We hope this issue of Savoir Faire brings you to new heights, appreciation, and love for the creativity of our talented students, faculty, and staff. We wanted to express our experiences as a class and inform the readers of the writings and artwork and how they bring a variety of different styles to the magazine. For all the artists waiting to burst out, just remember, there is power in creativity. As George Walter Fiske said, “I see the power of insight, imagination, vision”.

As with any literary journal, the Savoir Faire Staff members would like to offer many thanks to the people who assisted in making this issue successful. Michelle Triplet, Marjorie Harper, and Tammy Kennedy, with Student Life are to thank for all their help. Chris Bagwell, who promoted Savoir Faire through electronic messaging campus-wide, also deserves praise, as does Rusty Johnson, for scanning the artwork included in this issue. English Instructors Anna Nelson, Cielia Adams, and Jessica Cobbs, and Art Instructor Kelly McDade were a tremendous help in selecting works to be included in the magazine. Thanks are owed to Deans Holly French-Hart, English, and Larry Powell, Telecommunications, for making their department resources available. A special thank you goes to Danny Williams for coordinating the contributions of artworks to this publication.

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# Table of Contents

Meet the Artists ................................................................................. 4

Safety ................................................................................................. 8

Jared Coyle

I Remember ..................................................................................... 11

Amber Patton

My Impetuous Hound ......................................................................... 12

Elizabeth Nifong-Velazquez

Cat Castle ......................................................................................... 13

Nicole Valenzuela

I Remember ...................................................................................... 14

Dodie Snyder

Forever Cool ..................................................................................... 15

Harold Foster

Silent Nevermore ............................................................................. 16

Jason Lee

Two Worlds Apart ............................................................................. 18

Matthew Sutton

Swan Song ......................................................................................... 20

Jerry Gardner

Starving Artist .................................................................................. 25

Winner of the Savoir Faire Artist’s Award

Harold Foster
Pulse ..............................................................26
David Coston

Lilies and Slim Jims on my Grave .........................27
Winner of the Savoir Faire Writer’s Award
Victoria Barnhill

Not Too Long Long Ago ........................................31
Cha-Ni Koski

Casualties ..........................................................32
Jerry Gardner

Sleepy Hollow ...................................................34
Heidi Smith

“A Short Poem” ....................................................35
Jared Coyle

Paradise ............................................................36
Matthew Sutton
Dodie Snyder started writing poetry 18 years ago when she was in high school. Her Mom is her main source of encouragement and inspiration. Her dream job is to be a songwriter for her favorite artists. Her biggest life changing experience was having children.

David says his dream job is to be an actor/writer. He has an irrational fear of heights and is embarrassed when he gets angry. His pet peeve is hypocrites. To describe himself, he says, “I think I’m normal therefore I am.”

David Coston

Jared points to elementary art projects and high school essays as the beginning of his expression. His main form of expression is music—piano, saxophone, and voice. His irrational fear? “Even though I know a wasp or bee sting won’t kill me, I still bob and weave as though my life depended on it.” His dream job would be to be paid for doing what he does all day as it is: writing.

Harold’s inspiration comes from his high school art teacher Marilyn Henderson: “Each time I do a picture I think of all the things she would say about my artwork.” He would love to eventually be a cartoonist.

Amber Patton

Amber hates it when people don’t leave voice messages, and fears being stuck on a roller coaster. Her life changed when she a promotion at work inspired her to get a graphic design degree.
Victoria started writing as soon as she learned how and began composing music immediately upon taking up piano. Her primary pet peeve is people who complain about their lives without taking action to change. Her life-changing moment was when she committed her life to God.

Jerry has always expressed himself creatively. He draws inspiration from everyone whom he has seen overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. His pet peeves are being interrupted and ignored.

To give an idea of how long she has been creating artwork, Nicole says, “[M]y kindergarten teacher…told [my Mom], ‘This little girl is going to be an artist.’” She draws inspiration from her dreams and from nature. If such an award existed, she would win the award for most random irrational fear this issue: emus.

Ian has drawn for as long as he can remember. He started writing in 3rd grade. His favorite artist is Gustave Moreau, and he is inspired by everyone from Hilary Clinton to Kurt Vonnegut. He has a pair of dream jobs: a U.S. Embassy overseas or running a high-end art gallery.
Savoir Faire

Jason was a sax player in his school band and performed songs for his family. He is inspired by the unique styles of Prince and Michael Jackson. His irrational fear: Spiders. “What if they jump?!” His dream job is computer forensics investigator for the F.B.I.

Elizabeth draws inspiration from her mother’s life and the things she has overcome. Her pet peeves are people content to wait for opportunity and people who disrespect the military. Her dream job is to work for Disney.

Matthew is a self-taught photographer whose interest and creative expression in the medium began rather early on in life. He is inspired by the work of Jean Michele Cousteau. His pet peeve is faked attentiveness. His life-changing experience was the birth of his son on January 14, 2009.

Cha-Ni has an addiction to her cell phone, yet at the same time hates receiving constant text messages and calls. The worst job she recalls she ever had was working at Hollister folding clothes all day.
David Raines Community Health Center (DRCHC) is an independent, community-owned, non-profit, Joint Commission Accredited (JCAHO), Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) providing quality, affordable, primary and preventive services to all regardless of race, national origin or ability to pay. We operate five centers located in areas where care is needed. We are also a partner in North Star Health Systems-community health centers working together to improve health care in North Louisiana. There are multiple services available for BPCC students, including the following:

**Dental Sealant Program**
Children receive dental exams and sealants placed on the 6 and 12 year molars without charge to the parents. The mobile dental van takes the services directly to the children at school to address oral health in the most cavity prone teeth, the molars. David Raines Community Health Centers provide the dentist, dental support staff, sealant materials, equipment and supplies.

**Medical Home School Initiative**
It promotes healthy child development and encourages the establishment of a source for regular ongoing care for children and their families. David Raines provides a registered nurse and a licensed counselor at Northside Elementary School with no out of pocket expense to the parents. David Raines staff serves the students four days a week. This program helps eliminate truancy due to illness or behavioral problems.

“IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE”
The lead horse of the small posse stops as a sudden echo crashes across the valley. The rider calls to his men, “That’s the alarm! Break off pursuit! Back to the Port!!” and jerks his horse. The rest of the group quickly turns and gallops away to the distant call of a horn.

Further up the hill, a figure looks between the evergreens at the retreating riders. He heaves a sigh, shivering as he stands from the snow-covered ground. Rubbing his wrists, he moves the shackles to a more comfortable position along his forearm before continuing up the mountain. He carefully picks his way between the trees, doing his best not to leave a trail.

He stops at a frozen stream just as a few white flakes begin to fall through the trees. The wind picks up, cutting through the figure’s thin clothing. After a brief rest, he follows the stream for a few hours even as the snow falls heavily on him. His exhaustion and the constant snowfall cause him to leave the stream in search of shelter. He soon comes against a steep cliff and walks along it until he gets to an overhang. Shaking the snow from his shoulders, he hugs himself as he lies back against the stone, hoping he can make it through the night. He closes his eyes, only to reopen them, finding only pain and hurt in the darkness behind his lids, stemming from recent memories. Unable to sleep in the cold and knowing every step forward is another step away from slavery, he resumes trudging through the mountains.

He realizes he is on his knees, his breaths coming out hard and slow in the cold air. Blinking snow from his eyes, he looks at the broken landscape before him. He is surrounded by mountains, the peaks obscured from view by heavy clouds. All but the semi-protected trunks of evergreens are covered in white, including himself, he soon discovers.

He shakes his head, sending still more snow cascading to the ground. He manages to stand back up, noting the quiet around him as the wind gently blows against his side. “I’m not cold.” The thought strikes him as strange, until he wakes up enough to comprehend that he is cold; his senses are just dull. He rubs his face with his icy hands, being careful of the brand mark under his left eye and gets feeling back into the nerves.
“Which way…” he rasps out, his blue eyes looking for any type of landmark. He spots an area of unsettled snow at the bottom of a slight incline; he follows with his eyes the path, half covered from the night’s precipitation, to his position. “Oh, that’s right. I fell.”

He takes a few steps in the opposite direction, then turns to the right as he thinks he spots... “A cave? How lucky can I get?”

Lost, alone, with no food or water, his only goal now is the cave before him, which he soon realizes is much further away than he first thought. He stops twice for a break before he finally makes it to the snow covered opening. He digs through a barrier and finds himself in a small tunnel. He carefully walks into an almost overwhelming darkness, keeping near the left side of the tunnel for guidance and support. After a few dozen paces he runs into a wall, by feel discovering that he is in a much smaller passageway. He tries to find his way back, fails, and falls to the ground, much too tired to move. “At least I found a good place to die…”

Something scurries by his face and he instinctively snatches it, hearing a chorus of squeaks emanating from the object. “Sorry, little one.” He intends to snap the rodent’s neck and clean himself a meal, but something else catches his eye. “Where is that light coming from?” He looks to his fist, the beady eyes of the mouse wide in fear. “I’m really not that hungry…” It is a lie, but the mouse doesn’t know that. “I’ll let you go, for now. Call it a lesson on your part.” He opens his hand and the mouse jumps, falling to the floor with a light thump, and dashes into the darkness.

Before he can regret letting a free meal go, he looks back at the light, dimmer now, and tries to follow it as best he can. “Candlelight,” he thinks as he gets closer. “Someone moving with a candle. I hope they don’t mind strangers.” He pauses for a moment as he hears a voice, high pitched falsetto, singing in a strange, lilting language. The candle light stabilizes around a final corner as the voice becomes fuller, more feminine. The voice stops and Karl realizes the reason: he had turned the corner, quietly, but stupidly. His eyes
should’ve taken in the room, a low bed and nightstand looking out of place, shoved in a corner. Instead, like any male, he takes in the singer, tall, young, wearing a simple looking blouse and skirt under a heavy cloak, and bootied feet. Surprise registers on her face as she in turn looks at him.

“Chi sei? Cosa fai qui!?” Her voice is unnaturally smooth. Her posture, however, betrays her nervousness as she lets her arms come to her sides, fists clenched. “I’m sorry, I was lost, and I…”

“Che cosa? Non capisco che lei.” He shakes his head. “I don’t understand you.” The young woman’s eyes close as she whispers under her breath. A light passes between the two. Karl raises his left arm to shield his eyes… “Now do you understand me?” “Yes. Yes, I do.” He finds himself smiling. “My name is Karl. I’m a runaway.” He holds up the shackles at his wrist. The woman smiles back. “Not anymore, Karl. You are safe now. My name is Lara. Welcome to Sanctuary.”
To my impetuous hound,
I would be lying if I told you this contained hope;
Honestly, I have ten to spare and to give an anecdote.
Time is indeed precious and I do not wish to waste too much,
The only crime I would be guilty of is offering your wants and such.
I have heard of those enticing words that rain down like an Angel.
But really hound, are those true? Or are they just a fable?
Eyes of sapphire and lips like rubies,
Is not that what you told my cousin, Judy?
She was naive in her thoughts, to think that you would be true to her.
And now you have come to collect untainted,
True love’s gift of love that’s waited.
When Petra’s stone halls are full again,
I might consider this an offer and not a sin.
Your words were easy on the ears,
If I were a nymph held captive 10,000 years.
You speak high regards to every body part
And yes, you do show interest, even in my heart.
But childlike you are, you see
For you fuss and then whine like a baby.
You want it now, what youth has to offer
But you are no man, not even enough to father.
If beauty and wholesome treasures are what you seek,
May I suggest another girl?
Maybe Ursula or possibly Margarette?
For these young ladies search far and near
So I am sure you will do my dear.
My eyes seek one who speaks of time,
As if it was a precious gift and not a crime.
My time is up impetuous hound,
Run along now dear,
There is no kibble to be found.
I remember:
All the times you were there for me.
Through the times of good and bad,
Through the times I thought I needed to be free.

I remember:
All the times we were alone.
All the times we were apart.
I wanted to be with you ‘til dawn,
to feel the beating of your heart.

I remember:
All the times you said I love you.
All the times you cried,
All the times I didn’t know what to do.
All the times I wish I could have died.

I remember:
All the times you made me see.
All the times I said my love is for you.
All the times you made me believe.
All the times your love was true,
But most of all I remember you.
My nerves ached with fear. Ancient memories of me—a shy, quiet lad—speaking in front of a class of my peers caused a feeling of nausea. My bass guitar felt heavy, making my legs feel like freshly boiled spaghetti—loose and unsupportive. Echoing chants from a seemingly impatient audience sent a terrifying numbness into my soul. Silence suddenly invaded me. Eventually, I realized that the ear-shattering, heavy metal music we played that night was not as piercing as the silence in the moments leading up to that life-changing event.

I awoke that morning only guessing what plans the day had in store. An hour or so of rehearsal and a half a day of hiding inside alcoholic beverages seemed to be the standard ritual of this newly-formed musical union. Naming the band Drunk and Drunker was not simply a clever idea: it became a way of passing time until the next rehearsal. Whiskey seemed to be my choice of poison, and I could not wait for the first sip of the day. Rolling out of bed, I grabbed a mostly empty bottle of Jack Daniels from the nightstand and chugged the remaining spirits. The sweet burning started to drown the “butterflies” almost immediately. Leaning a bit, I peered into the next room. The singer and guitar player had visited the closest package liquor store and had begun their “butterfly” chasing as well. At that moment, I knew that rehearsal was questionable since many times before the lack of sobriety had led to more than a few skipped practices. Though none of us said it, we all knew there would be no practice today.

Arriving at the venue early, I could smell the night before in the parking lot. Old beer and musty air filled the alley leading to the back entrance. I opened the rusty, metal door and made my way past the dressing rooms through a maze of hallways and on to the stage. Gazing out across the empty dance floor, I felt the “butterflies” rise from the dead with newfound vengeance. Exactly what I had gotten myself into was still uncertain. I did know that there was no turning back: the bar owner had already paid us.

As the inevitable moment arrived, I strapped my bass over my shoulder and checked the tuning of its strings. I could hear the increasing volume of the crowd as the emcee jogged out
onto the stage and welcomed them to the evening’s event. When I made my way out of the dressing room, I reunited with the rest of my nervous band mates. We hugged, we wished each other good luck, and we passed a vodka bottle around for a last swallow of courage. With all stage lights dimmed, we took our positions. The drummer covertly tapped his drumsticks together four times to introduce the rhythm of the opening song. My first live performance was underway. As each song danced from the stage one by one, I could sense myself transforming from a prisoner of nervousness into a sentinel of raging musical excitement. I felt as one with the now flashing red and purple haze of strobe lights and smoke.

In conclusion, I venture to say that taking my first sketchy step onto a stage visited by many timid “cats” before me helped mold me into the person I am today. I shall not be scared to be myself. I shall not be afraid to understand. I shall not look back and wonder. I shall, however, look back and know. I shall be silent nevermore.
I thought I would never be loved. I never thought. Not until you looked into my eyes. I noticed you way before then, of course - in fact, I would daydream about you, stare at you. You didn't notice me then. Nobody did. People like you don't notice people like me. But you did. Today I "accidentally" bumped into you in the hallway.

Awkward laughter.

Muttered apologies.

But then you looked into my eyes. My unworthy, disgusting brown eyes. I've never felt anything like it - it was a baptism. You gave me new life if you could even say I had life before you blessed me with your glance. Would you believe that I actually thought about ending it all? But that was before. Your electric blue eyes, they filled me with life. I had nothing. Nothing to live for.

Now I have you.

I love you.

I know you feel the same. It was unmistakable.

I know it.

I'm the luckiest man alive. I wouldn't switch places with Bill Gates. Not for anything.

You spoke to me today. That itself is enough to elate me. Guys would kill to be with you. They would kill. But you didn't talk to all the other popular
guys. You chose me. I could hear how nervous you were, see it in your eyes. I almost got lost in them, almost didn't catch what you were saying. Your friends were staring at us the whole time, giggling, urging. Then another small miracle.

You asked me to prom.

And you did so in a voice more angelic than any human could ever imagine. I was stunned. I never imagined that you would even look at me. Now I'm going to prom as your date! You shouldn't mind your friends, it's okay to be nervous. I was too. Really nervous. I don't know what you see in me, but you must feel at least as strongly as I do. I love your friends. They talked you into getting over your fear of asking me. We will be perfect! I wonder what we will name our first child? I hope it looks like you. I love your friends.

I wish I had friends.

08/09/2009 - 2:00 AM

Let them laugh. Let them stare, point, mock us. Let them. I don't care about them. Not anymore. All that matters is you. We walk proudly, holding hands. You blush. It's adorable. You are a goddess. You are more than a goddess, I'm sorry I kissed you on the cheek - I should have asked about your feelings on PDA. I'm glad you're okay with holding my hand. Your skin feels like it was made to touch mine. I'm sorry that you still have trouble opening up to me, but I know how it is. You know, I feel like I've known you my whole life. You're my soul mate. You know, I used to doubt God's existence. But now, I can't. Just look at you. You're perfect. I long so badly to touch you, to smell your euphoric scent. I have a strand of your hair. I keep it in a ziploc bag underneath my pillow so we can always be together. We always will be. Nothing will stand in our way.

Nothing.
You broke up with me. Said the whole thing was a bet, that you had to stop. That you couldn't hurt me. But it's okay, love, I know it's all a lie. I could see it in your eyes; you didn't want to end it. You think you're not good enough for me. I know this because I felt the same way at first - how was I ever going to be a worthy boyfriend? But I was. I promise, I forgive you for the lie. I know you think you're looking out for me, that you have feelings that are too strong this early in the relationship. I know you're afraid that I will think you're crazy if you tell me. I know that's the real reason you ended it. But I know you're not crazy. I feel the same way; It's okay. I'll help you. I'll show you it's okay to feel the way you do about me.

Tommy told me he's your boyfriend now. I know it's not true, just a cover-up. I know it is. As if he or anyone could fathom our unconditional love for each other. I'll show them. I will. I'll show them what true love really is. And don't worry. I've already forgiven you for everything. I know how you feel. I'll help you realize it, too. I would do anything for you.

Anything.

I found out where you live. It was easy. Everything is easy if you know how to use the internet. Anyway, I had to. I couldn't get near you at school because Tommy kept threatening me. He even said he would kill me.

I believed him. Didn't I tell you guys would kill to be with you?

Anyway, I could have easily dealt with him, but I didn't want to be sent home. Being sent home would mean I wouldn't get to see you. I couldn't bear it.

I couldn't.
I knew it would be difficult explaining our situation to your parents. I dressed up in my best suit - first impressions are very important. I told your dad about everything. About how we felt about each other, about how you lied. He called you downstairs. You were with Tommy. I guess I shouldn't have been surprised. I also shouldn't have been surprised when Tommy punched me. Or when your dad laughed. But I was. I left, physically hurt. And you know, I almost doubted you. But you still had that look in your eyes when you saw me - the look you reserved only for me. I knew then that you were forcing yourself to associate with him, that the pain of your loss was forcing you to try to replace me. But I know you still want me. You need me like I need you.

I know now what I have to do.

08/13/2009 - 12:01 AM

I was able to pick the lock on your front door. It was easy. Everything is easy if you know how to use the internet. I'm sorry about the mess in your parent's room. I'm sure someone will clean it up.

My dear, we live in a world where we cannot be honest with each other - where we cannot be the true lovers we are meant to be. I didn't expect you to be understanding when I walked into your room holding a silenced pistol. So I did it quickly. I promise you, my love, what I have done is for our own good. Heaven will accept us and our love, unlike this cruel, harsh reality. I thought my plan through - your parents will be there with us! You know, my love, the last thing I wanted to do is cause you any unnecessary pain, so I used the internet to find the quickest, most painless death I could, and I have it to you.

As of right now, I am without you. But soon I will run through the pearly gates and into your arms. Oh, I almost forgot. You never met my parents, so I made sure they would be there too. Our
parents are going to be so proud of us when they see what true, pure love we have for each other!

I am without you. I can't stand it. So as I end this final letter, I only hope you will be waiting for me along with our parents. Our life will be perfect.

I know it will.
Starving Artist

Harold Foster
Winner of the Savoir Faire Artist's Award
Your blood
Your heart
Your pulse
The rhythm of your life
Beating
Pounding
Strumming
Sounding out
Across the void
Calling to me
My own rhythm
Rising in ecstasy
Of the hope of your touch
Of the possibility
That our two rhythms
Can come together
Crashing into a great
Cacophonous symphony
The chaotic
Simplistic beauty
Of just the idea
Of us
It is all
Because you live.
ATaleofRandomEvents

My name is Noriane. I am a five foot, tanning, fast food eating, bizarre individual that suffers from Attention Deficit Disorder. Well, I wouldn’t exactly say I “suffer”; it’s actually pretty convenient to have a legitimate disorder to blame for my total randomness. Anyway, you can gather from the brief description that I like to live dangerously. Yup, that’s me. You know that tag on the mattress that says, “Do not remove under penalty of Law?” I stared at it one day for almost ten minutes just wondering, “What if?” My curiosity got the best of me, and before I had one more moment to contemplate, and Rrrriiiip! It was gone! I stepped back with the tattered material in my hand and glared at myself in the mirror with a satisfied smirk on face. “Ha!” I said out loud, like someone could actually hear. Five minutes later the FBI and CIA busted in my front door. I then confessed to them that I never ate my vegetables and that I always sat too close to the television. They asked me to disable the booby traps I had laid out to catch the boogeyman, and they proceeded to take me to Never Never Land. Yeah, I know what you are thinking. My parents have been trying to figure it out for twenty six years. I think they must have been able to see the future when they picked my name because if you look it up, you will find that Noriane means pity.

Even as a child, I always had an overactive imagination. I was the source of much of the embarrassment my parents had to endure, and my enormous mouth got me into trouble, a lot. My mom is a school teacher and an angel, I’m convinced; Dad is the smartest dude I know. They have been happily married for thirty five years and have a disgustingly healthy relationship. I guess I felt a need to break up the monotony of our disturbingly functional household. So, I did what any kid who wanted attention would do, I lied. I told my kindergarten teacher that my mom brought me to stores around town and taught me how to steal. That was an interesting phone call. My mom tore into my rear end so mercilessly that I couldn’t walk for a year. My dad used to sell insurance and travel a lot, so I told my second grade teacher that he had moved to Missouri with his girlfriend, and he and my mother were getting a divorce. Right as the swelling of one well
deserved punishment had subsided, on came another. I can still feel the pain of that one to this very day. You would have thought I liked getting spankings. I don’t want to surprise you by saying that I have been known to say really brainless things. With my apparent “foot-in-mouth disease,” I fashioned myself into an easy target and this was ideal fuel that my siblings used to terrorize me. Once, my family and I were having breakfast, and they were joking about how airheaded and stupid I was. I quickly replied without thinking, “I AM NOT STUPID! They checked at school today, and they said my IQ was 20/20!” Almost twenty years later, and I still haven’t lived that one down. My brother and sister loved to harass me because I was highly gullible. Until I was about twelve, they had me seriously convinced that I was adopted. My mother had to actually drag my birth certificate out to assure me I was legit and that the “milkman” wasn’t my real father. Embarrassment, as well as misfortune has plagued my very existence, often brought on by my ability to be a total space cadet.

My noticeable ditziness sets the stage for me to persistently remain a train wreck for prolonged periods of times during many phases of my life (to say I had stints of bad luck is not just a representation of the debacle that is my life). To this day, I refuse to ride a bicycle because I am convinced that there is some universal or magnetic force that causes me to run into objects for no other reason than to put me into mortifying social situations. I was riding in front of a Boys and Girls club one day, and there were about fifty or so kids outside playing dodge ball and soccer. For no reason, I lost control of my pepto-pink beach cruiser and BLAM! “Chain link fence, meet my face. Face, this is a chain link fence.” That’s right, head on into the border surrounding a field packed with my peers, whom I attended school with. At that moment, as I wrenched my mangled bike off my bruised and bleeding body, I knew there was no escaping humiliation. I turned around, in a daze, hoping no one saw or that someone would come to my aid, but nay, that is not what happened. All the kids playing that day had stopped what they were doing and were pointing and laughing at me. I wanted to die! “She ran into a fence!
Ha ha ha! That girl ran into a fence!” They all chanted and yelled to one another. I limped off slowly trying to tow my totaled transportation. I thought the worst was over, but as you’ll gather, that was just not my luck.

Over the next few days, I laid low, avoiding eye contact with anyone. But on the third day, my luck had run out. “Hey it’s the retarded girl who ran into a fence!” I heard this guy I really hated behind me. Seriously!? Can my life really suck this bad? I thought to myself. Well, the answer is yes, it can. I would learn that the suckability of my life was immeasurable and limitless. I knew the taunting over the fence incident would have to cease eventually, and it did. The next week, I ran a stop sign and plowed into the side of a moving Volkswagen van. Same guy saw this, so I then became “The retarded girl who ran into a car.”

This magnetic force followed me through my high school years. I was in seven wrecks. Let me clarify; I rear-ended seven people….seven different times, in a three year period. Oh, and curbs were never sympathetic as I ran over them. I busted five tires and had to replace my rim twice. I was scared to drive ANYWHERE. My, how the roadways loathed me and lured my car into damaging circumstances. I am telling you, it was that universal force thing I was telling you about. In time, all things are explained.

So, I started out today unlike the rest. I had cried all morning because my boyfriend thought it would be nice if he dumped me in a text message. I left school, anxious to get something to eat. After a full morning of uncontrollable sobs and five back-to-back classes, this girl was ravenous, and Taco Bell was the ONLY thing on my mind. Let me preface this by telling you that I love Taco Bell. There have been times when I gorged myself on that wonderful imitation Mexican cuisine that I thought I was going to have to call a rescue crew to bring the Jaws of Life to remove me from my pants. It’s actually really sick. Anyways, I could see the sign up ahead, like a beacon of hope in this dark world, enticing me to come nearer, persuading me to “run for the border.” I was on a mission to fulfill the roaring in my stomach that seemed to say, “GIVE ME A MEXIMELT, NOW!”
My only desire was to appease my appetite. Then suddenly, everything was dark.

I awoke in a bright room filled with lots of people, a hospital I presumed. As my eyes began to focus, I pulled myself off the floor, checking for blood or any sign of what had happened. I first realized that I was NOT in a hospital, and second, I did not have the superb goodness of Taco Bell in my hand. So, What happened to me? Where was I? My memory was quite fuzzy. I was led by an ethereal form to a seemingly short line, compared to the one next to me. Ah-hah, I got it! I’m in Heaven! I thought for a second, and all the scattered pieces of my memory came flying together, and I suddenly remembered everything. Unexpectedly, from the other line, I heard, “Hey, it’s the retarded girl who got hit by a Mack truck!” For crying out loud! Not this guy again. I have to put up with this idiot in heaven, too? Yes, I got hit by a Mack truck. Why I am not surprised? The suckability of my life had maxed out. But, then I was handed some papers and led through two doors.

Worried, I stopped and wondered where the people in the other line go, but I was reassured when I got the impression that they go somewhere else. There in midst of considering all my bad luck, I looked and saw all the things that brought me joy, and then I knew I was in heaven. So, I’m sorry to say there is no moral or reason for this. It was just a series of random events that led me here. By the way, that guy who always screamed “Hey, it’s the retarded girl...,” well, I think he wasn’t in my line for a reason. And for me, the best part about heaven….NO ROADS!
Damn.

A large crowd is gathering around the squad cars making this situation even more dangerous.

It's no small wonder I was called in on my off day, I guess they didn't really see the point in calling in the SWAT guys. After all, they just make people nervous, and sometimes even they can be inaccurate. Me, I hit my target every time. And this is a pretty easy target for me to hit.

I still can't make myself comprehend why the creep decided to rob a toy store located only two blocks away from a police station. I can't even begin to wrap my mind around what he might be shouting to the unfortunate children that are only hostages in his eyes.

I sure as hell don't want to think about the desperate situation one would have to be in to pull a stunt like this. Imagination is a bad thing to use when you have a job like mine. You can't concentrate on the possibility that he's somebody's son, imagine all the family members he could have. When you think like that, it's easy to reason with yourself about why you shouldn't take the creep that's waving a gun at innocent children out. My commander from the eighty first Sniper Division said it best. "You can't think of the enemies as humans, like you and me. You shouldn't humanize something you're about to put in a body bag." I asked why, and he laughed. He said "How would you be able to deal with yourself if you did?"

He was right enough. I wouldn't be able to.

The reality of the situation. That's what you have to concentrate on. You can't think about anything else. You have to think with your eyes, with your trigger finger, with your instinct.

The reality of the situation is this:
There is an unknown man waving a gun at children. He is
talking on a cell phone to our negotiators. I don't know why he's standing so close to that huge window. It would be easier to paint a neon bull's-eye on his chest. For now, I'll call it blessing. This genius held up the store for $550. He was surrounded by police as soon as he went for the door. He's yelling into the phone now, I can read his lips:

"I'll kill her!" he mouths, in a silent scream. He aims the pistol.

I've seen eight other men say something like that before I used my rifle to rid them of the miserable existence they called a life. The sad thing is I'm perched on top of a car in plain view. If this thug had half a brain, he would look outside and see me, look down and notice the red dot on his chest - right where his heart should be - and give up. Instead, he's too busy lording around with the gun, pointing it at some poor little girl's head. She starts crying, and he laughs. The last mistake he makes is putting his finger on the trigger.

A thunderclap - glass cascades down from the huge window frame like a waterfall - thankfully none of the gathered crowd get to see what happened on the other side due to the interference.

Wish I could say the same for the hostages.

He doesn't even live long enough to pull the trigger, thank god.

I feel bad.

Not because he never saw me, not because the little girl he was aiming at now has his blood all over her, and not even because I've caused yet another funeral for some unlucky family.

I feel bad because I'm happy. I'm happy that I get to make it home in time to see the game.
The key to her heart sits round her neck
If only I can grab it and unlock love
I handed her a rose
“Be careful of the thorns
For, though beautiful and sweet of smell,
Blood is easily drawn.”
She took my rose and pricked her
Finger; she dropped it on the ground
The rose died, my heart cried
My love, my loss, my death
Send a card to my old friend
Loneliness, his name
For I will be seeing him soon
Give me life eternal!
In a textbook I see
Names long gone, faces long faded
But they live on! They love on!
Can I continue in this manner?
Or can I let loose my heart?
If I sleep a thousand years
Who will be there to greet me?
Bossier Parish Community College