



**Hedera helix
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Purpose of Sigma Kappa Delta

Sigma Kappa Delta serves two-year college students who achieve academic excellence in English. Members need not be English majors but must demonstrate an interest and proficiency in literature and writing. ΣΚΔ offers members opportunities for

- Scholarships
- Awards
- Leadership
- Competition
- Publication
- Travel
- National Conferences
- Networking

Access www.english2.org for complete eligibility requirements.

Hedera helix – the scientific name for English Ivy and the national plant of ΣΚΔ, symbolizing resilience and individual growth. In keeping with the Greek spelling, we use the lower case “h” for helix.

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Editor's Note

I am honored to be a part of Sigma Kappa Delta and this 2011 literary journal. First, let me offer my best wishes to Ms. Jan Anderson. Her dedication to SKD and the *Hedera helix* is sorely missed. Our thoughts are always with her through her leave of absence. Second, let me thank all the members who submitted entries for the writing and photo contests. Your talents are to be commended. Congratulations to the winners and to those selected for print in the journal. Finally, let me thank the judges who had an extremely difficult task of picking one winner from a host of outstanding inputs.

I encourage all SKD members to take part in the writing and photography contests. Watch the entry deadlines for the 2012 entries. They are going to be extremely early, due to the dates of the awards ceremony. I hope to see next year's winners in New Orleans to accept your prizes.

Kat Padilla



2011 SKD Scholarship/Award Winners

Scholarships

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Community College

Photography

First Place

Transition in Time
Jordan Theis – Darton College

Second Place

The Mentor
Bridgette Montgomery – El Paso
Community College

Third Place

Chelsie's Waters
Amy Saylor – Calhoun Community
College

Writing Awards

Literary Analysis

Marlowe's Struggle
Jennifer Morgan Cooper – Collin
College

Short Fiction

Of the Cloth
Diana Sydnor – College of Southern
Maryland

Essay

To Our Family, It is Happening
Rachael Faulkner – Wallace Community
College

Poetry

Wake Up
Nicholas Reich – Beville State Community
College

Chapter Awards

Literary Magazine/Journal

Aurora: Voices and Visions
Epsilon Alpha
Northeast Alabama Community College

Chapter Activity

Book Buddies
Theta Beta
Calhoun Community College



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Cover photo courtesy of Dr. Randy Cross and Barbara Joan Padilla





To Our Family, It is Happening

/Rachael Faulkner

I came of ancestors who slept in dens. Who fished and hunted. Who cut and crafted. Who puffed peace pipes and took Spirit Journeys. Who believed in modesty and marriage. Who had dark skin and dark hair. Who painted their faces. Who painted their bodies. Who would die for honor. Who would die for tradition. Who would die for life.

All of their blood was red - most of it spilled. Slaughtered over land and gold and religion. Religion.

Buffalo disappeared before Wounded Knee. Then a dilemma - a reservation or an American life. An ultimatum - lose culture or lose home. When the river split, the current slowed. I did not come of pioneers. I came of Ghost Dancers. Poverty is poison without pity. Recent ancestors of my grandparents got out of the hole and married their children off to European mutts.

Amidst unfolding tribulation, my grandparents were conceived. Granny is a hippie; Pappy is a cowboy. She plays guitar and sings folk songs; he ropes and rides. She has long hair and wears turquoise rings; he's got a western belt buckle and snake skin boots. They married very young, and divorced young, too. They had three children. These are my mother's parents. They came from Florida, home to orange orchards and the Seminole.

Mama had it hard, beaten by boys and poor as a beggar. Cold nights in a shack for a home, an unknown biological father, a shared bed with a sister and brother, hardly an education to speak of and fighting parents tore her down and built her back up.

My father and his folk came out of Georgia, where the peaches are plump and the Creeks were many. They had horses and six children. A brain aneurism left my grandmother a widow when she was hardly forty. They had also married young, probably unprepared for the children they bore.

Uncles tell strange tales, and I try to imagine what it was like to be them, growing up in the 70's and 80's. I try to remember my grandfather. I don't bother trying to imagine the grandfather who even my mother never knew. He is not my grandfather, he is the man who ran out on his family when he didn't even have one yet and died of skin cancer. But my grandfather, he was a skilled carpenter, like Jesus except that he had a heavy fist. And he loved me. But I hear different stories from those uncles, from my father. They all call him Frank.

After books were torn, pranks played, dogs thrown down stairs, divorces finalized, cassette tapes tossed out of car windows, GED's received, fathers passed away, fathers searched for, floors mopped on hands and knees, bones broken, and A.A. meetings attended, they all grew up. Or ran away.

The image I have always had of my mother looking for her birth-father is quite like in the movies when one goes searching for a long-lost relative. I can see her, fifteen, maybe sixteen years old, becoming a woman, finding independence. But first she must find her father. I imagine her driving herself out to a remote little southern town that she was clued into by a source unknown to me, to an old wooden 40's era house complete with wrap-around porch and rocking chairs. I hear her knock hesitantly on the door, to be greeted by a middle-aged woman she's never seen before, her grandmother, who





only talks to her through the tattered screen door. She only says enough. Dead, skin cancer, sorry. And perhaps, for my mother's trouble, she gives her a relic to hold onto; "You look like him." This is how I have always pictured it happening, and I guess I always will. No one has ever told me anything different.


Histories that are precious to me may be meaningless to others, like the story of an uncle escaping Toys-R-Us with a bunch of camping gear and a bicycle tire. He would have gotten away with it, too, if it weren't for Franky's finding out. Or the times they thinned the house gin, or tried to pull off Evel Knievel stunts, or led a wire from the electric fence to the goats' water basin. I wish I had been there so I could laugh like they laugh when they tell it. I remember one uncle helping me assemble a model engine. He was usually the one instigating their boyhood mischief. He was the engineer. Just a year ago he took his own life. Maybe he felt like it was the last thing that he could steal. His final act of delinquency.

My parents collided at ages fourteen and sixteen in an arcade on a campground while playing Mrs. Pacman. Later my father was given a quarter by his future father-in-law, who told him to use the pay phone to call back when my mother turned eighteen. He tossed it back and said he'd use his own quarter. That's all it took for him to get in good with Pappy.

At eighteen and twenty, my parents were married; happy, dirt-poor newlyweds in Alabama. I've always known that's the way it ought to be. After three years, I was a flower. They called me a surprise. My earliest memory is of my sister's birth, almost two years later, like a trick God played on me.

In secret, I would try on her discarded, stick-on, fake fingernails that most little girls so adore. They were never still sticky or numerous enough; I would be lucky to complete one hand. Such early forms of femininity were untaught to me.





Somewhere in the middle of adolescent mayhem I got robbed. What was taken then I later freely gave, for lack of sense of ownership. These crimes paid off; I learned life lessons while serving my sentence. I gave up dolling up when I realized that women don't do it for men. They do it for women. Because they are all acting as competitors, and simultaneously as judges.

Now the nuclear family is struggling to remain membranous. Extensions are stretched and strained and some break. Ties come undone and are difficult to reestablish. No one tells stories about the bad times. I can hear them though, they echo through the looks that pass between relatives. They say, "Remember when he broke your arm with the freezer door while he was drunk?" and "What about the time dad almost left us?" or "I can't stop thinking about what that boy did to you." It is understood; these are looks that one does not return. The hardships of our people in other households are too distant for us to have a say. No one likes to talk about the screaming, the eating, the not eating, the slipping by, the wasting away, the dying. But everyone knows it's happening. To our family, it is happening. What can we do?

Now there is Jesus, and purity, and little scriptures posted around the house. There is closeness that it seems I cannot be a part of. There is innocence that I know I cannot relate to. There is a favorite, a beauty, an angel; and there is another, a black sheep, a problem child. There is a burden that I know has been me; I am carrying it now.

On the eve of revolution, I unite with an accomplice. We each up heave the buried sins of our lines, tie them together and wear proudly what we've made. It is ugly and it is horrible, but it is the truth, and someone must bare it. And so we bear it all the time.

This is an account of my history and life and identity. I am not a woman or a man. I am not a Christian. I am not the name my parents gave me. I am a good person. I am a theist. I am an American Native.

Rachael Faulkner

Wallace Community College

Pi Beta Chapter



Essay – 1ST Place



Wake Up

/ Nicholas Reich

Lying still
in a corner
of the room
is your eidolon.

It is overgrown with weeds.

So I douse
the thing
in oil.

To the wretch I throw a flame.

Up it goes
like dry timber,
smoking and moaning
heaving and rolling.

Now – at least – it moves.

Nicholas Reich
Bevill State Community College
Phi Alpha Chapter



Poetry – 1ST Place



Marlow's Struggle

/ Jennifer Morgan Cooper

In Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*, several opposing images are presented. The author juxtaposes illness and health, madness and sanity, and light and dark. The most prevalent and the most powerful of these images is the juxtaposition of savagery and civility. The novel's protagonist, Marlow, arrives in the African jungle as a civilized man from Europe. He immediately realizes that the savagery belongs, not to the natives of Africa, but to his own fellow company men. Resisting this savagery becomes Marlow's central struggle throughout the novel and eventually results in a shift of his entire outlook on life and humanity.

When Marlow catches sight of six Africans attached together by "iron collar[s] on [their] neck[s]" he is appalled (Conrad 33). This is Marlow's very first impression of the company station. This initial impression, along with a few other instances at this station, makes a significant mark on his psyche. Marlow sarcastically reminds the reader that since he is a white man, like the white men responsible for these "high and just proceedings," the natives also hold him accountable for their enslavement (Conrad 33). Although he remains silent and make no move to outwardly express his disgust, his feelings are evident by his expression that the captives are "men" and not beasts or savages (Conrad 34). Marlow continues on his way to the station only to be interrupted again by another illustration of European savagery. He stumbles upon a grove where native helpers have "withdrawn to die" and Marlow finds himself face to face with one of the dying (Conrad 35). Even in the face of this carnage Marlow is unable to see the natives as anything less than human beings; they are still men in his eyes. He offers a dying boy one of his "ship's biscuits" and for the first time, unknowingly, proves his humanity and separates himself from his fellow Europeans (Conrad 35). Directly following this frightful scene Marlow encounters the Company's chief accountant and is impressed with the "unexpected elegance" of his attire (Conrad 36). Despite the accountant's fine clothes and respectable manner, Marlow discovers him to have a detachment to the dying men around him. Marlow finds it almost inhuman. The accountant expresses annoyance at the "groans of [a] sick person" and maintains "great composure" when Marlow demands to know if the man has died or not (Conrad 37-38). Marlow is once again shocked to find savagery among his own co-workers and native countrymen.

Marlow continues to struggle with this blatant savagery from such an unexpected source when his helmsman, an African, dies. Marlow encounters difficulty when attempting to separate civilized behavior from the savagery that seems to rule the jungle. Marlow expresses annoyance with having to worry "about [the helmsman's] deficiencies" and although Marlow refers to the helmsman as a "savage who [is] not more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara," Marlow is moved by his death (Conrad 84). Marlow is surprised at himself for feeling so deeply emotional at this, but this emotional display once again proves his humanity and shows how far removed he is from the European savagery. After months spent on the continent of Africa observing the cruelty and greed of the Europeans, Marlow's entire manner of thinking has collapsed. He now sees his pre-determined image of a nation full of savages has been severely misdirected. His emotion at the death of his helmsman is due to a "subtle bond" the two of them formed (Conrad 84). After the helmsman's death, Marlow could have handed his body over to the other



natives to be eaten. Instead, Marlow insists on a “simple funeral” and removes the “spear out of his side” and slides the body overboard (Conrad 85). Marlow claims to have done this to avoid a riot among the natives for the dead man’s meat. However, Marlow himself disproves this by saying that if his “late helmsman was to be eaten, the fishes alone should have him” (Conrad 85). Marlow’s conflicting reasons for having given so much effort and respect to the dead African parallel his own confusion about himself. Marlow cannot seem to adopt the savagery and detachment of his fellow Europeans. The majority of them are able to view the Africans as savages, but Marlow’s nature cannot surrender to this backwards philosophy.

Marlow’s last effort to maintain civility among increasingly savage crew members takes place after Kurtz is safely aboard the steamer. When the crew decides to have a “little fun” by shooting the natives on shore, and Marlow’s cries from the “whistle” do nothing to stop them, he realizes he has completely lost them to the savagery of the jungle (Conrad 109). They have been consumed by the heart of darkness.

Ultimately, Marlow’s struggle to maintain civility amid complete and utter savagery results in a total transformation within him. Unlike the helmsman’s death, Kurtz’s death has very little emotional effect on Marlow. He begins to express a “careless contempt” for all things and becomes disgusted with men (Conrad 113)

I found myself back in the city resenting the sight of people hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other, to devour their infamous cookery, to gulp their unwholesome beer, to dream their insignificant and silly dreams. They trespassed upon my thoughts. They were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating pretense, because I felt so sure they could not possibly know the things I knew.
(Conrad 114)

His general repulsion with the commonplace routines of “perfectly respectable persons” is evidence of Marlow’s disenchantment with the life he used to lead (Conrad 114). Marlow makes a very powerful declaration to the reader after Kurtz’s death: “I did not go to join Kurtz there and then. I did not. I remained to dream the nightmare out to the end” (Conrad 112). Marlow’s nightmare does not really begin until his return to Europe. This is because Marlow’s epiphany is that the real nightmare is not seeing human heads on stakes, or even in witnessing a comrade’s death. The real nightmare is in returning to live among these people, who live their lives “so full of stupid importance” and “in the assurance of perfect safety” while Marlow can never escape the knowledge the evil lives inside all of them (Conrad 114). It is in Europe, not Africa, where Marlow faces his nightmare of knowing what men are capable of, the savagery within people, when greed and power are the motivating factors.

Works Cited

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. London: Penguin Group, 1995. Print. Pp. 33-114.

Jennifer Morgan Cooper

Collin County Community College
Chi Gamma Chapter





Of the Cloth

/Diana Sydnor

"Bless me Father for I have sinned," she breathed through the finely woven lace curtain that separated her from him. It had not been his Saturday to have to do Confessions, and he had been planning to go the game, but since Father Joe had a wedding ceremony to perform, he agreed to fill in and miss the Titans playing at home. Since he had made plans to meet the guys after the game to shoot some pool at Kevin's house, and Father Joe had agreed to do the early Mass, this had hopes of being a pretty good trade-off. He might even have time to get in a few miles before meeting the guys. He had been a runner since running cross country and track in high school, and he still had it in his blood to run. It was a crisp fall evening, the leaves were just thinking about turning, and that all-too-familiar October nip had bitten the air – this would be a good evening for a run. He was wondering how many more were waiting in the church when his mind forced him back to the words being spoken through the cloth. "It has been almost four years since my last Confession," and he noticed there was something hauntingly familiar about that voice. It flowed gently through the fabric - thick, sweet, southern, like the sorghum his mother used to buy at the farmer's market, and he found himself holding on to every word she spoke, wondering why this woman was having such an effect on him.

She continued to speak, telling him of the extra-marital affair she had had the year before with a man she had known for several years from the office. She knew it was no excuse, but her husband was never home, she had been desperately lonely, and she just became vulnerable to his advances, even though she knew it was wrong. She felt like she might have been falling in love with him, but she ended it because it seemed like the right thing to do. When she had attempted to tell her husband of her indiscretion, he had stormed out of the house, and he had said he couldn't live with what she'd done. She had come to find out later, of course, that he had been having an affair of his own, and he was just waiting for the right time to leave. That appeared to be the right time.

Once she had separated from her husband and gotten all the legalities taken care of, she had returned home to be near her parents since they were aging. She had found a job with an accounting firm in Chattanooga, and she thought it would be nice to start over and return to the Church. Her mom didn't mean to nag, but she was a constant reminder of the way she had been raised. She reminded Jeanette often that it was her duty as a good Catholic to go to Mass each week. Confession seemed to be the right way to turn over a new leaf and start again. She knew Mom was right.

Father Byron told her that her penance was to add an extra weekday Mass to the regular Sunday Masses. He also wanted her to do weekly confessions to help cleanse her soul and a daily recital of at least one decade of the rosary. He told her then that he had a pair of rosary beads in his car, and it enabled him to recite and reflect on the prayers whenever he was driving. She let out a little giggle, saying that she hoped he was keeping his eyes on the road, but that she guessed God would protect him from harm anyway. A look of remembrance washed over his face, and he felt a boyish glow heat him from the crown of his head to the tips of his toes as he realized this woman with the heavenly voice and the girlish laugh was Jeanette. He wondered if she even would remember him, and he found the long-before buried pain return as he remembered the way she had broken up



with him just a few days after Prom.

Prom night had been a mistake, and he knew it even then. They had gone out to dinner at Café Jordan, and they had had a wonderful evening dancing and laughing with their friends. They had been dating for nearly a year, and they had agreed that they wanted to wait until marriage to have sexual relations with anyone, since it was the right thing to do, whether that marriage was eventually to each other or the result of other relationships. But she was absolutely breathtaking in her lavender dress, and her long, chestnut hair was pulled up with little tendrils curling around her face. He had felt handsome as well, in his black tux he had rented for the evening, and somehow that seemed to give him a little more courage than he had normally. His buddies were all with their dates, with promises of a wild evening. They had gotten hotel rooms, a limo, and had each grabbed a bottle of



this and that for the party in the hotel that night. Ronnie decided to book a room, too, just in case, so they would have somewhere to go should they choose to have some time alone.

The party had gotten a little out of hand. Ronnie had brought a bottle of Black Velvet and a bottle of Kahlua from his dad's well-stocked liquor cabinet, and they had filled large cups with milk from the hotel lobby. Jeanette was drinking white Russians all evening, while he sipped on his whiskey straight from the bottle. They were getting pretty heavily intoxicated, and they knew it, but they were having a good time. He couldn't really even remember how they ended up in their hotel room, but it didn't take much to ignite their passion so that they found themselves tangled up with one another over and over again that night. First on the couch in the room where they decided to watch a movie, then on the bed as they began to give in to these new and forbidden desires they were feeling for one another. The third time was in the shower – he had happened to open the door to the bathroom while she was showering, and he saw her silhouette through the steamy room behind the shower curtain. He couldn't help himself and he joined her.

They exhausted themselves and finally lay, spent, on the bed to sleep off the alcohol and activities of the evening. Morning found them each feeling a bit ashamed, her for following through with what she had been determined to wait until marriage to do, and him for having pre-planned the whole thing. He took her home, gave her a kiss, and told her he'd call her later. He did call, but her mom said she wasn't feeling well and couldn't come to the phone. He had tried again a few hours later, and by the next morning, he got in his car and went over to see her. He was getting worried. Her mother had told him that it wasn't the best time right now, and that he needed to go on home. The following day she had agreed to speak to him, finally, and told him that it was over. They passed in the hall a few times at school, but by September they had each gone on to different colleges and had moved on with life without each other.



He could see her kneeling, beads and booklet in hand, stumbling her way through the decades, and looking up the prayers and mysteries as she went along. She kept tucking an annoying lock of her auburn hair behind her ear. He felt a jolt electrify through him as he recalled nibbling on that ear and getting lost in the depth of her dark eyes. He felt that buried desire rise up within him, longing to feel the warmth of her skin against his again. One of the altar servers walked out and lit the candles, forcing him to bring his mind back to the Church and his God, the Crucifix which hung behind the altar, and he felt an intense degree of shame for allowing his mind to wander in that way. He prayed silently that God would forgive him for being such a weak man. He prepared for the Mass, setting out the vessels, dressing in his vestments, and she still didn't know who he was. He felt a longing to run up behind her and put his hands over her cocoa brown eyes, saying "guess who," but instead he lined up outside the door behind his dear friend, Alice, who carried the Lectionary and followed the procession into the church and up to the altar. He could feel Jeanette's eyes following him up the aisle, as the realization began to strike her that this was her Byron, her Ronnie.

He could feel her watching him as he celebrated the Mass. Alice stood to do the first reading, "The first reading is from the Book of Kings," to which the congregation replied, "Thanks be to God." Alice read flawlessly of Naaman's healing and followed with the Responsorial Psalm "The Lord has revealed to the nations His saving power." Next was the second reading, from the book of 2 Timothy. "But if we deny him he will deny us. If we are unfaithful he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2:8-13). It was then time for the Gospel reading. Ten had been cleansed and only one returned to give thanks to God. He could feel Jeanette's eyes following every move he made, and could imagine her listening intently to the Lord's word as he spoke. He concluded the Gospel reading with "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you" (Luke 17:19).

Byron completed the Gospel reading, said his homily, which he had spent even more time than usual on, and he prepared the Eucharist. He noticed Jeanette in his line for communion. She bowed as she approached, and he held the Eucharist in front of her, saying, "Body of Christ," to which she responded "Amen," with her eyes locked onto his and a knowing grin lighting up her face that he couldn't help but respond to. He gave the final blessing, having lost sight of her, and he made his way through the ocean of parishioners waiting for a handshake or warm Fatherly smile. He walked out the back door of the church that led to the stone path he was so familiar with. This meandered behind the rectory to his private entrance, where he found her waiting beside the ever-blooming roses for him. She reached out to hug him and they embraced, feeling the warmth of an old friendship and the desire of what once was within each other's arms. She let the embrace go first, saying, "Father Ronnie, huh." He smiled sheepishly, and he asked if she'd like to come in for a few minutes and catch up. She said, "I would love to, but I think I'd better not." He nodded his agreement and responded, "well, then, I'll see you at Mass?" And she responded, "Daily."

Diana Sydnor

College of Southern Maryland
Xi Delta Chapter

 **Short Fiction – 1ST Place**



Jingle Bell Memories

/Diana Sydnor

Baby girl at 46
head tucks under momma's chin
mother cooing
and running hands through silky waves
as Christmas tree lights flicker off and on.
Time stands still
or maybe turns in reverse
With two women
feeling a youth that's been long forgotten
Priceless postcard
memory of what used to be
when you were 46
and I was your baby girl
and we enjoyed Christmas together.

Diana Sydnor

College of Southern Maryland
Xi Delta Chapter



Poetry – Honorable Mention





Dear Diary

/ Emily Reynolds

*This paper was written in response to an assignment for the poem "In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae. The assignment was to write a creative essay in response to the poem. I chose to write from the perspective a soldier serving during World War II, the time the poem was written.

Dear Diary,

We have been here for over a year now, but you know that. The living conditions are awful. There is little to ease the mind here in the trenches. With all of the destruction and war, there is little hope. I think of my beautiful wife and baby girl back at home. My baby must have grown so much this past year. I miss her sweet smile and baby laugh. I wonder if she is talking now. It saddens me that my baby will not remember me. My wife most likely wonders if I will ever make it home to her. I miss her loving arms around me. My mother, I know, hates this war and is angry that I had to go. I had no choice. My father hopes that his boys come home. I have not seen my brothers since we were deported over here. I wonder if they are still living. My older brother, like me, has a family that misses him. My little brother, just turned nineteen, should not be fighting in this Second World War.

I have another job now. I deliver mail each day to the different soldiers. These letters from home bring smiles just as often as they drive the men to tears. I often wonder what these letters contain. Maybe they are letters from mothers, or wives, or sweethearts left at home. I have not heard from my lovely wife in a while. I hope she is okay. It is often surprising how the men I would have thought would never cry will weep like small children while reading these precious letters. These letters are like lights in the darkness. They let us know we are not forgotten and remind us of what we are here fighting for.

The sadness about the camp tonight is like a blanket. It hangs over everyone. The fighting yesterday was so intense. We lost so many men. The doctor was up all night trying to get to everyone that had been hurt. There was no way to block the screams of the men as they were stitched up or had limbs amputated. Those men will leave in a few days. My combat buddy was seriously wounded. He has been unconscious since the fight ended. The doctor stitched and bandaged his wounds as best as he could, but there is nothing more he can do. I must say good bye to my best friend. I wonder if I will see him again or hear from him. I do not know where they are taking him. They will not tell us.

This morning, while I was delivering the mail, I came across one of the officers sitting on the back of one of the ambulances. The officer was scribbling something on a piece of paper. I stood there observing him, waiting on him to notice me. I remembered having seen this officer before. He was always spending his spare time writing. I had always thought this odd. Most of the men spend spare time sleeping or just relaxing and writing their families back home. This officer was writing poetry. He was also a doctor. As I watched him write, he kept looking over toward the field where we had buried the dead from yesterday's fight. He was glancing toward one grave in particular. I wondered if maybe it was his fighting buddy. Maybe he had lost his best friend like I had lost mine. I did not want to interrupt him to ask. After a few moments, he abruptly handed me what





he had been writing. As I read the lines, I began to weep. The words were describing the morning from that particular moment. His words were strong and filled with the emotions he must have been experiencing. I did not know what to say when I finished. I handed him back the paper and stood there looking at him with tears in my eyes. He stood up, held out his hand for his mail, then turned and left. I do not know what he did with the poem. I wonder if he will ever show it to another person. I wonder if the poem would have the same impact on others that read the poem as it had on me.

Tomorrow we move on. I don't know for sure how far we will make it. Hopefully we will make it safe. I need to sleep. Sleep is a luxury now. Good night.



*John McCrae's poem "In Flanders Fields" was published in England by Punch on December 8, 1915.

Emily Reynolds
Darton College
Pi Delta Chapter



Short Fiction – Honorable Mention



My Mother's Warmth

/Breland Van Wooten

Our home was very poor,
Few luxuries did we need.
A roof, water, and heat,
And lights for us to read.

Of these things, one and all,
The wood heater was the best.
It gave warmth for us all,
In our quaint little nest.

It seems like yesterday,
So easily I recall.
Waking early for school,
Rushing into the hall.

My room, so terribly
Cold, the hall was nice and warm.
The front room even more,
From heaters boxy form.

For several years to come,
It happened always the same.
Rushing toward the front room,
The heat my only aim.

Then one day, it happened,
The fire was totally gone.
The room, cold and bitter,
I wondered what went wrong.

Quickly, I came to know,
Like a light above my head.
The cause of the small fire,
My mom lay sick in bed.

Oh, what a fool I'd been.
The fire didn't stay for me.
'Twas mom who made it fire,
In morning hours wee.

Every morning she rose,
To make the dead fire by hand.
Standing in the frozen
Room, now I understand.

The heat I came to love,
Came not from home or from hearth,
But a place most special.
Love, from my mother's warmth.

Breland Van Wooten

Northeast Alabama Community College
Epsilon Alpha Chapter

 **Poetry – Honorable Mention**



Setting, Symbols, and Theme: Tools for Appreciating Literary Insanity

/ Angela Allison

Gaping stares from severed skulls, wretched pleas from wallpaper women, and the “skulking” stench of yellow saturate “The Yellow Wallpaper” as delusions discussed by the narrator (Gilman 444). Though this character’s mind is confined within a twisted reality, author Charlotte Perkins Gilman skillfully constructs for readers her haunting tale. An understanding of setting, symbolism, and theme is important for an appreciation of this story. These elements help readers see past the narrator’s delirious antics to grasp the story’s plot, gain deeper insight into her character, and comprehend her evolving approach to life.

An understanding of how setting influences the plot is vital to one’s ultimate enjoyment of Gilman’s tale. The story takes place in a house away from home in the “ancestral halls” of a “colonial mansion” (436). The narrator is told the abundance of quiet, fresh air, and sunshine in these healing quarters three miles from town will ensure a speedy recovery from her afflictions, though she internally declares from the outset “there is something queer about it” (436-437). Comprehending the necessity for and implications of these secluded surroundings is important because it allows the reader to understand why the plot follows a certain course. Mental illness, such as the narrator’s, was often hidden away in times past to avoid an awful stigma for the victim and his or her family. John, a “physician of the highest standing,” probably feels the pressure of this potential stigma more than most husbands and has no qualms about displacing his wife in order to avoid it (437). While relocating his wife enables him to protect his reputation, he fails to consider the implications of leaving her alone in this isolated place. As she has no support system save for a sister-in-law, there is neither adequate monitoring of her worsening condition nor intervention sought expeditiously enough to save her from it. Basically, though this house is supposed to preserve John’s livelihood, in actuality it has quite an opposite effect: it aids in the destruction of his wife’s life. Also ironic is how the narrator’s anxiety about the “ghostliness” of the place is validated in the end, making her sick mind the silent voice of reason on the subject of the healing qualities of the house (437).

Setting also plays a symbolic role in the story. The easiest example to identify is in the wallpaper, which represents the narrator’s “temporary nervous depression” (437). However a more subtle and complex comparison is made between the house and its female guest. In describing her rented estate as “[t]he most beautiful place,” the narrator is referring also to her own façade, one she is encouraged to maintain despite her inner illness. She also comments on the “delicious garden” and its “large and shady...paths” (437). The garden’s fertility symbolizes her ability to bear her own fruit: children whom she mentions several times. The sheltered paths refer to how her children are shielded from her and taken into a relative’s care during her recovery. Also outside the mansion are greenhouses, though the narrator observes, “they are all broken now” (437). These useless greenhouses represent a previous incarnation of her mind, nowadays neglected and unable to successfully cultivate her own thoughts.



Likewise, symbolism continues on inside the house. The nursery the narrator is consigned to is a illustration of the current state of her mind. She describes there being bars on the windows, symbolic of the restrictions on her own thoughts, installed by her husband, her illness, or possibly both. She additionally notes the room looks like boys have used it, which parallels the male influence that pervades her own beliefs (438). Symbolism can also be found in her mention of the bed, which is nailed to the floor. This "great immovable bed" signifies her marriage, in which she feels helplessly restrained (440). In stating the bed is the sole item they found in the room and "looks as if it had been through wars," the narrator draws a parallel to her preoccupation with her marriage (439). Like the bed, the couple also has battle scars, theirs from fights about the narrator's condition and her inability to "do [her] duty in any way" (438). These duties she feels guilty of not fulfilling might even include the obligations she has to her husband between their war-torn sheets. These subtle symbols found around the house reveal the true feelings the narrator has about herself and foreshadow the eventual deterioration of her condition long before the depths of her troubles are explicitly disclosed.

Equally as important as symbolism, theme aids in the reader's ability to appreciate this short story. The controlling idea of this work is that while a woman may feel imprisoned by her role in marriage, if determined, she can seek and find liberation. From the beginning of the story, it is clear the narrator feels little control over her own life. Her repeated musing of "what is one to do" when speaking of her disagreement with her husband's orders shows how little she values her opinion, opting instead to subjugate herself to the will of a husband whose care for her is questionable (437). Her desire for his approval over her own happiness is a continuing trend throughout the story. For example, she accepts the room he assigns her in their rented house with little argument, despite the uneasy feeling it gives her (437). Later on, after he insists her condition is improving, her attempt to communicate her feelings to the contrary is met with stern reproach (442). Her husband's reply, listing himself as the first person deserving of an improvement in his wife's condition is very telling. His words display an explicit selfishness and errant identification of the husband as a victim while minimizing the suffering of the truly damaged party: his wife.

The tides of the wife's submissive nature start to turn near the end of the story, which is evident when she contemplates her removal of the wallpaper. Despite her husband's certain disapproval, she revels in finally being able to free the woman imprisoned behind that awful yellow paper (445). As she releases the creeping convict from the wall, she simultaneously secures an escape from her own intellectual prison. Once free, the narrator's first action is one that asserts her newly found independence and an end to her acceptance of a status lower than that of her husband's. In his shock of her having "got[ten] out at last," he involuntarily adopts a position on the floor (447). It is at this closing point that the narrator is able to exact her ultimate revenge, for as her husband lies unconsciously on the ground, it is she who can "creep over him," finally enjoying the superior position (447).

Though it takes readers on a terrifying journey into the disturbed mind of a "hysterical" person, this is not a tale entirely devoid of reason or rationality (437). In fact, aspects of the story that make the most sense are not contributed directly by the narrator, but cleverly concealed by the author instead. Gilman uses several of these elements like set-



ting to reinforce the plot, symbolism to define the narrator, and theme to explain her shift in attitude to construct a story readers can appreciate, despite the madness contained within its pages.

Works Cited

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "The Yellow Wallpaper." *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama and Writing*. Ed. X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia. 11th ed. New York: Longman, 2010. 436-47. Print.

Angela Allison

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Theta Gamma Chapter



Literary Analysis – Honorable Mention



Sweet As Tea

/ Jordan Theis

I grew up in a place where the only thing sweeter than summertime was the tea. I did not realize everything good about South Georgia until I left it. Although vacation was only for a week, I actually did miss this humid, three season place. From the end of April to about the beginning of October, and sometimes longer, you can count on the temperature being in the 90s. Shorts, tank tops, and flip-flops can almost be worn all year round, which is my favorite attire. I believe there isn't a place that is much hotter than here. The other day there was a heat index of 110! The only places that get that hot is maybe the tropical rain forest and the desert, and no one lives there. I guess the devil really did come down to Georgia. Snow might be pretty to look at, but nothing is better than sitting beside a pool, under an umbrella and with a miniature one in your drink, seven out of twelve months of the year.

During the summer months, rain falls almost every night starting at four. The late morning and afternoon is filled with great blue skies and cotton ball clouds that you can jump in. As soon as those dark clouds start rolling in, so do the thunderclaps. The thunderstorms in the south just don't compare to anywhere else. The lightning strikes down from the darkest cloud, with simultaneous great force and elegance. With its sometimes purple brightness, it seems to captivate everyone's attention, triggering frightful and respectful stares. After the storms pass around eight or nine, a nice thick sheet of water is left as a residue in the air leaving everyone with frizzy hair and sticky skin. In the dead of night, sometimes I wish for gills that could help me breathe in the one hundred percent humidity and eighty-five degree weather.

My hometown is an hour or so from just about anywhere and a few minutes from a farm. One could go to the beach, the capital of two different states, countryside or city, and it is seconds from several BBQ joints and pool halls. At all of these places, one can find good 'ole southern sweet tea.

Everyone is nice here, too. If someone is a native of the area, they don't realize the hospitality of it, until you encounter people who simply don't care. When I wave, I can bet you the other person will wave and smile back even if I don't know them. In other places, though, this is not as true. There are two types of southern women: the sweet, and the rightful blunt. Going by the rule, "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all," the sweet southern women simply say, "Bless her heaaart" when they want to comment on someone's behavior.

The "blunt" believe they are doing the other person a justice by speaking their mind, that way there is no confusion on their feelings. When speaking of a little girl's misbehavior, the blunt woman would say, "Well you know her daddy slept with another woman and her mama is too scared to do anythang about it." Both women however, know how to cook, and know how to entertain their guests. When you visit a true southern home there are most likely always four drinks in the fridge: sweet tea, lemonade, milk, and beer! And usually there are three few rules you must know before entering the home:

1. Never refuse any woman's home cooked food or beverage, even if you just ate.



2. Never sit in Daddy's chair
3. Always say yes ma'am, yes sir, no ma'am, no sir

Georgia might not be known for its beauty, but it is known for its people. What's so good about a pretty place, if there is no one to look at it with? I'd say that the best views in South Georgia are the football fields and the sun-kissed, glowing tans on everyone's bodies, and the best sound is the southern twang. Whether in music or in conversation, there is no confusion over the roots of a southerner: either "ya are" or "ya ain't." Friday nights just aren't complete without four quarters in it, and the weekend isn't done until a morning of church.

Some might say that the church is slow or stubborn, but I say respect and tradition. Just like the fright of thunderstorms, putting the fear of God in someone will make them more respectful. One might not be able to notice the beauty of the south straight away, but you step on someone's porch, talk to them a while, and they will soon realize just why people always come back even after they leave; Georgia's always on their mind.

Jordan Theis
Darton College
Pi Delta Chapter



Essay – Honorable Mention





Photography

Transition in Time

Jordan Theis

Darton College

Pi Delta Chapter

Photography – 1ST Place

The Mentor

Bridgette Montgomery

El Paso Community College

Psi Delta Chapter

Photography – 2ND Place





Chelsie's Waters

Amy Saylor

Calhoun Community College
Theta Beta Chapter
Photography – 3RD Place



Horse Power

Jordan Theis

Darton College
Pi Delta Chapter
Photography – Honorable Mention

A Cold Conversation

Joshua Lamb

Three Rivers College
Omicron Delta Chapter
Photography – Honorable Mention



