

MONTAGE

2009-2010



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Welcome to the 2009-2010 edition of Montage!

I'd like to thank all who submitted their original works of art and literature for this year's publication. A special thanks goes out to Dr. Seufert and Dr. Zeck, our sponsors, for their dedication and assistance in making this publication possible. I would also like to express my gratitude to my fellow staff members for giving their time and input during our weekly meetings. I couldn't have done this without you! A big thanks goes to Steven Varble for an excellent job organizing the layout and to Julie Woodward of Main Street Printing for the final printing.

On behalf of the Montage staff, I hope that you enjoy reading this year's edition of Montage!

Becky Sherwin
Editor-in-Chief

Staff

Advisors: Dr. Seufert and Dr. Zeck

Editor: Becky Sherwin

Assistant Editor: Liesel Reinersmann

Art Editor: Rachel Riggle

Staff:

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Webster Boose

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Hey! It's!

Joshua Parker

It's not about staying away from doing drugs, alcohol, or smoking.

It's about not judging those who do.

It's not about what your experiences have told you about people.

It's about making experiences with people.

It's not about being right.

It's about being open.

It's not "let he who is without sin cast the first stone."

It's "let's not cast stones."

It's not about taking sides.

It's about encouraging yourself to be on one, universal side.

It's not about calling yourself a Christian and going to church and prayer groups and then not interacting with people who live otherwise.

It's about not placing yourself above others.

It's not about leading.

It's about joining.

It's not about having a 4.0.

It's about understanding that people with 2.0's struggle.

It's not about blaming the school.

It's about strengthening the student body.

It's not about how it seems to be one thing after another.

It's about not giving those things respect by not showing that it has an effect on you.

It's not about standing up for yourself.

It's about sitting down with others.

It's not about last semester.

It's about this semester.

It's not about getting through a meeting.

It's about what you go through in a meeting.

It's not about what and why.

It's about who and how.

It's not about not being around people who do things that don't
have your approval.

It's about simply not doing them.

It's not about being a babysitter.

It's about being a friend.

It's not about speaking your mind.

It's about combining minds.

It's not about not approving of someone.

It's about saying "Hi."

It's not about focusing on differences.

It's about having a smile.

It's not about kissing butt.

It's about not wanting to be negative.

It's not about making money.

It's about making character.

It's not about law and order.

It's about brotherhood, respect, and service.

It's not about me.

It's about you.

For Someone Who Was Once Close to My Heart

Rachel Riggle

As the wind begins its bitter chill
The leaves float gracefully from the tree.
So I fall from thee.
A better friend
Thought I, there was none
Till what poisoned you to me
Was said and done
Not a thing I can do,
to break or mend
So rightly,
I weep no more
The loss of a friend.
Please, old friend
Hate me not.
And I not you
Yet accept this as true
That I was never
And neither were you.

Angel

Becky Sherwin

"There's always adoption," Anthony suggests. He takes his eyes off the white blanketed country road for a second and glances at his wife. Her face glistens with silent tears in the darkness. Tears well up in his own eyes. He knows she's trying to stay strong.

"All I wanted was one of our own." She shakes her head and looks down. Her face is creased with exhaustion. Anthony knows it's much harder on her. This is the third miscarriage since they started trying. He reaches a hand out across the seat to her. She accepts it and he squeezes her hand tightly as the car rolls slowly toward home. They left the doctor's over an hour ago, before dark.

"I love you, Deb," he looks at her again, his eyebrows raised, and stares deep into her eyes.

"I love you, too." She glances up at him but something catches her eye out the corner of the windshield. "Look!" She points through the flurries.

"What?" Anthony taps the brake and looks around the beating wipers.

"What is it? A deer?"

"No. Slow down." Deborah twists around in her seat straining to see out the back window. She sniffs and wipes her eyes, trying to brush away the sadness. "There was a man..."

Anthony slows gradually. There are no other lights in sight save their own headlights pouring out before them. His eyes are fixed on Deborah as he sits waiting. She whips back around and catches his gaze.

"Turn around," she urges.

"But we can't just pick up some stranger."

"Well, let's see who it is." Deborah pulls a tissue from her purse and blows her nose.

"But he could—"

Deborah's voice rises suddenly. "It's below zero out there. He'll freeze to death!" She shoves the crumpled tissue back into her purse and cranes to see the man again, glad for the distraction.

Anthony sighs, suddenly becoming aware of the rush of heat from the vent and the warmth spreading throughout his body. He glances toward the

back window. He knows his wife has a point. But he also doesn't want to put them in danger, especially Deb.

"Are you sure you saw someone?"

"Positive," Deborah nods. "Now, Tony, turn the car around." She leans in toward him and narrows her eyes, pleading.

"All right," Anthony half-whispers under his breath. "We'll see if he needs help."

Anthony gently pushes the gas and the car rolls over the snow. His eyes scan either side of the road.

"See a turn-off?"

"Up there...I think," Deborah replies.

They reach the skinny drive on the edge of a field and Anthony pulls in and backs out cautiously. As they backtrack, Deborah notices their tire tracks have all but disappeared under the snow. She scans the left hand side of the road, where she saw the man, as the car rolls at a steady pace.

"This is bad," Anthony comments. He eyes the large flakes pouring from the black sky and squints along the road hoping silently that no one will be there.

But then a figure appears at the side of the road, all in black, illuminated by the headlights. His face is angled downward but he appears to be watching them out of the corner of his eye. Anthony slows to a stop just before him.

"Deb..." his voice shakes. She motions with her arm for him to pull forward. "Deb?" he whispers looking at her. His eyes widen with dread. Her gaze is fixed on the black suited man.

Anthony inches the car forward, drawing up alongside the man. Giving one last glance at Deborah, he rolls down the window. The man doesn't make a move or look up. Billows of white crown his bare head and stick to his sport coat. Deborah gapes at the motionless figure.

"Do you need help?" Anthony calls as a gust of snow blows in the window. He shields his eyes from the flurries and takes in the man standing not three feet away. The man slowly lifts his head. Even his eyes are black. His bright rosy lips turn upward, not quite showing his teeth, and his cheeks glow pink against his pale face.

"Get in," Deborah calls, motioning to the backseat.

He steps lightly over the snow, opens the back driver's side door, and slides

to the middle. Deborah faces him and smiles. She notices the smile has not yet left his face.

“You okay?” she asks. The man only nods.

“Where’re ya headed?” Anthony asks. His voice is unsteady. He swallows and glances at the man in the rearview mirror.

The man shrugs. “No place in particular,” he says.

Anthony shares a look with Deborah. He raises his eyebrows, questioning her. She answers by staring deep into his eyes and tilting her head. Her soft black hair falls over her eyes and she quickly brushes it back without losing eye contact. Anthony raises his dark eyebrows higher so that they almost merge with his prickly dark hair. Deborah gives a single, but firm nod.

As the car begins to move and slowly turns around again, Deborah looks back at the man.

“Do you want to come home with us?...For dinner?” She asks him.

“I’d like that very much,” he answers in a smooth voice.

“Good,” she says. “I’m Deborah. And this is my husband, Anthony.”

The man leans forward a little. “Nice to meet you both. I’m Eli.”

A sense of calm fills the car as Anthony guides them safely home through the layers upon layers of snow. The normally five minute drive takes twenty.

“I feel like a snow plow,” Anthony jokes, perfectly at ease in the ongoing blizzard. Deborah and the man chuckle and then all is silent the rest of the journey.

Finally they pull into the drive of the newly built one-story house. The couple invites Eli inside and Deborah takes his coat, marveling at its dryness as she hangs it on the rack by the door.

Deborah scurries around the little kitchen, preparing burgers on the George Foreman and tossing a salad together. As she sets the table, she hears Anthony and their visitor talking and laughing in front of the television in the next room. They sound like old friends.

As they sit down to dinner, Anthony and Deborah wait for Eli to fill his plate. His black eyes flash from one to the other.

“Shall we say grace?” he asks.

“Of course!” Deborah and Anthony exclaim in unison.

They all bow their heads, and Eli reaches for each of their hands across the small round table. They accept and join hands together.

"Dear Father in heaven," Eli begins. "Bless this family and bless this food. Thank you for your forgiveness, your love, your grace, and your miracles. Amen."

"Amen," Anthony and Deborah repeat.

The three eat in silence, smiling and enjoying each other's company.

"I feel so happy!" Deborah finally blurts. She grins and shrugs her shoulders as if she can't believe it.

"You should be," Eli answers. His eyes lock with hers for a moment. Anthony looks between them, curious about the exchange.

"Why?" Deborah asks.

Eli finishes his meal and smiles, the warmth reaching out to both of them.

"You're going to have a girl," he tells them matter-of-factly.

"Wha...?" Deborah looks at Anthony and then back to Eli. She chuckles. "I can't."

"But you are," Eli insists.

"Are you psychic or something?"

"No. I wouldn't call it that." Eli is interrupted by the ringing of his cell phone. "Excuse me," he says. "I should take this." He pulls out his phone and stands up. "Thank you very much for the meal...and for your kindness and hospitality."

"You're welcome," Deborah replies. She and Anthony rise to their feet as Eli leaves the room. They hear the front door open and then close.

"Did he leave?" Deborah wonders. Anthony shrugs. "He had nowhere to go," she thinks aloud. She hurries through the house and out the front door after him.

"Deb?" Anthony steps out onto the porch, illuminated by the bright light on the ceiling. He spots Deborah in the front yard, shuffling through the white fluff that reaches above her ankles. She changes direction several times, eyes scanning the fresh surface of the snow.

"Deb?" he calls again into the dark, silent night beyond the porch. She shakes her head back and forth but doesn't look up at him.

"He just...vanished," she says and shrugs her shoulders at the ground.

"Whattdya mean vanished?" Anthony moves to the edge of the porch, rubbing his hands up and down his arms. He glances back toward the house momentarily, wondering if he should grab his coat.



Illumination

Becky Sherwin



Untitled

Tina Arnold

"I mean he's...gone...and I don't know how." She spreads her arms out and spins in a complete circle in one direction and then the other. "There's no tracks, no footprints." She faces the porch and stares up at Anthony, whose features are cast in a shadow from the dazzling porch light shining like a halo behind his head. Deborah gasps. Her eyes grow wide and her mouth falls open into a radiant smile. Her head tilts back and she surveys the sky in every direction, the waves of her long black hair flowing around her with each twist of her head.

"Deb?" Anthony questions. He starts down the porch steps toward her.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing!" She continues to study the sky, moving further away from the house. "Nothing!" Her pace quickens and she leaps with each step, her arms reaching up as if she's trying to fly. "Nothing's wrong!" Deb's voice rises higher and higher in a joyful praise. Suddenly Anthony can't stand to be apart from her any longer. Forgetting about the coat, he jogs across the yard to her. Reaching her, he throws his arms around her from behind and pulls her tightly to his chest, his heart racing with excitement. She laughs out loud and he joins in, both of them gazing heavenward. Then she takes his hand and places it on her belly.

"Let's name her Ellie."

Inner Conflict

anonymous

tempted to touch, but forbidden to hold,
inside so hot, but outside cold.
I want to hold, I want to feel,
but I can't let this feeling be real.
when he pains, I want to comfort him,
but the ring I wear reminds me of him,
him, the love of my life,
who one day I dream of being his wife,
I've loved him for years it seems,
in real life and in my dreams.
but why, then, do I feel this way,
hard to keep my emotions at bay?
I can't help but feel there's something there,
a chemistry, sparks in the air,
I look at him and let myself feel,
but touch the ring to keep it from being real.
the passions I feel here are kept tight,
so to be released in its proper place at night.
but that aside, one question remains:
with this secure, loving life with so much to gain,
why is the feeling of intense passion for the other there?

Lifetime

Katherine Hester

How long can it be 'til I hear your voice?

Strong enough to shake the tops of the highest mountains,

But gentle enough to calm a stormy sea.

How long can it be 'til I see your face?

Your eyes dark and mysterious as if the day turned to night,

But warm and inviting, leaving me wanting more.

How long can it be 'til I feel your touch?

Your sweet lips gliding down my bare flesh

The sweat dripping down your face.

How long can it be 'til I see you again?

And we share that one moment in time

Where time stands still.

How long can it be 'til we meet again?

One can only wait a lifetime ...

Masks

Julia DeGroot

When I look in the mirror
I don't like what I see
Not the physical characteristics
They're not what scare me.

I look deep inside
I don't know who I see
There are so many masks
I can't decide who's the real me.

I know somewhere I'm there
Somewhere deep inside
Waiting to escape
Afraid of what I'll find.

It's hard to come out
When I've been hiding so long
Those masks protect me
When I need to be strong.

One day I'll escape
Soon I'll break free
Away from the pain
And finally be me.

I know it's not right
To put on this front
But I feel safer this way
Away from the hunt.

Those bloodthirsty ones
Who tear you apart
They can't hurt me now
They can't tear my heart.

You see if they do
Then I'll get out the mask
It's like an invisible shield
An unbreakable flask.

But just like the mirror
I stare into right now
I'll soon escape me
Before I shatter somehow.

It's only an illusion
This mirror I see
Just like the masks
Are an illusion of me.

When The Wind Blows

anonymous

When the wind blows, it helps me let go
Of the thoughts and pains that hold me so
Closely to the ground, where I clutch my heart,
Tears rolling down my cheek, I then look up with a start
and a gasp, caught in my throat, I see them standing there.
Two, whom are close to me, standing in the dead air
Of the cold autumn, looking down upon me, they lend a hand,
Each bend down, looks of concern, and so I stand
Shakily upon my feet, my thoughts are scattered
And shaken with the wind, my heart feels shattered
Among my two loves. I stand, blank face,
Feeling the tear of my wants, one I wish to chase
Away, let it go with the wind, watch it blow
Away, take away my pain, bury it in the cold snow
That soon will come. And yet, I still clutch it tightly,
Keep it close to me, let it never go away, fighting
The urge to scream "It's you whom I love so!",
You are the one I cannot let go when the wind blows.



peaceful messenger

Teresa Marcotte



Untitled

Tina Arnold

US

Tiffany Pitman

we ate too fast
we drank too much
we smoked bad things
 But we were never wise

we fought hard
we fell in and out of love
we were young
 But we were never wise

we told lies
we were the good time guys
we had bedroom eyes
 But we were never wise

we set fires
we crushed dreams
we wanted to be good fellows
 But we were never wise

as i look over matted photographs
seeing eyes that had no clue of tomorrow
i smile and truly thank God that we were never wise

Here I am

Sabrina Brullo

Here I am

Alone and wondering

Were you ever my friend

I'm stuck questioning your motive

I'm left here amazed at your strength

I thirst for the truth

I want to know the future

I want to see time rewind

I want to fix the sorrow

Tell me my dear

How do you feel

I'm scared to be around

I'm not sure how I drowned in self pity

I hate feeling like I belong in a movie

I want to know the sound

Of laughter once again

I question if I'll make it

I'm not sure where to begin my journey

Find the strength to read and study

But all I want is to lay in your arms and stay

I want our future together to be permanent

To feel so real that it could never flourish or go away

I ask for so much how can I repay

I want to have the answers

To the questions life gives me

But I know I cannot control this world to let me

I am afraid of my own self

I am afraid of failure
I want the courage
I want the self esteem
That shows I matter
How do I get there my friend
And daddy when will I know it's time to go
Will you be there this time to guide me
I don't feel you near
Did you pass on without me
Why don't I stop wondering
And why don't I start living
I feel my life is great and complete
But you think I am barely living
I come first in this battle of life
I matter most and then comes you
But I want to support myself I want to be stable
I don't have a parent I can ask to pay me labor
I don't have a mom that can afford my expenses
I don't ask for an easier life
I ask for a stronger person

A faded memory

anonymous

Dark angels possess me,

but they can't control me,

I can't keep fighting forever.

I'm slipping back to the ways I thought I forgot.

Take me away from the life I thought I could get out of.

Words fade into night,

with every breath I make a slice.

Mind is clouded, faith is weak.

All I have is a faded memory.



carefree summer day

Teresa Marcotte



Shadows of the Giants

Liesel Reinersmann

Relationships

Chelsey Lapinski

If you're reading this that probably means one of three things: One - you are sitting in the student life center waiting to see the nurse and found this sitting on the couch. Two - you have a friend who hasn't been on a date since junior prom, and you were perusing her reading materials while she finishes doing her hair before your girls' night out. Three - you were hoping this would give some insight on why your relationships keep failing. If you fall into the first category, I hope you feel better. If you fall into category two or three, this is the article for you. You or your friend need some serious advice on how to handle men. Or the men you hope to have. This article is designed to do just that; help you negotiate the murky waters of the male brain in order to have a successful relationship. Here you'll see the issues couples face and how to deal with them like a diva. Not a Brittany Spears MTV diva, but a 1950s Audrey Hepburn, diva, classy, intelligent, and understanding of all things male.

Firstly, your man will have the memory of a goldfish. If he's sitting in front of any electronic equipment, be it a TV, computer, or gaming system, his memory decreases by 50%, giving him the memory of half a goldfish. The worst part about this memory issue is most men don't realize their brains are functioning at the same level as half a goldfish. When you asked him why he didn't pick up that gallon of milk or call his mother back the answer isn't "Oh, I forgot," like he says. It's really "Oh, I didn't remember having to."

- Brittany would handle this by never asking her man to do anything, even when he asks to help. This leads her man to feel worthless despite the fact that he *is* capable of putting the dishes in the dishwasher.
- Audrey would handle this by using technology to her advantage. She would text him when she knows he's on his way home so he can swing by and get that milk at the last minute. She'd also let him know that she appreciates being able to count on him.

Secondly, guys are not naturally romantic. Understand? There are guys out there that have romance in them. You've seen them, chatted with them while you waited for your Starbucks. The attractive ones wearing the tight charcoal sweaters, Express jeans, and dress shoes. Think back on it. Did it ever occur to you that the guy at Starbucks may be "playing for the other team?" Let's face it, it's happened to all of us and it's humiliating. Assuming you didn't meet your man at Starbucks, if romance does show up on its own, there is a reason. Either, like I said, he's "playing for the other team,"

or a previous girlfriend taught him the ropes (for which you should be eternally grateful.) Or, his mama grew up in the Deep South, cooking apple pie and teaching her baby boy just how to treat a lady. It doesn't matter if his mama beat it into him with a hickory stick or Godzilla is his ex-girlfriend, either way your man was not born with a romance gene. So don't be mad at him because he didn't spontaneously buy you flowers, or take you out for your favorite dinner. It's just not going to happen, so don't get it in your head that it will.

- Brittany would handle this by playing (what I lovingly refer to as) the "girl game." Dropping hints so subtle that there's no way his goldfish brain could possibly pick up on it.
- Audrey would be subtle but in a different way. She'd enlist the help of her friends. Her best friend might send an e-mail saying she was thinking about getting you some flowers, since you've been having a hard week and she wanted to make sure he wasn't already planning something special. This gives Audrey's man the opportunity to say, "Why yes, Audrey's best friend, I was going to get Audrey some flowers."

Thirdly, communication is essential. Don't expect him to know when you need to talk. He can't possibly guess what you're thinking, so tell him. For example: If he asks "What's wrong?" Do not, under any circumstances, sigh, turn your head down, and say "oh, nothing," then sigh again. It doesn't work. He doesn't want to deal with the hassle of begging it out of you, so just talk to him about it. Similarly, don't ask him a question you don't want an answer to. Guys aren't good at telling you what you want to hear like your girlfriends are. If you want justification for cutting a car off in traffic, give your best friend a call. Also try to give him the benefit of the doubt. If there are two ways to interpret the answer he gives, pick the one that makes you feel good. Tell the truth always- it's up to you on how you present the material. Oh and never, ever, ever, say, "I don't remember." It infuriates you when he says it, so don't say it to him or you'll end up in a vicious cycle of no one remembering anything. Yes, he may be one hell of a kisser, but that won't be so helpful when your life starts coming at you a little faster than you'd like. You need him to talk to.

- Brittany wouldn't bother to think of communication as being important. Her logic is if he needs to talk he will. Despite the fact that she gets mad when he doesn't ask her about her day.
- Audrey would tell the truth and let him know how busy her day was, and that she's going through a rough time. Maybe they'd talk over a nice dinner out. She'd kill two birds with one stone; dinner and his comforting advice telling her that life will get better.

Fourthly, when it comes to technology this can either make or break a

relationship. Text messages, voicemails, and e-mails are great as long as you don't abuse them. Don't be a nagging partner, posting on his facebook all the time, or sending him long drawn-out messages about how you can't wait to see him in 3 hours, then 2 hours 45 minutes, then 2 hours 30 minutes...etc. Though you want to be involved in every minute of his day the fact is you can't be. So don't kill your relationship trying. Technology poses a whole new realm of issues. Don't read his e-mails, or log on to his facebook, that's his business. Just like a rumor, you can see something out of context and it can run like wildfire then explode in your face. Maybe your girlfriend did send him that e-mail about the flowers. Do you really want to explode on him for talking to her secretly if that's the case? If you trust him enough to date him, you should trust him enough to give him his privacy. Odds are he'll appreciate it so much he won't be talking to that other girl, because that girl would be checking his e-mail.

- Brittany would utilize her technology by calling, e-mailing, and texting all within the same ten minute time frame, just to make sure he got the message. If he hadn't called back within ten minutes she'd try again, with all three modes. Brittany would continue this way messaging every ten minutes until he called.

- Audrey would use the method that works best for her man. If he hated having to stand with the phone at his ear listening to the voicemail she'd send him a text. If she knows he leaves his phone in his car while he's at work, she'd shoot him an e-mail.

So are you an Audrey or a Brittany? Think about it just for a minute. Now, to all the Audreys- congrats! You have navigated the murky waters of the male brain and found yourself in the crystal clear waters of a healthy relationship. To all the Brittany's- Hopefully this gives you some basic insight on the world of men. I know it's hard to change your thought process, but try. Get back on the horse if you haven't been out in a while and dazzle that guy in the Tommy Sweater (the one who's not "playing for the other team") with your wit, charm, and knowledge of all things male.

Don't Judge Me

Demetrius Suggs

don't judge me on my appearance
don't fear me 'cause i'm black
don't label me 'cause i wear baggy jeans and a hat
i am not a statistic because of my dialect
i am as important as you and i demand respect

don't judge me by my friends
don't fear me because of where i've been
don't label me 'cause i have darker skin
i am not a statistic because of my neighborhood
i am a smart human being and my heart is good.

Never Break My Spirit

Demetrius Suggs

speak your cruel words i won't cry
but if i said i wasn't hurt it would be a lie
throw your stones i won't break
but i will feel the pain and my body will ache
hold me down with criticism it's ok
but know i will break free of your chains one day
slander my name i won't sue
but know break my spirit you will never do

Letting Go

Katherine Hester

My heart burns, as I stare into the dark night sky...
Wishing you were here with me
All that I have left are these faint memories...of what we used to be
And I just can't seem to let you go...
It seems like it was yesterday... when I saw your smiling face
Your deep brown eyes quickening my heart's pace
Oh how I wish I could turn back the hands of time...
to be together again
So I don't have to let you go...
This house is lifeless...
without your presence filling it with everlasting light
The warm aromas of a warm dinner...and a glade candle
I miss those days when we would lie in bed all day...without a care in
the world
Holding onto each other...never wanting to let go...
I'll never forget that dreadful day...
when we were forced to say goodbye
The disease had taken over...leaving only minutes
You were so scared....tears streaming down your face...
knowing it was time
For you to let go...
It's been over a year since you were taken from me
Your presence has long faded away
But the thought of the one day...where I too will leave this earth and
return to you
Has helped me to finally let go...

Nature's Touch

Becky Sherwin

Limbs tangle slightly

against the silky sky.

Brushing, touching,

flowing in the wind.

They converse silently

in a language all their own.

As the creatures below tread over their roots,

they extend toward the heavens,

singing all the day as they mingle

with the daylight growing softer, softer still.

And then the sun kisses the earth,

slipping into night's shroud.

Stars twinkle between their fingers,

caressed by blackness.

The moon unfurls from the clouds,

revealing, illuminating their silhouettes.



Frosted Landscape

Kayla McClusky



Silent Lovers

Teresa Marcotte

Colorblind

Sarah Hall

Take a ride with a little girl
who sees people for who they
are and not for the color of their skin.

My mama told me that she is goin' to take me somewhere today after school and I'm goin' to get to wear my pretty blue dress with the big white bow on the front and the frilly lace at the bottom that I just got, brand new! She told me that we even get to ride the bus and I am so happy I could just cry, but if I cry, I think she would make me stay home and I just don't want that at all. All day during school I keep lookin' at the clock above Miss Fredericks' desk, 'cause I just turned seven and I can tell time real good. Even Clara told me so at recess and she doesn't like me.

When we were working on our math problems today, Miss Fredericks called on us to do samples on the blackboard. I guess she called my name three whole times but I wasn't paying any attention 'cause I was staring at that dumb old clock that seems to be broken and not moving at all! The bell is going to ring any second now, I just know it.

While I'm watching the clock, Gary, the boy who sits in front of me, turns around in his seat to talk to me which makes me so mad 'cause I need to make sure I know what time it is. He has a piece of paper in his hand that is rolled up into a ball and he just puts it on the corner of my desk. He says, "I bet you can't hit Miss Fredericks and get away with it." I like Miss Fredericks; she's a nice lady, so I tell him that I just won't do it. He says, "I dare ya." I shake my head no and he says, "I double dog dare ya." Well, now I can't very well pass up a double dog dare, 'cause if you do all of your friends laugh at you and besides, I like Gary.

RING! Yes! I shove the ball of paper back at Gary and jump out of my seat. Now, I'm going to run the whole way home to change into my nice clothes and I'm not even goin' to put my books away 'cause I gotta get ready for me and my mama's trip. Hopefully Mama doesn't see my books everywhere 'cause I think she'd make me pick them up before we leave and that would be just awful.

We start walkin' to the bus stop and my mama keeps telling me to hurry up 'cause I keep fallin' behind looking at the people and cars that pass by. She grabs my hand and holds it until we get there, even though I can walk by myself and I do every day when I go to school. Secretly, I just think she likes holding my hand, so I let her. As she drags me down the sidewalk she keeps saying, "Patricia, you stop starin' at that trash that walks by and move up closer by me." I hate when she calls me Patricia, but she would hit my rear end if I told her that. Anyways, I don't know what she is talkin' about 'cause Montgomery is a clean place and I don't even see one piece of garbage around, so I just say, "Ok, Mama," and I try to walk faster, which isn't easy in my white dress shoes that I am trying not to get dirty.

We finally get to the bus and my mama helps me up the steps with her hand. I ask if I can give the man in charge of the bus our money, but she says I can't, so I pout, sit down, and fold my arms across my chest so she knows that I'm mad. She says that there is no use in pouting because the man already has his money and that's that. I know she's right, but that doesn't mean I'm going to unfold my arms.

As I'm waiting for the bus to start movin', I'm lookin' around and there's all sorts of different people on there, which I just love 'cause I like seeing how everybody's different from me. Sometimes during reading time at school I don't read at all; I just think about why God made people look different and I think it's 'cause he got bored makin' the same people all the time. I know I would!

Sitting in front of me and Mama is a really skinny man with glasses on and he has a dirty face! My mama would never let me leave the house with a dirty face! I'm wonderin' where he is goin' lookin' like that, so I ask Mama. "Mama? Why is that man so dirty?" Well, I think that the man must have heard me ask 'cause he is turning around to look at me right now. He says to me, "Little girl, what's your name?" And I say, "Patty..." I look up at Mama real quick to see if it's ok and she doesn't seem to mind so I say, "Patricia Louise Roberts." He says, "Well, Patricia Louise Roberts, I am a construction worker, do you know what that is?" Do I know what that is? I'm not stupid or somethin', but I just say, "Yes, sir," otherwise Mama would hit my wrist in front of all these nice people.

He tells me that he just got off of work and is on his way home to his wife and to take a shower. My mama smiles at me, brushes her hand through my hair and the man turns around.

I look to my right and I see a man and a woman talkin' about somebody named Izenhowr. I heard papa talk about him before, but I just wonder why his mama gave him such a funny name. I don't know why people talk about him so much, it's like they think he's in the movies or the President or somethin'! I laugh to myself 'cause now I'm just bein' silly.

I turn my head towards the back of the bus, but I make sure to do it carefully 'cause mama always tells me to turn back around, but I don't know why. I can see a sign about ten rows back that says BLACK on it and it's a good thing me and Mama got a seat up here because I'm not wearing any black today! Maybe I should have worn my black shoes today and then I could have sat in the back of the bus! I never got to do that before!

I see two very nice-looking women sitting together. The one on the right has bright red lipstick on. Mama says I'm too young to wear lipstick, but I sure want to. Both of the women have big brown eyes that are just so pretty! I wish I could ride the bus with my friend and have big, pretty eyes like them and be able to sit in the back of the bus too. I wish I could be like them! I think I need to look at someone else 'cause I don't want mama to notice me staring. I look at that sign again that says BLACK and think to myself, if only I wore those darn black shoes I could sit back there; it's just not fair that I have to sit in the front.

I start to turn my head back to face the front to pout again, but then I see a woman sitting right behind the sign. She looks a little older than my mama, and she has glasses on and from what I can see she doesn't even have a spec of black on her! Now, I am real mad! I turn around quickly and mope some more. My mama always tells me not to mope because then nobody can see my pretty smile, but I don't care! I'm mad and I'm goin' to mope if I want to. The bus starts moving and I keep my arms folded tight, but I can't help but to smile a little 'cause our bus doesn't have to sit here anymore. The bus makes a few stops to let some people on and some people off, but Mama says it's not our

turn yet. I think that it should be our turn to get off at the next stop because we have been on the bus for two whole stops already. The bus driver says, "Empire Theatre" and I look up at Mama and she says, "Not this one, dear." Three men got on the bus at this stop and I don't think there are even enough seats for everybody!

The bus driver stands up, he smiles at me as he walks by and I follow him with my eyes as he makes his way to the sign that tells me I can't sit back there. I think this is my chance! I think he will take the sign down and I can sit in the back of the bus even though I'm only wearing white shoes and a blue dress. I'm wrong; he doesn't take the sign down. The two women with perfect, brown eyes stand up for two men to sit down and I think that was very nice of them to give up their seats for people they don't even know. I think maybe if I stand up to give someone my seat then I could move to the back! I know Mama would be very mad at me if I moved from my seat though, she probably is about to yell at me for looking at the back of the bus for so long. I look at her and see that she's starin' too! I can hear the driver saying something to the woman who isn't wearing any black and she is probably getting in trouble for sitting there in the first place. Serves her right; it's not fair for her to sit there if I can't. The driver starts talking louder and it sounds like he is getting angry. The woman says, "I don't think I should have to stand up," and then she turns and looks out her window. The driver walks towards the front of the bus again and this time he isn't smiling at me, he looks just like Papa does when I do something real bad. He just gets off the bus! Now who is goin' to drive!? Everyone is whispering to each other and standing up to get a better look of where the driver is goin'.

So, I'm just sitting in my seat trying to think of one good reason that bus driver would just leave us all here. I say, "Where did that man go, Mama?" She is standin' on her tip-toes trying to see out the window on the other side of the bus as she says, "I sure hope he's going to get the police to arrest that good-for-nothing black girl that won't obey orders."

Now I'm not thinking about the bus driver, or the police officer that is walkin' this way, or even the fact that someone is goin' to be arrested! The only thing that I'm thinking about is that Mama said that lady was

a good-for-nothin' black girl. Is that what this is all about; the color of her skin? Today at school, we used finger paints and I got brown paint on my skin and nobody was mean to me. I look over my shoulder at the woman staring out her window ignoring all the mean things being said about her. I see the sign that says BLACK and think that I just want to go crumple it up into a ball like Gary did today. Gary. If Gary was here he would dare me to do it. He would even dare me to give up my seat for someone. "I double dog dare ya, Patty," I say to myself. I stand up from my seat, and my knees buckle 'cause I'm nervous, but I must be brave! I turn towards the woman I was once mad at and smile real big at her. She turns away from her window and looks over at me and stares at me with those same big, brown eyes that I wish I could have and she smiles, just a little, right back at me. I open my mouth to yell to everyone that I will give up my seat for the man so the nice lady can keep hers, but Mama grabs my shoulder tightly and pulls me back down before I ever get the chance.

The driver just got back to the bus with a police officer right behind him. The policeman walks up to the lady, pulls her hands behind her back, and starts pushing her to the door and she says, "Why do you push us around?" The policeman says something back to her about how it was the law or somethin'. I just don't think that we should have a law that says we have to push people around or kick them off the bus! As the two of them walk past my seat the woman looks at me and smiles again.

The bus is movin' again, and Mama looks out her window and says, "One less piece of trash we have to ride with." I look up at her and ask, "Mama, why do you not like that lady?" She says, "She's just not like us, dear. She's different." I turn to face the front again, and I just can't stop thinking about what would've happened if I was able to keep that lady on the bus. I'm so mad that I didn't yell real quick and say that I would give up my seat so she could stay. I could've done that dare; I should've!

I look at Mama, so mad that I could yell at her, but I just say, "Mama? Do you think that God doesn't want us to like that lady because she's different?" I think Mama must be tired of talking 'cause she doesn't even answer me.

Pros for My Bros. AKA for My Friends

Rachel Riggle

You are the one I count on,
one of the only people I trust.
You balance my life with yours,
and I see your influence in me every day.
To be without you,
is like that bad dream
where you go to class half naked.
Well, you would be my missing pants.
I guess what I am trying to say is
Thanks for covering my ass.

The Lights of the Time

September Bush

Hold me even as the sky falls.

Pull me into the embrace; surround me with your protection.

Whisper in my ear and tell me that it's going to be ok.

Take a chance with me even though we're both scared.

But that's half the fun.

I'll seal my bleeding heart and you'll open your eyes.

Together we'll go for this ride, scream and cry.

Don't wait, for you might just miss that very thing

that you've been waiting for.

The End

Kelly Ambrose

The End is near, I see it clear, but I don't want to see.
Because the pain is full of fear, a fear that carries the end of me.
My stomach aches upon awake, my heart feels like a pounding drum.
The more I feel the Ending near the more I want to be numb.
I cannot take the pounding that strikes beneath my chest; a gripping,
squeezing, painful ache of dreaded loneliness.
Within my veins I feel the rushing pulse of my life being flushed away; my only
hope is that I wont wake up one day.
It's the only way that I can avoid the dreaded End that is slowly killing me.
The End will be the death of me, yet a walking zombie I will be.
A walking, talking dead human with no heart, no mind, no soul, because the
End has taken them and destroyed them all.
I see it clear, and now it's here, the end of me; the End

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