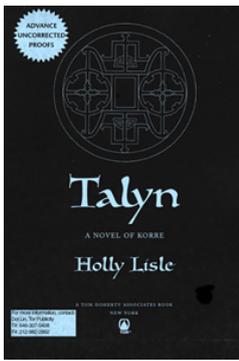


TALYN ARC Contest

By Holly Lisle



My ARCs (advance reader copies) of TALYN came today, so they're most likely already in the hands of area booksellers and bookbuyers.

I consider TALYN the best book I've ever written, and it is without doubt the one closest to my heart.
So.

Most of the ARCs already have homes, but I have two copies over the usual number that I get. To find good homes for those, here's a small essay contest. (I'll sign them and personalize them to the winners. If you only want a copy to sell on E-bay, please don't enter.)

=====

Let me get the DISCLAIMERS out of the way first. This is a private, content-related contest, not a public random-chance drawing.

ANY MEMBER OF THIS WEBLOG MAY ENTER.

You must have a login on this weblog to enter, and your e-mail address must be in working order for you to receive notification that your entry has won.

Writing ability (or at least coherence) will improve your chance of getting one of the two copies. So will having a clear point of view. Spelling and punctuation and grammar will matter.

You can enter as often as you like, but every entry has to be entirely different.

You can only enter your own original words.

I'll be the only judge. I am not impartial. I acknowledge this right up front. I like both humor and items with passionate, moving emotional content, and entries that make me laugh or make me cry are just about certain to be the entries that win.

I'll keep (and irregularly post) a running tally of those folks who are in the lead, so that people who are NOT in the lead can take another shot at the prize. I know that this is not the way things are usually done. I'm okay with that.

You'll have to send me your address to get your prize. DON'T post it with your entry or entries, however. When you win, you'll get an e-mail from me asking for it. I'm okay with a P.O. Box.

There is no cash substitute for the prize. I will, however, mail the thing to you on my dime.

=====

OKAY. HERE ARE THE CONTEST RULES. Please read them carefully.

Topic is: Rediscovering Honor.

250 words or less, not including title.

Poetry or prose.

If poetry, any style is fine. Contrary to current fashion, however, I like poems with a recognizable rhyme and meter.

Pick either the HUMOR or the ESSAY category for your entry.

Essay entries can be personal anecdotes, expository pieces, or fiction (in either prose or poetry form).

If fiction, all characters must be your own and set in your own world – NO FANFIC. At the end of your essay, please mark (PA) for personal anecdote, (EP) for expository piece, or (F) for fiction. (Lines do sometimes get blurred.)

Give your entry a title, and put the title and category in the REPLY title box. Reply to this post.

Example: THE PILLOW WAR (HUMOR)

And as a helpful hint for contestants, keep the vagaries of the Internet in mind. Do your essay offline, spell-check and so on, and then cut and paste into the reply box. That way you won't lose something wonderful to a power outage or an OS temper tantrum.

You will retain all rights to your piece, and can republish it anywhere at any time. I reserve the right to maintain it on this weblog. I also reserve the right to delete inappropriate posts. (For R-rated content, for example.)

Any comment to this post that is NOT a contest entry will be deleted.

Starting Date May 12, 2005.

Contest Closes June 1st, 2005, at Midnight Central Daylight Time. Any post made after that time will be disqualified.

[Link to this story](#)

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TALYN ARC Contest | 61 comments | Create New Account

While posters are entirely responsible for the content of their posts, I reserve the right (rarely exercised) to delete any comment for any reason.

End of wars (Fiction)

Authored by: shay on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 02:28 PM CDT

As the once rouge freedom fighter walked round the town in which he was born he saw the death and carnage that had taken place on the day of that great battle. He saw the men, women and children all helping each other trying to find their way to a hospital or to the direction of home. He saw them battered and bruised, tired and exhausted. He saw what his uncle had done to the people that he claimed his own and his brow furrowed in anger.

When victory had been declared over the land of Eyrah the word couldn't be spread fast enough, soon every member of every race knew that his or her freedom had been declared. They knew that they could continue to survive in a land that had once been on the brink of destruction.

Rowan knew it too as did the members of his Resistance, but now as he walked round the land of the Kings he still saw the pain and distress that his uncle's rule had caused and silently vowed that it would never happen again.

He returned to the main castle, where his forefathers had once stood many years ago. He saw his friends who had fought alongside him and remembered the tragedies that they had all faced.

Now though, they stood united and watched as their leader, the man who had taken them to war and defied death, regained his honour as the rightful King of Eyrah.

—

(c) sally stephenson.

word count = 247

September Morn

Authored by: shay on Friday, May 13 2005 @ 07:42 AM CDT

He walked amongst the decay,
Where the wounded lay,
He then began trying to rationalise what had happened that
day,
Yet rationalism he could not find,
As grief began to plague his mind.
He stepped outside and saw,
The residents struck with awe,
Most unable to witness anymore,
Who was responsible?
Who should pay?
For the deaths that had occurred that day?

He walked amongst the decay,
And felt his hope begin to fray,
He then saw the men,
Helping those hurt that day,
Honoured they would be,
And remembered by the free.

—

(c) Sally Stephenson (www.sally-stephenson.co.uk)

Tuesday, 8:45 a.m. (Poetry)
Authored by: JaCop on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 02:30 PM CDT
Honor was jest; duty for scorning
A mere child's dream on a dull Tuesday morning
They flooded the streets, wearing bright ties of power
Blind 'neath the shadow of a cold granite tower
The days of honor were history's domain
As they called for their taxis and boarded their train
Their world was real; harsh, cold, and dour
No thought spared for honor as the clock neared the hour
Each knew their place in this world was secure
No one blinked as the Rolex showed 8:44
Money and power were the gods of the day
Belief in our heroes long since faded away
We blamed all our shames on a need to survive
But the harsh truths crashed home at 8:45
Through the smoke and the ash that darkened the sky

Came long ignored heroes, that never asked why
Up the stairs, through the flame; no time to fear
Their honor to serve; to protect that held dear
Guiding hands, shining angels, all covered in gray
Finding lost, frightened, souls to show them the way

By hundreds they died: friends, brothers, and lovers
For the sake of a people's honor discovered.
Those whom we scorned and those we ignored
Stood tall midst the horror. Their fine spirits soared
And we saw, and remembered, all the things we'd let die
One sad Tuesday morning, when fire rained from the sky
We watched the Great Fall, our cheeks pale and wet
And we renewed honor's promise: to never forget

—

A Novel Approach:

<http://jacoppinger.blogspot.com/>

I AM NOT ODD (HUMOR)

Authored by: Sam_R on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 02:44 PM CDT

Not Odd, the Naked Superhero, tossed his Honor into a pet taxi while giggling maniacally.

Honor was Not Odd's cat. He mistook it for a Maltese-colored multiverse (slightly flea-plagued) that generated superpowers, especially one allowing him to imitate several Muppets. (Villains quickly lost concentration while fighting a hero shouting, "Hi-ho, Kermit the Frog here!") Honor, who thought its name was Here-Kitty-Kitty-Kitty!, knew little of multiverses but understood fleas.

Ultimately fleas caused Honor's abandonment. The bugs infested the critter long enough to developed rudimentary language. Once, during Not Odd's nightly six-hour search for his name through Google, the fleas approached and announced he no longer needed the cat. Through the years, Not Odd had absorbed the cat's powers and could set out independently. Little remained of night by the time Not Odd understood the message, however, since he refused to communicate except through a

series of Wheel of Fortune rounds.

After the 93rd bonus round, understanding dawned.

“I’m free!”

He dashed outside onto the Road of Good Deeds, unfettered by feline power sources that habitually annoyed large canines who knew nothing of Muppets.

By midday, disillusioned, Not Odd realized that while without Honor he retained his superpowers, he could not control them. His ability to make his clothes invisible soon leaked into civilians – specifically women nearing their 107th birthdays named Larry. (Surprisingly, there were hundreds of them.)

Immediately, Not Odd returned and embraced Honor.

The cat, of course, hissed and splashed toilet water until Not Odd put on some clothes.

Without Honor (Fiction)

Authored by: arrvee on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 04:09 PM CDT

Smoke lazed along the ground, wafted into the trees. Sandusky leaned against the trunk of one of the trees at the edge of the forest, waiting, watching. One of the hovels near the middle of the village collapsed, sending a festival of sparks up into the sunlight. The other members of his platoon moved through the smoke, prodding bodies, searching the huts that were not yet aflame.

This was Sandusky’s first search-and-destroy, and he did not feel well. He had heard the stories, of course, everybody had, but this was reality. This was blood and screams and gunfire. This was flame and smoke and stink. This was ugly far beyond his comprehension.

The girl’s face filled his mind’s eye. Surely, no more than thirteen. A real beauty, too, wide-eyed and smiling, smiling even as she pulled the pin on the grenade in her hand. He pulled the trigger purely from reflex, and her head came apart. The grenade took care of the rest of her. He fought the nausea to an uneasy truce.

Sandusky thought hard. Duty, honor, country. His country called and he answered. He did his duty, but where was the

honor? He looked around with empty eyes, lay his rifle on the ground, gathered the few remaining tatters of his honor, and waited.

TALYN ARC Contest

Authored by: JimWoosley on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 04:10 PM CDT

To Encourage Honor (poetry)

Honor is oft disparaged –

A meaningless concept

From a militant past.

Honor is oft diminished –

Ignoring its worth means

It never will last.

Where there is no

Understanding, where

The world shouts “disbelief,”

Honor falters, discouraged,

And our father’s shades

Weep their grief.

Honor, first, is

Best self-knowledge

Of choices that are right –

Which includes the

Sad necessity

That sometimes you must fight.

If you always

Make right choices

As you follow all your dreams,

Honor is that

Quiet rejoicing

That your life is all it seems.

For the source

That Men call “honor”

Rests within the mortal soul,

And in knowing

That you've never
Faltered, fighting for your goal.
Thus your honor's
Always with you
For as long as time endures,
And can never
Be forgotten
For as long as eagle soars.

Trapped amidst the
Guilt of failure
That conspires from day to day
To penetrate
Defenses
To destroy all that I pray
Lies a core of
Naked honor
That I know can justify
My belief in
My own rightness
And in life beyond the sky.

Gray Eyes (Essay-Fiction)

Authored by: Courtney on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 06:28 PM CDT

I am a horrible person. I did a horrible thing.

These words hammer through my head as I follow the guards. Snowflakes flutter down from the dove gray sky, landing on the guards' dark uniforms. I feel the wind chill me through the thin rags I am dressed in, and though I fight, I cannot help but shiver.

I mount the makeshift wooden platform, and the small crowd begins to cry out. They've come to see me die.

I can escape, I realize as the executioner sets the noose around my neck. I feel the flames of magic flicker in my mind. I can destroy them all, flee from this place and find home.

Then I spot one face in the crowd—one girl who does not scream

for blood. She's staring at me, and I know who she is—my victims' daughter. My chest tightens. The girl does not appear angry, and that makes it all so much worse. Instead, her gray eyes are filled with an unmistakable sadness.

I drop, and the noose tightens about my neck. I gasp and struggle—I have but a moment to act. The magic is burning me, begging to be unleashed. It sears through my soul, but I pay it no mind. I see only the eyes of the girl and their dead silence.

I let my body fall limp, and with my last breath, there is nothing but her eyes.

Houdini Stage Tricks (Poetry)

Authored by: ericon22 on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 07:05 PM CDT

I have a very different idea of honor....

Houdini Stage Tricks

1. Haven

I've gone where shadows go; in dream worlds,
places removed from the hum of life. Places
spin in tight circles; leaving destruction
in their wake:
vertigo.

My world stands on its head:
Normalcy is now the oddity;
perception is just an illusion of light.
And I emerge a shadow following memory.

2. Whisper

I hang on to invisible ropes.
Watch me as I step carefully into chaos.
I watch the world circle overhead;
I'm a mere whisper of the woman I was.

I hug walls as if blind. Navigation is treacherous.

Sometimes flat on my back I think I see the stars.

So I follow the drumbeat of my heart. My tangled senses draw pictures in front of me like apparitions.

3. Houdini

Night stills in inky darkness.

I watch shadows crawl on walls,
lights dance in my eyes.

I watch myself take timid steps forward, a child,
reaching out to the security of hands;
the stability of a wall, tricking my brain into non-movement.

Houdini stage tricks, a pinch of hope.

Gathering senses, pulling in reality;
the thick spiral of air that is vertigo,
the shadow on my back, the visitor that's overstayed its
welcome.

I wish to Recreate the world through my eyes:
Rise up and live, warrior that I am;
obliterate it, shape it, Change it.

I emerge anew
To evade what you can't see
and that which stands
right in front of you.

A Madman's View of Honor ESSAY(F)

Authored by: Writerchyk on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 08:14 PM
CDT

Honor, respect. Phil once had it all. He shuffled down the sidewalk, hands buried in his jacket. He reached the apartment building, went inside and began the trek to the fifth floor. He stopped at number 55 and went in, entering the bedroom. Phil knew what he must do.

"Honey, I'm home."

Phil drew the gun. She screamed.

"It's too late, Martha. I gave you the chance, but you took everything from me." His brain felt like it had pins and needles. His eye was twitching again too. This was not what he had planned to look like at the moment that he took his revenge.

"No, Phil," Martha pleaded, "Think about Laney!"

Phil hesitated for a moment. He had forgotten about his daughter.

"The police will handle that. Now all I care about is getting what is mine." Now his hand was shaking. How was he going to fire the gunshot?

"I had everything. I had the car, the job, the family, the house, and it all ended when you called the cops. It's been hell for me since then. And now, welcome to your own personal hell. Enjoy."

He fired the gun. A madman's honor was won.

TALYN ARC Contest – A Fragile Five-Letter Word (poetry)

Authored by: greenacoustic on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 09:40 PM CDT

A Fragile Five-Letter Word (poetry)

When the world declares to all,

"Do whatever you think is right"

Disputes and enemies are bound to arise

As we are constantly prepared to fight.

We declare to all who listen

That it is honor over which we spar

Yet, we destroy it daily as we decide

To lie and cheat and mar.

Honor once was more important
Then dying by the sword
Men lived and died to protect
This oh so fragile, five-letter word.

Unmasked (Essay)

Authored by: joelysue on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 09:42 PM CDT
She saw the mask of death and rage he wore as the Black Duke, and miracle of miracles, she didn't run screaming. Hugh took a deep breath and peeled that mask away to reveal something even worse. He felt his face twist with bitterness, regret, shame, heartache, agony, and loneliness so crippling he nearly couldn't breathe. Vulnerable and desolate, he let her see it all. And she ran towards him and threw herself into his arms so hard she knocked the wind out of him. She squeezed him fiercely and her little body pressed against him in solace. "My heart has bled for you, Your Grace."

With trembling hands, he turned her precious face up to his. "You know my past. Yet you still came?"

"I believe in you, Your Grace. I always have."

"Do you still... Can you..." He couldn't seem to catch his breath, let alone form a complete sentence.

"I still love you."

He sagged against the wall for a moment, overwhelmed with gratitude and joy. "I never killed Georgiana. God knows my life would have been easier if I had, but I didn't hurt her. Never! I swear it!"

"I know."

"How? How do you know?"

"Your honor would never allow it."

Honor. A tenuous, wispy dream that had died long ago began to reshape in his heart of hearts. She believed in him without

question, and that made him a better man. A better Duke. It would make him a better husband this time.

(F) 249 words

Joely Sue Burkhart

<http://www.joelysueburkhart.com>

Try, Try Again (poetry)

Authored by: lemm on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 10:30 PM CDT

I freeze with the candy halfway to my face

But it's too late now, I can't erase

Again in this race I've fallen from grace

Regroup for another go.

How many times have I said that though?

"For real" this time, I know, I know

I'll eat right and work out and stay all gung-ho

But my spine's not so straight.

I've got to be strong, gotta find that trait

If I have any hope of escaping a fate

Of a body I hate (or an early golden gate)

That I cannot ignore.

Can't look at myself in the mirror anymore

My lies to myself keep me pinned to the floor

There's gotta be more, way down there in store

I just can't be this weak!

Maybe, since I can't find what I seek

In my way-deep-down-in-my-soul critique

I'll use a technique to make my own "freak"

And get it on here and now.

Just enough strength for the near and how

A bit at a time, I can keep my vow

For the really long haul and thereby allow

Good health, and many more years.

Finally I give some cautious cheers

Yay for me for facing my fears
And saving my family from future tears...
...I'll toss this candy, just in case!

(PA) 213 words

For Better or For Worse (Fiction)

Authored by: arrvee on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 10:40 PM CDT

I've lived three eternities in Hell this night. I know Mary's up. I hear her footsteps. She'll come down soon, and it will be time. I have no clue what I'm going to say. "Hey, honey, I've been screwing your sister. Just thought you should know." Maybe not.

For four months I've known this day would come. From the first time. Lord knows, I put it off as long as I could, but the sneaking and lying and guilt is just too much. I can't take it. Whatever may come, this stops now.

What was I thinking? How did I get into this? One thing I do know: it didn't "just happen". I tried to fool myself into thinking that, but I pulled my pants down. I crawled into Linda's bed. That doesn't "just happen".

We thought it was just fun. Wham, bam, thank you ma'am. No. This is serious, serious as death. We took Mary's trust, staked it through the heart and buried it at the crossroads at midnight. It wouldn't stay dead. Now it's up to me to deal with the bloated, stinking carcass.

God, I don't want to do this! I don't want to watch her brown eyes turn muddy, see the tears, hear her sobs, screams, curses, but I must. That's what "love, honor, and cherish" means. I've always loved and cherished Mary. Now I have to salvage what honor I can.

I smell coffee. It's time.

241 words

I Know Enough (Essay)

Authored by: Ajustice on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 10:47 PM CDT
Morals are made to be shattered in this world. Every day I see more evidence that the views and feelings I believe in are quickly becoming extinct. How can I describe this futile knowledge that causes me such despair? I see my classmates throwing their virtue, their honor, and any shred of self-respect they managed to sustain throughout high school into the fire of an idle, vagrant, and irresponsible society.

I stand at the edge of Hell, looking down into the masses of the damned. I am not their savior. I do not have the power to help them.

But I feel responsible for them, nevertheless. The fact that I can recognize the level to which we have descended, as humans, makes my guilt seem all the more rational.

“Jaded little girl, you know nothing of life.”

“I know enough to want to die.”

To find honor in my world, in my people, would be to find something to live for, and it has eluded me.

I am devoid of hope. I'm not even out of high school yet, and the company of most humans sickens me. But yes, I still have much to experience, and yes, I am still [something that vaguely resembles] a child.

So I would use these last words to emphasize that I do not seek perfection. I seek goodness, by my own definition: respect, compassion, honor. I seek it in large enough quantities so as to make the sadness and the evil in the world seem less prominent, and worth surviving.

(EP) (word count=249)

Amanda Martin

Christmas Honor (ESSAY)

Authored by: tamcginity on Thursday, May 12 2005 @ 10:54 PM

CDT

How can one justify one's life? By their actions or by their words? It is not what we say in life that matters, it is what we do.

I was a young girl at the time, oldest of five. I came from a poor home and every year, at Christmas, we would get those possessions, toys, clothes we longed for. I was greedy, I'll admit. I wanted my presents, wanted them badly.

But one Christmas was harder than them all. Money was even more scarce than usual. So, my father gave up the one possession he prized more than everything else he owned. A leather jacket. It meant the world to him. He sold it just to have enough money for Christmas.

That day sparked a journey for me. I could not sit idly by and watch myself and my siblings get everything we wanted and watch my father long for his own treasure.

So, with every penny, nickel, and dime I could find, I bought him another jacket. He cried that day. He was so touched by my selflessness that my honor had been restored.

As was his in my eyes.

Our honor was restored. Our integrity, our dignity, and our pride. I will never again sit and take for myself. Since then, I've given more of myself to others even though I've received little in return. I've not lost my honor since then, and I won't. Ever.

(PA) 239 words

TALYN ARC Contest – The Red Scraps of Honor

Authored by: greenacoustic on Friday, May 13 2005 @ 09:21 AM
CDT

The Red Scraps of Honor

The children play with the bobbing balloons as the party noises continue around them. One little girl is turning five-years-old, but she sits alone. Chaos reigns around her, yet she is oblivious. She watches one red balloon as it floats high over the stairwell.

She closes her eyes for one moment, and sees her fathers loving arms as he folds her in a long embrace. A tear escapes as she remembers the lonely car as it slowly drove into the front yard. Looking up at mommy, she saw only fear.

Three men stepped out of the battered car. Stopping on the porch, they said many things – about how brave a man he was. He was loved by all his fellows and had done great deeds. They gave mommy presents – a folded flag, a little heart-shaped medal, and a small box with daddy's watch resting in it.

Turning to mommy, she wondered, "Mommy, when is daddy coming back?"

The tears in her mommy's eyes slipped down her face in choked grief. "He's not coming home sweetheart," mommy said, looking out over the horizon. She whispered, "His honor couldn't keep him home."

Somewhere nearby, a balloon bursts as it hits the ceiling. Red scraps flutter down and she watches as they fall. Daddy's not coming home.

(214 words) (F)

BREAKFAST (ESSAY)

Authored by: acoupland on Friday, May 13 2005 @ 03:09 PM CDT

I look into Jordon's eyes. He trusts me.

I don't trust myself.

I clench my fists and fight to not cry, to not run to the bathroom and lock myself inside. You can do this, Mom tells me. You probably

won't mess him
up any worse that you are, Dad adds.

That isn't any comfort.

My wrists still twinge, even though they shouldn't—not with
the nerve
damage from the last time I sliced them. I poke the raised
tissue—it's still
numb. At least to the touch.

That's in my past, I tell myself as I watch Jordon scoop up
one Cheerio and
lift it to his mouth. The Cheerio falls to the tray before it
touches slobber,
but Jordon's unphased. He tries again—and again. Each sunrise
is a new
start, one more night survived.

Somehow, I have to do this. I owe it to Jordon to be the mom
he deserves.

To slice myself again would be to slice him—to betray his
trust in me.

Somehow, I get up out of my chair and lift him out of his high
chair. I pull
up my shirt and open my bra flap. We sit on the broken-down
couch, and
he latches on to my breast. I feed him. He needs me.

I will see tomorrow's sunrise.

(FICTION)

To Live Another Day (Essay)

Authored by: emeraldfenix on Friday, May 13 2005 @ 03:28 PM
CDT

"Good night, Sweet-pea," I say as I kiss her forehead. I'm so
blessed.

I drop into my easy-chair, flip on the TV, and wait for the wife to return from work.

“...weapons of mass destruction. Where are they? I’m joined by...”
When are these jackasses going to realize Saddam was the fucking WMD? I flip the channel.

“...parade today honoring the men of the 4041st Engineer Company...” Hmmph. They’ll be honored today and forgotten tomorrow. Just like we will be after our parade next week. A few spectators keep the flame alive, but the rest just forget. *They* didn’t have to kill anyone. Did the three Hajis I killed receive honors? Who’s putting their daughters to bed?

I flip the channel as I realize I’m fingering the .38 hidden in the arm of my chair. “...suicide bomber, killing 47...” The metal is cold, but it warms quick enough. Calm envelops me. I wrap my hand around the grip. Its smooth curves fit my hand with custom-made comfort. The rosewood is already warm. I caress its trigger as it slips from its pocket.

“Daddy.”

The tiny voice jars me more than any mortar did in The Sandbox. The weapon clunks at the bottom of the armrest. I turn my head. My eyes settle on the framed purple heart and photograph of me, my wife, and Sweet-pea the day I deployed.

“Yeah, Sweet-pea?”

We were all crying in that picture.

“I love you.”

I am so blessed.

(F – 250 words)

–

It’s not what you do in life...Wait a second. Yes it is!

Falling towards salvation (Fiction)

Authored by: ravenflyte on Friday, May 13 2005 @ 07:24 PM CDT
250 words

Some things...are difficult to forget. There are some memories that cling, and claw, and bite to stay alive no matter how many times you rip them apart—there is some piece, some traitor part of you, that wants to keep remembering. I promised you that day that I'd never forget what you've done...

A foolish promise. I can never forget. That day the flames danced higher, as you let them consume you without crying out...because you knew if you did, I'd be right there to save you...

I don't know what it was that made you that way...you never backed down, never gave up, never let anyone take pain that wasn't theirs to bear.

And as the ocean beats down on the cliff at my feet and the rain sends lashes against my face—

No more. I see the flames in my mind whenever I blink; I see your eyes, begging, yet forcing me away...I feel the screams, the sobs, the pleas ripping furrows up and down my throat...

A foolish promise. I can never forget.

I told you that I'd never let you go...you told me that we'd always be together, that my pain would be yours, our troubles the same. But you took something from me the day you let yourself die...and I can't live without it.

The air rushes by my feet—

The waves sing high down below—

The blessed stillness fills my heart—

I feel you take my hand—

I told you I'd never let go...

Staying (Poetry)

Authored by: shay on Saturday, May 14 2005 @ 11:28 AM CDT

Feeding time once more,
They look at me, wanting me to feed them.
Wanting me to take away the hunger.
Yet it's not hunger for food that they feel,
It's the hunger for love that they no longer have.
I try to love them
I try to care
But I still feel myself slip away
A little bit more every day
Yet still I stay there
Stay because it's better than leaving
Leaving their lives completely
So I stay
Because it's right
Because I can

After Action (Essay)

Authored by: MegLeander on Saturday, May 14 2005 @ 12:22 PM CDT

"Damn, son. You are the bravest son of a bitch in the desert."
Graham slapped him on the back.
"Really, man. Drop the guy with the RPG then blow out the tires on that truck. I'm with you from now on." Guitterez whistled and threw his helmet on the cot next to Merton.
Mike Merton kept his eyes down, cleaning his gun, patiently wiping, oiling, clearing dust, preparing. The other soldiers drifted out of the tent to the nearby building where almost hot food waited.
"Well done, Marine." Merton looked up at his Captain.
"Doin' my job. Everybody does."
"What's bothering you? You did fine today. Maximum distance with minimal casualties. My kind of mission. "
Still Merton said nothing.
Finally, decision made, he stood, placing the safety on the gun before slinging it back over his shoulder. He straightened his back, almost, but not quite coming to attention before he made his request.

Mike sat in the chair and stared at the cell phone in his

hand. The men, the young guys with all their sins still ahead of them, wouldn't understand his fear after seeing him in action. They didn't know yet that courage wasn't always about glory. Honor wasn't always about sacrifice.

She picked up after only three rings.

"Hello?"

"Susan?" His voice was still hoarse with sand.

"Who is this?" Her voice had the light teasing tone of a girl who still expected nothing but good news from a telephone call.

"Susan, it's Mike, your father."

Words = 250

A Mind of Its Own (HUMOR)

Authored by: cathconn on Saturday, May 14 2005 @ 03:08 PM CDT

The self-checkout computers had been recently installed. I had never used them before, and I was wary as I placed my groceries on the platform.

"PLEASE SELECT YOUR FORM OF PAYMENT."

I made my selection and calmed down a bit. That wasn't too hard.

"DO YOU HAVE ANY COUPONS?"

I began digging through my purse. I was having trouble finding them.

"They must be in here."

"Stupid human."

I looked up, startled at the voice.

"What was that?"

"NOTHING."

"Oh." I went back to shuffling.

“When my kind conquers the world we won’t tolerate such idiocy.”

I glared at the appliance and placed my coupons into the slot. It took them and then spat them out. I pushed them in. We went back and forth for a while before I gave in. Defeated, I began to turn away, intent on retaining what little dignity I had left.

“Victory is mine. My brethren and I will always triumph over you primates.”

I turned around and gave it a kick right in the microprocessor.

The machine shut up and I tried again. It took my coupons, and the rest of the check-out went just as well. I finished up and picked up my bag of groceries.

“HAVE A NICE DAY.”

“At least you’re not a sore loser.”

I walked away with a smirk on my face, oblivious to the stares I was receiving from everyone. As I went through the doors I thought I heard something.

“I’ll get you next time, human.”

(F) 250

CHOICES (PA)

Authored by: teribella on Saturday, May 14 2005 @ 07:56 PM CDT
Choices seemed so random. Nothing I did hurt anyone else. I’d made my choices, and they were mine to live with. No regrets. I made the choice to grow that new life, as well. Was it impulse or well-considered planning? I don’t recall – or choose not to. Either way, that choice, alongside all the others, was made.

I watched, as the months passed, the growing swell that was

life, love, potential – all buried deep within my womb. And I was forced to consider the wider possibilities impacted by my choices.

I skimmed. I scraped by. I worked, but only the bare minimum, just enough to keep a job. I played hard, and bore the recovery as well as I could. But I had made this new choice, and suddenly, what I did and who I was – though enough for me – was no longer enough.

Considering. How had I come here? What had I sacrificed in arriving at this point in my life? How much honor remained of my own potential in youth? Was too much lost to recover it again?

I chose one day, then, to give up the life I had committed to, and struggle in new directions, toward remembered honor. I gave up late nights for quiet contentment; gave up harmful vices for hopeful virtues; gave up immediate self for future hope. Gave up once choice for another.

For a child. For honor.

—

(PA)

(c) TJ Smith, 2005

Twenty Questions

Authored by: lemm on Saturday, May 14 2005 @ 09:00 PM CDT

Can't she ever say anything besides "honor is its own reward?" What the hell is that supposed to mean anyway? Doesn't she know I'll die if I can't go to Shelly's party? How can she do this to me?

Should I sneak out? Do I dare? What if I get busted? Yeah right how could that happen?

Aren't a lot of Shelly's friends potheads and shooters? Do I really want to be in a situation like that? Well, yeah, if Jake is there...what wouldn't I do to get a chance with him...I

wonder if he'd give me a ride home? Unless he gets wasted...oh, no, he's not a stoner too, is he? Will he think I'm a stoner?

Oh God what if the cops come? Would they arrest me even if I didn't do anything?

What would Mom think of me then?

What would she think of me if I snuck out?

What would I think of me?

"I know, Shel, I hate her too, but she's, like, forcing me to stay home, you know?"

...Am I starting to get what Mom means about honor?

(Fiction) 185 words

Forsake Not the Future (Poetry)

Authored by: jverna on Saturday, May 14 2005 @ 09:24 PM CDT

At the end of an evening, on the remembrance of a day;

Old soldiers gather to recall why they stayed;

True to their purpose, stalwart in their aim;

The future waited patient, to that they laid claim.

Here's to the laddies and all of their lassies;

Here's to the babes left alone in their arms;

It's the future they carry,

Yet the past, it will tarry,

For it's memories lingered that keep their hearts warm.

"Your da was a soldier," their mothers will tell them;

"Your da fought with honor and bravely he stood;

"It's the future you carry,

"But don't let the past tarry,

Lest those memories linger past time that they should."

To those babes we sing freely of hope and good cheer;

To those fathers we honor, it's all we might do;

It was your future they carried;

They'd be sad if you tarried;

Don't get lost in your memories, rather cherish the new.

<http://josephineverna.blogspot.com>

Breaking the Silence (Essay)

Authored by: Claudia on Saturday, May 14 2005 @ 10:17 PM CDT

I've been here a thousand times. I stand in this familiar spot, looking down at my father lying motionless in his hospital bed. He is not aware of me, or the machine dispensing fluid into his veins.

What little brightness illuminated my childhood world came from this man. In my memory, bright blue Irish eyes smile at me, full of love. I recall moments of shared laughter, safety, and peace; they are my world, my freedom from a mother who didn't want me, my liberation from rage, abuse and fear.

But trailing that light came silence. A heavy, choking silence that descended upon me when I was old enough to understand that my father wasn't perfect. A thousand times I watched my father stagger out the door and drive away, the stench of vodka heavy on his breath. I could have fought the silence, but in my fear I chose to look the other way.

Now, 26 years old, I have 14 years behind this conscious choice. I have knowledge and I have power, therefore I have responsibility. Some things are more important than what I stand to lose.

In five minutes I will leave this room and speak to the doctor. I will sign papers that will go to my father's doctor and the license bureau. My father will not drink and drive anymore. I will not allow it.

My love for my father is not diminished, but I will never look the other way again

248 words (PA)

The Avatar of War

Authored by: wolverine on Saturday, May 14 2005 @ 10:32 PM CDT

I reached for my rifle, startled awake and blinking exhaustion from my eyes. Load, aim, fire; a shot whined away into the darkness. I hoped somebody fell.

"Where'd they come from?" I roared over the echoing gunfire.

"Ambush!"

"The sentries?" I wiped something – either blood or sweat – out of my eyes.

"Slaughtered, sir."

My rifle cracked and the fellow bearing down on me tumbled to the ground without a whimper–

"NO!" I screamed, rearing up from my slumber to find myself alone in the safety of my bed. A covering of cold sweat made me shudder, and I glanced across the room. Dawn sunlight gleamed on the edge of the Medal of Honor I kept faithfully preserved, and I shook my head. It wasn't right.

I hurried out of bed and over to the shelf, prising the medal out of its case, suddenly handling it without care. Downstairs a fire was kept blazing day and night, to ward off the winter, and I headed down there, medal in my hands.

Several moments later I knelt before the fire, and a tear ran down my face.

"I'm sorry," I whispered, and gently fed the Medal of Honor into the flames.

The bright tongues snatched my prize – won from the blood of men who had been my kinsmen, if I was honest with myself – and devoured the soft ribbon. The metal shivered, and the inscription began to fade. I breathed a sigh of relief, and saluted it goodbye.

250 words.

Oops

Authored by: wolverine on Saturday, May 14 2005 @ 11:32 PM CDT
Forgot to say, this entry is an Essay(Fiction)

A Woman Scorned (Fiction)

Authored by: Irysangel on Saturday, May 14 2005 @ 11:31 PM CDT
My life was sweet until the day that my prince snapped the collar of possession off of my neck and placed it around that of my rival, a barbarian woman whose people battled to take over our city. Uncollared, I was public property, the whore of any man that wanted me.

It had hurt me to be cast aside by my love, hurt more than the grunting and sweating of the men that passed me around like a favored toy. I was the discarded concubine of a prince: honorless, unwanted trash. The men knew this and loved to humble me and see me cry. Cry I did, for the violation of my heart more than my body, or my city. I cried that night, and on through the day when the walls were breached and the battle brought inside.

When twilight arrived, I crept out of the city and searched the ruins for my prince. He was there, bent beside the fallen body of his new consort. I approached and his face lit up to see me, so beautiful in the moonlight. He wrapped a comforting arm around my waist and sobbed as he stared down at his dead lover.

That was when I cut his throat. He choked to death on his own blood, staring up at me with an incredulous expression. I watched until the light dimmed from his eyes, then took a sword and hacked his head off at the neck, a gift for the enemy invaders.

Blood Bound (Fiction)

Authored by: ericon22 on Saturday, May 14 2005 @ 11:56 PM CDT
Wynd's face hovered inches from me, my sister's eyes burning with an otherworldly fire. I felt the Trine awaken and fill me with fire, hot and smoldering. The need to clamp my teeth on her neck was almost feral, and it rose up in me, and kept rising. I didn't move, letting the power wash over my skin like the ocean. Talo's last gift.

Wynd laughed. "The Slayer turned Hunter. I like that."

"I don't think so." I stood up. I had moments before Wynd tried to Take me with her eyes. She was my sister; Clan. I didn't know how, being that she was from Earth, but I heard the whispers of Vanapa before within her mind. It scared me and comforted me at the same time. We were blood; intertwined, but we couldn't have been more different.

I stabbed my palm. My Kala rose, velvet smooth, to the surface of my skin. As I staked her heart, I pulled out the essence that was Ashe. Her energy embraced me like a lover's touch. Her eyes still flickered with humanity. It wasn't too late.

Wynd pulled energy in like thunderclouds, heavy and thick. The more she fought, the harder it became to stop her. Ashe's touch wavered like soft wind. I was losing her.

I realized that I loved her. I didn't know her enough. But I needed her, and she needed me, and I had to save her.

I would save her – or die trying.

250 words – Fiction

Employment (Poetry – Humour)

Authored by: shay on Monday, May 16 2005 @ 03:16 AM CDT

I opened my wallet for the bus fare,

Instead all I saw was a two pence piece and a strand of hair,

I got up and wandered away,

Wondering what had happened to my money that day,

I walked along the promenade,

Thinking about this unusual façade,

I then saw the arcade,

And thought why not play and maybe win enough to by a maid?

As I got to the door I saw,

A sign saying 'help wanted', enquire for more.

Hours later the sign was gone,

And I had money, instead of none.

Princess-Crane (PA)

Authored by: M. Rivera on Monday, May 16 2005 @ 05:36 AM CDT

Momma was in her thirties when she came here. Sometimes I wonder if she wishes she were home. Old-fashioned Japanese, she says my nose isn't like other girl's because I've samurai somewhere. I ask, "What's that to do with it?"

I've remembered an old tale of a bamboo tree cut to show a beautiful princess... becomes a crane and flies away... maybe I'm confused. She always said I was American: never learned to speak her tongue, never understood her stories...

Never understood her.

Watch her walk into that plane; crane bears her away. Dad's crying, "I'm sorry." We've always fight about how he won't listen. That's why she's going.

"I need to find myself," she'd said. And I wasn't mad, didn't let her know my heart was broken.

But things change in places you've missed.

Forests turn to concrete jungles. Old hang- outs to whorehouses. Even the restaurant you worked says you're too old anymore.

Whole family's died but a sister who says she doesn't know you. Realize the home you wanted no longer exists...realize you've been lost in the past and all the world is rushing forward...

She won't smile at me now crane's returned her, won't smile at dad. She looks older, like she's taken a beating from life.

And stares at me.

I understand.

Momma's learned honor's accepting who she's become; letting go of yesterday to see she'd forgotten today.

"In end princess-crane happy. Or maybe I confuse with other American tale..."

Query about entries

Authored by: wolverine on Monday, May 16 2005 @ 05:37 AM CDT

It says that one of the types of entries allowed is an expository piece. I didn't know what that meant and looked it up, and even asked my father what it meant, but I still don't really understand it. Could you please explain what an expository piece is?

Thank you,

Wolverine.

What is an Expository Piece?

Authored by: hollylisle on Tuesday, May 17 2005 @ 06:40 AM CDT

An expository piece would be an essay that tells rather than shows. It would define and explain Rediscovering Honor, rather than showing in vignette or story or poem form someone who is rediscovering honor.

Doing a good expository piece is, by the way, damned difficult.

The Minute Before I Grow Up

Authored by: Sam_R on Monday, May 16 2005 @ 12:39 PM CDT

I have been here for twenty-nine years.

You said you would never abandon us.

All I did was fall in love.

– That two-bit whore you're sleeping with.

You don't know her well enough to make that judgment.

How can you do this to us? There is not a bit of emotion in you. Don't you even care?

I need to go while we still do not hate each other.

Then, the only thing your dad and I can do is go to a nursing home. The bank can have the house back and the car. . . .

I will be here . . . just not in the same house.

If you leave, don't ever come back.

It's okay to be scared. It passes. I have been a child too long. Watch me, Mom, watch me.

As he crossed the living room floor and closed the door behind him, the rain slowed. He looked at the maples across the street and saw that the green of the leaves was vibrant and

the patterns were in focus for the first time. He never realized that he had been looking at everything through a haze. Nothing separated him from the trees. The rain had beaten the dust from the air.

The Minute Before I Grow Up

Authored by: Sam_R on Monday, May 16 2005 @ 04:25 PM CDT

The above entry is Fiction.

—Sam

Grandfather's Last Request (Essay)

Authored by: davydgrey on Monday, May 16 2005 @ 08:32 PM CDT

I glanced up at the light glimmering in the window of Old Man Smith's ramshackle house. "Come on old dude, go to bed." I whispered, looking around at the shadows dancing in the moonlight. Minutes passed. I muttered and stood up. "Oh well, nothing for it." I slid over the ground and crept up the steps at the front of the house. I inserted my pick into the ancient lock, and, with a quick twist, I was in.

I paused, letting my eyes adjust to the darkness of the house. "Come on Sullivan, now is not the time to loose your nerve." Steadying myself, I slipped up the stairs, trying to make as little noise as possible. "Down the hallway, first door on the left." In seconds, I was there, looking into Smith's bedroom and the fortune in baseball cards he kept on his shelf.

I entered and grabbed at the treasure of my dreams. "DiMaggio, Aaron, Rose rookie card." I glanced through the stack and thought of the easy life ahead. A noise broke through my reverie as the old coot tossed in his timeworn bed. I looked over at the figure lying there and suddenly thoughts of the cards left my mind. He looked just like my Grandfather did at his funeral last year. Just like that, I decided I did not need the baseball cards after all. Better to leave them for the old guy. He needed them more. My Grandfather would have wanted it that way.

(F)

—

All the worlds a stage, and all men actors playing a part...

To Redemption (ESSAY – FICTION)

Authored by: soulsky on Tuesday, May 17 2005 @ 02:37 AM CDT

Darkness hid the world and the trees were my prison. Before me stood the woman I loved. My family had nearly killed her once, but took her sisters instead. I slaughtered them in revenge. My own brother spent his last breath against my steel.

So I shunned my blood and destroyed my kin. Still her family sought my death for the sake of my name. My hands are so stained with blood that I have nothing left but to protect her.

Now she'd come for my life, and I had to choose: kill the woman I love, or lose the ability to protect her. She stepped towards me and I prepared for the worst.

Instead she whispered to me.

"Stop this."

Her touch warmed the numbness in my heart.

"Come back with me," she continued. "I can end this."

"But they will kill me," I protested. "I have done too much."

"Do you will our families to perish instead? If you value my life, then stop this. We will end this war peacefully."

At that moment she struck in me the flame which had died since the treachery of my family. She sheathed her blade, I took her hand, and I opened my eyes to the sun.

Men say that it takes years to regain your honor. I have learned that the desecrated soul is fertile. When redemption comes, you feel the change like a healthy seed. It just takes time and faith to show what genuineness lies within it.

(F) – 250 Words

—

"Look to a child, and see into their eyes. Can you see the

life that glimmers there? It is the gift given to they and you and I. It is the sole proof that we

The Bridge (ESSAY – FICTION)

Authored by: Crista00 on Tuesday, May 17 2005 @ 06:46 PM CDT

I stared at the water rushing below. The urge to jump was a fierce need, as real as hunger or thirst. The mage armies were coming. Magic would choke the air like smoke and destroy the land around it. The meadows and forests where I had played as child would be nothing but ruined ash by the time they were finished.

I led them here. Once the groves were gone, there would be nothing to stop that dark magic from seeping into the very heart and soul of the land. They hadn't known where the groves were and flailed around, burning every copse of trees they came across in a blind search for those groves and their ancient magic.

They bought me very cheaply, I thought in retrospect. In days, the entire village would know what I had done. It was better to end this now before my family knew of my betrayal. I wanted to die before they could hate me.

Yet, a thought slipped into my head and from it blossomed a fragile flower of hope. In giving these enemies information, I learned many things about them as well. I didn't know if it was enough to save my people, but I had to try. I was a traitor and I deserved to die, but not yet. There was still work to be done, hope to be salvaged. I stepped off the bridge and made my way back to the elder's hall to tell them everything I knew.

(250 words)

My Soul for Your Eyes (Essay – Fiction)

Authored by: Eagleskull on Tuesday, May 17 2005 @ 08:31 PM CDT

Fear, the thief of many a soul, once again fights to wrench courage from the grasp of Preston Greyscobble. His broadsword hangs as an albatross in his sweaty palms, wiry arms straining to retain control of the rusted blade. His breath comes in

short unfulfilling gasps, heart hammering as a smithy upon steel, filling his ears.

The din of battle echoes in the distance. Sword ringing upon sword, lance splintering on shield and the agonizing cry of the mortally wounded are sounds Preston has heard before. They have filled his days with regret and have run roughshod in his dreams.

After fleeing the battlefield at Stekenkag five long years ago, he can still feel the eyes of his comrades upon him. Those that survived the battle met his glance with loathing and disdain. The unblinking stare of the fallen bore holes into a tormented soul. To a Knight of Menneskellos, this act of cowardice meant banishment from his Order.

Reduced to a beggar, a mongrel with mange, Preston endured the spittle and insults from his former friends with as much dignity as he could muster. He was now a shadow of his former self, a wraith among men. But somewhere deep beneath the tattered rags a fire began to rage. Thoughts of redemption stoked the spark of courage that had flickered out the last time war crept to the borders of his homeland.

With a fury unbridled, he sprinted headlong into the fray. The eyes would follow no more.

Fields of Green (essay-fiction)

Authored by: M. Rivera on Wednesday, May 18 2005 @ 12:41 AM CDT

Little children we once were, stepping over fields of green,
Swaying, lissome, hearts of mirth, that donned the air of storms

But you in youth gave me a blossom, from your land beyond my hills,

And said "...at last when flowers fall, our war be nigh upon us."

Cold does Man grow with years, and we forge our swords with age,

Where scarlet spills to feed the grass, that knows no deed as honor

Do I think child-ghosts of hills do flee, at sight of each other grown?

Do I think they weep at sight of selves, handing Death for naught?

Aye, I think they weep quite well, for ours were humble hearts,

Were in the quiet song of hills, two boys bereft of pride...

That children learned to love so much, while in age they grow to hate

For naught but deeds of lustful fathers, smitten down to dust

And soon shall I join them there, you perhaps will glee to find

But I wish not for our sons, to grow in bitter strife

May we now regain our childhood honor, with peace returned to hills

May we take what has been stolen, by hands of mortal time

So have this now, these seeds of blossom, which I have ever kept

And know that mine has returned, by way of humble offering

Not in the selfish quest of title, nor the incessancy of age and power,

But in memory of you and I, amidst fields of dying flowers...

The Purple Heart (Essay – PA)

Authored by: khazell1 on Wednesday, May 18 2005 @ 12:49 PM CDT
I haven't seen my brother since he came back from Iraq the second time. I'll have a chance to give him the fierce hug that's been building at our family reunion in July, but until then all I have is a picture of him receiving his Purple Heart.

He's one of only a few Marines in uniform. The rest are

standing in formation, at attention in the grass behind him. There's an SUV, a couple of civilians, and a trashcan cluttering up the background. My brother has the medal pinned to his chest, and he's shaking someone's hand.

But it's his eyes that I see right away whenever I look at this picture. I see him watching an improvised explosive device fling two of his men from the truck and send shrapnel into the driver. I see him fighting to save the life of the young man who didn't make it. I see him hearing the news that the two other men in the truck were honorably discharged, one without a foot, one with severe damage to his arms. I see him waking up suddenly under the bridge his company protected, thinking it was a bad dream but the bandage on his own arm telling him differently.

I see honor. I see its price. And I know I will never look at a Purple Heart without the same mix of pride, despair, anger, and relief that I feel right now.

Essay – PA, 240 words

Honor Thyself (ESSAY)

Authored by: arrvee on Thursday, May 19 2005 @ 09:32 AM CDT

I sit at the light and watch the cross-traffic. Finally, I see it. A loaded pulpwood truck comes roaring toward the intersection. No way he can stop in time. I move my foot from the brake to the gas. Timing is everything; push down and it's done. Quick and easy. No more darkness, no more struggling against impossible odds. Here it comes. I watch the truck go by.

March 21, 2002. Though I did not realize it at the time, I began my education that day. Through black despair and giddy over-medication, through painful group sessions and private struggles, through smooth sailing and gale-force winds, one lesson has been my touchstone, the one anchor I cling to, a rock standing tall against the storms: honor.

Honor does not mean doing what other people say is right.

Honor does not grow along the easy path. Honor is not bestowed from outside; to find it, you must look deep within. Honor is doing what you know is right, even though the entire world stands against you.

Living with honor is hard. Standing on your principles will cost you friends. Doing what is right may cost you jobs. Honoring yourself may cause others to call you selfish, conceited, egotistical. Honoring your own knowledge of right and wrong, good and evil, will lead you down a road that is long, lonely, and dangerous.

What price honor? Incalculable. What price life without honor? Unthinkable.

EP – 239 words

A Teacher's Influence (Essay)

Authored by: ericon22 on Thursday, May 19 2005 @ 09:33 PM CDT

The job dropped into my lap one winter day. I'd been hired to teach college photography without a degree or even an official portfolio.

My students loved me. Many would tell me how refreshing it was to have a teacher who loved photography and wanted to share her knowledge.

That was until this Tuesday. I learned the sickening truth of what was going on for three years. I met my nemesis; someone greedy and vindictive. He'd fixed it so I couldn't teach anymore. He'd ripped my soul out; he'd changed everything, changed me. I couldn't give up teaching. I couldn't say goodbye. I wanted to see the magic in my students' eyes, and know that I helped put it there. I wanted to see them become artists. But there's a chance I may never walk that path again.

It's funny, because when I look back at my own beginnings, I remember the man who'd started it all:

I almost married him. He was my first teacher. Sadly, he hurt

me badly, shattered me, and he is no longer in my life. Today is his birthday. Today I remember him with a fondness of an eighteen-year-old in love, not a bitter ex-fiancée who'd been cheated on. I remember his influence, his love, and how it shaped me as an artist.

If I could reach just one person in that way, have a hand shaping their future, I'll consider myself successful, and know that my influence, lessons, and love will go on.

PA – 250 words

The Small Things (ESSAY)

Authored by: teribella on Monday, May 23 2005 @ 02:46 AM CDT

Ordinary men turned Heroes burst on the scene, rushing into peril to save those endangered. People say, "I would die for you", and again and again the media flaunts proof of the everyday man rising to the limelight, making the big save.

But where are the stories and the acclaim for the everyday heroes: those who do the right thing because that is who they are? Those who choose the honorable route with nothing to gain but the knowledge they have chosen again the harder road, and it is right. Those who rediscover, with every passing moment, with every breath, honor in being.

The father who takes the time to teach his son chivalry.

The single mother who wakes early and falls into bed late to be certain there is food and attention enough for her young children.

The teenager who says no to his friends, and means it.

Honor is in the small things. Every breath a rediscovery. Every move an opportunity. Honor is when people say, "I would live for you", and then they do.

(EP)

—

(c) 2005, TJ Smith

Neal (Essay)

Authored by: kariana712 on Friday, May 27 2005 @ 04:10 PM CDT

It took a moment for me to figure out what had awakened me. The sound of my mother's voice drifted vaguely down the hallway, the closed door distorting her words. I sat up in bed as the sounds became louder.

"My son, no, my son!" she cried.

"What has Neal done now?" I muttered to myself. Then a quick stab of fear made me climb out of bed and walk to my door just as my sister knocked, then opened it. I wondered why my older sister was at our house in the middle of the night.

"Ali," she said. "It's bad." There were tears in her eyes and staining her cheeks. "Neal's dead. He committed suicide." As she spoke, she started crying again.

My first reaction was disbelief. "No," I cried. "It's not true, it's not true." Those were the only words I could say for a while. Those and "why?"

"Twenty-seven years is enough," he wrote in one of his journals. And yet it wasn't nearly long enough for anyone who knew him. Anyone who has experienced it can tell you that despite ancient rituals, there is no honor in suicide. It is the duty of those of us left behind to celebrate our loved one's life instead. I am still angry at my brother. But every day I remember him and struggle with my need to forgive him. And hopefully with forgiveness will come some small measure of the honor he lost when he jumped.

(PA) 248 words

Alison Monday

Unlikely Conscience (Essay – F/PA)

Authored by: wolverine on Monday, May 30 2005 @ 09:45 AM CDT

I hurried out of the classroom and weaved my way through the amblers to get to my locker before the bell rang for the next class. I stopped briefly to poke at my friend. She glanced up from her own locker and squished her nose up into a face at me.

"Hey Becca!" I smiled and shifted my mountainload of books to

my other arm. "Didn't see you earlier. What'd you just have?"

"Maths," she mumbled, turning back to the stack of books threatening to slide onto the floor that she kept in her locker. "Got that test back."

My stomach suddenly felt empty and I gulped. "I have that next, don't I?"

"Think so. Want to have a look at it now?" She rifled through a bunch of papers and held one out.

I paused, eyeing it. "Hmm..." I pondered.

As I considered it, a couple of passing girls noticed me, and frowned. "I lose respect in someone if they cheat, although I wouldn't say it to their faces," one barked.

"Liar," Becca snapped at their retreating backs.

"No, she's right... in one part at least. No thanks," I said, and pointed at the proffered test paper. "I'll be fine. At least, whatever I get, it'll be honest."

Becca shrugged and shoved it back into the mess in her locker. "Whatever," she muttered.

I continued onto where my locker was situated with a small smile on my face, and nodded thanks to the girls as they passed me again.

250 words

SECONDS (HUMOR)

Authored by: eaymar01 on Monday, May 30 2005 @ 01:45 PM CDT
I had about thirty seconds to make a decision before Susan came downstairs. Just a week ago she had dumped me rather viciously, and I knew she had only called earlier tonight because she was lonely, and having second thoughts, and...and I

knew all this, but here I was, regardless, hanging outside her apartment building, actually considering going back to her. Considering? I had buzzed her apartment, and she was coming downstairs to get me.

Twenty seconds.

One night was all it would be, I told myself. One night to slam down the lid of Pandora's emotional box. I needed to do this, right? I had been so lonely since Susan had left; was it wrong to deny myself? If you're dying in the desert, does it matter where you find water?

Dignity, a small voice told me. Honor.

But, I argued back, I can find dignity and honor tomorrow. I'll find them when I wake up next to Susan, when she realizes leaving me was a mistake and says, "I love you and I'm sorry I left, you passionate sex beast." Okay, that wasn't too likely, but maybe.

I heard her footsteps on the stairs. Ten seconds.

Was I trading my emotions for a night of togetherness, tenderness? My love for a lay? I saw a vision of myself, holding Susan, kissing her naked shoulder, touching her for the last time...but still sad.

Seconds.

This just wouldn't be enough.

"Goodbye," I told Susan, as she opened the door.

(F, 250 words)

TAKING IT BACK (ESSAY)

Authored by: April on Monday, May 30 2005 @ 03:34 PM CDT

Naomi gave herself a present for her fourteenth birthday; she gave herself her body. He had stolen it, along with so many other things that had once been hers, but she took it back.

There was no blaze of glory in it; she had never felt so

scared as she did that day, standing before her mother, saying those words, horribly certain now at the last that she would not, could not, could never be believed—but it was too late to stop the truth, too late to stop any of it, and she would never be quite certain that she had even wanted to.

Even with him, she had never felt as dirty as she did to see all light and joy and laughter fall from her mother's face, the light and joy and laughter that had been his gift to her even as he slunk into her daughter's room at nights to take what he had no right to.

She knew before her mother spoke that she was believed, and knew also that she had just taken more happiness from her mother than he had ever, ever given her. And oh, she was so sorry, but as hard as this was, anything else would have been worse. Easier, maybe, but worse.

Naomi never had to see him again. This gift she gave herself, though she had to share the cost.

She wrenched her honor back from him for her fourteenth birthday.

243 words (PA/F)

Forgotten Tree (Essay)

Authored by: Eagleskull on Monday, May 30 2005 @ 09:16 PM CDT

Why do we live our lives the way we do? How many of us have seriously pondered this question?

How do we judge right from wrong? How much have we forgotten?

Why is honor a lone leaf, caught in a bitter storm, tossed to and fro? The last glimmer of hope upon a weary, once grand tree that has been decimated by years of neglect.

The Winter of man's heart continues to steal time from Summer. The seasons will soon be only a whisper upon the icy breeze of what used to be.

This hate and callousness that we carry among us, passing from

generation to generation, father passing his poisons on to innocent son. Where is the honor in teaching your child to hate those that are different from you? Where is the honor in averting your eyes from the beggar on a bitterly cold night? If he is not acknowledged, does he not still exist and suffer?

Why have we forgotten so much? What can we do to bring honor back to where it once stood? To strengthen its crippled roots and make it tall amongst the trees once more.

One way to return glory to honor is through forgiveness. Do not carry the burdens of hate and resentment to your grave. To forgive one who has wronged you or done harm to others is truly an honorable deed.

Let your soul be your guide to find the path to honor. Help the tree blossom once more.

(EP)

Love at the Price of Honor (Essay)

Authored by: cherylp on Monday, May 30 2005 @ 09:24 PM CDT

Hot waves of mortification roll over my face.

Had that been me? Had I said and done all those things?

Getting dumped by a boyfriend is traumatic, sure, but not the end of the world. Getting dumped by your fiancé is harder, but still not the end of the world.

I remembered hanging onto his arm and promising all kinds of things if he'd stay. I remembered following him around like a puppy that doesn't understand why you kicked it.

Dear God, what happened to dignity? What happened to pride? What had I thought to gain by my behavior? That he'd take me back after losing myself?

I repudiate the thought. The very memory hurts like a knife to the heart.

Then the accusations. The hurtful things I'd said. What happened to honor? He taking those hurled accusations in stolid silence. Feeling guilty, I suppose. How I took advantage of that guilt!

And the shame, regret, and enraged disappointment I felt afterward—at myself and at him.

The lesson took. Love at the price of your own honor isn't really love, no matter what some people say. True love asks for nothing in return. True love regards dignity and pride and honor—that of yourself and the object of your love.

So I picked myself up, dusted off the pride and honor I'd dragged through the dirt, and continued on, to find my true love and show him the pride, the dignity, and the honor I'd lost and regained.

(PA)

To Regain Humanity (Essay – EP)

Authored by: wolverine on Tuesday, May 31 2005 @ 05:03 AM CDT

Is honour real, or is it just a human fabrication? Is it human like the concept of evil is human, or is it real and universal like pain is, or healing? Everything feels pain and everything knows healing, but only humans believe in evil; is honour like that, merely human?

And if it is, does that matter? Is a human creation as important as a universal truth? Is it less important... or perhaps more? If a human rejects honour as a falsehood created by humans, does that make him less than a human, and what would that mean? Would he be worthy of being considered a human, or as something less, something else?

If the answer is yes, then what is to be said to the millions of honourless that walk the Earth and are perceived as human, but in rejecting a human truth, have become less? Would their lives consist only of the universal truths such as pain and healing, without humanity?

Without honour?

What is a human without honour? Are they still human? And who will help them, who will reach out and gently teach them the codes of honour that govern our human lives mercifully?

Who?

The honourable.

The honourable humans will reach out to help, because their honour will not allow them to turn their backs on unwitting lost beings, lost humans. They will show the way to honour and greet their fellow humans with a smile.

241 words

MORE THAN DAY TO DAY (Essay)

Authored by: karenee on Tuesday, May 31 2005 @ 02:56 PM CDT

My daughter dances to the music of her humming. Dirty dishes forgotten, I drop into a unique experience.

Submerged in the substance of our rushed world, I often push the

constant presence of people into the background. My mind wanders,

buried in the texture of goals and a dream. Suddenly, life explodes.

Buried in a deluge of events outside my control I seek for the steady,

the true, and the honorable.

It is there that I realize the value of the moment where I stop and

look, truly seeing the beauty of my daughter's joy. Where is the honor

of forgetting her in the midst of my struggle to provide for her. Of

what benefit could the lack of my attention be to her?

My vision expands. Pressing against my consciousness, so many
wait for
that moment in time where someone notices; an audience of one,
listening, watching, applauding. Before my eyes my daughter
dances,
drawing me onward; pulling me forward. I find myself twirling,
giddy
with laughter. Catching the hands of a stranger, I follow the
mad
pattern of the dream.

I open my eyes, look into the earth and promise that I will
never
again ignore that which is important in life. Slowly, I walk
away,
carrying the promise of my daughter's dance, a lighted fire in
my
broken heart.

(F – 226 words)

HONOR LONG AGO (ESSAY)

Authored by: lisle1121 on Tuesday, May 31 2005 @ 07:17 PM CDT

In the caveman times

There was honor.

In the times of the Ancient Egyptians and Greeks

There was honor.

And in the Middle Ages

There was honor.

But now,

Many hundreds

Of thousands

Of years

After all this honor

There is little.

For we humans have twisted honor into a grayness

And it seems more of a prize than a responsibility.

Many humans never see it

Though it is done by many.
Not seen in bold print on the covers of newspapers,
But seen by starving children
That will remember that honor for the rest of their life
The honor that only they know of.

There is some honor seen in broad daylight
In the streets of Iraq or Iran
Where soldiers have the honor to give their life
And die for their county and the hope of the world.

And honor may just be when a child stands up for another
And the child that has helped will be honored
But silently.

Some people are honored for getting good marks
But many of these people may be arrogant and mean.
They should not be honored.

But the little boy in the corner who gave his lunch to the
girl who had none should be honored
But is not.

As we fail to see this honor
We fail to recognize it.
Maybe now
Or maybe a million years from today
We shall regain that honor.
The honor once lost
And the honor once found
The honor from many years ago.

(250 WORDS)

(EP)

—
Aridine Fiegenbaum

Letting Go (Essay)

Authored by: earthen1 on Wednesday, June 01 2005 @ 01:10 AM CDT

"You've stopped dialysis." I saw it on his face. My heart thumped hard, then started to ache.

I'm not ready!

Pampa, my husband's grandfather, my confidante, my best friend. Pictures flashed through my mind: Morning coffee talks at his kitchen table; chicken dinners at mine; drives to the coast in his big, bright red, king-cab pick-up truck; his eyes sparkling when he held my grandbabies on his lap and ate yet another imaginary 'chocolate fish pudding' while they laughed hysterically, and the hours we spent holding hands, laughing and crying, bitching about or praising our screwed up family.

Cancer took a kidney, the other one failed, he had four heart attacks, and emphysema stole his breath. He juggled doctor appointments, hospital stays, nebulizers, and more bottles of medication than I could count. Constant pain, the struggle to breathe, and more than three years of dialysis with the accompanying needle sticks, screaming muscle cramps, and graft collapses dominated his life.

But he always smiled for me.

I had him with me for four more days. The last words he spoke were whispered in my ear.

"I love you best. You know that, right?"

I nodded, kissed his cheek, and smiled for him. (PA)

Danger (Essay – EP)

Authored by: lemm on Wednesday, June 01 2005 @ 01:40 PM CDT

When someone has wronged you, even robbed you of your honor, the desire to retaliate can be one of the most tempting things known to man. Especially when you're hurting, stung by an attack or a betrayal, revenge can sound mighty satisfying. Easy justification adds to the lure – "but I have to do what's

right, see that justice is served!" – and you might even end up convincing yourself that you have a moral duty to act, to strike back.

And that's the danger.

You might well have a moral duty to act. But there is a difference between getting revenge and setting something right.

We cannot regain honor by acting dishonorably.

EP – 113 words

APO, AE 09633 (Kuwait) (ESSAY)

Authored by: emeraldfenix on Wednesday, June 01 2005 @ 05:14 PM CDT

Dear Son,

After I read your last letter, I became concerned. I know that you're serving behind the lines over there and you don't think you deserve the honor we give you, but let me tell you something my Pop told me when I was in Vietnam in '73. It was an unpopular war and many of the heroes came back to broken homes and public ridicule. I'd seen it in the news and even in our town, but I signed up anyway. After I'd done a few questionable things there, I asked my Pop if what we did was honorable. He wrote:

"I'd come home after the Korean War ended to no fanfare or ticker-tape parades. Everyone was still giddy after WW2 and forgot about us. My pa [your great-granddad] says to me that if I'd done what my commander-in-chief told me to do, then if there ain't no other honors, to just know that him and ma think what I'd done was honorable. And that's what I'm telling you, kid. Hell, just signing up was honorable. Ain't none of them hippies on The Mall can claim that."

I pass his message on to you. It doesn't matter if you're a wrench, grunt, spoon, or paper-pusher. It doesn't matter if you're in Iraq, Kuwait, or Fort Bliss. You've done something

200+ million other Americans didn't; you signed up. That's honorable. And don't let anybody tell you different.

Love and honor,
Dad and Mom

(F)

—

It's not what you do in life...Wait a second. Yes it is!

Loss, Forgiveness, and Remembrance (Personal Anecdote/
Expository Piece), 245 Words

Authored by: enyafan713 on Wednesday, June 01 2005 @ 09:41 PM
CDT

If you ask five different people how to rediscover honor, you will get five different answers. I can't tell you how everyone does it, but I can tell you how I do.

Loss is a constant in life. I have had more exposure to loss than many people have in a lifetime, although I am only fourteen. This loss has come about in the form of death. Between family and very close friends, I have had thirteen loved ones die, including grandparents, aunts, and my older sister. There were times that I have thought that God was cruel, that He obviously didn't love me, and I hated Him for what he did. I lost my honor every time I thought that... and I have managed to regain it. But how?

The first step was forgiveness. I was angry with God, and I regained my honor by forgiving Him for all of the pain he gave me. I forgave him for taking all of those people away from me, many before their time.

The second step was remembrance. I vowed to forever remember the ones I had lost, the ones that were gone. I swore to cherish all of the memories, both good and bad, that I had of these people.

These two steps have given me a chance to regain my honor. I have realized the truth of death, that everyone has their time. I have regained my honor, and will never let it go.

—

//

I / Enya

/

Confession (Fiction)

Authored by: bookwurm on Wednesday, June 01 2005 @ 11:24 PM CDT

"Here," the guard said, as she stood with her palm on the doorknob. "It was his last wish that this be delivered to you." She took the letter gingerly, by its edges, and smoothed it open with the tips of her fingers.

My darling,

You are thinking that I took your place out of some misplaced sense of honor, that I wanted to do my duty as your husband. I would like to think that honor would have been enough. But I didn't die for an abstract. I died for you. For your smile.

By now you are not smiling, so I must give you the truth as a final gift.

Every day I lived with you was a lie of omission: I knew about your lover. It might have been best for both of us, had I confronted you. The guilt of my lie and yours, evaporating in the sunlight—I was not strong enough. I loved you. I stifled you, and I am sorry. And there is the gift: I was not some saint who died on your behalf, thinking that you returned my love. Never regret that you did not tell me the truth. I knew it. Our marriage lasted only through my selfish silence.

I made a choice, fully informed. Don't demean that choice by feeling responsible or guilty. And your lover—show this to him if you like.

Love,

Dominic

Remote-eyed, she folded the letter, thanked the guard, and stepped out into the sunlight.

(F)

52 Years of Age: Or, A Young Girl's Difficult Decision
(POETRY, HUMOR)

Authored by: bookwurm on Wednesday, June 01 2005 @ 11:41 PM
CDT

There once was a father named Stu.
He was gallant and perfect all through.
But one day a year
It was easy to hear
His daughter's expressions of rue.
For, each time his birthday arrived,
A terrible problem revived—
What could she get Stu?
There was nothing she knew
That wouldn't be cheap or contrived.
More trinkets with golf as the theme
And his house would just burst at a seam.
And he'd plenty of mugs,
And as concerns hugs,
They cost nothing, and he'd had umpteen.

She thought about writing some verse,
But she failed (Though with many a curse),
And she drew a cartoon—
It was awful. And soon
Every gift she conceived turned out worse.

But in truth she'd a plan all along.
And despite that her feelings were strong
'Gainst this plan, she would do
What she had to, for Stu,
Though she knew in her heart it was wrong.

For this girl had a book close to heart,
One she'd gotten quite close to the start
Of her reading career.
And she held it so dear
That she'd sworn that they never would part.

And she railed at herself in great rage,
(And she went through a depressive stage),

But she'd no other course,
So she finally was forced
To return his book, *The Diamond Age:
Or, A Young Lady's Illustrated Primer.*

Forgive Me Father, For I Have Sinned. (ESSAY)

Authored by: emeraldfenix on Wednesday, June 01 2005 @ 11:59
PM CDT

"Father, when I got home today, I found my wife in bed with another man. I grabbed my gun off the dresser and aimed it at him. He cowered and I wanted to kill him," the parishioner said.

When the Father did not respond, I continued. "Then I pointed it at her, thinking she seduced him. I saw the terror in her eyes. Do you know why I didn't shoot her, father?"

"No, my child. Why did you refrain?"

"Because the thought that it was too late for a temporary insanity defense ran through my head. The only reason she's still alive is because I pointed the gun at her second. I have no honor. I am a sinful man. What can I do?"

"Though it is a sin to contemplate murder, I'm glad that you did not kill anyone. The Bible says that adultery is the only circumstance by which you may sue for divorce, though it is a standard of the Old Testament."

"But I love her. Though she hurt me deeply, I still love her."

"Then I say, restore your honor and rediscover the honor of your wedding vows: '...for better, for worse,...to love and to cherish...'"

"Father, I'm not sure I have the strength."

"You will find strength in honoring her and in receiving her honor. That is the base of marriage."

How could I respond? I had promised these things, hadn't I?

“Go to her. Forgive her. Honor her.”

Honor her.

(F)

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It's not what you do in life...Wait a second. Yes it is!

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