming off the top of my consciousness for now

Ciao, true believers!

A change in the weather - 5/27/2008

 “WHAT HAPPENS?” G.M.L. 5-27-08

What happens when the goddess falls?

What for the poet when the muse fades away?

Who will hear his prayers of adoration?

Who will inspire his lyric verse?

What happens when the lover leaves?

What for the knight when the maiden is lost?

Who will cherish his tender affections?

Who will invigorate his manly valor?

Where do the broken pieces of love go?

Where to store the fragments of shattered dreams?

Will they fit neatly on a shelf in our memory?

Will they fill a forgotten corner of our heart?

What happens when the beauty departs?

What for the man when his mate says farewell?

Who will he gave upon in enraptured awe?

Who will fill the void left in his embrace?

I see her face and her eyes haunt me. I reflect on the pain and joy that we have shared and brought each other, the moments of closeness that seem so far away and long ago, the dreams we had of a happy life together that now seems so unlikely that impossible is the only word that could describe its potential. She will be one of the greatest loves of my life, without a doubt and her face, the sound of her voice, and warmth of her touch will always be the most bittersweet of memories for me. I have carried my torch until its weight has worn me to fatigue and its flames have long grown to cold spent coals. I have no regrets and would do it all a thousand times over. She is and ever shall be my closest of friends and dearest of companions, but the reality of our paths intersecting and merging as one has long since passed into the realm of fantasy, what if, it would have been nice, and has passed clear on through to happening only in the most miraculous of circumstances. My prayers have changed from let us find our way together to let us be free of bitterness, blame, and find mutual happiness in our own rights. If God has willed us to be together, then he will have to set in motion the currents of time that will bring our ships back to each others' path

It isn't as new as it may seem or may sound. It has been a long time coming. It has been a slow gradual spiral that we both fought with measures that were valiant, compromising, but ultimately unable to prevent the inevitable. I wish her all the love, happiness, fulfillment, and beauty that she desires. She is a wonder and will always have a special place in my heart, my memories, and my life.

It is an acknowledgement of the closure of this chapter in love that prefaces a new chapter. I am in love with someone. I wouldn't dare offer comparison because it would cheapen both of the women that I speak of in this chronicle. She was blindsided when I told her, flattered, honored, but both she and I knew that even if she felt the same way time and circumstance stand in opposition to anything that might develop. But there is nothing to be heartbroken over, there is only joy that there is always hope, always possibilities, always the future, always love. While nothing may develop of my new love, the fact that love prevails, persists, and lives on is enough to warm my heart and give me strength to step boldly into the future with optimism and intrepidity.

This isn't a writing of lamentation, of mourning, of disappointment; it is a declaration of hope. This is a message of wonder, of rebirth, of renewal, and of change in the weather. Grey skies are going to clear up and I shall put on a happy face.

A friend gave me some encouragement recently that I will share:

Her: let your heart lead you, but decide first to be content no matter what happens. Something good happens, that speaks for itself. Something less desired...you were brave enough to let your heart speak and courageous enough to take the step

Me: thank you. That helps a great deal. You are always good council

Her: I have an itch in my heart

Me: damn...that'd be hard to scratch

Her: it's telling me that it is time for you to re-awaken; for you to revive the passionate, inspiring, inspired soul. You must be the phoenix. It's this bizarre feeling

Me: I feel like I'm constantly chasing the energy I need to burst forth from the ashes

Her: the reigns are dangling there by your side...they are within your grasp. Take hold, let all the recent anger, sadness, disappointments, joys...let it fuel you.

Me: you are just the prophetic one tonight, aren't you! :)

Her: I was beginning to wonder that myself

Her: I haven't felt this moved by something in a while.

Me: wow.

Her: this voice pushes me, saying “him; tell him.”

Me: I will heed its words and yours

Her: I know that I can trust you to know that I am being 100% honest...

Her: God

Her: this has not happened in many, many years

Her I have stepped out of “organized religion” a good bit because of what it had become for me, but never away from Him.

Me: that is understandable. I've been there

Her: you have been on my heart a lot lately...even though I have not said this to you

Her: I felt this incredible pull to talk to you tonight

Her: I was just going to say hi when I sat down, but all this emotion hit me

Her: I dunno if emotion is even the right word

Me: wow. That means a lot to me. I have felt like my life has been in a holding pattern for a long while now and that finally I can see new hope on the horizon, mostly from the news of getting the new job, but my personal life has still just been a big clutter

Her: to put it plainly, God told me to tell you to awaken and move.

Her: and do not be afraid

Her: if you were looking for a sign...this is it

Me: well, I shall at least speak my heart and risk rejection from venturing rather than wonder what if.

Her: I love you

Her: I am looking forward to seeing things brighten for you

Me: I love you to, sweetie! I hope that your intuition is right

Her: she is rarely very far off. It has happened, and she has been misguided before.

Her: but when I am still and really listen...she's right

Me: I just have to think about what to say to...

Her: monkeys eat chicken nuggets!

Her: it will make her smile

Me: thanks so much for talking with me tonight.

Her: you are welcome

Thank you so much, Boo. Thank you and thanks to all of my friends who have stood by me while I have been in a place of darkness, fear, and loathing.

Just like in Mary Poppins, There has been a change in the weather.

Fear and Loathing in Cleveland is almost at its end and soon the shell shall crack open, the wings will stretch to warm in the sun, and the phoenix will again be reborn from the ashes and rise resplendent to ascend to its rightful place in the heavens winging ablaze to glory

Turn the page. It is time for a new tale.

drip drip drip... - 11/11/2008

So, the past five days have seen me soar to the highest heights of mania as I rode a wave of creative kindred fellowship with my fellow artist and educators and now I have once again sunk to a low that I haven't felt since before I got my career back on the rails and rolling again. Every day that passes I feel my age and I find myself looking into the eyes of those I find appealing to desperately see a glint of interest or a spark of intrigue in their eyes as they look at me. My solitude feels so resolute lately. There always seems to be a barrier between me and anyone that might fit the bill as a companion. The only think that seems greater than my desire for someone to love and love me is the imminent hopelessness of that possibility being made manifest. Strange ghosts from the past came around the corner to say boo and point their icy fingers at wounds long since healed but still visible. It didn't hurt me, but it made me remember the pain I felt then, of whom I used to be, and of how much I both miss and loathe that incarnation of myself. My thoughts drift to my friend that passed away recently. She was a beautiful angle of creative joy. She was an artist like no other and her passion, her warmth, and her vitality flowed not only through her creations but through every fiber of her being. I truly wish I'd known her better and had made the effort to spend more time with her when I had the chance. I recently painted an abstract piece and dedicated it to her. I'm including the dedication here for posterity.

This painting is dedicated to the fond memory of Melanie Tyler Owen.

Melanie was my creative hero, a powerful force of personal and artistic encouragement, and my friend. Melanie was always appreciative of what I was trying to say through my art even if the statement was as simple as, “Hey, look at this, isn't it neat?” Melanie's encouragement of my artistic pursuits and the incredible example she provided within her own art kept me motivated to improve my skills and ever develop my ability to create. Melanie was a true artist. Her vision reflected all that life holds and both she and the works she created will have an impact that transcends her time spent with us. I will miss my friend, but she will live on in our hearts and is immortal even in this world through her art.

Being around my peers was both a tremendous validation as well as a reminder of my inadequacy, my laziness, and the fact that I always feel like a poser, like a wear a mask of artistry, like I'm pretending to be something and those that know me spare my feelings and those that do not know I am phony and are so disgusted that they say nothing. I look upon the ingenuity and the fresh wellspring of uniqueness that flows from their hearts and minds and I know that the only things that flow so freely from within me are dark, spiteful, vicious, bleak, and appalling. Where is the beauty within? Where is the muse to light my senses aflame and kindle within me the joy that can tap the wellspring of vision that is inherent in a maker?

I can't describe the ache I feel when I see a face or a smile or the soft features that cause the song of love long since gone to echo within the empty caverns of my heart. It makes me shudder, buckle, and go limp with anguish, regret, and hopelessness. Time is passing me by. I see the smile of a child as they discover the world around them, I see their faces light as their world grows by leaps and bounds just by peering at life around them and I want to hold them and tell them of all the beauty in the world. I wonder about holding my own children next to me and teaching all the wonderful things about what their new senses can perceive. I wonder who they will be. I wonder when I will meet them. I wonder who will be by my side and hold those tiny hands with me as we walk through life.

I shuffle sideways along a ledge toward some semblance of stability, comfort, happiness, and fulfillment. I see my toes dangle over the edge and feel my feet slip uneasily on the loose gravel beneath me. I feel the sharp jagged cliff at my back and the blistering sun searing my skin as hot dry winds weather my face and dry my eyes. I keep chanting my mantra as is slide inch by inch along the thin incline toward the mountaintop. Keep going. One more step. Breathe deep. Step and check your footing. Shift your weight. Keep Going. One more step.

I always witness greatness and always feel that it is always just out of my grasp. Consistency is one of my only consolations and relentless determination is the only momentum I can count on at times. For the past few years I left life pass me by and now I am trying to catch up to it and claw tooth and nail to get within arm’s reach of where I want to be. It is as if I can see it up ahead and the only obstacles in my way are time, patience, and its substantial lead as I struggle to build up steam and explode forth from my steady jog.

I know. It is bleak. I haven't written in a while. I feel guilty about that. I miss the catharsis that I used to live on like a beautiful drug and the words of those of my friends that read and bless me with kind words of understanding, sympathy, and encouragement. It really is food for my soul. Knowing that you've read and hearing you share something because of it is a salve that soothes my weary spirit.

So, now it is again time to close. There is so much to say, to share, and to pour forth from the vessel with me but my hands are tired and unwilling to lift the weighty pitcher and hold it steady and let my mind trickle out. Later when they are strong again, I will try and fill the page again with the nectar my pitcher holds.

a reply to a friend's blog - 12/22/2008

People do read. I sometimes feel like my own musings are scattered to the wind for no one to notice, but occasionally someone reads and my words resonate within them and they tell me.

Bitterness and cynicism are the flip side of wisdom. I find myself fighting them off every day. I have done my best to be as adult as possible save for one tiny special place inside of me. That tiny special place is the home of the child. The spark of wonder at snowflakes, the uncontrolled laughter of being tickled breathless, and the miraculous joy of toys under the tree on Christmas morning. If you have that spark, give it room to breathe and take it out to see the sun once in a while and if you have lost yours, make a pilgrimage to find and rekindle it.

Journals are wonderful and I encourage you to write. They are like emotional toilet paper turned abstract art. You wipe all your shit on them and put them up for everyone to view and comment, but he real wonder is that your emotional backside is clean afterward. I know, kind of a disgusting analogy, but I think it still applies. I have been writing in one since late 2001 and it has over 700 entries of my soul sponged out into cyberspace. I want mint to be a moment, collected, edited, and bound for my friends to possess after I have gone to my great reward. It is very “cruel intentions” of me, but I like the idea of my joys, pains, dreams, and insights printed on fine paper, neatly organized and resting between a thick protective cover and sitting on the coffee tables of Bella Wallace, Kathryn and Raine Lollis, Kalee Marshall, and other yet to be named or even born. Until I have children of my own, it is my best hope for any form of immortality.

If there is one thing I understand and can appreciate in someone else it is loneliness. I do not need a woman to complete me, but I also know that man was not meant to be alone and that while I am whole, I yearn to part of a greater whole than myself. I have always been a family kind of guy. The things of this world mean little in comparison to a woman that loves me and children to teach, to love, and to help grow into intelligent and good men and women. I recently confessed to someone I admire: “ache inside. I miss not having a name to whisper to myself as I drift off to sleep and to spark my mind and body to motion from the peace of slumber. For now, it is that which consumes me...&”

For now I have to pray, be patient, and persistent.

I hope you have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.