

Progeny

Poetry Photos Short Stories

Volume 2, Issue 2, Fall 2006



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Poetry ♦ Photos ♦ Short Stories

Defiance College

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On behalf of *Progeny*, I would like to extend a very special thanks to those who submitted to the publication. The assistant editors and I were pleased to see the interest and support that was shown through your contributions.

The support of *Progeny* includes the generous gift of three book scholarships by the Writers Group of Defiance County Arts Council for our Fall 2006 writing contest. A special thanks to Lorraine Andrews for helping to make the scholarship possible. The first-prize entry, "9/11/2001," by Rachel A. Baker is included in this issue.

As you read *Progeny*, I hope you will be inspired by its contents to let your voice be heard and that you will be intrigued to discover that which lays inside each and every one of us . . . our "progeny."

Lastly and certainly not least, I would like to thank my associate and assistant editors—Karolyn Avila, Lauren Brown, Stephanie Rupp, Kristy Davenport, and Andrew Pratt—for their endurance and commitment throughout the past few weeks. I have truly enjoyed working with each and every one of you, and I am grateful for the "progeny" that you have brought forth. Much thanks for making this publication possible.

**The voice of *Progeny*,
Alicia M. Johnson**



Little Butterfly
Andrew Pratt

The Gift of Your Voice

How do we find our voice?
Is it a matter of speaking out
or a matter of being heard?
I mean really heard,
not just a casual “uh-huh”
or nod of the head.
A real voice will listen
with empathy and give
clarification of what is being said.
Have you ever really listened to
your voice?
Sharp words can sometimes pierce
worse than a knife.
One positive or negative
word can impact a day.

My voice is a treasure
when it is singing,
especially if it touches
someone’s heart.
It moved many to different emotions
when I sang at my church.
The song played was a soft, sweet tune
with a powerful message.
The piano keys rang through the building,
the drums played softly.
Some smiled, some cried,
and some only inwardly reflected.

The lasting result is a person reaching
an inner place that helps to heal the soul.
Speak out, speak up, and use your voice.
Whether in singing or humming,
embrace the voice that is yours!!

Lisa Roddy



Girl

The sugarcane was at least six feet tall. It seemed so big to her. Her father could just reach up and cut pieces, and sometimes he would put her on his shoulders to get some. She normally didn't like waiting until they were taller, because then she would never be able to reach them. Besides, they tasted just as fine now anyway.

Gypsi took a large bite out of the sugarcane and chewed on the thick stalk, enjoying the sweet flavor going down her throat. She chewed until there wasn't any sugar left, then spat out the cane. She took another big bite and looked up and out at the long, wide field. She wanted to cut some for herself, especially when there were miles and miles of cane. No one would miss a couple of stalks, she told Papito. *Por favor*, couldn't she just cut one or two?

No, Papito would say. You'd hurt yourself. The machete is bigger than you are. No, I don't want you getting hurt. We'll get some more later. Gypsi looked out at the sugarcane field again, and looked up at the sky. It was getting dark and cloudy. The wind began to blow, hard, and she spat out the last bite of her cane. She reached behind with sticky hands, trying to grab her father's hand. All she felt was the cold air in between her fingers.

Gypsi looked behind her. Her father was gone.

Gypsi turned around in a complete circle as her hair blew in her face, the wind getting more and more harsh. All she saw was sugarcane. Miles and miles of sugarcane. She looked back up at the sky. It was getting darker and darker by the second, and Gypsi felt like she was floating. She looked around and saw the sugarcane moving. The stalks were rushing by her like a group of sun-stricken bats, the leaves nearly cutting her legs and face.

Shielding herself, Gypsi looked ahead.

She saw a bolt of lightning tear through the sky, and then she saw a spark. As she got closer, she saw that a stalk had caught on fire. The fire went from one to another, its trail of smoke getting bigger and bigger. Another bolt of lightning flashed, and Gypsi saw another stalk catch on fire. She watched as the fire got closer and closer to her, the smell of burnt sugar filling her nose.

She looked at clouds and saw them begin to spin. She watched them whirl together until it made a tornado, slowly gravitating toward her. Gypsi wanted to move, to run, but she found her feet planted to the ground. She felt the heat of the fire, and dirt was flying. She raised her arms over her face as the shrill cries of the wind filled her ears. She didn't want to be here. She wanted Papito. She wanted to go home.

The tornado got so close it took her breath away; the fire scoured her skin. Not knowing what else to do, she screamed.

Karolyn Avila



Sea Grass

Brooke Shinabarger



Untitled No. 8

Can you see me?
Do you see my empty eyes
that were once full of joy . . . simple joy?
Can you hear me?
Do you hear my broken voice?
I used to be full, full of glee . . .
Can you remember me?

Do you remember the long summer days,
the golden fields of the past,
the blue skies of the future,
and smiles of the moments that we were in?
No . . . no you can't remember all of this . . .

If you could, what would you do?
Run back to me
like in those bright sunny days of before?
Or would you forget them . . . again
and not feel that same pain once more?
I didn't want to hurt you either . . .
we were so close,
like the final pieces of each other.

When you do remember . . .
Come by and say "hi."
I'm still in the field
watching the skies . . . like before . . .

Siobhon Smith



Alone
Brooke Shinabarger



What a Day?!

With a brisk, confident pace,
head held high,
he began his walk
up to the corner of Willow and Main.
He waited,
roar of automobiles and fuel exhaust
plastered his face.
Music tunes of Rap and R&B vibrated instantaneously
as he drew nearer to the crosswalk.
With anxious thoughts,
steady hand,
he pressed the minute, eroding crosswalk button.
Time stood still,
the sun beaming its frying rays,
the roar.

He looks across the street,
sees the large reddish orange hand,
glances at his watch, five minutes!
He looks on,
the reddish orange colored hand
changes,
like a dripping droplet of sweat
as it leaves an impatient person's body.
Thrusting his weight forward,
vigorously
turning his head both ways,
he lets out a breathy sigh
and crosses Willow and Main,
each step
furious and brisker than before,

the traffic light transformed
to the ugly reddish orange hand
blinking
so wildly.
Looking back,
he sees the traffic,
his spot of residence
at the corner of Willow and Main.
He moves on
only to return in five minutes

Andrew Pratt



Cityscape
Andrew Pratt



Constitution Day

It is truly a great document,
and our guaranteed freedoms are priceless.

But when did honoring the Constitution become federally mandated?

Is it to shift our attention away from Iraq
or the New Orleans' dead and homeless?

And how can my son be unpatriotic by not wearing our colors
or for a lack of timely flag waiving?

If tomorrow it could be his life on the line,
when our freedom needs saving.

When our leaders dictate our patriotism,
don't they simply place it, and our constitution, at risk.

Tim Rickabaugh

The Corrupted Man

They've stolen and taken away from me that which I have earned.
They've marked my wages off to others and my property have burned.
I've not killed, nor raped, nor stolen, and have slighted not but some.
Would it not be wiser to have enjoyed these deeds, instead of martyrdom?

I stand saintly and righteous, honored with truth by my side,
But are those lofty wills a tribute to these wrongs I must abide?
Do not I look quite foolish, as I'm whipped and falsely wronged?
I think I'd rather have the drink than for a cup of water longed!

If I speak against my neighbors, if I lie and black my name,
That name shall be exalted, and theirs will be the shame!
Their shame against my glory, false, wicked and belied,
And mine will be to steal from them, and theirs to go and hide!

For here I stand the corrupted man, I'd rather lie than lose.
I'd rather steal than work, I'd rather run than pay my dues.
I could have stood an honored man, I could have died for right,
But then I would be dead and they alive, the victors of my fight.

Andrew Brent



9/11/2001

There is a pearl in my left ventricle
Rubbed smooth by five years of desensitization
But deep in the center lies the
Horror of realization
Those people are jumping
God, what a decision
I was taking a test when the first plane hit—
“No accident” (as we thought then) “will interfere
With my class”
(What innocence)
How did life move on?
Five years later the nation has buried its pain.

Even I don't cry
(Though sometimes the lump in my throat
Doesn't absorb all the tears
And I see distortedly)
What innocence, and confidence,
We lost when the second plane hit.

I watched it, and there was a haze of
Confusion as I realized
It didn't look like a replay.
I was one of the first in the classroom to know.
Even now as I write, that pearl
Gains a few more coats
To protect its inner workings
From the acid of rage and heartbreak
And the loss of faith in justice.

That day was my marking point—
There was Life Before and
Life After.
All anyone wanted was a return to Normal.

Now, Normal is grumblings in
Long airport lines
Mistrustful looks at anyone who
Could be One of Them
Reading the headlines with cynicism
Claiming “If I were the President I would”
. . . We have become numb.
We need incision without anaesthetic
Together pour our pearls, our
Secret, coated anguish
Upon Ground Zero in memorial,
In solidarity with the victims,
Their families, the shocked, beaten psyche
Of a once-formidable Nation,

Until our private offerings cover the
Scars of a death scene
With the cast-off remnants
Of self-deception
And forced moving-ons.
We need to feel that stunned shock,
Recall the fear of confusion
And the hysteria of
Smallpox
And public places
(Even now I regard certain events in large cities
With suspicion)
But that is all part of Life After.

There is a pearl in my left ventricle,
And it makes it hard to breathe.

Rachel A. Baker



When I Wear Those Shoes

I pull the elastic strap over my tights,
my toes are pinched but oh so free
when I wear those shoes.

My body feels the music,
feet sailing across the floor
when I wear those shoes.

First Position, Second Position,
Third, Fourth and Fifth
when I wear those shoes.

Muscles hurting, feet cramping,
it'll be worth the pain though
when I wear those shoes.

Plié, Arabesque, Battement,
Relevé, Passé, Sauté
when I wear those shoes.

Expression in my movement,
freedom in my limbs
when I wear those shoes.

I find a dancer,
I find myself
when I wear those shoes.

Amy Von Deylen



Sandy Foot
Brooke Shinabarger



Aluminum Dreams

feels like my blood's been drained
my wounded heart no longer works
my blood won't pump through veins
my lungs won't catch the air
I can't live without you
everything's in fast-forward
while I'm stuck on pause.
dreams brought me to you
but life tore us apart
I'm left with a single wing
unable to fly
but still wishing at every moment
for one more chance to try.
the wind calls my name
like I call to you
but the sky changed its color
to match my dark mood
and so I put all my dreams
in an aluminum can
and toss it to the ground
and kick it away.

Kristi Jo Leaders



Land and Sky
Andrew Pratt



The Glistening Sea

Clothespins tag linen,
hanging on the laundry line,
if dry breeze given;
dad again sips turpentine.

Boys who are rough and will
never grow up, never grow still,
hanging on the laundry line,
stomping in at half past five,
beat their chests
for proof of life.

Smiling under cowboy hat,
dad says “hey gimme that,”
slide it forward, close your eyes,
a sea will drown the prairie
‘til dreams recede with the tide.

Lost or looking, we
cowboys, at glistening sea,
sailing clothes, sailing love,
sailing far from here.

In drier days
the clothesline pays;
ma fixes supper
while my father plays
at argument and wrestles
life from new pain,
young boys listen
to guitar strains.

Dad went sailing though
as we grew out of older clothes;
ghost pins scattered
in overgrown lawn,
the old man drinks—
pine—his mind is gone.

At sunsets in dry breeze,
I find my thoughts in
all of these:
lost clothes, lost love,
lost sails—
ripped and blown
too far from here.

Dustin Wittenmyer



Lost
Andrew Pratt



Different Ways to Hurt

I can feel it coming on,
the lies the mind tells.
They have no fear, no doubt,
moving about they shout
So I'm left to cringe.
It's overwhelming, overflowing,
the way the heart starts pounding,
how every breath gets harder to take
Then the words won't come
and the pen won't write.
Tears will flow suddenly
and hearts will break heavily.
I can hear the pieces fall,
one at a time hit the linoleum floor
and like glass it shatters,
catching sorrow like light,
a glorious dark rainbow.
But then the soul follows
and I'm all that's left
alone, empty and distraught.
But this is just another day
where there's nothing I can say,
nothing new, it's all the same.
This just hurts a different way.

Lauren Brown



Reflections

Kristy Davenport



Haunted

I'm not alone
I feel a wicked presence
A figure in the dark
Something tickling my sixth sense

Always glancing over my shoulder
Closing and locking doors
Afraid that something will get in
A shadow on the floor

I'm not alone
A blast of cold air
I can see my breath
Something pulling at my hair

Something brushing by me
Shivers race down my spine
A heavy footstep
Something trying to give me a sign

I'm being haunted
Something lingering here
Voices in the night
A whisper in my ear

Hard for me to sleep
With a presence near the bed
Something dark and cold
Filling me with dread

Angela Santo

Barefooted Sunrise on Oak Tiled Floor

Souls resting,
breathing,
inviting,
wood to become one.

In sweeping meditation,
bowing to creation,
and her ways.

I am caught in the sands of tide,
beating and breaking down,
pronouncing day and dreams dead.
I am cleansed.

Abigail Reichard



Chelsey

I promise you are normal—
everyone's been there.
I promise the load of problems are lighter
when there are two to bear.

I promise tomorrow won't be easy,
as you probably know.
I promise I know the real you
even though you never let it show.

I promise you are beautiful,
whether you see it or not.
I promise you are better opened up;
it's given you what you've got.

I promise struggles help—
they will strengthen you even more.
I promise when there is pain,
there will always be an open door.

I promise life is tough;
it may get worse than now.
I promise you will make it through;
I know you'll find a way, somehow.

I promise I won't always know
exactly what you need.
I promise when you are confused
you can count on me to lead.

I promise that I wouldn't help
if I didn't want to.
I promise that I'm on your side
and completely honest with you.

I promise when you can't rise,
that I will help you stand.
I promise when you are afraid
you can reach for my hand.

Brooke Shinabarger



Worry
Brooke Shinabarger



Absence

A flower blooming
in midwinter
is like the end of absence.

I believe I have seen it:
life pushing up
through dense snow,

delicate petals
and leaves,
alone, in a cold white field,
bending in the wind.

I have felt like the sun
on a winter day,
stretching out across nothing,
tired and useless.

Until, at the base of a tall,
wind-sculpted drift,
I find this flower,

and I am home.

Dustin Wittenmyer



Droplets
Andrew Pratt



The Challenge

Today I challenge us . . .
I challenge us to break down the walls
that we have so carelessly put up.

To stop looking for what we already have
and to start appreciating
the hard work and dedication
needed to foster existing relationships,
friendships and mentorships.

To not be in such a hurry to give up,
but rather to be patient
and to realize that easy come, easy go
is and isn't a true statement.

To take time where we think there is no time,
to tell and show the ones who love,
cherish, support and care about us,
how much we appreciate them.

To not take for granted the most important things,
such as relationships with people,
spirituality and self awareness.

To acknowledge when we are wrong
and not be too proud to ask for forgiveness
from those we have consciously
or unconsciously wronged.

To treat each day as if it were our last,
to prioritize, utilize and specialize our interests
and to realize that we are all capable of
and deserving of
Love,
Companionship and
Friendship.

To think before we act
To love before we hate
To go before we leave
To trust before we fall
And most importantly to strive to understand it all.

Alicia M. Johnson





Hydrangea
Andrew Pratt