

Personal Reflections



Artwork created by Eddie Soich



THE MAN IN THE MIRROR

As I stand here looking at this man in the mirror looking back
at me,
He's asking what do I see.
Now I become the mirror and he's looking angry,
Asking questions about this enemy I see,
But this enemy was me.
As I attempted to walk away from this picture of rejection,
I was stopped and humiliated by a confusing reflection.

I'm the man that knows you.
You are the man that's untrue.
As I tried my best to clear my mind,
The man in the mirror took me back in time.
As I meditated deeply on what's being said,
Aggravating thoughts went through my head.
I stood there and looked at him treacherously
And pointed my finger at this enemy that I see,
But it was me.

As I stand there in denial,
The man in the mirror asks me how I've never done any time,
But the man in the mirror is blowing my mind.
He's the one who committed the crimes.

I felt that I was convicted of losing myself,
Because I became someone else.
This confessing reflection made me stand still,
I couldn't move at my own will.
I remember that day I was in another world,
I accused my brother of messing with my girl.
He never did anything wrong;
It was me singing that same old crazy song.
This is what I claimed,
But the man in the mirror said I was insane.

Right then I knew that it was time to change,
That's the day I stopped shooting drugs into my veins.
I finally realized exactly who I was,
So I fell to my knees and got help from above.
The power of the Lord came over me.
My eyes were open and now I see the enemy within me.

I stood there for a while.
He tried to hide behind a smile.
I remember that same old frown,
But only this time it was a frown that was turned upside
down.
He tried his best to put me through a test,
But the power of the Lord made him confess.
Now he's laid to rest.
Now that God has brought this to an end,
The man in the mirror has become my best friend.

Melvin Griggs

ARE MY EYES THE WINDOW TO MY SOUL?

If my eyes are the window to my soul,
tell me, the pain does it show?
If my eyes are the window to my soul,
can you tell that I mean stay when I say go?
If my eyes are the window to my soul,
why do you ask what I am thinking?
Shouldn't you already know?

Now tell me, my eyes, are they the window to my soul?

Deborah Moon

WHY THEM?

I was only 15 when I lost my two best friends.

As they revved their engines to see what car was faster, they came to the crest of the hill only to find innocent passengers coming their way.

As they punched the brakes, the tires started screaming and the metal of the two 2000-pound machines banged and twisted together. As the truck spins sideways, the voices from inside scream as the road comes running at them.

The windows burst out and then sparks flew from the hot roof going down the road like a train on the tracks. As one is ejected to the ditch, the other is pinned between the dirt and twisted metal. We run panicked following the eerie sounding voices in the distance of the two crying out for help.

As the lights from the departing helicopters faded, friends and family were left sobbing for them.

I will never forget my two best friends.

Matt Whitman

THE KNOCK

There's a knock at the door,
A knock I've heard before.
My heart starts racing.
My knees start to weaken.

But is my heart just playing games again?
Or could it be true?

Is it you there at the door?

Chasity Forrest

STARTING OVER

Sometimes as I lay in bed,
And so many thoughts are running through my head,
I wonder what's to become of me.
Has all of this happened because of my decisions, or was it
destiny?
Will I go on to do well?
Will I find true love?
Only time will tell and God above.
Will my children ever forgive me? Can I forgive myself?
Am I going to do the right things and stay out of jail?
A thousand unanswered questions keeping me awake,
And I know there's a lot more than my own feelings at stake.
I pray for strength and courage to start all over again--
To be a better mother, daughter, sister, and friend.
So I gather around me all the people I love and who love me.
I believe in my heart it's not too late, you see.
I'm going to go out in this world and be the best person I can
be.
That is my goal for the year two thousand and three.

Shellie Van Driel

ALEX'S WORST DAY EVER

Alex was awakened by the pounding noises outside early that morning. There were construction workers building a house on the new lot next door. He stumbled out of bed. As he tripped over his slippers, the phone rang. It was his boss Mr. Burns, who needed Alex to pick up some doughnuts for the conference meeting they were having at 7:00 AM.

It was already 6:00 AM and Alex only had 1 hour to get ready and pick up the doughnuts before work. He opened the closet door, where he kept his linens, but there were no clean towels, so he grabbed the towel from the day before. It was lying on top of the clothes hamper; it was still damp, but it would have to do.

Alex turned the water on in the shower. He jumped in and the water was freezing cold. The pilot light must have gone out. He wrapped his damp towel around him, grabbed the matches, and walked down into the cold, dark basement, bending down on the hard concrete floor with his bare knees.

Finally, Alex was ready to take his shower. The warm water on his cold body was the best thing that had happened to him all morning. Alex dressed himself and then headed out the door. He walked down to the corner deli to buy some doughnuts. As he rounded the corner of the building, he could smell the fresh baked dough and the sweet smell of the icing on the cakes. Compared to the early part of his morning, things were going well. He boxed up the doughnuts and paid the cashier. As he turned to walk outside, something scared him. He threw the box of doughnuts in the air, then realized that it was only a dog. He reached to catch the doughnuts before they fell on the dirty floor. As two doughnuts fell out, the dog lunged in the doorway to catch them. Alex asked the cashier to give him two more doughnuts as he said, "That dog must have really been hungry to go through all that trouble to get some doughnuts."

Alex headed to work. As he walked into the office, Mr. Burns said, "Good morning."
Alex replied, "No. This was my worst morning ever."

Melissa Bartley

DETERMINATION

He walked ever so slowly down the hall on his own.
Every step was a struggle as he tried to go on,
Holding tight to his walker with his feeble old hands.
"Oh, you're lucky," he said with a tear in his eye,
"To be able to walk with such ease in your stride
And not have a walker or cane by your side.
As a boy, I remember, I could run like the wind,
Jump over hurdles and back again.
I carried my wife through the threshold of life
And played with my children all through the night.
Now my loved ones are gone, and I'm left alone
To mourn and to grieve for them on my own.
Please don't think bad of me because I'm old.
I still have my mind!
I still have my soul!"
Then ever so slowly, he turned around
To proceed down the hall where he was bound,
Holding tight to his walker with his feeble old hands.

Patricia A. Martin

ACCOMPLISHMENT

I have accomplished many things while being young. The ones that I am proudest of are having my children, holding a job for more than a year, and now going back to get my GED after quitting high school my senior year. These are the main things that I have accomplished so far at age twenty.

I have three beautiful children. The first child was born when I turned fifteen, a freshman in high school. By the time I was seventeen, I gave birth to another baby. The following year, I gave birth to my third child.

After having given birth to the last child, I went out looking for a job. When I got the job, I started as a waitress. When my shift got slow, they put me in the kitchen as a prep cook. I worked there for a full year and three months. I thought I wasn't going to last, but I did.

A few days after I quit my job, I chose to go back and get a GED. I'm hoping to pass the test so I can find a better job to support my children and me.

What I have accomplished so far is a lot for being young: having three children, holding a job as long as I did, and now going back to school after a couple of years. I hope to accomplish many more difficult situations that come my way. These are the ones I am proud of so far.

Tina McKenzie

WHAT NEXT?

Ever had one of those days? Let me tell you about mine. I was twelve minutes late for work, and the boss was standing by my work area, looking at his watch, and shaking his head. As I got closer, he started drilling me: "Must be nice having a job like yours, Lowe! Just come to work whenever you like?"

When I got to my work area, I looked him straight in the face and noticed he had toothpaste smeared on his face, and his shirt was buttoned up crooked. I tried the best I could to keep my composure, but I broke out with one of the biggest grins I think I've ever had. Well, you probably know what happened next. I spent the next hour packing up my tools. All the guys didn't think I should have gotten fired over that.

When I walked out to the truck, I noticed my keys hanging in the switch on the dash, and the doors just happened to be locked. While I was slim-jimmed the door on my truck, the cops came up behind me, shoved my head against the glass. "Freeze! This is the police!" Nothing like a bloody nose, care of the local police department.

After about an hour of sitting in the back seat of the cruiser, and the guys I used to work with yelling "criminal" and "fugitive" when they came out for a smoke, the city's computer came back on line, and Officer Davis let me out of the cruiser. He told me he was sorry about the nose, and he was going to let me slide on my tags that had been expired for five months. I had forgotten all about it.

When I walked through the door at home, the telephone was ringing. It was the principal at the middle school. He was interested in knowing why my stepson had two packs of cigarettes and matches in his lunch sack. Oops, I must have grabbed the wrong bag when we walked out of the house this morning. Needless to say, no one was amused when I walked through the office door at school except my

boy, who was glad he had the next three days off, thanks to good old me.

My wife was not amused, either. She was even less amused after opening the mail and finding out that I had deposited our bill money after 3:00 P.M. last Friday, and we had six bounced checks.

About 11:30 P.M. that night, I headed up the stairs. I looked in at the kid, as I always do, and went on to bed. As my head hit the pillow, I thought to myself, "I sure am glad this day is over." As I shut my eyes I realized that I had started filling the waterbed in the basement after the six o'clock news.

Ever had a day like that?

Tim Lowe

NEW EXPERIENCES

Experiencing the holiday season in the USA has been very fun for me. Many happy events take place between fall and winter. When I was in Japan, I didn't have any experiences with Thanksgiving and Halloween. Two years ago, I came to the USA for my husband's working assignment and have been able to join in these holidays.

My first experience with Halloween was very exciting. While I waited for children to come to my home, my heartbeat was fast. I paced excitedly behind the door. I was happy to give the disguised children a treat.

The last two Thanksgivings, I've had chances to join a Thanksgiving party at my apartment clubhouse. People of all ages were present, and some brought traditional food to the party. I tasted that food with pleasure. While I enjoyed the meal, I heard stories from Americans about their families. They looked so happy. From their stories, it seems that everybody always takes care of his/her family, even when they live far away from each other.

At Christmas time, I like to see all the traditions that people celebrate. In the USA, many houses are illuminated with lights. I really like to drive around my neighborhood to look at lots of beautifully decorated homes. Recently I heard that some Japanese people who've gone back to Japan from the USA have been starting to decorate their houses like the Americans. In my country, Japanese are in a holiday mood at Christmas time. We decorate with Christmas ornaments inside the house before Christmas, but we don't do as much decorating outside as the Americans.

I guess this holiday season will be the last that I can stay in the USA. After I go back to Japan, I think it'll be difficult to feel like this. It just happens in the USA; therefore, I'd like to have great experiences whenever I can.

Mamie Ito

WHICH IS WORSE?

Which is worse? A child who dies from miscarriage, stillbirth, crib death, car accident, fire, or murder?

Which is worse? A car accident on a slippery road that claims innocent lives, or a car accident where a car is speeding and the driver has been drinking?

Which is worse? A rape that is committed by someone you know, or a rape committed by a total stranger?

Which is worse? A missing child who's never been found, or a missing child who's found dead?

Which is worse? A murder caused by someone the authorities never find, or a murder where the killer is caught and punished?

Which is worse? A murderer's case that goes to trial, or a murder case that becomes a "plea bargain"?

Which is worse? Death by natural causes, or death by someone else's negligence?

Do you know which is worse?

The answer is all of them!

Karen Smith

GOD ANSWERS SPECIFIC PRAYERS

My name is John and I live in Milford, Ohio, and work at Live Oaks School. I attend Eastgate Baptist Church; my Pastor's name is Mark Wash.

Mark asked if the church could borrow a hundred chairs for a New Year's Eve service. When I picked up the chairs on December 30th, there was a light rain falling and the temperature was 57 degrees, which was not bad. When I got the chairs to church, they were wet and I had to dry them off. The next day we had our New Year's Eve service. That night the pastor asked when the chairs had to be back. I told him they needed to be back the next day because school would start January 2nd. He asked what time I would like to pick them up; I told him whenever the door could be unlocked. He said about 8 o'clock.

That night when I went home, the rain was still falling and the temperature was getting colder. I was not looking forward to moving the chairs in the cold, wet rain. When I got home and went to bed, I asked God for a window of opportunity for the rain to stop so I could get the chairs moved without getting wet. Each time I awoke, I could hear the rain and tell it was getting colder by the way the rain was hitting the house – the rain hits harder the colder it gets – and I would ask God again for a window of opportunity.

The next day when I got up, it was still raining. When I left the house at 7:25, it was raining harder than ever. I had to go to the school and get a two-wheel dolly to move the chairs. I left the school, went over to the church, and got there about 7:50. Two other men were coming around 8:00 to help me, and it was still raining hard.

I went inside to start stacking the chairs. When the other men got there, I went outside to tell them what I would like to do. The rain had stopped. I exclaimed, "Thank You, Lord!"

After telling the other men what I would like to do, we loaded the trucks and took them to the school. We got them loaded, unloaded, and back in place where they belonged in the school. When I went outside, it had started raining again.

This is how God answered my specific prayer!

John Berling

GOSSIP!!!

I don't have a face
Yet I'm in every place.

I don't have a heart
Yet I can tear lives apart.

I've caused innocent people to lose their jobs
And teenagers to sit around and sob.

I've caused grown men to shudder
And people to mutter.

I ruin lives, break up marriages
And cause long-lasting friendships to wither away.

I've caused grown men to cry into their pillows
And the strong to hang their heads in shame.

I've caused many a sleepless night
And others to walk around in fright.

Everywhere I go I create havoc and heartache
Even my name hisses...the word...GOSSIP!!!

So ask yourself,
Is it true?
Should I repeat it?

Patricia A. Martin

ARGUMENT

WOMAN—
Does indeed,
Women certainly do,
Belong on an altar.

My only argument with men is this:
Whether on that altar
We proudly stand
Or, docile, lay down our necks.

Leanna Gillespie