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Creative Piece
EIWP 2012
Tammy Bridges

Once there was a king and, like all the best kings, he had absolute control over all aspects of his kingdom. No one was allowed to live in or even enter his kingdom without his express permission. People could leave at will, but they could not return without his permission.

When he was a young man, he made many foolish decisions. But as he grew older and wiser he began to seek counselors who would help him balance wisdom, pleasure, and service. Many wise people came to him seeking to provide guidance and, frequently, gain for themselves.

“Give all that you have to those around you.” “Stop insisting on being in control, and let others have their way.” “Why do you say this is your kingdom? Surely it belongs to all who live within it. You are only one, and they are many.”

His kingdom suffered worse in this period than in any other, because he was trying to do right, and he had been told that all change causes suffering for a time. But as his people began to flee his kingdom, and even his presence, he knew his counselors had misled him, and he cast them out.

Some did not wish to go and insisted he had no right to order their coming and going. A few he was compelled to forcibly escort to the edge of his kingdom and gently toss across the border.

Disheartened and alone, he wandered his kingdom surveying the ruin he had caused. Many fields were overgrown with weeds. Many villages were bleak and empty. But in one village he found a woman cheerfully going about her work.

Her cottage was clean and pleasant smelling. She had plenty of firewood stacked neatly by the door. Tea was steeping in a shiny brown pot, and a fresh loaf of bread lay on

her well-scrubbed table. The order and cheer drew him in. 2

Although he was the king of the land he was afraid of the reception he might receive, and he hesitated to cross the doorstep. Standing outside, hoping to be invited in and afraid of being sent away, he lingered uncertainly.

He was not forced to linger long. The kind-faced woman who had been preparing a simple lunch invited him in to join her. With a sigh of weariness and longing, the young king stepped across her simple threshold. Wiping her hands on her linen apron, she ushered him to a comfortable chair bolstered with plump cushions. The king knew he should speak but could only manage a sigh of relief as he sat.

Jeannie Gaddis

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EIUWP Summer 2012

Creative Anthology

What Kind of Shoe are You?

If you had to choose,
what kind of shoe best describes you?

Are you a sneaker, conforming and versatile,
or more like a steel-toed boot working like a bull?

Do you speed through life like a running shoe,
or focus on one goal at a time like athletic shoes do?

Would a fun-filled flip flop describe your personality,
or is a trendy boot, changing with time, more your reality?

Are you comforting like a slipper or loafer,
or an all-weather boot protecting loved ones from life's moisture?

Do you add variety and flair like a stiletto heel,
or a simple dress shoe adding fashion appeal?

Would a cowboy boot with spurs show your motivating style,
or is the natural way, your bare foot, what makes you smile?

If you had to choose,
what kind of shoe best describes you?

“True Sacrifice”

The past six months had been difficult for Rachel. In their twenty years of marriage, Rachel and Will had never been apart for more than a few days. Now her husband's job had him doing a lot of traveling and away from home for weeks at a time which left her feeling like a single parent to their three children. She had been thrilled when her husband had surprised her with a trip to New York to visit; he had even secretly worked it out with her parents to come up and stay with the boys for the weekend. Rachel anxiously counted down the days until she would travel to New York to see her husband.

The weekend finally arrived. Rachel made all of the preparations before she left. She left detailed plans for her substitute at school, did her shopping for groceries her family might need, and purchased a few new outfits for her trip. Now all that was left was packing and heading to the airport.

The Friday had finally arrived; Rachel rose early, kissed the kids, and drove herself to the airport. She had never gone to the airport alone, so she was a little apprehensive. Upon arriving she parked the car and caught a shuttle to the airport. After finding the Delta counter, she checked her bag, got her boarding pass, and headed to the gate. She was surprised how smoothly the morning had gone; both flights had actually arrived early.

When she exited the plane and headed toward the baggage check she spotted Will. There he was with a bouquet of beautiful flowers and a smile from ear to ear. They embraced and headed to grab Rachel's bags and then to the car. Will was looking forward to sharing the beauty of upstate New York with Rachel.

The weekend did not disappoint. The first day began with lunch at a vineyard. The weather was a perfect sunny seventy-eight degrees with a light warm breeze. They then headed back to the

hotel to settle in and prepare to meet a few of Will's new friends for dinner. They traveled on a quiet two lane road admiring the beauty of season. It was spring in New York and everything had just begun to bloom. They passed one of the picturesque Finger Lakes glistening in the sunshine.

After arriving at the hotel, they relaxed for a short while before freshening up to meet some friends in Skaneateles for dinner. Skaneateles was a quaint little village settled along the pristine Skaneateles Lake. The view from the restaurant was breath taking as the lake seemed to go on forever. They enjoyed an amazing New England meal consisting of fresh fish and clam chowder and wonderful company.

The next two days touring the marvelous New York countryside went by much too quickly. Hiking in the parks, picnicking by the lakes, experiencing the wine country, and just the time Rachel and Will had together all seemed to pass in a rush.

Sunday afternoon came and it was time for Rachel to pack up and head back toward the airport for her return trip home. While she had missed her boys and realized how difficult it must be for Will to be away for such long periods, she wasn't quite ready to leave Will and return to her busy life as a single mom. She teared up at thought of boarding the plane alone and leaving Will. Their weekend together had been incredible, and Rachel wasn't ready for it to end.

Upon arriving back at the airport, Will accompanied Rachel to the security check and they said their sad goodbyes. Will said he would be coming home soon for a visit, but it couldn't be soon enough for Rachel. Trying to hold back her tears, Rachel waved farewell and started toward her gate.

She boarded the first plane for Detroit. The flight was uneventful and she arrived a little early. After exiting the plane, she looked at the screen to see what gate she would need to find to catch her final connecting flight. She noticed the next flight would be

delayed two hours. Disappointment set in immediately. Not only did she have to leave Will, but would not see her children before they went to bed. Self-pity overwhelmed Rachel as she headed toward her gate.

As she found a spot to sulk, Rachel noticed a serviceman in his uniform also waiting. Rachel curiously began to wonder where he was headed and where he had been. She then began to feel a little ashamed of how selfish she had been about own circumstances. Yes, she had been holding down the fort at home for the last six months, but she and the kids had gotten through it. She hated leaving Will, but they had had an amazing weekend. What had this young soldier been through?

As her thoughts began to wander, a young man, maybe ten years old approached the soldier with his mother. With tears in her eyes the mother spoke to the soldier, "Excuse me sir, my son wanted to come and talk to you; his father has been in Afghanistan for the past six months," she explained. "Would you mind if he gave you a hug?"

The soldier obliged. Both the boy and his mother could not hold back the tears and those all around smiled with misty eyes. What a truly humbling moment and a reminder of what sacrifice truly is. Rachel would still miss Will and look forward to his homecoming, but now she would remind herself of the larger sacrifices others make every day.

Writer's Block in a National Writing Project

I climb the stairs with trepidation

I fear I have no imagination

The classroom door is still locked

Good because my brain is currently blocked

Sacred writing is the first task every day

So a locked classroom is a bit of delay

I have thought about writing on the way to school

But my brain won't communicate which is very cruel

So daily, I sit without a map or plan and just describe stuff;

Never a complete thought or story, it's just not enough.

As I have learned in creative lessons this week

Writing is a process, but what rhymes with week?

My creative writing future seems very bleak.

I need to open my brain, what do I tweak?

I've learned about using a plot map to organize

And thinking about writing as a cycle is definitely wise.

Brain, relax and talk to me please.

The creative juices need to flow with ease.

I've learned to start with what I already know

Lab reports and research- it's just so slow

So I start to research writer's block,

Amazingly, my brain begins to unlock.

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I think my left brain is dominating my right.

How does this happen, it's locked up so tight?

I need to stifle the left brain inner critic

Release the right brain to go out on a frolic.

I am finding out it is all in my mind.

I must allow the right brain to unwind,

Maybe breaking routine, drawing, music or aromatherapy

Discovering out how to stimulate the right is the key.

Of course, retraining my brain will take some time

And I have Author's Chair, where I have to share my rhyme.

So I will start with listening to music to kick off the process

And allow myself to be content with a bit of progress.

My left brain is not happy with this work of art

My right brain says it's alright, let it be, think of it as a start.

Authors Chair

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By Tim McGinness

It is after midnight and once again he can't sleep. He decides to take a walk. Of course, a walk is a meager use of the word, considering he is trapped in a fortress that was never designed for this reality. As he makes his way down the hallway, a slight movement catches his eye.

The silhouette of her body shows through the window sparking deep feelings in his mind. Every curve is calling to him. His first impulse is to run to her, but she has become his forbidden fruit.

Of course, that does not stop his eyes from taking in every inch of her perfection. His eyes wander from her outline to her mouth-watering features, the curve of her hips and her perfect breasts, but they all fall short of her facial features. He is reminded why he fell in love with her. Her smile, her kindness, the way she laughs or laughed.

Before he realizes it, he is just a few steps from the window and her enticing existence. Just a couple more feet and he would be able to touch her, hold her, and kiss her. He knows he can't but the urge is so great. One touch, one kiss, what would be the worst thing that could happen.

She could reject his actions but he knows she won't. Her attraction to him is even greater than his. She would destroy any barrier to get to his very being. He knows that she will rip his heart out, literally. Even in death, he knows she is capable of destroying everything. Why does this one walking dead woman have a control over his very being.

He has put down hundreds of zombies and yet he can't bring himself to destroy this one rotting enchantress that accepted his hand in holy matrimony so many years ago. One shot is all it would take to end this torment, but how do you kill the one thing you have always loved. He would rather take a bullet himself than harm his true love.

He knows that it won't be long before the virus does it for him. So for now, he will continue to savor his one love in the only way he can.

Dr. Murray

EIWP SI 2012

25 June 2012

Passing the Test

I was VERY excited when I opened my birthday card from my Aunt Monica and found my cousin Katie's EP, *From Dust*, inside. Monica had been charging everyone for this little gem, and I mean *everyone*. Not even family members were entitled to a freebie... they weren't even entitled to a discount. But here it was, in my hands, gifted to me. I hadn't even asked for it because I didn't think Monica would let it happen. If ever there were proof that I was her favorite niece, this was it.

I peeled off the plastic wrap, and began to scrutinize the EP from the outside. I liked the worn, vintage look that Katie herself designed. It was simple: gray and white, with nothing to distract from the names on the front: *From Dust*, Katie Johnson. The CD itself followed the gray and white design; a white flower brightened the gray background as it sprang from the center of the disc.

Flipping the EP cover to the backside allowed me to continue my review of my cousin's creation. I scanned the song titles to see if anything was familiar, and sure enough, her first creative endeavor, "Sleet and Slow," made the cut. The rest of the songs were unfamiliar, even though "Prism Heart" sounded like a potential winner. It was the first track, after all, and every musician knows that every album

should start with a kicker. The rest of the song titles sounded intriguing as well, on her face. If a song can meet all three of these criteria, it has the potential for and I was eager to listen to the rest of the songs. I didn't have time to give the EP my endless playability. If even one of Katie's songs could meet all three of the criteria, full attention, so I set it aside for the time-being. I didn't want to listen to Katie's hard she'd pass the test.

work without being able to listen carefully and provide it with a full opportunity to As I let "Prism Heart" play, I was glad I had already rolled down the window because the song did, in fact, need to breathe. I smiled as soon as I heard Katie's

Once I actually had the time to test out Katie's music, I slid into the front seat voice fill my car, and it made me feel the need to share it with the whole wide world of my car, popped *From Dust* into the CD player, and prepared for the test as the However, having the window down wasn't enough—it *had* to be louder. I turned the music began to play. I rolled down the window to let it breathe in the summer air, and volume knob, and I didn't turn it back down when I was stopped at the 17th Street I cranked the volume up enough to see my rearview mirror vibrate in response to the intersection. I was still smiling.

bass. By the time I reached Western Avenue, my arm was resting on the window, the volume was at a ridiculous level, and I pressed the "rewind" button on my stereo because Katie had passed the test. I needed to listen to "Prism Heart" all over again.

Now, in order to pass the test, a song has to need breathing room; it has to make the driver *want* to roll the window down and hang her arm out the window as she sings along. The song must also make the driver feel like the whole wide world needs to hear it (which is a nice way of saying the driver must have a desire to play the song obnoxiously loudly). The final aspect of the test is one that is the most difficult to pass. After all, plenty of songs need breathing room, and plenty of songs need to be shared with the whole wide world ("Yesterday," anyone?), but just because a song can pass the first two aspects of the test easily, it does not mean it can pass the last part. In order for a song to really pass the test, it has to make the listener feel AWESOME, like everything is either alright or soon will be. It has to put a smile

April Noel
EIWP 2012
Dr. Robin Murray
Creative Anthology Piece

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Blank space

Brain fried

Too many letters,

And numbers,

And abbreviations,

And acronyms!

But-stop complaining already.

We're the all-or-nothing family.

Last summer-

Lazy afternoons

Hours of swimming

Quarts of sunscreen

Hundreds of popsicles

And a road trip here and there.

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No agenda, no daycare

No watching the clock.

So it seems this summer has to be

The COMPLETE opposite.

Lots of chaos,

But all for a good reason...

So I can get that professional development

And we can have, *finally!*

A bigger home.

More room for our family

And all of our stuff.

I'd be much more *excited*

If I weren't so *exhausted*.

Town Square Travel

Around the Farmer's Market, the roads come alive.
It's a wonder how people decide what to drive.

A sensible car...to get you where you need to go?
A roomy truck...to help with what you need to tow?
A little moped...to zip around with ease?
A nice convertible...to feel the gentle breeze?
An old antique...to catch people's eye?
A motorized bicycle...to let you fly by?
A practical minivan...to chauffeur your children?
A classic bike...to save on gas can be a real win?
A cool motorcycle...to ride with a bit of edge?
An old red wagon...to pull along the concrete ledge?

Either way, we all find a travel mode
To take us down each unique road.

Money, Money

Money, money, where does it go?
Somehow my funds always drop so low!

The bills continuously need to be paid;
Don't those utility companies have it made?
What happened to all the groceries accrued;
Somehow all that food has been chewed?
How can I spend so much money at Wal-Mart,
When I don't even have a very full cart?
Pay for a fix-it and another repair;
Doesn't it seem like life's not fair?
Another must-have is an EIU parking pass;

Aren't those traffic cops a pain in the @\$\$?
Do I really need new clothes to wear;
Of course, what if something would rip or tear?

Money, money, where does it go?
All I want is some more spending dough!

Wild EIWP 2012

EIWP 2012

A site for discussion about writing:

Calling all educators!
Attention all writers!
Everyone is welcome!

Like us;
Get closer;
Follow us.

Multicultural,
interdisciplinary
learning experience.

Imagine change.
Fall into a good book.
Value work and words.
Praise focus and motivation.

What starts here CHANGES THE WORLD.

EIWP 2012—I like it WILD!

Eastern Illinois Writing Project

Creative Piece

Anticipation

Erin was working so hard. Labor is absolutely accurately named. I held her hand as she pushed. Breath, push, relax. Breath, push, relax. She was stoic-no grunting or screaming. Her face scrunched as she strained, her eyes closed. There were long pauses between the contractions, and Raul and I talked about whatever to ease the tension, but the anticipation was powerful. This seemed to be taking a long time, certainly much longer than I remembered with my babies. The doctor didn't seem worried. Isn't this taking a long time?

The top of a dark little head appeared and receded. Breath, push, relax. Such a long, long time. Text messages from relatives: What's going on? How's it going? It's going great! Right?

This is it! A few more good pushes and we'll have a baby! Push! Keep pushing! Then a pause. I watched as the doctor swooped a trained finger around the dark, fuzzy head and... Oh my God! The cord was right there, wrapped thickly around the neck. Doctor, not saying a word, quickly and calmly clamped, clamped and cut through

that awful cord. The gray head pinked and squawked. With a gush the baby swished smoothly out to the doctor's waiting hands. Baby got a quick wipe off and was zipped up to mommy's tummy where she lay crying just a little before calming.

Amazement! Euphoria! She's beautiful, dark, and perfect!

Look at her little toes! Listen to that! Happiness! I took a picture of the little family and sent it to the crowd waiting down the hall. I felt so honored to be there and so proud of Erin. She had worked so hard to give me my lovely granddaughter Natalia. Wow.

My eyes creep open giving way to rays of sunshine that fill my childhood bedroom. As the familiar sights of my bedroom start to transform from fuzzy blurs into clear vision, I see Raggedy Ann and Andy fitted tightly across my double window, off-setting the drab of the brown wood paneling that flows from room to room throughout the entire house. I take a moment to admire Raggedy Ann knowing full well that the next time I gaze up at her, she will appear to look more like an angel than a rad-doll, illuminated by the moon. And the next time I gaze at Andy, my eyes will sting from garden sweat and my skin will burn from its Case-International hue, all consequences of spending a summer's day in the garden.

But today is not like any other day working in the garden. We won't be bent over breaking our backs picking green beans, or callousing our hands from shoveling wheel-barrows of potatoes, or staining our fingers at the blackberry bush. Today is Corn Day! Today, the insects will give way for a new team of workers: A team of workers who are carrying on a long tradition of Corn Days. A multi-generational team-grandpa, grandma, mom, dad, brother, sister all working side by side. But Corn Day is not a one day event. Preparations for Corn Day begin early in the spring with the setting apart land from the larger field that harvests their livelihood, the tilling of the saturated earth from late winter snows, and eventually, the planting of the seeds that will soon sprout the whole reason why there is Corn Day.

Corn Day comes once a year. It's an event that is commemorated at each family meal when corn is served. When the blue and white corning-ware dish is passed around the family table, we all remember why we have Corn Day. It's to enjoy the sweet corn all year long and to know your stomach is full because of your labors. As Corn Day gets underway each participant gathers knowing exactly their age appropriate role. Everyone disappears amongst the jungle of dark green leaves and dried silks. The only sounds are the cracking of stalks as the ear pulls away from its home, the rustling of tightly knitted corn rows shuffling from the alien invaders and the chatter of children seeking confirmation that their maiden voyage into the corn field is a job well done. As the sun begins to hover directly overhead, the adults and children emerge out from the depths of the garden. They come proudly

carrying the ears that have spent their nights listening to the sounds of summer as they grow and ripen.

As Dad and Grandpa stumble out in their Red-Wing work boots, Grandma and Mom are waiting to shuck the ears, stripping them from their cocoons that fostered each tiny sweet kernel. Grandpa, arms covered in his long-sleeved work shirts in July, brings flattened seed bags that store the remnants of the seed's life cycle, the castaway shucks. Each member of the family works shucking and cleaning corn, meticulously pulling at the last stray silk that clings to the cob. As they work, everyone silently looks forward to the winter night when they will bite into a mouth full of sweetness and remember their communal efforts on Corn Day. The yard swing sways rhythmically till the last corn is stripped naked and ready to be bathed, just like the children who spent their summer's day in the cornfield.

Just Desserts

Lisa, Megan, and Jen were enjoying their typical **Saturday** afternoon at the mall. Sharpening their wicked tongues on the hapless victims that came into eye range and also doing some shoe shopping. **This Saturday**, however, would prove to yield more than a pair of platform sandals. "Look at her," sneered Lisa as she pointed to a Rubenesque girl. "She should not be wearing low rise jeans. Unlike myself, she is not a size zero."

Jen pranced over to the mystery girl and asked in a sickening sweet voice, "Excuse me. I have a flat. I was wondering if I could borrow your spare tire?" Pointing at the stunned girl's middle, the three cackled as they passed.

Strutting in their Ambercrombie shorts and flinging their extensions around like three vain peacocks, the trio continued spraying insults throughout the mall. In their wake, they left startled shoppers with angry and hurt feelings.

As they stopped to admire their shiny reflections in a storefront window, an undeniable craving hit them like a Mac truck.

Megan clucked, "I have a massive craving for...
"Cookies!!!" Lisa and Jen answered in tandem.

After applying a fresh coat of lip gloss, the girls were drawn to a store called "The Cookie Jar."
"How long has this been here? I've never noticed it before." Lisa wondered.

Behind the counter, stood the same mysterious girl with the low row jeans. With a nefarious grin she said, "Welcome to the Cookie Jar. Aren't you girls just the loveliest things on pedicured feet? So glad I can serve you."

"Looks like she's been eating all the profits," mumbled Jen.

"Because you girls are so fantastically beautiful, I'm going to give each of you our house cookie for free. We call it our "Just Desserts".

The three girls greedily grabbed with their French-tipped talons and gobbled the cookies

down. In an instance, their Clinique complexions broke out into a dizzying array of acne. Their bodies started to swell like a dead opossum lying on the July asphalt. With a sniff, they noticed they smelled like one too.

"I'm all bloated!" screamed Megan.

"I'm bloated and broken out!" screamed Lisa.

"I'm bloated, broken out, and reek of B.O.!" screamed Jen.

"Ladies, why the fuss? You got your Just Desserts." And with that being said, the storeowner vanished into thin air.

I let you in. You push me away.
Why can't you ever stay?
Break through the walls of my lonely heart
When the conquest succeeds, things fall apart.
I let you in. You push me away.

Frustration permeates my very soul
For the situation is beyond my control.
What's the point, anyway?
to pursue someone then walk away.
I let you in, you push me away.

Abandoned

Things unknown, things unspoken
weighing on my mind again
will they ever come to fruition?

You left me here, no rhyme or reason
left in torment--sick fascination
Abandoned.

What once was love has now turned to hate-
hate of the unknown--hate of fate
Abandoned.

Why did you leave without even a word
I thought I meant more to you? This is situation is absurd.
Abandoned.

Time heals all wounds, they say
For peace of mind is all I pray
Abandoned.

Time passes; rage and anguish fill my mind-
So much for the healing time. By: Amanda Williams