



Verbal Equinox

A comment from the boss by **Sylvia Newman** Writing Center Director

Welcome to the latest issue of the *Verbal Equinox*, the Writing Center's literary newsletter. This semester we are again publishing the winners of our writing contest, held last fall, along with commentary about why each piece is a winning one. Our hope is that both students and teachers will find this useful in their discussions about writing.

News from the Writing Center

Last semester, we said goodbye to our advisor and friend, David Sumner. We now welcome Dr. Becky Jo McShane to this position. We look forward to her insights and her involvement with the Center.

Last spring we hosted the 10th annual Rocky Mt. Peer Tutoring conference. We welcomed 120 participants from 14 universities. Weber State University was well represented by our students. The feedback we received was very positive. Beyond the excellent presentations, everyone loved the karaoke! This year, we attended the RMPT conference in Logan at Utah State University.

The writing centers in our region (Utah, Idaho and Nevada) are working to become an official affiliate of the International Writing Center Association (IWCA). I met with other directors in November at UVSC where I was chosen to be on the committee to draft the constitution/bylaws necessary to achieve this goal. In February, I met with Tiffany Rousculp of SLCC's Community Writing Center, and Lisa Eastmond of UVSC's Writing Center, and created a draft of bylaws. This draft was sent to all directors for their input. We obtained final approval at the RMPT conference and hope to have official status by next fall.

We continue in our goals to serve students, enhance the professionalism of our tutors, and increase the credibility and visibility of the Center.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Verbal Equinox and find application for it in your classes and/or your own writing. We encourage all students to enter next year's Writing Center contest and every other contest, including the English Department Writing Contest as well as to submit to the Metaphor, WSU's literary magazine.

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The Battle for Field-bowl Park by Jake Tolman

I tell her that she's a very pretty girl, and she smiles. Smiles, just as most do, excepting those who truly are. They've heard it often before, you see, and understand just what really is being said. And so I'm left thinking that I have her all figured out. It isn't but a moment later, however, that she does something to completely confound me. She asks me what I want, says that her life is in complete awry, and that she'd best be left alone. To think, me, a total stranger? There's wisdom in keeping to yourself, you see. Well I duck-back the query and try to engage her in a typical conversation about weather and headlines. She starts to cry. We both sit for a time on the park-bench, alone, together.

Then I see it. I knew that this young thing was the same I'd often seen moping about the

park, camera in hand, always reading levels and turning knobs, so that she scarcely ever took a picture. Her camera sits on the park-bench, in her bag, barely visible through the denim crease. Her head's in her hands, waiting for a comforting word. I realize that she's not the typical candidate, but rent's come due on my apartment, and Jerry at the pawn shop has piqued my interest in a new set of camera filters, ones that make things soft and delicate, like old liths you see. Something in me still says that this isn't a good idea, not that it's particularly wrong, but that there's a measured risk involved.

You see, you'd typically want to hit a tourist. They haven't a clue were the local drain-spout pub is, let alone the police department, so it's rarely ever reported. And when one does go to such lengths, the police tell

them that they'll file it and call, if ever it should turn up. There isn't a file for such complaints, though, only a basket, or so says a crooked ex. Cops? I honestly believe that my line of work requires more up top.

Anyway, I run the risk of being very identifiable were I to decide to work today, that, and I do rather enjoy this particular park-used to field-bowl in it as a punk kid. It would be a hard crime scene not to return to. Now don't go getting the notion that my girl and I have shared an overly long, uncomfortable silence. I've been talking whilst thinking so as to keep ears from pricking. As said, up top.

From what I can see of it, the camera appears to be a fine one. Looks to be Swiss-real metal and glass, no plastic in it, and if it weren't for this final observation, I should have very much liked to have kept my

Thoughts on "Battle for Field-bowl Park"

Storytelling is largely about exploring conflict. In "The Battle for Field-bowl Park," Jake Tolman works compellingly with this central aspect of writing stories.

We think the main conflict is about the girl wanting the guy to leave her alone. Actually, the central dilemma is hidden in the mind of the guy, the story's protagonist. He is grappling with an issue of his own: to steal, or not to steal, the girl's camera. This layered conflict gives the reader more to think and care about, making the plot more interesting.

With a conflict in place, the author can afford to dip into introspection and odd detail.

The middle section of this story provides relevant details about the protagonist's inner-conflict. They also encourage the reader to care more for the girl he is considering mugging. This intensifies the plot.

The author effectively uses stream of consciousness as the thoughts of the nameless first-person narrator completely dominate this piece. The piece lacks dialogue because the protagonist reports everything the other characters say in his own words.

This helps the reader stay focused mainly on the internal conflict.

As a final payoff, the author ends the story with a well-chosen simile. The guy, a photography aficionado, compares the girl to a lithograph. This simile alludes to an earlier moment in the story when the protagonist mentions he likes the old printmaking images.

The visually interesting final sentence also sheds light on the protagonist's climactic decision; he is partial to "soft and delicate" things.

park-a true sacrifice, I think to myself. I note not ever again to do such a thing, lest my whole city be lost, and

I be left searching for a

new home. I pat her back a few times, reassuringly, and then carefully reach over her, just as she begins to spill warm tears

over me. I pull back for a moment, seeing that some passersby have taken a sudden interest in my poor girl's torment.

Some believe that she's lost a dear friend, others that I've just broken her heart, I'm sure. No, perhaps she's just told me of our impending child, or that her father should disown her, were we to marry so as to have the child. They, with cornered eyes, hoping to find a tragedy greater than their own, my poor girl, with an aching heart, and I, a petty thief, just hoping to somehow pay his monthly rent to a thief of a more sociably acceptable nature. And yet in it lies the truth to all prose e'er laid in ink.

I eye the onlookers with a practiced spite, and they make as though they've encountered a new pollen or seen a tree for the first time. Well, the interruption has forced me to grow too close for comfort, and all the while my girl's been sputtering about some boy at sea. A lucky fellow, I think to myself, not to be away from her though, and then it's done, the battle's been waged, lost, and retaken.

I, myself, start getting somewhat misty-eyed as I tell her that her boy's lucky to have

mood, and we laugh some. In it, though, she perceives a hint of truth, as one should.

She is then quite suddenly taken to the fact that our conversation is being broadcast. She closes up her purse and gives me her hand. I help

I help her up from the bench, reassuring her that her boy would be a fool not to return to such a pretty face, and she smiles, and walks away, as soft and delicate as an old lithograph.

such a considerate girl, one who doesn't mind moistening the arm of strangers on his account. She pulls back at this and apologizes. I tell her that it was only intended as a joke, to lighten the

her up from the bench, reassuring her that her boy would be a fool not to return to such a pretty face, and she smiles, and walks away, as soft and delicate as an old lithograph.

.....

Draw a crazy picture; Write
a nutty poem; Sing a
mumble-gumble song;
Whistle through your comb;
Do a loony-goony dance
'Cross the kitchen floor; Put
something silly in the world
That ain't been there
before.

—Shel Silverstien

.....

The Desert is a Climate of Below Average Precipitation

by **Brooke Adele Ipson**

Who told you comfort was a liquid?
Landing in an opened palm, you are certain it is evading-
you have moved into its fated plane
for this length and little else.

"It was a fluke," you'll say.
But what of karma and creation?
What goes around is elsewhere and
what comes around
is wandering in the irrigation.

Watching over suburbia-
curled and spooning with the city in this next,
your vision is captured by blocks upon blocks of sycamores and
roofing.

You have said you do not deserve this fallout of rain
then leave your organs to grow anorexic and neglected.
Always doubtful,
you should retreat beyond the basin.

When wet rain settles on hot asphalt, currents of
evaporation wither
up.
The pavement calculates fissures.

Who told you comfort was a liquid?
You lie calloused on the textured flooring
of the desert and dehydrate
in your stagnation.

Thoughts on "The Desert is a climate of Below Average Precipitation"

"The Desert is a Climate of Below Average Precipitation" by Brooke Adele Ipson challenges the audience's perspective.

Ipson starts her poem with the question, "Who told you comfort was a liquid?" Questions are a great way to get the reader thinking about the poem's central idea(s). However, Ipson makes a wise choice not to overuse this tool. She only uses questions two other times in the poem. Furthermore, she chooses to start her final stanza with the same question that started the poem. This provides continuity via repetition.

Throughout the poem, Ipson utilizes powerful images and word choices to confront the reader's perspective. Two examples are the phrases, "your vision is captured" and "you lie calloused." In addition, words like "fluke" and "anorexic" employ hard consonants that contribute to the poem's forceful approach.

Ipson also experiments with a popular poetic technique called enjambment. This involves carrying a phrase over from one line to the next without a pause. The result is a single idea or image

that literally straddles two lines. Perhaps the best example in this poem is the sentence in the fifth stanza that ends "...whither up."

This poem may not allow the reader to get comfortable, but that ends up being its greatest strength. Using a creative structure and hard-hitting images, Ipson demonstrates that even in the desert, liquid isn't necessarily comfort.

.....

If they give
you ruled
paper, write
the other way.

Juan
Ramon
Jimenez

.....

The First Glimpse of Something New by Melissa Buxton

I can hardly remember when I started watching people. In all my memories, I have an acute of sense of those around me—their relationships to each other, their conversations, their looks of longing or loss, their lives etched in the lines of their faces framing eyes that see and are seen. I think I must have always been an observer. I think I must have always felt a sense of connection to people, even those I have never met or cannot hope to understand. Their stories have seemed as real as my own and yet separate. I am haunted by stories untold, theirs and mine, and how they somehow overlap and encircle each other until they become one story—the story of the human experience.

Watching people is the curse and blessing of the shy. Unable to step outside of themselves because of the fear of rejection or the ease of solitude, shy people often find themselves engaged indirectly in the lives of others they come across. In others they find experiences they have not had and may never own. Other people's experiences, even though they are only observed, enrich their own small world.

I count myself among those encased in their own heads—the watchers, the shy—even though I have found the strength of my own voice. Education and age have made me bolder than I have ever been before. I can speak my mind now without fear of rejection. I can talk to newly met people, strangers. I can even teach the things I have learned to others. It has been a long transition into the world of interaction. And yet, at heart I am

still that child on the playground leaning against the cool brick comfort of the school wall, wishing I could find a bigger and better voice. I think I will always be that girl, waiting on the sideline, watching people's experiences, and writing their stories into my own.

When I think about my own story, I find key moments of spectacular change, flashes of color on the black and white oration of my life. I call them character moments, experiences so powerful they have changed my entire outlook on the world,

defining then expanding the breadth and scope of my narrow view. Each one has taught me something important and shaped or refined me into the person I have become. Many of my character moments have been in my observations of people—people whose lives or experiences are so different from my own they stick out from among the masses. For them I am grateful. To them I tell this part of my story, the part that overlapped theirs and is now encircled.

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Thoughts on "First Glimpse of Something New"

The most effective technique Melissa Buxton uses in her piece, "First Glimpse of Something New," is description. She uses sensory descriptions of the sights, sounds, smells, and feel of the city to transport the reader into the story with her.

The colors in her piece are especially interesting. The author tells us right at the beginning that "key moments of spectacular change" are "flashes of color on the black and white oration" of her life.

She then keeps this metaphor going throughout the story, describing everything from the "men in green, silver and gold" to the "gray stone" to the "rainbow cotton candy" and finally ending on the "flash of blue sympathy" that the experience with the sleeping man added to her life. The image of the girl placing a neat white box on a pile of

garbage predominately gray and brown is especially poignant.

Her descriptions are original. She describes the sleeping man's cardboard box as a "stiff brown blanket." She also uses variations of the phrase "cold brick comfort" a couple of times.

The author creates the feelings of familiarity that further enhance the invitation for the reader to be involved with the essay.

In addition, the author effectively uses repetition. Three times for three different groups of people, she repeats, "People throw in money. Can I have a dollar?" On the fourth time, she throws in a little variation, writing, "People pass on by. Can I give her a dollar?"

The prior repetition puts more emphasis on this line which is an important foreshadowing of a scene later in the story when we see the narrator once again offer money to a person nobody seems to notice.

I was twelve when my uncle was married. He had met and fallen in love with a girl from the San Francisco Bay. They had invited all their friends and family to share in the joy of their union. It was a time of celebration. The joy of newness saturated the air with a sense of completeness and family. Everyone seemed to have a place, except me. I was caught somewhere in the middle of the children and the adults-trapped in the painful age of adolescence where part of me longed to put away childish things and the other part wished I were still young enough to just go out and play.

Even in the anguish of my age, I fell in love with San Francisco. It was my second trip to the city, but the first time I wasn't old enough to let the environment affect me. San Francisco is a great town. It has a thousand things to do and see and taste and smell. I will always associate it with my first taste of real culture.

Our first day starts with early breakfast-the Denny's Grand Slam made better by company and excitement. We eat there out of convenience and give little or no thought to its nutritional value. Breakfast done and the family filled to capacity, we are off to downtown with its mass of buildings knocking against each other in the sky, a bundled mass of white and gray, new and old,

merging to create a strange modern face for an old city. I remember the people, all different, all strange, all going or coming from someplace to somewhere with little regard for a shy girl from Utah. I had never seen blue hair or a nose piercing or torn fishnet stockings hanging from beneath black skirts. I ask my mom, "Who are they?"

She tells me, "Different

dollar? Men are on the boardwalk dancing and singing to a band of old guitars and spoons. They are singing the blues with the heat of the sun in jeans and red clap shoes. Can't you spare some change lady? People throw in money. Can I have a dollar? A woman, old and withered gray, sits on a bench throwing away bread crumbs to the birds.

Humming her own song to herself and making a place for an aviary show.

People pass on by. Can I give her a dollar?

We stay all day until dinnertime and then slowly move uphill in the trolley to the restaurant that has been waiting all day. I can't pretend to be hungry,

until I see the machine in the front lobby that is making warm, hot tortillas all by itself. I see the dough go in as a ball, get flattened, baked, tossed, baked, and spat out onto a Santa Fe glazed plate and taken to a table somewhere in the back. This place serves fresh tortillas with their salsa instead of chips. I can't wait to sit down.

The carnival atmosphere pulls us into our table. I order a fresh lime margarita virgin style because the dark waiter tells me I am a pretty girl and no one ever says that to me. I order an adult size order of enchiladas with rice and beans on the side because I wish I am older than twelve and ordering from the grown-up menu will make it true. My family is laughing all around to the sway of Latin rhythms of the mariachi band in the corner. We are as happy as we have been all day. The waiter asks

Everyone seemed to have a place, except me. I was caught somewhere in the middle of the children and the adults-trapped in the painful age of adolescence where part of me longed to put away childish things and the other part wished I were still young enough to just go out and play.

people come out at night. They are going home to sleep and the day people will take over."

Day people? Night people? Different kinds of people?

Still emerged in thoughts of the difference between those who occupy the day and those who occupy the night, I find we are waiting for the trolley car. We travel downhill to Pier Thirty-Nine-the number one tourist stop in San Francisco. It is jam crammed with people and I fall in love with everything there is to see. Men in green, silver and gold stand like statues until you almost believe they are. Then they move suddenly and shatter the illusion. People throw in money. Can I have a dollar? A man sits on the side of the walkway with a branch. He is silent. He is still He suddenly screams and so do the people next to him as he jumps out from behind the branch. People throw in money. Can I have a

me if I want to wear a sombrero. I am too embarrassed to say no. I wear the sombrero until it is time to go. The waiter brings our food back in neat white boxes and there are so many we all have to carry our own. My aunts and uncles are louder and happier now because of their non-Virgin margaritas. They laugh and sing and hug out of the restaurant and into the street, all the way to the corner where a Do Not Walk sign tells them to stop. I stop too, but for a different reason.

We are next to a gray stone building; its glass revolving door has stopped on its hinge against a lock bar. The gray disappears into a darkened alleyway and a pile of rubbish—a jumble of the leftover morning news and dirty cardboard boxes. There is so much trash I think everyone must have noticed, but when I look up everyone is still laughing. I look back to the garbage because I am not sure what I have seen. He is lying so still I almost start to believe he is a statue. Then he shudders under his stiff brown blanket and shatters the illusion. I look at the box in my hands and suddenly I am crying.

"Mom," I say. "Is he one of those people who come out at night?"

She looks down, then over, and her face changes.

"He is," she says. I look at my leftovers again, the almost untouched adult portion of cheese enchiladas that I couldn't finish or even start because I am still full from the machine-made tortillas and ship vendor doughnuts and famous chocolates and original taffy and rainbow cotton candy and ice cream and churros and clam chowder and sourdough and my Denny's Grand Slam breakfast!

"Do you think I should give this to him?"

She looks down, then over, and says, "If you want to."

"Will you take it?"

"You go," she says.

I walk away from my family's laughter to the man sleeping beneath the cardboard in a dark alley against the cold brick comfort of the building wall, and I wish I could find my voice. I don't say anything, just bend down and put my neat white box next to his head and lay the four dollars I have left in my pocket underneath. He stays asleep and I walk back to my family.

In a life of watching and remembering, I think of that sleeping man on the streets of San Francisco more than any other stranger. He is a flash of blue sympathy on an otherwise monochromatic time of my life. I have wondered about his story and let it infuse my own. His street gutter slumber changed my

narrow view that this is a fair world. It isn't and it can't be.

I can hardly remember when I started watching people. I know I have always been one of those people who really watches others to see something about myself. The view is not always a clear one, but it changes and shapes my perspective every time I let myself really look. Can a man sleeping in a cardboard box change the world? Probably not, unless you consider the change he made in a shy girl from Utah, who took the sad truth of his story and made it part of her own. Unlike him, she has the chance to tell what she has learned, what she has seen, and how her story has become richer and deeper because she noticed a man in a pile of rubbish and let his life, his experience, encircle her own. She is grateful.

And so am I.

.....
*You must understand the whole of life,
not just one little part of it.*

*That is why you must read that is
why you must look at the skies,
that is why you must sing, and
dance, and write poems, and suffer,
and understand for all that is life.*

—Krishnamurti

Phalangium opilio:

Harvestman, also known as Daddy- longlegs

By Christina Derry

The smooth gray
pebble-body
walks with threads
near the crushed
purple petunia
on the cool
sidewalk,
and knows
the marks
of the changing
season,
like the angling
of the sun
and the new
taste of the wind-
though he
doesn't know
how many names
he has.

Abbie by Christine Bond

One year ago, my whole perspective of the way I think of people changed. A very young child was taken out of my life and the episode served a heavy impact on the way I value children. September 9 was the day I decided people are worth more than I make them out to be. The world does not revolve around Christine. That concept did not hit until a tragic time which should not have happened.

My house is a living zoo. Well, at least that is what some people may call it when they walk in: children screaming, running, jumping, and having fun all over the place. But of course, it is not a zoo. In a professional sense, it would be called a home day care. Every morning, Monday through Friday, starting from six in the morning and stretching clear out to six at night, our house is full of children and has been for twelve years.

Throughout the twelve years I had been around the day care, I didn't care. I would never reach my hand out to help, offer

myself, or try to be a part. To be the one to change the baby's diapers was unheard of. I would just disappear into my room, hoping I could go unnoticed from all the chaos. What I didn't realize was the importance of valuing a child's life as though they are worth something.

I woke up. The clock read 1:00 a.m. I heard the door creak as it opened slightly. I listened and I heard someone's light footsteps tiptoe to my bed. I was torn out of my deep, dreamless sleep. I looked up at my mom. There was just enough light to make out a tear drop falling from her cheek. She finally spoke.

"Christine are you awake?"

"Yes," I replied in a groggy, half awake voice.

Her voice cracked before she made the terrible words come out her mouth.

"Mark just called and...Abbie died. She's dead. I just can't believe it! But I'm honored he

Thoughts on "Phalangium opilio: Harvestman, also known as Daddy-longlegs"

In her poem "Phalangium opilio: Harvestman, also known as Daddy-longlegs," Christina Derry effectively uses free verse style in a concise, vivid, and thoughtful way.

First, though she does not follow an established poetic form, Derry's poem does have form. All of the lines in this piece are approximately the same length. No line is more than four words long. The result is a poem with visual uniformity.

Derry also makes a nice, fluid use of metaphor. The poem presents an arachnid that has a "pebble-body" and who "walks with threads." By seamlessly mixing these abstract images in with literal ones like "petunia" and "sidewalk," the author's images are both clever and accessible.

The big payoff of the poem comes in the last half. Derry uses imagination to take us into the spider's mind. She supposes what things a spider notices—the change of seasons—and what

things it doesn't know—its various human-created names. This also provides an arc to the poem, by adding significance to the poem's straightforward title.

Ultimately, Derry's poem succeeds on two levels. Its visual focus makes it enjoyable for any reader. Also, the poem's musings about a spider's thoughts motivates the reader to consider deeper issues about the relationship between creatures and their environment.

called us, letting us be a part of her passing."

More tears dropped from her eyes, sort of pouring out now. I sat up in complete shock. I didn't believe what I heard. I knew Abbie had been really sick the last three days, but how?

My mom replied as if reading my mind.

"It was her appendix. It burst. The poison went through her whole body. She was not strong enough to fight the poison."

I thought to myself, Abbie was only eight months old. This type of thing never happened to someone at such a young age. I lay back down and my mom left knowing I needed to be alone. To do what, I didn't know. So I slept. Well, at least I thought I had. I awoke the next morning wishing I had been dreaming. A dark, lonely feeling started to settle in the air. I knew it was too late...the reality had already sunk in.

A cold chill ran across the back of my neck as the wind blew a warm light breeze. Under the circumstances, the warm air felt cold as ice and dark, like the deepest, blackest corner in an empty, run-down house. A sort of forbidden place was creeping upon me. It felt surreal. I felt like I was not supposed to be there. No one should be able to enter, or be permitted to enter, by order of some higher power.

I looked down and saw the pink box. It was about three feet long at the most. The color was the shiniest, prettiest pink I had

Thoughts on "Abbie"

In this story, "Abbie," Christine Bond creates a first-person narrator-aptly sharing her name-who is so realistic that we believe this really is the author's story. The story is so plausible and the tone so honest that the reader would never guess this piece is fiction. We only know because the author tells us it is. She does an excellent job of creating a realistic slice of life.

The author does other things that make her story very memorable. She starts the story at the end. This is an effective way to create suspense. The reader wants to know how the story reaches that conclusion. Then, when the story takes a full circle and ends in the same place, the story feels very complete.

Her description is also very vivid. The pretty pink box and the beautiful spring setting contrasts with the dark and solemn tone of the scene, creating an interesting juxtaposition. We all know the clichéd funeral scene with the dark sky and depressing drizzle of rain. This funeral scene is a realistic one, as is the narrator's reaction to it.

She effectively uses juxtaposed images throughout the rest of her story also. She writes that the "warm light breeze" blew a "cold chill" across her neck, and contrasts the chaotic scene opening the piece with the calm and peaceful scene ending it. In fact, the whole premise of the story is the contrast between what she thought of her relationship with Abbie and what it really was.

every seen. The box was decorated with silver details-angels and flower-things of beauty and happiness. Yet, the box stood for the exact opposite. There was nothing of laughter and playing, all those fun things that children should be able to do.

I turned my gaze away from the sad little box and noticed the grass was green. The trees were covered with bright green leaves. It kind of reminded me of spring, when everything starts growing and it somehow makes the world seem right. I wanted to ask God, why? The world felt so dark, gray and lonely. How could the trees and the sky still look so

happy, so beautiful, so normal? I knew the answer to my questions. They didn't understand what had happened. Their only purpose in life was to live, not feel. I resented the scenery. I wished that I was a part of the landscape, so I wouldn't have to endure the pain any longer.

That moment caused a flash of sadness to rain over me. It could have been raining or even pouring, but it wasn't. I tried to remember and knew I had to, but nothing. I looked at the pink box again, hoping something would come to me. But it was not Abbie in the pink box, it was just her body. Her happy little spirit had

left her body and gone on to a better place.

I needed to get away. I had never experienced such a dark, gloomy, and blank state of mind. Even though lined with gray square stones, the grass was still green. I thought to myself, the grass didn't deserve to be green.

This was supposed to be a gloomy, grey place—a place where people come to mourn and be sad, place to mourn the loss of a loved one and remember the times they did share, a place to be sad at all the things they should've done.

Suddenly a memory, the one I had been waiting for, ran across my mind: I saw her. I saw Abbie's beautiful blue eyes, her cute little mouth smiling up at me for no reason. She loved my presence; it was all that mattered to her at that time. She made the cutest noises, gooying and gagging, making all those familiar baby sounds, but somehow her gooying was special. She reminded me of a little angel, the way that I would imagine an angel to act. She looked at me with a glint of hope in her eyes wanting or needing me to pick her up and hold her close. She had hope

because she knew that I understood what she was saying. Happiness seemed to follow her wherever she was. The world was right for her.

Now as I sat looking at the pink box, I sealed the memory in my mind. I felt I should have had more memories. The logic of the

ran down my cheek relieving my burning eyes. Then another drop and another. The sad feeling returned. I was crying for all the should've's and could've's that I could not do anything about. The ground looked so very cold and unloving. The ground was no place for a child. That is were

Abbie's body would be now. It just wasn't

right. Nothing was right.

If it were up to me, this would have never happened. Regretfully, I could not help it at all. I know that now, and now I do care more than

Now as I sat looking at the pink box, I sealed the memory in my mind. I felt I should have had more memories. The logic of the situation was so indescribable. Abbie was at my house every day, and I only had a few memories to keep of her. That was the second I decided to change. I told myself, "I'm going to care."

situation was so indescribable. Abbie was at my house every day, and I only had a few memories to keep of her. That was the second I decided to change. I told myself, "I'm going to care." How could I have been so selfish as to only give Abbie a couple moments of my time? She deserved so much more. I needed the memories. I needed to care for the children in order to have those memories. It is ironic. I even considered Abbie to be my *favorite*. I should have thought that my *favorite* deserved so much more.

I felt my eyes burning. My nose felt stuffy. A tear of sorrow

ever. Abbie has a new baby brother named Samuel. I never detest a second I have with Sam. I do not take children for granted anymore. I realize now that children can be taken from us just as easily as they are given. I hold Sam safe in my arms and remember how important my job is. My job has little gifts every day, and I will remember the memories as much as possible now. I'm still a little sad at the fact that Abbie had to be taken away from us in order for me to grow up. But I will not think of it that way. It seems kind of selfish. Abbie will always be with us in our memories.

.....

AT THE TOUCH OF LOVE EVERYONE BECOMES A POET.

-PLATO

.....

Voice of Storms I'm Drowning In by Malcolm Rasmussen

How hushed the air through me hums
In hanging notes I hear from you.
Silk Island syllables that tumble from your mouth,
In drops resound with the percussion
Of your sound and the drums of thought
You still to rest in me.
And if my soul should slip and cradle in your words
Beating rhythm to my mind
-The soft thunder of storms
And clouds I bare my closing eyes to-
Then let my soul sleep-settle there in that tempest,
The softest brogue I've bathed in,
And sleep, my soul,
Shower in the echoes of your breath,
And gladly never wake.

Thoughts on "Voice of Storms I'm Drowning in"

An interesting poem begins with an interesting title. "Voice of Storms I'm Drowning In," by Malcolm Rasmussen, sparks interest.

The reader is curious about how one can drown in storms produced by a single voice.

This poem is also interesting because the imagery of the title is carried throughout the remainder of the poem.

The author juxtaposes the images of weather-"air," "drops," "thunder," "tempest"-with images of speech-"syllables," "words," "brogue." This imagery continues throughout the entire poem.

In addition to the imagery, the most effective device this poem employs is the extensive use of alliteration.

However, this poet goes a step beyond, and repeats only certain sounds, and further, sounds that will enhance the imagery of the poem.

The use of the "h" sound in the first two lines sets the tone of quiet, as well as mimicking the sound of the flowing air mentioned.

The remainder of the poem makes extensive use of "s" sounds, which mimics speech. Both the "h" and "s" sounds are soft; they enhance the gentle feel of the poem.

These devices-the title, the imagery, the alliteration and other devices not specifically mentioned-work together to make a beautiful poem.

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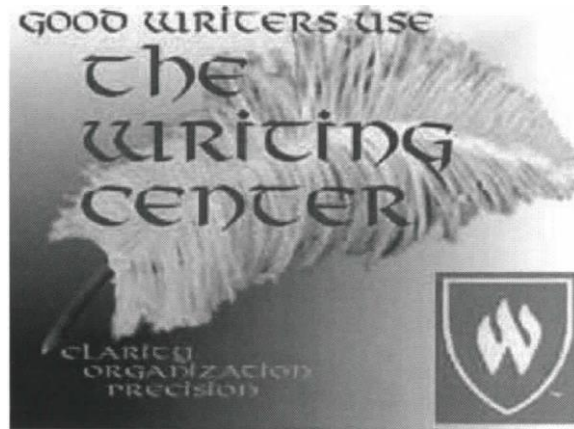
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Verbal Equinox is a bi-yearly publication aimed at helping students improve their writing and become more fully aware of the writing resources available on campus. We would love to hear from you. Please direct suggestions, comments and questions to Sylvia Newman at snewman@weber.edu or call the writing Center at (801) 626-6463.

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