

Odyssey Oracle

Created for and by the students of the UW-Madison Odyssey Project

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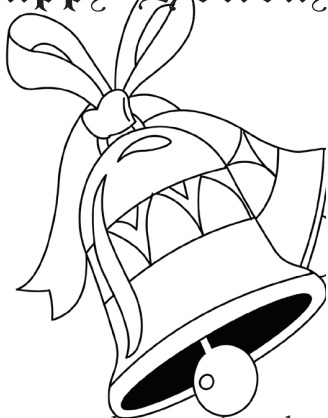
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Happy Holidays!



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Yasmin Displays Her Style

An extra credit assignment asked students to create their own sentences using twelve different stylistic devices ranging from alliteration to irony. Yasmin Horton creatively chose to link the twelve together into something of a story. More examples from students included inside.

As her man approached, Yasmin became pink with passion (*alliteration*). The closer he moved toward her, the faster her heart beat (*parallelism*). She began to sweat profusely until she looked like a person with a bucket of water dumped over her (*simile*). At once his steps had overtaken her, and she was his prisoner in the small space (*metaphor*). She felt as if the eagle overhead flying with clipped wings was calling out mournfully to her, "Beware! Beware!" (*personification*) She couldn't think with this beautiful beast of a man so close to her (*oxymoron*). She was suddenly aware of her terror as though she were a creature being stalked by a predator (*analogy*). Can he really love her if he treats her with such cruelty? (*rhetorical question*) Why is his breathing so erratic, alternating between panting and hissing

and wheezing? (*onomatopoeia*) All she ever wanted was to love, and all she ever loved was to be wanted (*chiasmus*). Suddenly something changed, and he moved away from her at the swiftest pace and with the grace of the greatest dancer (*superlative*). As he leaned forward to strike what she knew would be the final blow, he knelt and asked her to marry him (*irony*).



The Spice of Life: A Review of The Weary Traveler

By Tiffani Puccio

The Weary Traveler, 1201
Williamson Street, 442-6207

As you walk in, the atmosphere is very relaxed, although it is a very busy place with first come, first serve seating. A mixture of music emanates from all corners of the place, and candles decorate every table. Everyone can enjoy the back wall of board games. As you walk to the bathrooms, you'll notice handwritten quotes on the wall, most of them Taoist.

The drink menu is more expansive than the food menu. According to the waitress, the burgers are the most popular item on the menu.

I opted to get the special

of the evening: Golanga and Lemongrass Marinated Top Sirloin. Even though the restaurant was busy, the wait wasn't long for the food. The food looked beautiful, and the first bite sealed the deal. It was very tender, and the flavors exploded in my mouth. The side items were garlic mashed potatoes, sautéed red onions, and baby bok

choy with a spicy pineapple white wine sauce. I was skeptical at first about the baby bok choy, but now that I have tried it I want to learn how to cook it for myself.

So if you are looking for a place with a laid back atmosphere and eccentric food choices, the Weary Traveler is a place you should visit.



More Examples of Odyssey Style *Derrick Dazzlingly Does a Decagram of Ducks*

The dazzlingly decked out duck dove into the drink doing as directed by dad (*alliteration*). The faster he dove, the dizzier he got (*parallelism*). The duck dove so much he looked like a fisherman's bobber (*simile*). The nursery of pond life allowed the duck to bloom (*metaphor*). As his son dove in and out of the water, the duck father was the football coach paying attention (*personification*). He gracefully splashed the water about like a two-year-old in the

tub (*oxymoron and analogy*). The peacefulness of the pond might as well have been the Pacific Ocean (*analogy*). Wouldn't you, like the ducks, fly out of the water at the first sight of the great white shark? (*rhetorical question*) The water splished and splashed as the shark leapt out of the water (*onomatopoeia*). The greatness of this day was not the ducks in nature but the nature of the ducks (*chiasmus*). (**Derrick Washington**)

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chiasmus: *an inverted relationship between the syntactic elements of parallel phrases*

Some people love to hate, while others hate to love.

(Tiffani Puccio)

Do you live to work or work to live?

(Lorena Lovejoy)

Don't let the money control you; you control the money.

(Angie McAlister)

When we talk to God we're said to be praising, but when God talks to us we're said to be crazy.

(Mary Wells)

Live the life you love; love the life you live. (Molinda Henry)

One should eat to live, not live to eat. (Cicero)

I'd rather be looked over than overlooked.

It's not the men in my life, it's the life in my men. (Mae West)



And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you do for your country.

(John. F. Kennedy)

Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

(Matthew 23: 11-12)

personification: *representation of a thing or abstraction as a person*

The fire breathed the oxygen and was aroused to rage.

(Molinda Henry)

Cars danced across the icy roads. (Mary Wells)

There sat the pepperoni and sausage pizza, brimming with insidious grease and cheese, ready to pounce on the hips of everyone there. (Angie McAlister)

As I walked outside, the bright sun enveloped me with its warm hug. (Tiffani Puccio)

The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping slyly down at Scrooge out of a gothic window in the wall...with tremulous vibrations afterwards, as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there.

...that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hide-and-seek with other houses...(Charles Dickens, "A Christmas Carol")

irony: *use of words to express something other than (and often the opposite of) the literal meaning*

The mistress of the plantation was equally charitable with her whip. (Angie McAlister)

onomatopoeia: *naming of a thing by a vocal imitation of the sound associated with it*

My mom clattered and clanged as she washed the dinner dishes.

(Mary Wells)

My dog growled. (Diane Dennis)

The snow was crispy and crunchy. (Molinda Henry)

alliteration: *repetition of consonant sounds in neighboring words or syllables*

Susie sang a song of soul, and Sarah sits straight singing serious songs. (Juanita Wilson)

I was full with fresh fruit from the farmer's market. (Katy Farrens)

simile: *figure of speech using like or as to compare two unlike things*

I felt like a deer during a deer hunt. (Lorena Lovejoy)

Wednesday's Odyssey class is like a whirlwind of activity. (Diane Dennis)

A closed mind is like a fettered prisoner in a dark cave.

(Angie McAlister)

A woman is like a shining moon. (Lily Komino)

superlative: *grammatical comparison that denotes an extreme, as with the "-est" form or "most"*

That was the nastiest and most disgusting thing I ever saw.

(Lorena Lovejoy)

oxymoron: *combination of contradictory words*

I look forward to when we are alone together. (Mary Wells)

It was a warm winter day. (Diane Dennis)

They are cheap rich people. (Sonia Spencer)



Profiles of Our Peers: Part Three

Kathleen Brown: Win at Last by Lily Komino

Kathleen is a young, intelligent mother of two precious children: 5-year-old Terrian, and 3 ½ months-old Kimora.

Kathleen was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, with one brother. Her mother and father advised her to move out of Chicago and experience a different atmosphere from what she had there. She then did her research for the best place to raise kids and get an education. Madison was her first priority.

She moved to Madison in 2000, loved it, and decided to settle. Kathleen had a passion for fixing her life around with the tools of education. She wanted to go back to school, but due to the higher out-of-state tuition



charged, it was impossible for her to be enrolled in school. She was in a limbo state and did not know what to do.

When she came across the Odyssey program, it was like a savior pulling her out of a state of drowning.

Nou Yang's Start on a Road to Success during the Odyssey by Juanita Wilson

Nou Yang is sometimes quiet and sometimes loud. Born in San Diego, California, as the middle child of 13 children, Nou moved to Sacramento when she was one year old. She stayed in California until 2001, when she moved to Madison. She was more of a tomboy as a child and had more boys as friends than girls.

As a teenager, Nou discovered that her parents were very strict. She couldn't go out to movies or have a lot of freedom to go where she wanted to go like her friends could. When Nou was 14, her parents moved back



to California after not having adjusted to the Madison lifestyle. Nou was basically on her own and raised herself with very little parental guidance.

Nou met her boyfriend when she was 14 and became pregnant at the age of 15. She has two children: a son, C.J., 4, and a daughter, Ahlisha. Spending time with her children is her favorite thing to do.

They go to the park or stay at home coloring or drawing.

Nou's job consists of working with children. She would always check the bulletin board looking for advancement toward her



road to success, and one day she read about the Odyssey program. Nou wishes to become a doctor and become a role model for her children.

Latoya Robinson by Angie Williams

Latoya Robinson says she has her hands full, with four kids, working, and going to school.

Latoya moved to Madison in July 2000. She is from Chicago,



Illinois. Latoya says she really doesn't like Madison, but that it's better for her kids. She enjoys her job working with the elderly. Latoya says that she doesn't socialize a lot but mostly works, goes to church, and takes care of her kids. Latoya says, "As you see, I'm all about my kids."

Latoya says her goals are to finish the Odyssey program and get her license to be a Registered Nurse.

Angela Williams by Latoya Robinson

Angela is a 34-year-old woman with three beautiful children and a helpful fiancé. Angie and her family are originally from Chicago but have been here in Madison for more than 25 years.

Angela is a stay-at-home mom and a caretaker for her disabled father. Being a caretaker is not an easy job, and caring for her father makes it harder, Angie says. She's used to it now.

Despite anything Angie and her family go through, they all make it up every Sunday at Angie's house with some good ole soul food, which has been a family tradition since her grandma passed away.

When Angela graduates from the Odyssey class, she plans to attend M.A.T.C.

If not for the Odyssey project, I probably would not have gotten to know how much of a loving and caring person Angie is. Some of the things she told me really touched me.

Molinda Henry by Yasmin Horton

"My father was the first black to hold a teaching position in Madison's Public Schools." What a statement of pride for a young child, but to have that shadowed by neighbors trying to have you ejected from your home is horrific!

Those are memories shared by Molinda Henry. She was born Molinda Taylor in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, while her dad was a student at the University of Wisconsin there. At the tender age of three, Molinda moved with her family, consisting of her mom, dad, two brothers, a sister, and herself, to Madison, where her dad began his teaching job. Intending to provide a better quality of life for his family, Molinda's father moved them to the West side to a place called Skunk Hollow. The neighborhood was predominately Italian and did not welcome the Taylor family. Petitions began to circulate in the neighborhood with the sole purpose of removing this young black family.

Molinda's mother decided that she was not going to sit still



and allow her family to be pushed around. She went to work in defense of her family's right to occupy their home in this Italian borough and ultimately won, being allowed to continue right there in their home for another 17 years.

After attending and graduating from Madison's public school system, Molinda enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, where she served her tour of duty in Arizona. While in the Air Force, Molinda received training as a Medical Administrative Specialist, which she says left her with little confidence in the medical profession.

Molinda is a very proud woman, as is evident when speaking of these memories of her parents. Another source of pride for Molinda would be her two children, a 24-year-old son, Kahil, and a 22-year-old daughter, Emuye. Kahil is a soccer coach with the Boys and Girls Club in LaCrosse, where Molinda's life's journey began,



and Emuye is a graduate of Brown University and currently employed by Apple Computers in Cupertino, California.

As a member of Odyssey, Molinda is a student eager to question beyond the obvious. She doesn't sit in class and absorb anything that the professors toss around as fact. Molinda is known already as an opinionated student who will happily debate a class subject to satisfaction. She can get the juices flowing in class, and I really enjoy when she opens up and tears into a subject like a favorite between-meal snack. I am inspired by Molinda's bravado in class and look forward to many more days of class with her.

Erica Garcia by Katy Farrens

Erica Garcia: I'll bet by looking at her you would never think that this young, beautiful, and intelligent woman wants to become a Forensic Detective. Well, that's exactly what she's interested in and will one day become. If you don't know what Forensic is, it is the application of scientific (especially medical) knowledge to legal matters of debate or formal argumentation. In simple words, don't go out and commit a crime because Erica will be all over it!

Erica is a 20-year-old Latina woman who was born in Stevens Point but eventually moved to Madison. Erica has two sisters, Maria and Brittany, that she is close with. She has a brother, Gordo, that she is even closer with. In her own words, "We have always had that connection." That connection is what gets them through the hard times in their lives. Erica likes kids and works

with them every day at her job with the Princeton Club's daycare, but she has none and does not have any desire to have them!

One thing Erica loves to do is have fun. One of her favorite pastimes is to go out to the clubs with friends and get her dance on. She also likes to get tattoos, even though she hates needles. In fact, she got her first tattoo on a bet with her mom and sister. They said that Erica could never go through with it. Well, she proved them wrong, and she now has three.

Erica Garcia is one special person who has her whole life ahead of her. Although she only has a couple of goals she would like to achieve, I have every confidence she will achieve them and many more throughout her lifetime. One thing is for sure: I won't be breaking any laws as long as Erica is around!

Roslyn Phillips by Melissa Plasky

It's an evil nightmare



turned into real life: a world of ugly gunfire, splattered blood, lifeless, slain and slaughtered bodies just thrown around like trash on the streets or gum you can't get off the bottom of your shoe. The reality is that it's there, but no one is doing anything to pick up the trash or unstick the gum.

"If an old G can do it, I can too." That's a statement Roslyn can only pray her younger siblings will be saying considering the rough conditions in which they were brought up. There's not a bitter word or thought in the mouth, body, soul, or spirit of this strong-willed and grounded divorced mother of two.

Roslyn rose above the statistics of those raised in the heart of the projects deep in Chicago. Roslyn graduated and received a high school diploma, started a career as an administrative assistant, decided to start a family, and was blessed with two beautiful children: a son, Lee, now 32 with two beautiful children of his own, and a strong-willed daughter, Stephanie, who is 25, works with children, and graduated from college.

Roslyn ended up in Madison, Wisconsin, after a 17-year marriage ended in divorce and her beloved father passed away. Roslyn is used to seeing her life on the back burner as she has been and continues to be the rock to all in her family. She decided she needed a change and a better future for her children.

This multi-talented woman is a joy to all, especially to the choir she sings in at her church. She also spends a lot of her time devoting herself to finding her true self within the Lord. Through

her odyssey, she has found she would like to become a social worker for troubled youth or get into theater. "I like drama, but I am not a drama queen," she says.

Roslyn has shown an open mind and heart throughout the ups and downs of her life. As she opens the door to her real-life odyssey, she continues to be warm and nurturing to others. There is no better way to end than with the words Roslyn lives by every day: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me," saith the Lord." (Isaiah 54:17)

Corinthians Reece by Orok Rice

How many of you know that our classmate, Corinthians "Corey" Reece, is a self-taught saxophonist? He'd wanted to play saxophone for some time and got his beginnings from "an old black brother," who introduced himself to



Corey as "Gypsy." This was 1989, Madison, when Corey was 18 or 19 years old.

As Corey remembers, he bought Gypsy a beer. They spent some time hanging out together. The old black brother, Gypsy, said to Corey, "Hey, little brother," as only an old black brother could. Corey told him of his desire to play the saxophone. Later, Gypsy bought Corey his first also saxophone from a pawn ship, and Corey never saw him again.

Corey is now such a gifted saxophone player that he gives saxophone lessons to the Mt. Zion Baptist Church saxophonist. He also teaches a few kids from his own church, Fountain of Life. His personal playing style includes gospel, jazz, and R&B. He plays *no* country, *no* blues. In fairness to country and blues, Corey did give them a try but decided he didn't like them. His own saxophone heroes are Joshua Reed, Roy Hargrove, McCoy Tyner and the legendary John Coltrane.

Corey was born in Chicago. He lived in the Altgeld Garden Housing Projects. His memories of Chicago are flavored with music, playgrounds, laughter and lots of being hungry. His favorite memories are of playing with his cousins. Both his mom and his aunt had to work. The agreement was that the cousins would babysit each other. The rule was *do not break anything!* As kids will do, the cousins had lots of fun together. "Of course something always got broken," Corey says with a smirk, "and *we went down.*"

Corey has lived in Madison for over twenty years, since kindergarten. He's now thirty-six and is married to Karen, his wife of three years; she's from Verona.

They have no children, but Corey looks to be a father in the future.

When he was a kid, Corey wanted to be a preacher or a lawyer. On his personal odyssey, he'll inspire others to live their dreams, their heart desires. Who knows? Maybe he'll be a preacher, a lawyer, anything he wills himself to work towards, just as he taught himself to play the saxophone.

I'm grateful to have stepped into Corey's world just long enough to be reminded that each of life's encounters is more than chance. May Corey continue to be a teacher, a leader, a light in someone's world. I'm glad to have met you, my brother Corey Reece! The next time I hear the sounds of any of your saxophone heroes, I will be reminded of you and your determination. Play on, Brother Corey, play on!

Ella Oroki Rice **by Corinthians Reece**

Her name is Oroki, which means protector. With her long beautiful red locks and knee high boots, Oroki has a striking appearance. Being born and



raised on the west side of Chicago Illinois, she developed the type of strength that she carries so peacefully with her today.

Oroki has one younger sister and one step brother. Being the eldest of these two siblings living in the rough streets of Chicago, she acquired leadership skills, and the voice to be assertive whenever need be. But for the most part she's quiet, reserved and kind.

Ms. Oroki acknowledges that life is too short for us not to pay attention to all that life has given us, the good and the bad. Reflecting about how her life has been, she says her life has been a series of moving moments, like the time she even dressed up as a ghost for Halloween. Her three daughters never expected her to be so convincing, and they were genuinely amazed at the true scare their mother gave them. The look on their faces at that moment is something that Oroki will always cherish.

Oroki describes herself as an African American woman in recovery. But this absolutely does not mean that she feels defeated by any stigma that comes along with the perception of a person in recovery. Shame is not an attribute that she will readily adopt. She is proud of her own accomplishments and who she is as a person. She urges others to define themselves as a person, too, which explains why she is effective as a preschool teacher here in Madison. Her pleasant smile is never far away. She's been married once, and is now the grandmother of six beautiful little girls.

In a perfect world she would be a writer in the heart of New York because she is a city girl at heart. However, Oroki accepts

the role in life God has given her, for now.

Brian Benford **by Dwayne Bland**

Brian has been to every state in America. He decided to live in Madison because of the comfort level. He feels that Madison is a middle ground between city and country.

Brian is a community-driven man. He started the Madison Fatherhood Alliance, and he is currently the program director for the Neighborhood House. As program director, he designs programs for the people in the community. Brian is also currently an alderman for Madison's eastside.

Brian Benford was born in Milwaukee 48 years ago. He moved to Madison in 1979. He had two sisters and one brother. Brian started his family at age 28; his immediate family includes his wife and four kids, two boys and two girls.

Brian's astrological sign is cancer, suggesting he may be emotional and loving, intuitive and imaginative, shrewd



and cautious, protective and sympathetic.

After the Odyssey program Brian plans to continue school, get a degree, and one day run for office. He is optimistic about the future and hopes his efforts as a politician will inspire a new generation to get into politics and dictate the future.

Tiffani Puccio **by Sandra Ramirez**

Tiffani Puccio loves nature, but especially she loves the oceans. Her goal is to become a marine biologist. She wants to study at UW-Madison and transfer to San Diego, California. Someday she would like to live in Australia to study the Great Barrier Reef.

Tiffani was born in Freeport but grew up in Madison. She has a 26-year-old sister. Her grandfather is Italian, and she says, "I would like to visit Italy sometime to learn about where I came from." Great Grandma Puccio was the first to come to the U.S.

Tiffani likes to travel. Any time she has the idea of traveling,



she gets in her car and goes away. She has not been to a different country but likes to travel across the U.S.

She is a spiritual person but not a religious one. She's single and doesn't have kids, and she's not sure if she wants to have children, but she likes to be around kids. She was an ESL teacher, and she used to teach Spanish to little kids. She also taught at a middle school; for her that was a great experience.

Tiffani likes animals. She has two cats and loves them very much; they are her company when she's at home. Her favorite season is summer, and her favorite color is purple.

In her free time she likes to watch movies; her favorite movie is the *Star Wars* Trilogy. Her favorite TV show is *Comedy Central*. She likes to call her friends, play videogames, and read, and she'd like to learn to play the piano, too. Her favorite book is *1984*, by George Orwell.

When she becomes a marine biologist like her hero, Jacques Cousteau, she wants to make people aware of all the problems that our oceans and having because of contamination and pollution. She says we have to take care of the oceans because they are three quarters of our planet Earth, and if we do not take care of them, the whole globe is going to be in serious trouble.

Lakeitha Sanyang: Warm Heart, Cold World **by Stanley Sallay**

Born on the west side of Chicago, Lakeitha wasn't born with a silver spoon. On Chicago's



west side, you only have two options: develop a warm heart or join the masses of cold-hearted individuals. Lakeitha chose to maintain a warm 98.6° heart like God intended, although she didn't receive any maternal assistance when she got pregnant.

Being the second oldest of five children, she followed in the steps of her older brother; she moved out of the house at the age of 16.

Most people would've just given up. But as she's been doing since the age of 14, she continued to work, bouncing back and forth from Chicago to Madison to support her first child, Mechey.

Her heart, unaffected by this cold world, continued to grow. She now works with physically and mentally challenged people and now has two other children, Jervon and Ortez.

"Oh, I'ma be livin' in a high estate!" she replied after I asked her where she sees herself in the next five years. "I'ma be in an estate with the money from becoming a registered nurse and phlebotomist."

Stanley Sallay by Lakeitha Sanyang

"It's very hard being a black man growing up in the hood," says Stanley Sallay. Stanley is originally from Chicago and moved here when he was ten years old with some relatives. He returned to Chicago, where he finished high school, then moved back to Madison with his cousin, his father, Stan, Sr., and his two brothers, James, the oldest, and Brandon. Stan's mother resides in Chicago.

Stan also has a daughter, Kietana, two. She's very outgoing and outspoken, loves to play outside, likes people, and enjoys telling people her name. Stan smiles when he talks about his daughter. Stan lives with his daughter, so he gets to be with her and with Kietana's mother a lot.

Stan faced five months of being unemployed because he committed a felony. "This shows on my criminal background check, and they automatically turn you away," he says.

Despite the felony, Stan

says he is a very hard worker who has made an error and wants to correct it and get his life together. He has worked at temp services and sometimes at North America Moving Company, but it's very rare that they would call for work. Stanley recently found a new job working in Sun Prairie at the Famous Footwear warehouse.

Stanley came to the Odyssey Program for preparation. He says the program is his entrance to his success. He wants to be a commercial artist. He would like to make logos and special sound effects for movies. Also he's currently producing, recording, and writing lyrics for tracks. Stan thinks this is his time to shine and become a successful black man with a degree. He says the Odyssey Program gave him this opportunity to shape his life.

After graduating from the Odyssey Program, he hopes to become a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and wishes he could get on the football team and earn a scholarship. If entering the university doesn't work, he says he will attend the Madison Media College or MATC.



Sonia Spencer by Troy Terry

Sonia's present goal is to become an elementary school teacher because she has raised and educated her own kids, a set of beautiful twins, Carol ("CC") and Donovan ("DJ") Spencer, both 5 ½, and Celina ("Lina") Spencer, at the precious age of two years old.

Sonia has taught her children everything from their colors to their ABCs and also basic

knowledge of their surroundings. People have complimented Sonia on her vast knowledge and the education of her children; now she would like to take it to another level and become an elementary school teacher herself.

Sonia is inspired not only by her children but also by her sister, Arlette, 33 and financially stable with not one but four degrees. Arlette was married in April of 2005 to her husband, who is from Kenya. Arlette helps to support the family as needs be.

Sonia Spencer, 31, was born in Angola, Africa in 1975. She has three sisters; one passed away. Sonia has been employed at one of Madison's Anchor Bank branches for one year, helping people manage money and start-up new savings and checking accounts.

But when Sonia was growing up in Angola, some of her favorite games were soccer, jump rope, tag and basketball.

Sonia also talks highly of her younger sister, Darlinna, 18, currently attending Marquette University. Darlinna is a joy to Sonia and truly an inspiration as well. Sonia congratulates her sister for graduating from high



school with a 4.0 grade point average.

Sonia is married to her God-sent husband, Thuren, who's a hard working provider, very dedicated and committed to his family. They have been married for seven years this November. Let's wish them well as they pursue the American dream with their family and loved ones, and Sonia reaches toward her dream of becoming a teacher.

Troy Terry **by Sonia Spencer**

Troy Terry has one of the most beautiful smiles I've ever seen. On top of that, he is a kind, energetic, spiritual man.

Troy was born in Detroit in 1967. Two years later, he and his family moved to Madison and still call Madison home. He has a host of family members here, including Dr. Richard Harris of the Genesis Corporation. His brother Eddie is a construction



Troy attended Odyssey in September and October, and our thoughts go out to him now, wherever he may be.

worker. Shawn works for Mayflower.

Troy's relationship with his mother is strained, and he doesn't know his father. So you wonder who he turned to in times of need. The one constant in his life was his grandmother, Pearl Harris. Ms. Harris was both mother and father to Troy. She taught him and showed him many things Troy otherwise would not have experienced. She instilled the love of sports in him and the love of life until her death in 2004.

One of his favorite sports was hockey. He played from the fourth grade to the ninth grade. He admits to being a great skater. He also played football with the Southside Raiders.

Although his grandmother tried to do the best for him, his father's absence had a great impact on Troy. Because of that he made some decisions that led him to be imprisoned from 1985 to 2005. He believes if he had a positive male figure around, he would have made better choices and wouldn't have fallen victim to this society.

With everything he had to go through, you would think Troy would be a bitter, angry man, but he is not. He has a sense of calmness about him and a really positive, optimistic attitude about himself and his future.

While incarcerated he started making better decisions about his life and future. One of those decisions was to finish high school and start the path to a better and brighter future. He earned his HSED in prison and started living the survivor role, not the victim.

Troy's goals and aspirations in life are to be a well adjusted individual who is free to soar. His love of cooking he hopes

will one day lead him to a career as a successful chef of his own restaurant.

Marshall "Coach" Cook **by Diane Dennis**

We all know Coach, but did you know he's published 25 books, that his grandfather was a technical director for movies, or that he has appeared on the Oprah show? He was a guest on the Oprah show about seven years ago talking about how to de-stress Chicago drivers.

He calls himself the only ambidextrous, colorblind son of an immigrant. His nickname, 'Coach,' is meaningful because Marshall called his father coach. After years of teaching, his students began calling him coach and the nickname stuck.

Marshall grew up in Altadena, California, near Pasadena (home of the Rose Bowl). His mother was a fifth generation Californian, his father a Belgian immigrant of utmost integrity whose career was the navy. Marshall has one older brother who is an electrical engineer. They email each other



daily.

Marshall received his first dog, a cocker spaniel named Cindy, when he was two years old and had her until he was a sophomore in college. He remains a dog lover today. Marshall and his wife, Ellen, have two miniature schnauzers, named Sprecher (meaning speaker in German) and Pixie. They later found out the dogs are uncle and niece. They also have cats.

Marshall met Ellen in his college years, and they have been married for 38 years. They have a son, Jeremiah, who's 36 years old and acts in local community theatre. Jeremiah is engaged to a lovely woman named Kim, an archeologist from West Bend, Wisconsin. Marshall is very proud of his son.

When Marshall was teaching English at a community college in California, he and his wife enjoyed traveling and talked about possibly uprooting to another location. They both began applying for jobs around the country, and his wife was offered a job in the Madison Catholic Diocese. After a family vote, they moved across the country in 1979. For awhile after the move Marshall was a house husband. He began his job at UW-Extension as a program coordinator in Mass Communications and has gone through numerous departmental changes or mergers.

Marshall has a great sense of humor, is a voracious reader and enjoys athletics. He is a fan of baseball, basketball, and football. He lifts weights and rides his bike to work almost every day.

Marshall began teaching in the Odyssey Project when it began in 2003. He says his solid bond

with this project has revitalized his career at UW-Madison.

Diane Dennis: The Odyssey May Lead to a Warm Beach near Turquoise Waters **by Marshall Cook**

She was born here, and she's lived here all her life, but Diane Dennis dreams of moving somewhere warm, "near turquoise water," when she and husband David retire. They've visited Hawaii, Jamaica, and Mexico.

Diane works for the UW-Madison in the same department with Emily and Coach, and David runs his own machine tooling business in Sun Prairie, so for now, vacations at their cabin up north near Tomahawk will have to do.

Diane is the oldest of five children, and her two brothers and two sisters still live in the area.

Diane and David have a son, Nathan, 19, and a daughter, Brittany, 17. Nathan attends UW-Stout, and Brittany is a senior in high school. Diane likes cooking for the family and isn't afraid to depart from a recipe and "make things up."

Diane worked summers for the Department of Revenue while attending Madison East High



School. After graduating, she took the state test and accepted a job with the Spanish Department at the UW-Madison.

"Yo hablo pequeno Espanol," she admits, "enough to get by when visiting Mexico." She took Spanish in high school, where her favorite subject was English. She still enjoys reading fiction. Math was her least favorite subject.

Diane enjoys music and professes an abiding love for The Rolling Stones in general and *Gimme Shelter* in particular.

Those turquoise waters will have to wait while Diane immerses herself in the Odyssey Project, which she describes as "mind blowing."

"Odyssey has made me enjoy my job again," she says.

Katy Farrens **by Erica Garcia and** **Melissa Plasky**

Born March 3, 1980, Katy Farrens has a lot going on in her life, but at one point she felt like she was stuck. She felt like she had to do something with her life. At the age of 26, with two beautiful kids, Keishawn, 6, and Kazaray, 2, Katy felt it was time to do something that would help her move forward in life. Katy already has a job at Northport Apartments section 8 housing, but she decided to fill out an application to the Odyssey Project.

Now that Katy is in the program, she is very busy but enjoys the weekend with her kids. "I would do anything for them to achieve their goals in life," Katy says. Katy has a lot of expectation, but in the

end hopes to look forward to graduating in May, along with seeing her children proud of their mother. She wants them to see the graduation as a good sign showing that their mother proved that if she puts her mind to it, she can do anything. "I want my children to do better than me," Katy says.

As Katy and I talked, I sensed the passion and love that poured out of her for every topic we spoke on. "I want to give my kids everything I didn't have and much more," she says with a smile on her face as she licks her thumb and wipes her feisty, two-year-old daughter's face. Katy has been in an eight-year relationship enlightened by the Lord, and she and her significant other have been blessed with two energetic children.

Katy grew up as an only child, but that in no way stopped her from living a beautiful life. In her job at Northport Apartments helping families, Katy finds working with Section 8 rules crazy and hectic but in the end rewarding.

Now let's jump ahead to the future. It's the year 2010, and the

Wisconsin State Journal is hot off the press. The front page is in full color as the headline reads "Katy Farrens Elected Dane County School Board President." To many this may seem like a goal that's too far out of reach, but not for Katy. This strong-willed Madisonian has been very active in early Headstart for three years on the Wisconsin Headstart Association Board, which is why her goal of joining the County Board isn't far away.

I enjoyed interviewing Katy. She is beautiful person inside and out. She really is a great mom with a hard driven spirit. The Dane County School Board would be more than honored to have this woman join them. It's easy for Katy to get her voice heard. I know I will be voting for Katy when my daughter's in school. Good luck, Katy! You've got my vote.

Mary Wells by Curtis Williams

Mary Wells is, has been, and always will be a Madisonian. Raised on the Southside of Madison, Mary attended Madison West High School. She didn't

graduate but later got her G.E.D., which has done wonders for her life, as she now works in the securities division of a mutual funds group. She also has a job at the Monona Terrace as part of their highly-trained wait staff, but that's not all.

This wonder woman gave birth to three handsome boys. Two are musicians and play guitar. The oldest had high hopes of becoming a rap star, but he was injured in a tragic car accident and passed away on Christmas Eve, 2002, at the age of just 23.

Mary enjoys whitewater rafting, which she encourages her eight-year-old granddaughter to try. Road trips are a pleasure to Mary; she enjoys driving, watching the trees and animals, and being on the open road. Mary's travels have taken her to St. Petersburg, Florida. She does enjoy baking, but she tells her family she can't cook so she won't have to cook for the holidays.

As you can see, Mary is a family-oriented, hard working Madisonian, and I hope you've enjoyed a peek into her world.



Mary Wells' Christmas Mosaic

Christmas has always held a special place in my heart, and always will. My parents made my two brothers, three sisters, and me feel special on Christmas morning, even though our mosaic stones were clouded with the dysfunction of alcoholism. We knew it was a struggle for our parents to make ends meet, but we always had plenty of love, a roof over our heads, food on the table, and clean clothes. On Christmas Eve, my parents would let us see if we could stay up until midnight, and if we could, we could open our presents.

As the years went on, and my Christmas Mosaic was being built, I realized one day that the gifts under the tree were not brought to our house by Santa Claus. That's when my Christmas Mosaic started to have a noticeable change. I still looked forward to Christmas wholeheartedly. I enjoyed the anticipation of those wonderful visits we would make to our grandmother's house as a family, and the family members that would come over to our house during the season.

The colors of my Christmas Mosaic changed when I became a mother with three beautiful children of my own: Douglas, Frederick, and Ricky (Fred-Rick-Douglas). I had the pleasures of making sure their Christmases were anticipated as much as I remembered. They knew

also that they too were rich in love, although we didn't have other material things. I enjoyed having them help me decorate the house, and make cookies and homemade ornaments.

I also started a new tradition where we would pile in the car a couple of days before Christmas and drive around the nicer neighborhoods to look at their Christmas light decorations. I hope that they



will remember this tradition and do it themselves.

The stones changed colors once again as my oldest son Doug had a daughter named Gabrielle. She too has enjoyed the traditions that we have surrounding Christmas. Gabrielle really enjoys cooking. She & I have started our own cookbook of favorite foods that she likes to prepare. Her favorite of all things is

the Homemade Overnight-French Toast, topped with fresh strawberry slices and powdered sugar.

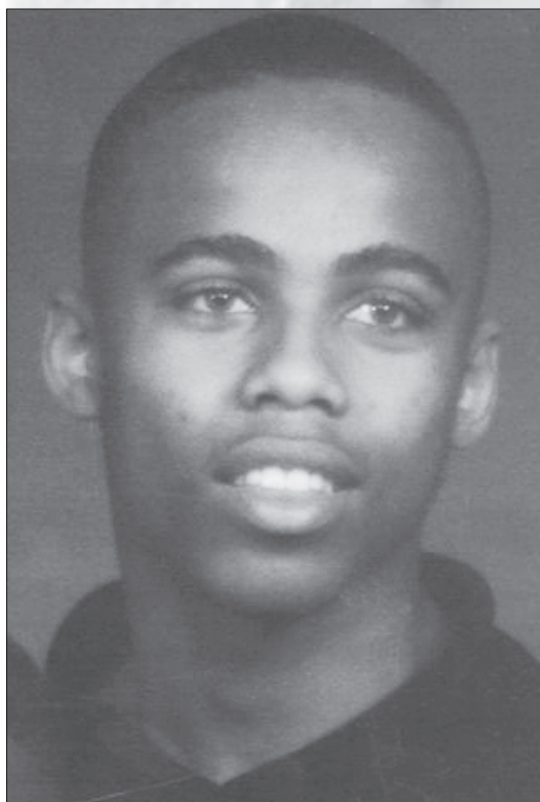
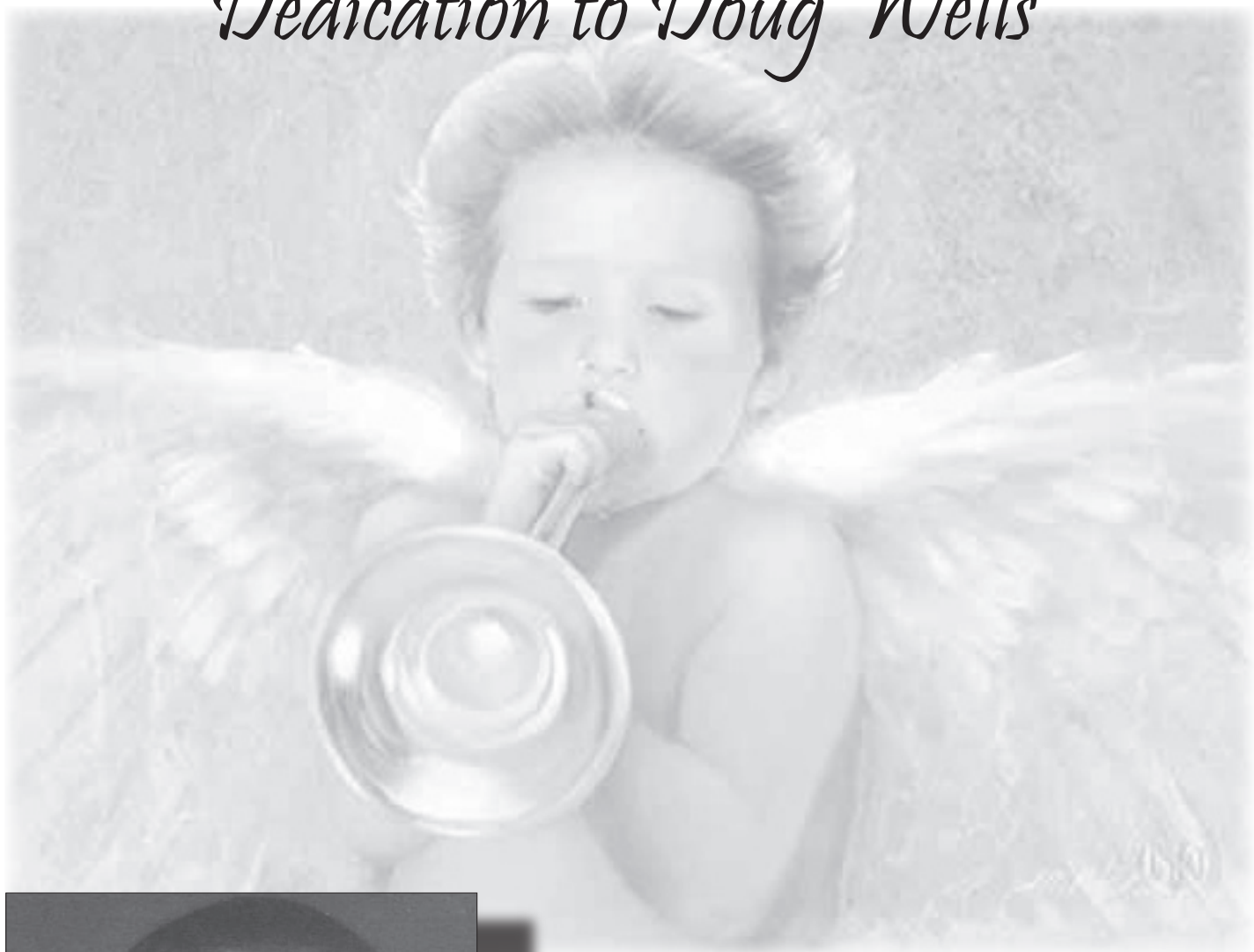
In 2002, my mosaic stones changed drastically when my son Douglas lost his life in a tragic car accident. My nephew and my son Doug were on their way to my house to pick up an early Christmas gift. They had to come across town, but only made it all but two blocks away. My nephew was too intoxicated and shouldn't have been driving in the first place. My nephew apparently passed out behind the wheel.

The car hit a tree on the side of the car that my son was sitting on. My son was unconscious when the paramedics arrived, and he never regained consciousness. My Christmases have not been the same since.

The colors of my Christmas mosaic changed again in 2005. That was the first Christmas since the accident that I was able to put up a tree.

I am sure that the stones in my mosaic will continue to change as the pain eases over time, and always will change as I continue on my Odyssey. As I continue on with my life's Odyssey I envision that Christmas will still hold a special place in my heart with all of the traditions that have made each one special. My son's memory will live on through all of us, especially through his daughter Gabrielle.

Dedication to Doug Wells



Doug, your 27th birthday in Heaven
will be such a grand affair.
The Angels will come from everywhere
to sing your birthday song.
I know they'll be so happy
that you've joined God's Happy Throng.
No, I can't send a card this year
or give a gift so fine,
So I'll just send a special prayer
to you, wonderful son of mine.
-Mary Wells,
in memory of Doug Wells

Writer Spotlight: *Ernest J. Gaines*

Ernest Gaines had to move far from his native Louisiana before he could begin to write about it. He overcame an impoverished background to become one of America's most respected novelists.

Gaines was born on January 15, 1933 in Oscar, Louisiana, near the slave quarters on the River Lake Plantation, where five generations of his family lived. His early schooling consisted of six years at the one-room school in the quarters and three years at St. Augustine Catholic School for African Americans.

He was raised by his aunt before joining his mother and stepfather in Vallejo, California at age 15 because there was no high school for an African American near where he lived in Louisiana. This aunt probably served as the primary model for his best known fictional creation, Miss Jane Pittman [Chelsea Forum].

After serving in the Army, he graduated from San Francisco State

College in 1957 and won a creative writing fellowship to Stanford University.

In his most famous novel, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1971), he created a 110-year-old woman who, in telling her story, relates the history of the American south. Other novels include *Of Love and Dust* (1967), *A Long Day in November* (1971), and *A Lesson before Dying* (1993), which became an Oprah Book Club Selection in 1997.

Gaines is a Professor of English and writer-in-residence at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Sources:

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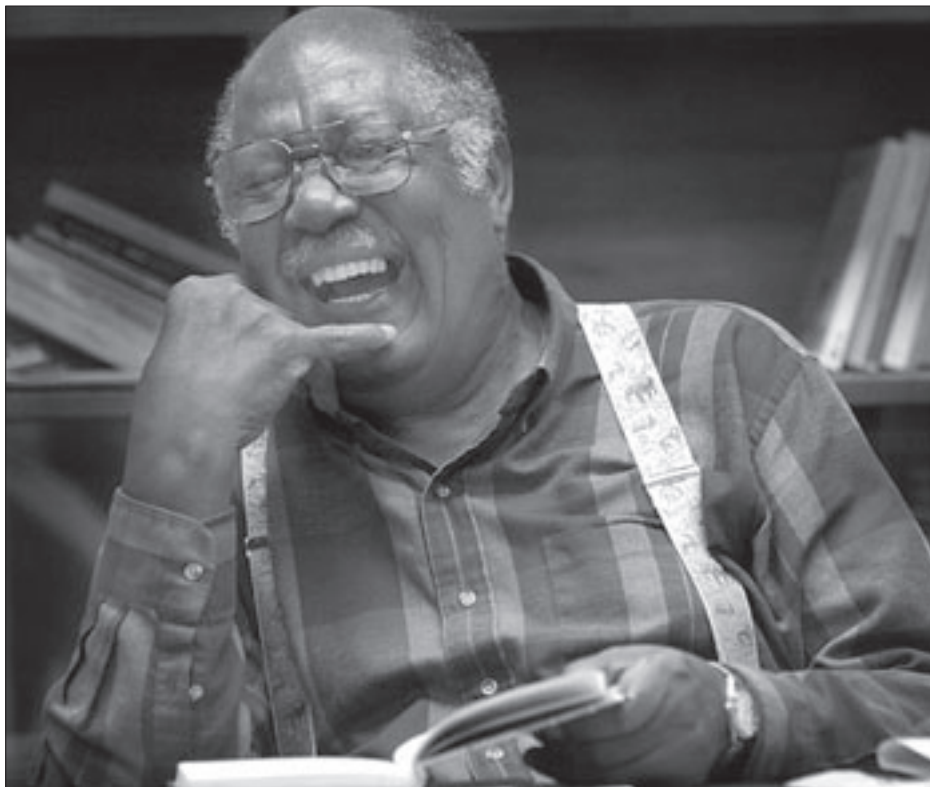
Gaines, Ernest J., *A Lesson Before Dying*

Gaines, Ernest J., *A Long Day in November*

Gaines, Ernest J., *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*

Chapter One from *A Lesson Before Dying*

I was not there, yet I was there. No, I did not go to the trial, I did not hear the verdict, because I knew all the time what it would be. Still, I was there. I was there as much as anyone else was there. Either I sat behind my aunt and his godmother or I sat beside them. Both are large women, but his godmother is larger. She is of average height, five four, five five, but weighs nearly two hundred pounds. Once she and my aunt had found their places—two rows behind the table where he sat with his court-appointed attorney—his godmother became as immobile as a great stone or as one of our oak or cypress stumps. She never got up once to get water or go to the bathroom down in the basement. She just sat there staring at the boy's clean-cropped head where he sat at the front table with his lawyer. Even after he had gone to await the jurors' verdict, her eyes remained in that one direction. She heard nothing said in the courtroom. Not by the prosecutor, not by the defense attorney, not by my aunt. (Oh, yes, she did hear one word—one word, for sure: "hog.") It was my aunt whose eyes followed the prosecutor as he moved from one side of the courtroom to the other, pounding his fist into the palm of his hand, pounding the table where his papers lay, pounding the rail that separated the jurors from the rest of the courtroom.



It was my aunt who followed his every move, not his godmother. She was not even listening. She had gotten tired of listening. She knew, as we all knew, what the outcome would be. A white man had been killed during a robbery, and though two of the robbers had been killed on the spot, one had been captured, and he, too, would have to die. Though he told them no, he had nothing to do with it, that he was on his way to the White Rabbit Bar and Lounge when Brother and Bear drove up beside him and offered him a ride. After he got into the car, they asked him if he had any money. When he told them he didn't have a solitary dime, it was then that Brother and Bear started talking credit, saying that old Gropé should not mind crediting them a pint since he knew them well, and he knew that the grinding season was coming soon, and they would be able to pay him back then.

The store was empty, except for the old storekeeper, Alcee Gropé, who sat on a stool behind the counter. He spoke first. He asked Jefferson about his godmother. Jefferson told him his nannan was all right. Old Gropé nodded his head. "You tell her for me I say hello," he told Jefferson. He looked at Brother and Bear. But he didn't like them. He didn't trust them. Jefferson could see that in his face. "Do for you boys?" he asked. "A bottle of that Apple White, there, Mr. Gropé," Bear said. Old Gropé got the bottle off the shelf, but he did not set it on the counter. He could see that the boys had already been drinking, and he became suspicious. "You boys got money?" he asked. Brother and Bear spread out all the money they had in their

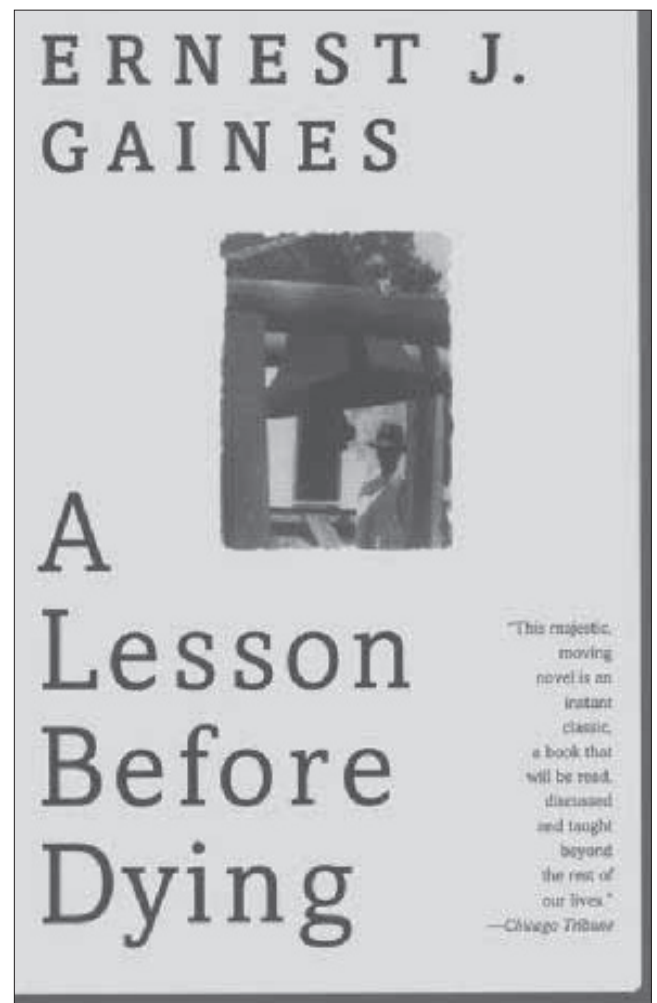
pockets on top of the counter. Old Gropé counted it with his eyes. "That's not enough," he said.

"Come on, now, Mr. Gropé," they pleaded with him. "You know you go'n get your money soon as grinding start." "No," he said. "Money is slack everywhere. You bring the money, you get your wine." He turned to put the bottle back on the shelf. One of the boys, the one called Bear, started around the counter. "You, stop there," Gropé told him. "Go back." Bear had been drinking, and his eyes were glossy, he walked unsteadily, grinning all the time as he continued around the counter. "Go back," Gropé told him. "I mean, the last time now--go back." Bear continued. Gropé moved quickly toward the cash register, where he withdrew a revolver and started shooting. Soon there was shooting from another direction. When it was quiet again, Bear, Gropé, and Brother were all down on the floor, and only Jefferson was standing.

He wanted to run, but he couldn't run. He couldn't even think. He didn't know where he was. He didn't know how he had gotten there. He couldn't remember ever getting into the car. He couldn't remember a thing he had done all day.

He heard a voice calling. He thought

the voice was coming from the liquor shelves. Then he realized that old Gropé was not dead, and that it was he who was calling. He made himself go to the end of the counter. He had to look across Bear to see the storekeeper. Both lay between the counter and the shelves of alcohol. Several bottles had broken, and alcohol and blood covered their bodies as well as the floor. He stood there gaping at the old man slumped against the bottom shelf of gallons and half gallons of wine. He didn't know whether he should go to him or whether he should run out of there. The old man continued to call: "Boy? Boy? Boy?" Jefferson became frightened. The old man was still alive. He had seen him. He would tell on him. Now he started babbling. "It wasn't me.



It wasn't me, Mr. Gropé. It was Brother and Bear. Brother shot you. It wasn't me. They made me come with them. You got to tell the law that, Mr. Gropé. You hear me Mr. Gropé?"

But he was talking to a dead man.

Still he did not run. He didn't know what to do. He didn't believe that this had happened. Again he couldn't remember how he had gotten there. He didn't know whether he had come there with Brother and Bear, or whether he had walked in and seen all this after it happened.

He looked from one dead body to the other. He didn't know whether he should call someone on the telephone or run. He had never dialed a telephone in his life, but he had seen other people use them. He didn't know what to do. He was standing by the liquor shelf, and suddenly he realized he needed a drink and needed it badly. He snatched a bottle off the shelf, wrung off the cap, and turned up the bottle, all in one continuous motion. The whiskey burned him like fire--his chest, his belly, even his nostrils. His eyes watered; he shook his head to clear his mind. Now he began to realize where he was. Now he began to realize fully what had happened. Now he knew he had to get out of there. He turned. He saw the money in the cash register, under the little wire clamps. He knew taking money was wrong. His nannan had told him never to steal. He didn't want to steal. But he didn't have a solitary dime in his pocket. And nobody was around, so who could say he stole it? Surely not one of the dead men.

He was halfway across the room, the money stuffed inside his jacket pocket, the half bottle of whiskey clutched in his hand, when two white men walked into the store.

That was his story.

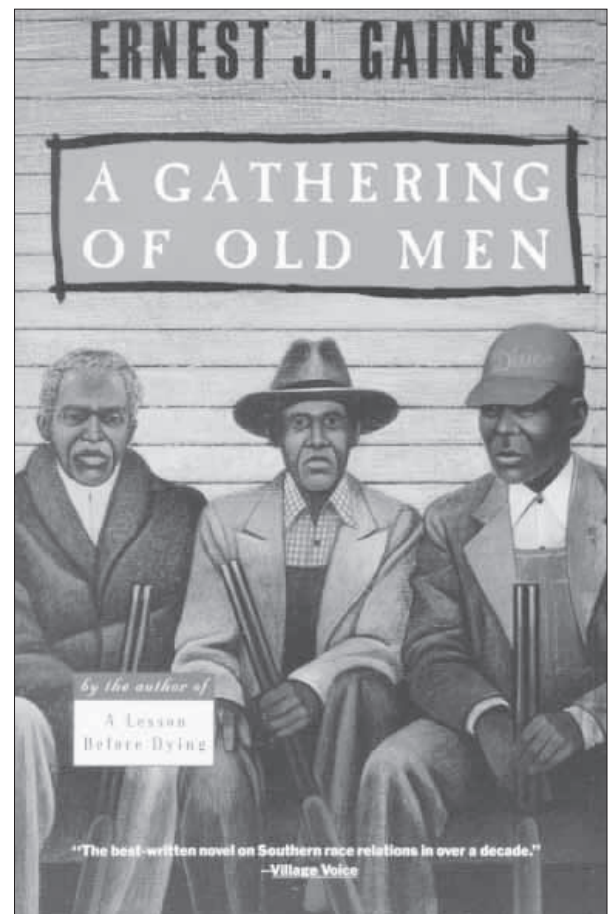
The prosecutor's story was different. The prosecutor argued that Jefferson and the other two had gone there with the full intention of robbing the old man and killing him so that he could not identify them. When the old man and the other two robbers were all dead, this one--it proved the kind of animal he really was--stuffed the money into his pockets and celebrated the event by drinking over their still-bleeding bodies.

The defense argued that Jefferson was innocent of all charges except being at the wrong place at the wrong time. There was absolutely no proof that there had been a conspiracy between himself and the other two. The fact that Mr. Gropé shot only Brother and Bear was proof of Jefferson's innocence. Why did Mr. Gropé shoot one boy twice and never shoot at Jefferson once? Because Jefferson was merely an innocent bystander. He took the whiskey to calm his nerves, not to celebrate. He took the money out of hunger and plain stupidity.

"Gentlemen of the jury, look at this--this--this boy. I almost said man, but I can't say man. Oh, sure, he has reached the age of twenty-one,

when we, civilized men, consider the male species has reached manhood, but would you call this--this--this a man? No, not I. I would call it a boy and a fool. A fool is not aware of right and wrong. A fool does what others tell him to do. A fool got into that automobile. A man with a modicum of intelligence would have seen that those racketeers meant no good. But not a fool. A fool got into that automobile. A fool rode to the grocery store. A fool stood by and watched this happen, not having the sense to run.

"Gentlemen of the jury, look at him--look at him--look at this. Do you see a man sitting here? I ask you, I implore, look carefully--do you see a man sitting here? Look at the shape of this skull, this face as flat as the palm of my hand--look deeply into those



eyes. Do you see a modicum of intelligence? Do you see anyone here who could plan a murder, a robbery, can plan--can plan--can plan anything? A cornered animal to strike quickly out of fear, a trait inherited from his ancestors in the deepest jungle of blackest Africa--yes, yes, that he can do--but to plan? To plan, gentlemen of the jury? No, gentlemen, this skull here holds no plans. What you see here is a thing that acts on command. A thing to hold the handle of a plow, a thing to load your bales of cotton, a thing to dig your ditches, to chop your wood, to pull your corn. That is what you see here, but you do not see anything capable of planning a robbery or a murder. He does not

even know the size of his clothes or his shoes. Ask him to name the months of the year. Ask him does Christmas come before or after the Fourth of July? Mention the names of Keats, Byron, Scott, and see whether the eyes will show one moment of recognition. Ask him to describe a rose, to quote one passage from the Constitution or the Bill of Rights. Gentlemen of the jury, this man planned a robbery? Oh, pardon me, pardon me, I surely did not mean to insult your intelligence by saying 'man'--would you please forgive me for committing such an error?

"Gentlemen of the jury, who would be hurt if you took this life? Look back to that second row. Please look. I want all twelve of you

honorable men to turn your heads and look back to that second row.

What you see there has been everything to him--mama, grandmother, godmother--everything. Look at her, gentlemen of the jury, look at her well. Take this away from her, and she has no reason to go on living. We may see him as not much, but he's her reason for existence. Think on that, gentlemen, think on it.

"Gentlemen of

the jury, be merciful. For God's sake, be merciful. He is innocent of all charges brought against him.

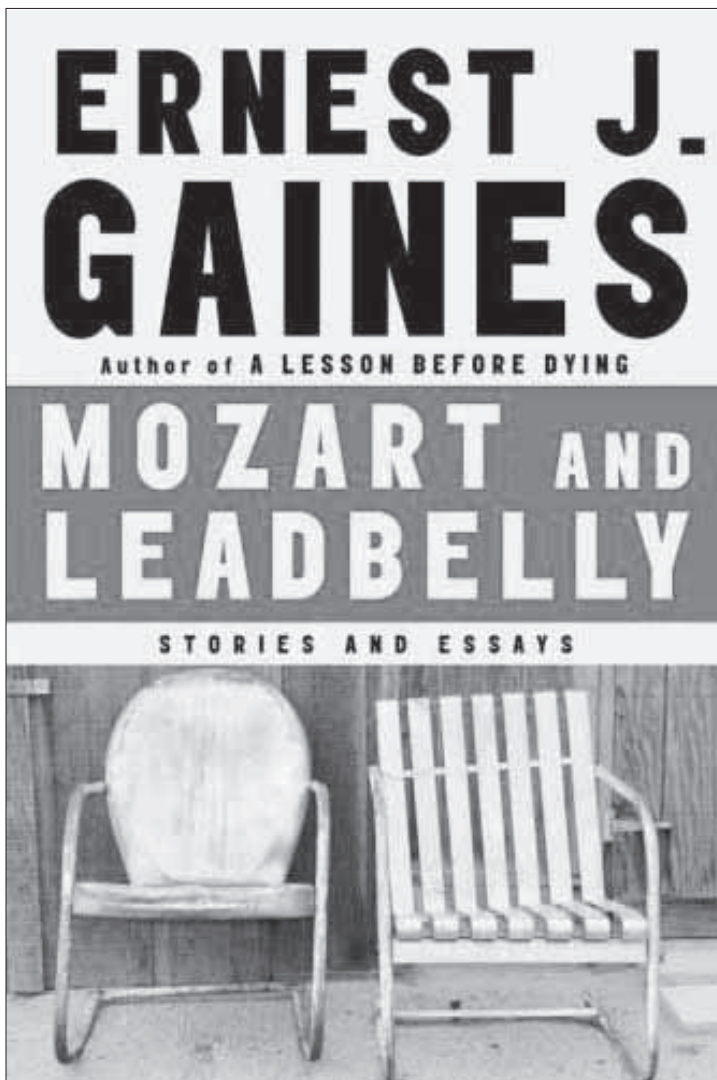
"But let us say he was not. Let us for a moment say he was not. What justice would there be to take this life? Justice, gentlemen? Why, I would just as soon put a hog in the electric chair as this.

"I thank you, gentlemen, from the bottom of my heart, for your kind patience. I have no more to say, except this: We must live with our own conscience. Each and every one of us must live with his own conscience."

The jury retired, and it returned a verdict after lunch: guilty of robbery and murder in the first degree. The judge commended the twelve white men for reaching a quick and just verdict. This was Friday. He would pass sentence on Monday.

Ten o'clock on Monday, Miss Emma and my aunt sat in the same seats they had occupied on Friday. Reverend Mose Ambrose, the pastor of their church, was with them. He and my aunt sat on either side of Miss Emma. The judge, a short, red-faced man with snow-white hair and thick black eyebrows, asked Jefferson if he had anything to say before the sentencing. My aunt said that Jefferson was looking down at the floor and shook his head. The judge told Jefferson that he had been found guilty of the charges brought against him, and that the judge saw no reason that he should not pay for the part he played in this horrible crime.

Death by electrocution. The governor would set the date.



Electric Red and White: The UW vs. Mercer Basketball Game

By Derrick Washington and Tiffani Puccio (with Kathleen Brown and Curtis Winters also in attendance)

Words cannot describe our appreciation to Peter Weil (a UW Alumnus and a Board Member of the UW Foundation now living in California) for donating four tickets to the Odyssey Project so we could attend the UW Badger Men's Basketball game against Mercer on November 12, 2006.

It was our first time at the Kohl Center and to a Badger basketball game. We feel that it helped broaden our experience. Our lives have so many walls in them; we feel as if you have cracked open a window and we can feel the fresh air on our faces.

Boy was that a great experience! The energy in the Kohl Center was crazy. It seemed as if red and white was powered by electricity.

We didn't imagine that we would have such good seats: being just eight rows behind the Badgers. We honestly felt like

V.I.P.s at courtside.

We won the game. We had a chance to see firsthand how prestigious the UW actually is. The Badgers made the Mercer Bears look as though they had some sort of anemia.

It made it even a greater feeling knowing we are now a part of the UW System. This was a great opportunity for us to experience something that most people take for granted. We're in here, we all kept thinking. We're a step closer to being full fledged UW students.

We also kept thinking about how the young men who could play basketball so well would have their lives—and the lives of their families—changed by the fact that this gave them a chance to go to college. Their coaches will teach them how to handle pressure, the spotlight, and failure.

All and all, it was fun. It

made us realize that we are no longer on the outside looking in. We are in the corridor of the building waiting to go into the Great Hall.

We hope that other UW alumni are encouraged to donate to the Odyssey Project. Our professors are truly inspiring, and they are helping us to gain better knowledge of the help and understanding that is out there for people who are truly interested in bettering their lives.

We are always looking for inspired and inspiring people to raise the morale in our class, and we hope that Peter Weil, Maureen Dembski, and other board members from the UW Foundation will come for a visit sometime to learn more about our class and ways to help.

We are so grateful for this wonderful experience.

