

fall 2007

# Progeny



# *Progeny*

*Fall 2007*

*Poetry Photos Stories*

*Defiance College*

*Volume 3, Issue 2 of the Translucent Series*

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## *From the Past*

I don't like fighting  
but I'll have to again  
The bruises are ugly  
but my skin will get over it  
I don't bleed easily  
but I know it'll happen  
And I don't like crying  
but guess what? I just might  
My outer scars have healed  
but my inner ones are still fresh  
I've tried medication  
avoidance and suppression  
but I've learned that to conquer fear  
you have to face it head on  
It hurts to go back  
but it hurts more to fall back  
back into the same trap  
one that I should now see coming  
My skin will be tougher  
My heart will be stronger  
My mind will be wiser  
And I'll be aware  
ready to jump  
to run  
to crawl  
to do whatever  
because I refuse to do anything  
but learn from the past

Karolyn Avila

*Untitled*

No was said,  
so I said watch and see.

Hurdles were set,  
and I laughed as I jumped over them.

Many turned their backs,  
and I bid them farewell  
as I continued on my journey.

Hurdles are temporary,  
pain is brief,  
but the sense of accomplishment is great.

Karlie Nickeson



*Racecar Reflection*, Brooke Shinabarger

## *Sewer Scene*

We had finally arrived. My family's familiar lake-house stood in the near distance with the lake stretching serenely before it. The wind blew gently, beckoning me to come and share in its calmness and peace. I had my best friend with me, a girl who is fairly high-strung. I looked over at her, and she had a disgusted look on her face as she swatted at mosquitoes surrounding her head. I took a deep breath and led her to my paradise, determined not only to have the best time of my life, but to help her have the time of her life also.

As I opened the door to the lake-house, we were hit with a wall of odor. "Welcome to the lake-house," I said, trying to make the best of the situation. My friend walked in, trying as hard as she could not to plug her nose (but no apparent success from scrunching her nose) as she walked past me. She took her suitcase to the bedroom as I traveled to the basement to turn on the water, power and air-conditioning. As I walked down the steps, the odor became stronger. I realized that the smell was not the lake; it smelled more like dirty socks than fish. I went into the laundry room and saw a large puddle of dark water on the floor. I checked out the lines for the new washer and dryer to make sure they were connected correctly and then reported what I found to my friend. To make sure it was the washer and dryer that made the mess, I asked her to flush the toilet so I could listen to the water in the pipes.

I heard the water swirl in the toilet bowl and began to listen closely to the pipes. I reached to put my hand on the one that was nearest to me to see if I could feel the water go through it. As my fingers gently touched the cold metal, a fountain of water burst through the bottom of the pipe. After a few seconds of shock, I was struck with the fact that the water on the floor did not come from the new washing machine but from the sewer line. No longer was there sewer water just on the floor of the laundry room, but it also drenched my clothes and hair. When the smell slithered its way into my nose, I could feel a ball of air traveling up my throat. Instead of gagging, I burst into tears as I yelled upstairs, "DO NOT FLUSH THE TOILET."

My high maintenance friend ran to my rescue as I ran and

jumped into the lake. She followed with shampoo, conditioner, body wash and a razor. She "took a shower" with "sewer girl" and stayed near me the entire rest of the day even though I know the smell had not escaped my hair or body. For hour upon hour we cleaned up the laundry room. She helped me take out sewer-drenched cardboard boxes, and not once did she scrunch her nose. Our first day of vacation was anything but relaxing, but there was a look in her eyes that day, a look that said, "there is more to me than you realize." I began to accept and believe this because she had shown me a side of her that I had never seen before.

Later that night, when the water line was fixed and everything was clean but us, my friend jumped into the shower. Shortly after she got in, I heard her scream my name. I waited for a moment and heard her scream again saying, "THERE IS A HUGE BUG IN HERE!!!" I rolled my eyes and recognized my old friend again. Slowly I made my way to the bathroom.

Jamie Wilmot

*First Prize*

Writers Group of the Defiance County Arts Council *Progeny*  
Contest



*Luke Michael, Brooke Shinabarger*

## *In Between*

Born in '61, timing was everything.  
When my turn came around,  
all we had left was a Cold War.

Yes, I grew up thinking about Communist missiles,  
but we never met face to face.

So, who am I to act like I've been there and back,  
when my future isn't at stake?

How can I possibly know what's worth dying for?  
You'd have to ask my dad about that one.

All I know is that I have a son of my own.  
I pray that he'll end up like me . . .  
being born "in between."

Tim Rickabaugh



*Timeless Devotion*, Brooke Shinabarger

## *It's Gone*

Our final mission is at hand,  
and we've been fully prepared.  
After daily practice runs,  
the hour of deliverance has finally come.

We're just doing our job,  
executing orders from above.  
And when it's time to drop,  
we'll be on target.

After all, they'll never admit defeat,  
and we'll save thousands of lives.  
Yet they seem so far away.  
I wonder what they're like?

Time for action,  
Focus . . . I've done it . . . its gone!

My God

What have I done?  
Who was I to possess and unleash such power?  
There was no hatred in my heart,  
just obedience to orders.

I wasn't prepared for this.  
Now I'll relive this moment forever,  
and the World will never be the same.

Tim Rickabaugh



## *Focus by Storm*

I had clutched the railing 'til the chipping paint gnawed at my palms. For a moment, I was allowing my body to rest and my mind to catch up. I had, for an unknown amount of time, paced the balcony, bare feet slapping an impatient rhythm on the ill-treated boards, an effort to out-walk my mind. And when I'd found that there was no escaping the constant shadow that was my mind, I'd called my brother. On a normal day his sarcastic jokes and witticisms were just the thing to make me smile, but now my cell was jammed in my back pocket, having failed to soothe me. Shifting my grip on the aged wood, I sat on the balcony railing, my back against a supporting pillar, legs stretched out in front of me along the length of the rail. Looking up, around the overhang, I stared at the stars peeping down at me on my perch. It was cool and clear but humid, the threat of a storm rode on the winds that made branches vibrate in warning.

The next thing I recall is me contemplating whether or not a shower would help my mind to settle, when I was interrupted by a voice from below. "Waiting on someone?" The speaker was a man standing on the sidewalk below, or rather he was leaning on a square, concrete pedestal that marked the end of the sidewalk and a set of stairs leading from my dorm. His skateboard leaned haphazardly against the opposite column and made me wonder how I had not heard and noticed him. Despite the vast space between us, I could see his face gleaming with sweat from skateboarding. It had struck me as strange that he was out so late, but then again, so was I.

After that question, I don't recall much of what was said, only that it was the normal, mild introductory things: where do you live, what year are you, name and so forth. He was Luke Knuess, a transferring sophomore from Kent State, who had grown up in New Philadelphia, Ohio, a country boy with a love of fried chicken and mashed potatoes. A bit of a hippy, Luke wore an earthy colored t-shirt with some random 70's saying, baggy, faded and ripped jeans, his brown hair cut to his chin. He told me of his father and how as a lumberjack he could look at the bark of a tree and tell what kind it was. To this day I could not say what identifies one type of tree from another. All I can remember is the dull throb of his voice playing as an undertone to the lighter silver clatter of the leaves on the branches warning me of the approaching storm. The humidity had risen, my knit shirt now clung to my stomach, the coming onslaught had picked up speed and yet I ignored it.

I found myself agreeing to let him show me a favorite spot of his. He had refused to tell me where it was but bade me to go get some shoes as it was going to be a bit of a climb. So, after a brief trip to my room, I jogged a couple of flights of stairs to the fourth and topmost floor, the only guy's

floor in my "all girls dorm." Close to the stair, a door was tucked away, the only one left undecorated in the whole hall. Neglected, forbidden and forbidding it seemed to be all at once, though it was but a plain white door. This was where Luke met me. He had held a finger to his lips before opening it and motioning me in. I was completely submerged in the dark and I panicked when I realized I could not see a thing and Luke was closing the door behind us. We were now in an unused dorm room. Beds were shoved against the walls and moonlight revealed closets that stood on either side of the door sentinels against us intruders. I must have said something that betrayed misgivings because the next things he said were "Relax" and "Look," as he slipped between me and a closet to open the window. Through it I saw the tempting, unexplored expanse that was the roof.

"You want me to go out there? Onto the roof?"

"Sure, I do it all the time, I even play guitar out there."

"Is it safe? Aren't you afraid of falling?"

"It's only dangerous if you go too close to the edge. Where we're going we don't have to worry about it."

I climbed through the wooden frame, balancing on the narrow ledge that ran beneath the window. Luke joined me and we hiked up the tiled slant to a platform just above where we'd come out. To describe in detail, to attempt to do the eternity of space that we saw that night justice would do it dishonor. I recall almost feeling as if I were spinning, as if I could actually comprehend the world rotating slowly on its thirty-two degree axis. The storm was forgotten: it still existed and was a threat, but for that moment, there was no cold, no incoming rain, just the smiling stars and their secrets. Then once, twice, a thread of light arched across the sky. "A soul leaving earth," Luke said. I did not and still do not agree with him on that. It is too morbid a thought for such a lovely phenomenon. I thought more that it was one of God's smiles stretched across part of the expanse of his creation.

For the second time that night, time was a paradox: it sped up and slowed down all at once. I can't remember how long Luke and I stood there in cold, in absolute awe, but there came a point where the cat's paw of the storm was about to land and we had to abandon our sanctuary. My mind remained stuck on the two shooting stars I'd seen, until I reached my welcoming bed. Then the storm unleashed Hell.

Tory McMaster

## *Minimum Wage*

What a pain you have become!

How can we afford to pay you more,  
and still maintain a reasonable level of comfort?

After all,  
you've survived on this wage for years.  
Why do you suddenly need more?

And,  
if you won't bother to help yourself,  
why should that cut into our profit?

I can't believe they were actually duped,  
into making it harder to meet our bottom line!

Now,  
where will our raises come from?

Why couldn't you have been more patient,  
waiting for the trickle down effect?

Tim Rickabaugh

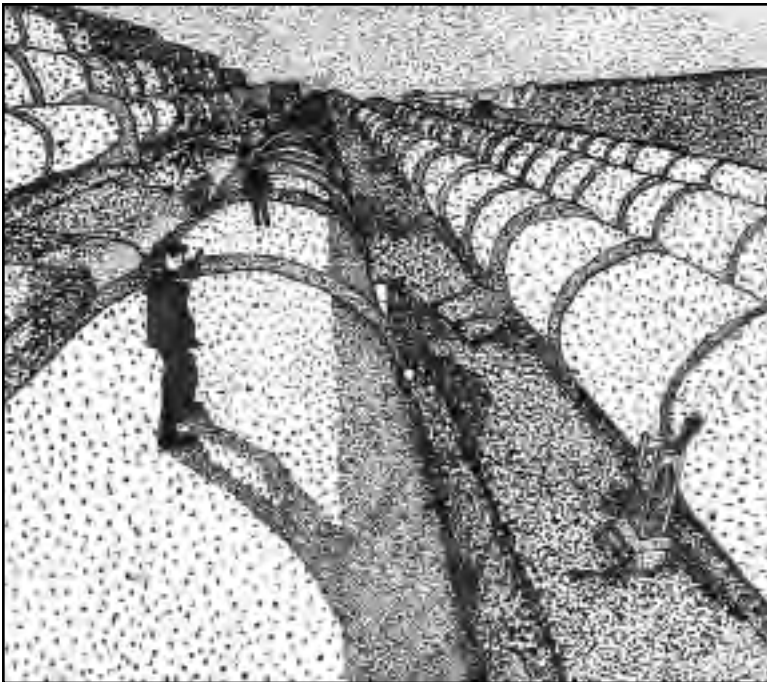


*Beginning or Ending*, Andrew Pratt

## *Worthless Hate*

The agitation, the quarrel.  
I'm winning, you say.  
Was it real? So quick, so easy.  
Why?  
Aftermath.  
Turmoil, guilt, unexpected return.  
Unsure, but certain.  
Not to return another way.

Andrew Pratt



*An American Pipeline*, Jacob Mulinix



*Out on Walden*, Brooke Shinabarger

## *If You Are Going to Help Me*

Please be patient while i decide if i can trust you.  
Let me tell you my story, the whole story in my own way.  
Please accept that whatever i have done,  
whatever i may do is the best i have to offer.  
i am not “A” person i am “THIS” person, unique and special.  
Don’t judge me as bad or good, right or wrong.  
i am what i am, and this is all i’ve got.  
Don’t assume that your knowledge about  
me is more accurate than mine.  
You only know what i told you.  
Don’t think that you know what i should do.  
You don’t.  
i am still the expert on me.  
Don’t put me in the position of living up to your expectations.  
I have enough trouble living up to my own.  
Please hear my feelings, not just my words;  
accept all of them.  
Don’t save me;  
i can do it myself.  
i know enough to ask for your help.

Kai-Drew Marshall

## *Down the Devil's Road*

A man one day went walking away  
Down a lane of his own  
When who should appear, with ugly sneer,  
But the Devil and all alone.

To the man he said, while scratching his head,  
"To what do I owe the pleasure?"  
"Oh, to my thought, and I thank you not  
For interrupting my leisure."

"Well if that is so, I'll let you go,  
But first you must answer my riddle.  
Come right along while I play this song  
Upon my crimson fiddle."

"A riddle you say, oh how clichéd!  
Cannot you try something new?  
You sorry Devil, you're feigning a rebel  
Living the greatest taboo.

"You dance away to enhance cachet,  
Taking the soul of a loon,  
But don't you see, you blind marquis,  
I'm not so easily hewn.

"To my avail I walk this trail.  
It reminds me of my life,  
For down this pass I met a lass  
Who later became my wife.

"For years it seems we spoke of dreams  
While stopping to smell the flowers.  
We grew so near, we grew so dear,  
Blossoming all of our hours.

"But Death, it came and took my dame,  
She faded with the season.  
Death was cruel and took my jewel  
And left me with no reason.

"Her sweet embrace I cannot replace  
And now she is Elysian.  
To you I say just go away,  
I cannot commit this treason.

"It is my soul, it is my dole,  
My bond is my quintessence.  
When I die, I'd rather ally  
My life with evanescence."

When all was said he cocked his head,  
And the Devil was simply mum.  
And like a ghost, he could not riposte,  
Defeated by this chum.

Kyle Cogswell



*Oddly Enough*, Brooke Shinabarger

## *The Man Who Left the Scar*

They are not forgotten, not erased,  
but the feelings from them have been misplaced—  
covered up—replaced by memories that don't make me cry,  
the kind that I don't look back at and try to deny  
they ever existed because it hurts even more  
knowing that today shows you didn't even care before  
and apparently never did, so today I don't know you.  
We could walk by each other, and you wouldn't have a clue  
as to who I am, what I love, or who I will be.  
But I've learned that being a father is no decree.  
You could just acknowledge the fact that I exist,  
unlike the way you treat me as a "to-do" on your list  
of things to do, people to see; your big desk is piled high,  
and I'm the post-it note that failed to catch your eye.  
You forgot, you're so stressed, you're just so tied down  
to your cold, artificial life that you jumped into about to drown.  
But you're swimming, barely, trying to keep your head above,  
but it seems so futile when you resist genuine love.  
Pushed away, tossed underneath, thrown to the side,  
How would you feel if you found out I had died?  
Guilty? Angry? Filled with Regret?  
None of the above is what I bet.  
You're absolutely justified, sitting on solid rock.  
You're so sure, you don't even glance at a clock  
because you're not thinking of all the time passing by.  
You see a letter or a missed call and don't reply.  
You don't want to admit to being wrong for the last five years,  
so your cold heart decides to simply cut all ties and disappear  
from your family, what you knew, and who loved you.  
I didn't think that was something a decent person could do.  
As a person, I have no idea as to who you are.  
You are simply the man who left me with an irrevocable scar.

Brooke Shinabarger

*Second Prize*

Writers Group of the Defiance County Arts Council *Progeny*  
Contest

## *Talking, Walking*

He walked in and  
Before I knew it  
His arm tucked tightly around me  
I didn't even look at him  
I just kept talking

We ate in silence  
An occasional glance was thrown around  
Longing, searching for a laugh  
But silence remained  
Later I begged for the silence again

He started with "God is good  
All the time"  
And then repeated it again  
While his eyes said  
It was difficult to believe  
He would believe anyway

His wife's face turned grave  
And her thoughts turned there also  
As he spoke of the results  
From the annual blood test  
That made his face equal to his wife's

I can only assume  
My face turned white as walls  
Salty tears fell to my lips  
As I listened to a man  
Who has been a father to me

What if he leaves  
Against his will, our will?

Can I walk without his support?  
Questions unanswered  
Statement the same,  
"God is good, all the time."

Jamie Wilmot



*Barn Thorns*, Brooke Shinabarger

## *Forest*

in the quiet of the night the animals lay  
within their dens when predators prey.  
the animals lay so sound in their nest  
while predators leave at dawn's early bliss.  
the pond is not shaken, the roses not tattered,  
the berries asleep with nothing to matter.  
the river a washing away the disaster.  
the lake all quiet, with nothing to matter.  
the leaves to breeze which way they desire.  
the sun arising to bring the day.  
the animals waken to stomp and graze.  
the water a scurry the night asleep.  
the day a hurry each hour to keep.  
'til the night each hour of sleep.

Katrina Saultz



*Walden Pond*, Brooke Shinabarger



## *Justice & Charity*

She had strong hands.  
Her fingers were familiar  
with knotted, hard cracked wood.

She brought her tools.  
Tools that plane, sand, cut,  
and strike only where they must.

She worked by Request,  
gently sloping roofs  
to ease the rain water  
into the troughs,  
generous rooms  
for families to meet,  
and doors that glide  
into their place.

She was Charity, though  
she came not blind  
as Justice is said to be.  
She saw quite clearly  
the need to ask them  
how her hands should meet.

She needed them too.  
They carried the wood,  
held the humming boards  
when she cut,  
steadied the frames, and braced  
the walls upright.

They were Justice.  
They watched their own  
labors grow, perpetual

hand over hand motion,  
like countless pulleys  
rousing their force on  
load-bearing chain.

When Charity was finished  
and Request was gone,  
no sterile offspring, statue,  
withdrew to an empty hall.  
Clasped hands  
were her progeny.

Justice continued to build.  
They touched each  
piece of golden timber,  
mastered the art themselves;  
they raised their hands together,  
lifting roofs above them.

Dustin Wittenmyer

McMaster Symposium 2007 Prize



*Barn, Andrew Pratt*

## *The Daughter's Tooth*

When my daughter was young enough to still have her last baby teeth—though she did not believe in the tooth-fairy or Santa Claus anymore—I was spending a day cleaning out the bedroom. I had just finished sweeping the floor and was stripping the bedding off the bed. Just as I was gathering the pillows on top of the bed, Lily came and poked her head into the room. When I evidently did not look busy enough, she meandered on in and plopped down on the bed.

“Mom, when’s lunch?” she asked.

“In just a few minutes,” I said.

Looking a little put out, she got up and started for the door. An idea popped into my head and I grabbed the nearest pillow and launched it at her. It hit her square between the shoulder blades and she froze in surprise. She turned around and gave me an I’m-gonna-get-even look. Then, flashing a mischievous grin, she stooped and grabbed the dropped pillow and charged forward. Amidst the competitive whacks of the pillows, somehow, I do not remember how, I lost my pillow. Maybe I had dropped it over the side of the bed; I don’t know. Not wanting Lily to one-up me on soft pillow slaps—in other cases there would have been competitive playful pokes or giggling tickles to see who could have had the last poke or tickle—I reached for anything that I could find. I just happened to grab one of my own childhood teddy bears that had a plastic nose and plastic eyes. I swung it at Lily, and it hit her in the face. She leaned away from me holding her mouth, the tears beginning to well up in her bright, blue eyes.

“Let me see,” I said.

“No!” she cried.

“Only if you let me see will I be able to tell if you are okay,” I replied.

Lily lowered her hands, and I grabbed a tissue from the bed-side table. I looked into her mouth and saw that I had knocked one of her front teeth loose, and her mouth had become a bit bloody. I remember giving her the tissue and grabbing another one to wipe

her mouth.

“You’ll be okay,” I told her.

Lily pushed at the loose tooth with her tongue and whimpered, “It hurts.”

“It’ll go away,” I said gently. “You’ll be all right.”

As she got up to leave, I looked down at the teddy bear in my hands. It had seemed such an innocent thing. I remember that I used to sleep with it when I was Lily’s age. It was the only one remaining from the pair that had been given to me. Its partner had fallen apart and my mother had thrown it away. I tossed the bear onto the bed telling myself that it was an accident. We’ll be fine, I told myself.

Turning to Lily, I said, “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to hurt you.”

She turned back from the doorway, eyes bright, and gave me a watery smile, and said, “It’s okay, Mom. What’s for lunch?”

We couldn’t help but laugh as her tongue snaked out and gave that loose tooth a good wiggle.

Angela Santo

*Second Prize*

Writers Group of the Defiance County Arts Council *Progeny*  
Contest



*Daisy*, Andrew Pratt

## *Because They Can*

Oh, I wish to be like those darned butterflies.  
All they have to do is flap their wings and glide,  
To escape all the turmoil and confusion.  
I wish I could be like them,  
That's why I chase them,  
Day after day,  
Week after week,  
Year after year.

I wish I could go where the butterflies go.  
That's why I follow.  
They fly by and never invite me to come,  
Maybe if I follow, they will let me join.

To go where the butterflies go,  
To be like those darned butterflies.

Siobhon Smith

## *Me, Myself, and I*

Hello I say,  
Hello to Me,  
It's a wonderful day,  
Don't you agree?

Why yes Me do,  
But yet I not.  
What was the question?  
Already Me forgot.

The day is long,  
I say it's short,  
But what of night,  
Or do you thwart?

Come on ol' chap,  
Come on I say.  
Or else we'll lead  
The others astray.

So what of them,  
What do they care?  
Focus is here,  
Don't compare.

So what if Me,  
So what if Me do,  
Cause I will never  
Be afraid of you.

How Me do,  
How Me dare.  
I will regret,  
This Myself swear.  
Oh jest you do,  
Oh jest you may,  
But watch your tongue,  
It's so clichéd.

Cliché it is,  
But not as so.  
Be gone with you,  
I cannot . . . Although . . .

What do you seek?  
What do you plan?  
I was here  
When it all began.

So was Myself,  
Bumbling Twit.  
All your babble  
I do not permit.

You have no say  
In what Me speak.  
Mind your words!  
You are oblique!

Shut up you two!!!  
I do not care!  
Of your quarrel  
You can I spare.

Shut up I say,  
Shut up again.  
My time with you  
I do disdain.

Quiet for now  
Until the morrow,  
I bid thee farewell  
Until tomorrow.

Then tomorrow,  
Although apropos,  
The sun shall rise  
And bid thee hello.

Hello I say,  
Hello to Me,  
It's a wonderful day,  
Don't you agree?

Why yes Me do,  
But yet I not.  
What was the question?  
Already Me forgot . . .

*esneterP rettu*

esnes ekam uoy naC  
 ,ereh etirw I sdrow eht fO  
pleh emos deen uoy od rO  
 ?raelc lla siht ekam oT

,esnes ekam ot evol d'I  
 wolla t'now dlrow eht tuB  
esu eht si tahw roF  
 ?wovasid lla nehW

tfel ot si pU  
 ,thgir ot si nwod sA  
reffus ew dluohs yhw tuB  
 ?eticni ew slaedi ehT

cigol ruo fo enoN  
 ,esnes nrad yna sekaM  
drow a si tahw roF  
 ?esneterp rettu tuB

Kyle Cogswell



*Cat Nose*, Brooke Shinabarger