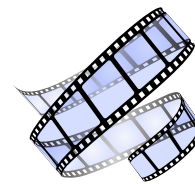




Former Philadelphia Eagles kicker David Akers discusses his induction to the Eagles Hall of Fame. [Page 10.](#)



Montco Radio Host Charity Event in Honor of Deceased Alum. [Page 14.](#)



Trying to Get Into the Holiday Spirit? Check out the Holiday Film Countdown. [Page 9.](#)

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# The Montgazette

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## The Students' Voice

Issue 71

Serving Montgomery County Community College and the Surrounding Community

Nov / Dec 2017

**Derrick Pitts, Chief Astronomer and Director of the Fels Planetarium at the Franklin Institute, takes the stage as keynote speaker of the MCCC 2017 Presidential Symposium. Learn more about Pitts and the Symposium on Page 3.**

Photo by Erin Ilisco





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# from the Editor

## Sara Wilkerson The Montgazette Editor-in-Chief

You're walking to your next class. There's whispers about,  
And you take your earbuds out,  
Out the corner of the hallway, you hear  
its name:  
That Dreaded Finals Week.

You feel as if Finals Week is following on you,  
Watching your every move, every Blackboard update.  
You get down on all fours and break into  
A sprint  
But it's gaining on you!  
That Dreaded Finals Week.

You're looking for an escape,  
You look for anything to distract you  
From it  
Netflix, Hulu, the latest season of Stranger Things  
Nothing works, because you cannot escape  
That Dreaded Finals Week.

I know that the end of the semester can be tough, and that temptations to not do your work seem tempting. And I know that important deadlines like registering for next semester can be easy to miss when focusing on the end of the semester. Yet, I just want to tell you, the students of MCCC, that now is not the time to slack off.

Believe me, wishing that we can skip past finals week and can sleep in for nearly a month seems great to do. Yet, that's just counterproductive. Wishing

Your English professor tells you the deadlines  
Proposals, Bibliographies, Revisions  
They all scare you, intimidate you.  
Your English professor tells you to relax  
But you know you can't, and it's all because of  
That Dreaded Finals Week.  
Running for your life  
(That Dreaded Finals Week)  
It's taking over your social life  
(That Dreaded Finals Week)  
Lurking in the shadows  
That incoming disaster  
(Oh no, you guessed it!)  
It's That Dreaded Finals Week.

Now it's Christmas time, the end of the semester  
And you seem to have lost your wits  
You acknowledge that the end was nigh  
Finally you can relax  
And enjoy Stranger Things in peace...

But alas! You check your email  
The deadline for Spring registration  
Is fast approaching!  
Payments are due!  
Oh, what to do?

Running to your laptop  
(It's off, off all the time)  
It boots back to life!  
(It's usually off, off all the time ... Except for Netflix)  
Getting that registration  
In at the last minute

Alas! You beat the clock!  
Let the next semester begin!  
Celebrating like crazy  
Pumped fists in the air  
No worry, no shame  
Oh, what a great feeling  
You were hammered for time  
Yet got it done  
Like a boss.

But alas! Another problem!  
Winter is coming  
(Sorry, not Game of Thrones sadly)  
And going  
The Spring Semester comes  
Before you know!

Mad rush to the bookstore  
And Amazon of course!  
Getting those textbooks  
(So not looking forward to that!)  
Hundreds of dollars, poof! Disappear!  
A magician's best work  
Comes at the hands of business folk

You marvel "Wow I'm broke"  
But don't worry, that's ok.  
You know the true goal is in sight.

That shiny new Associate's  
Will bow down before you  
Greeting your future  
And guiding you to success.

for something to happen is all that it'll ever be: a wish.

To make the dream of relaxing during the holidays a reality, you must put in the work. Work to finish those remaining assignments, work to finish all of your final exams, register for the classes you want (before they fill up), and before you know it, the semesters will fly by, and you'll be prepared to walk off campus as a college graduate.

Finish the end of this semester strong. Don't slack off; you can do this!

### About *The Montgazette*

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# Acclaimed Astronomer Derrick Pitts Visits MCCC

Sara Wilkerson  
The Montgazette Editor-in-Chief

*“Science can not grow, science can not proceed, science can not pursue, science can’t answer the questions... [it] seeks to answer without the diversity of thought. That’s what makes it [science] work. We need diversity of thought from everywhere to contribute so we can solve the questions we have about the Universe.” – Derrick Pitts, Astronomer*

This November Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) hosted its Ninth Annual Presidential Symposium featuring keynote speaker Derrick Pitts. Pitts currently serves as the Chief Astronomer and Director of the Fels Planetarium at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia.

Pitts’ career began at the Franklin Institute after he graduated from St. Lawrence University. Over the span of his prolific career, Pitts has held many positions, including the United States spokesperson

for the International Year of Astronomy in 2009, and in 2011 was named a Solar System Ambassador for NASA. Pitts has won numerous awards including a Distinguished Alumni award from St. Lawrence University and an honorary Doctorate of Science from La Salle University.

At the start of the Presidential Symposium, a performance from the MCCC Choir featured a rendition of David Bowie’s “Space Oddity.” Following the performance, Pitts started his speech with introductory remarks on

how he became interested in science.

Pitts explained that his interest in science stemmed from seeing acclaimed astronomers like John Glenn and Carl Sagan on TV as a child. Their TV appearances, combined with his innate scientific curiosity growing up, are what led him to pursue astronomy as an area of study in college.

Thanks to Pitts’ current

position at the Franklin Institute, Pitts said that he makes it his mission to inspire other future scientists by speaking at academic institutions and making media appearances on TV. By inspiring others, he explained that the scientific community can benefit from having more scientists explore the ways of the Universe.

Additionally Pitts emphasized that the

diversity of scientists is what truly matters for future discoveries in the Universe. He said that while the scientific field has made progress in making the field more diverse, there still needs to be even more representation of scientists in the field who are women, and who are representative of various races and ethnicities.

Continued on Page 4.



MCCC’s Choir performs David Bowie’s “Space Oddity” led by Music Associate Professor, Andrew Kosciesza, at the start of this Fall’s Presidential Symposium.

Photo by Erin Ilisco



Derrick Pitts discusses the diversity and complexities of the universe as keynote speaker.

Photo by Erin Ilisco



**Astronomer Derrick Pitts**  
Continued from Page 3.

After Pitts finished his ending remarks on life in the Universe, he took questions from audience members. When asked about what advice he'd give to college students looking to find their passion, Pitts advises students to, "Free [themselves] of [a] schedule... number one. Don't impose that on yourself and make that

a restriction that keeps you... [and] that forces you to do something you don't want to do, and take some time to explore what it is that you like to do.... It's not about just having the education just to have the education, it's about doing something you love to do."

To find out more about Derrick Pitts, his career and his latest achievements, visit the Franklin Institute's website via [www.fi.edu](http://www.fi.edu).



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MCCC President, Dr. Kevin Pollock, chats with the audience at the 2017 Presidential Symposium.

Photo by Erin Ilisco



Rose Makofske, MCCC Director of Equity / Diversity Initiatives, presents opening remarks at the MCCC 2017 Presidential Symposium.

Photo by Erin Ilisco





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# Counting Blessings: Professor Don Yost

Dave Aston  
The Montgazette Staff

How many times do we stop and count the blessings we have? Chances are, as hyper-active college students, not much. Between battles with professors and sweating over grades, the valuable people in our lives often take a back seat. Montgomery County Community College English professor, Don Yost, the speaker at this year's Writers Club Coffeehouse, knows what real battles are. He taught those who were there the value of finding blessings in the harshest times of life.

As was common practice among young men during the hard years of the Vietnam War, Professor Yost enrolled in college to avoid being drafted into the armed forces. Yost went to Seton Hall University and earned a degree in English Literature. Nonetheless, he was unable to escape the draft because the war had not ended upon his graduation. He decided to sign up after he was told how good he would have it as an Army officer.

After many grueling months of fighting on the horrific battlefields of Vietnam, Yost was reassigned and became a combat reporter for the Army in 1969. Yost's reassignment turned out to be a blessing in disguise since he avoided battling on the

frontlines of the war. However, as a reporter, Yost witnessed many fellow soldiers die or succumb to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Coming home was no better as many people called Vietnam Veterans, like Yost, "baby killers" and "men who just wanted handouts from the system." Yost proved these misconceptions wrong as he obtained a Master's degree and then began teaching at Montco about a decade ago.

Yost said his experiences in Vietnam have many parallels to today's events. His most poignant parallel is that no matter how different our life experiences are, we can all understand and help one another through any crisis. He encouraged all of us to cherish the people around us, and this message hit me hard that night.

Earlier that night, I received word that my mother was diagnosed with a brain tumor. With all the other events going on in my life, I was struck hard by Yost's story, and after hearing heartfelt poems during the open mic session, I poured my heart out. I recited the poem that you'll read later in this issue (See "Poetic Voices"). With it, I realized how much more I must count the blessings in my life, cherishing the greatest

people during the harshest moments of life.

My thanks to Professor Yost for sharing his story with

the Montco community. You can buy his book *Blessings: Transforming My Vietnam Experience* on Amazon.



MCCC English Professor Don Yost

Photo by Amanda Powers



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\* National Public Radio, September 2015



*The Value of Family*

# The Femininity of Hip Hop in Mainstream and Local Music Scenes

Savan DePaul  
The Montgazette Staff

It is quite apparent that the rap music industry has created a troubling relationship with its female audience through the actions and words of its most prominent faces. Ever since the explosion of hip hop music into mainstream culture, numerous rappers have bred misogynistic and objectifying views of women; furthermore, mainstream rappers continuously feel a need to either be “real” or “hard.” Yet, local music acts, such as Etheric Felines, have stepped away from this antiquated “femininity” and have created their own take on feminine views.

In order to promote a gritty and hardcore celebrity personality, nowadays it’s normal for a rapper to look down on the feminine aspects of personality and biology. Over time, however, we’ve seen the few female rappers that do receive widespread media attention either oversexualize themselves (Nicki Minaj and Iggy Azalea) or follow the general rapper tropes of braggadocious hypermasculinity (Cardi B and Young M.A.), while plenty of independent artists explore their own themes and focus on non-gendered topics.

But little by little, more post-millennium hip hop acts, male and female, have embraced the femininity in their music and messages. Gaining an early footing in the 1990’s with influential artists such as Lauryn Hill and Meshell Ndegeocello, the feminine movement has progressed rapidly within the last few years thanks to shifting views on sexuality and gender identity in America.

More and more musicians reinvent hip hop everyday, constantly redefining the genre in numerous ways. Philadelphia-



Philadelphia Music Group Etheric Felines

Photo Courtesy of Deli Magazine

based experimental trio Etheric Felines embodies this ethos wholeheartedly with some wildly eccentric musical experiences. Made up of producer/composer Flesh Prince, rapper Acid Orphan, and singer Cicada O’Kain, Etheric Felines delivers beautiful tunes that challenge the hip hop status quo at every turn.

Take, for example, their latest single “Buy My Ashes.” Acid Orphan displays an impeccable flow, while delivering lines such as, “Wanna be a Byzantine beauty queen, waving from the mezzanine / A soldier queen, clever and lean, like Artemisia / Persian diva” and “Never having no babies ‘cause I run the [expletive] navy.” She constructs clever verses that illustrate the evolution of women’s rights in present-day America; at the same time, Flesh Prince melds Acid Orphan’s rap vocals and Cicada’s marvelous singing with

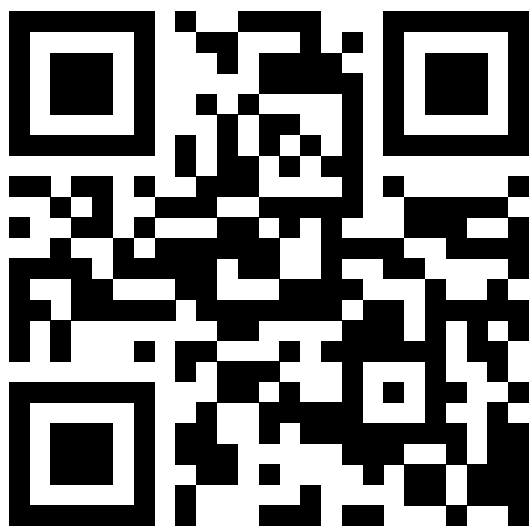
his beautiful instrumentation. Their only other single, “Birth House,” features more serene synths, atmospheric textures, and lovely vocal melodies over a hip hop breakbeat while also boasting more gender-conscious lyrics with an analytical (and nearly meta) edge.

Looking at rap music as a whole, one can clearly see that there’s still much progress to be made in the genre with respect to equality. But talented musicians - like Etheric Felines - oppose those negative stereotypes and begin to grow fanbases that identify with a desire to bring about change. Now that more and more rappers are openly embracing this philosophy, hopefully the music scene can take positive steps towards true equality.





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# Keeping It Classic: A Top 5 Holiday Film Countdown

Alonso Barrantes  
The Montgazette Staff

With Thanksgiving around the corner and Christmas right after it, there's no better feeling than gathering up your friends and family to watch a good holiday movie. Hollywood has produced many classic films in the past few decades, but these five films are what many film fans call "Holiday Classics" that you must see this season.

At spot number five, we have a 1988 action classic: *Die Hard*, directed by John McTiernan and starring a young Bruce Willis. This film follows a New York city policeman, John McClane, played by Bruce Willis, on Christmas Eve as he visits the company where his wife works, played by Bonnie Bedelia. Eventually, a group of terrorists, led by Alan Rickman, takes over the company tower, and it's up to John McClane to stop them and save his wife. This film makes excellent use of its festive tone as it is taking place a day before Christmas while executing an entertaining action flick in a world where *The Predator* and *Robocop* came during its time.

Creeping up at number four is Tim Burton's 1993 film *A Nightmare Before Christmas*. This film is a cult classic in the eyes of many as it follows Jack Skellington, the Pumpkin King who becomes bored in his

annual routine of scaring people in the real world. The film follows him in his adventure as he explores and discovers a new holiday that he tries to embrace, which turns out to be Christmas.

Jingling its way at the number three spot is Jon Favreau's *Home Alone*. Kevin McCallister, played by Macaulay Culkin, is left home alone by his parents during a family trip, he finds himself protecting his house from two robbers during the week of Christmas. He uses an assortment of tricks and traps as he triumphs against the robbers, and *Home Alone* proves to be a comedic and entertaining holiday film for family and friends.

Finally, at first place we have the holiday classic, *A Christmas Story*, directed by Bob Clark. This film is seen as a monumental classic to many and tells a heartwarming family story set during Christmas time. *A Christmas Story* follows the adventures of Ralphie Parker, played by Peter Billingsley,

The beauty of film is that they are all subjective and create many opportunities to talk about important topics or to even share quality time with loved ones. All of these films are wonderfully crafted and deserve to be viewed by everyone as they all share the same positive tone of the holidays.



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# Meeting Eagles NFL Hall of Famer David Akers

Rahul Thevar  
The Montgazette Staff

On October 20th around 8 pm, I was working at the Giant food store in Montgomeryville, PA, and I found out that former Philadelphia Eagles football player and current Hall of Fame kicker, David Akers, was at the Montgomeryville Mall signing autographs.

After Akers was done signing autographs, he took time from his busy schedule to stop by and talk to me for a quick interview.

**Thevar:** “How does it feel to be inducted into the Eagles’ Hall of Fame?”

**Akers:** “Oh man, I gotta tell ya, it’s an absolute honor to be able to be on the field on Monday night [October 23] and see the fans obviously and also see the other Eagles’ legends that are in the Eagles’ Hall of Fame. It’s just quite an honor.”

**Thevar:** “What was your favorite moment playing in the NFL and playing for the Philadelphia Eagles?”

**Akers:** “Winning the NFC Championship ring... Winning that ring, obviously we’ve been a little short of getting the Super Bowl ring, the world championship ring, but I think the Eagles are on course to be able to do that right now, this year as they drive down Broad Street.”

**Thevar:** “What do you think about the new kicker Jake Elliott?”

**Akers:** “It’s interesting, I’ve been injured in my time as well, fight through injuries

so I kind of feel for [all the] surgeries right now. I think that he’s a good kicker himself. As a young kicker, I think he’s looking pretty awesome.”

**Thevar:** “Do you have any words for your fans?”

**Akers:** “Just thank you so much for many, many years of support on and off the field. [The support has] truly blessed me and my family, and I’m always gonna bleed green. Go Birds!”

In addition to speaking with David Akers, I was also able to talk to others who support Akers, among them being former Eagles left tackle Jon Runyan’s wife, Lorretta Runyan, as well as Erika Akers, David Akers’ wife.

When talking about Akers’ induction, Runyan said, “Being able to celebrate this Eagles Hall of Fame induction, with David and his wife Erika, is truly an honor. Having known them for all of Jon’s nine-year career here in Philadelphia is special for us. David deserves this honor, and we are so happy for him and his family.”

Erika Akers also proudly talked about David’s induction by saying, “I am extremely proud of my husband. He is the first kicker to be inducted into the Eagles Hall of Fame... I was so thrilled that my husband could have such a positive night with the fans and the [Eagles] Organization... We are beyond blessed.”

Finally, I asked David Akers

in a follow-up phone interview about what advice he’d give to students here at Montgomery County Community College. As a response, Akers advises

those students that are still figuring out what they want to do in life to pursue, “whatever makes [them] happy and have confidence in [themselves].”



Rahul Thevar (left) of *The Montgazette* meeting Eagles Hall of Fame Kicker David Akers (right).

Photo Courtesy of Rahul Thevar

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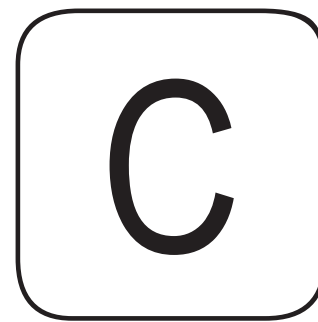
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# Today's North Korea is Yesterday's Cuban Missile Crisis

Justin Patrick Oakes  
The Montgazette Staff

President Donald Trump has shown time and time again what dire consequences we as Americans and human beings are faced with when we refuse to analyze history. Trump's apparent lack of understanding regarding the history of nuclear missiles may very well prove costly to American citizens, not just with our wallets, but with our lives.

Since tensions between North Korea and the United States have always been very high, it's safe to assume that North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un, was already in favor of the full destruction of America. Yet, many Americans haven't gone to sleep at night with the full realization that we might not wake up tomorrow, until President Trump took office. The last time Americans went to sleep with this legitimate fear of nuclear weapon induced dread was when President John F. Kennedy was in office.

The Cuban Missile Crisis marked thirteen days in 1962 of terrifying peril for all citizens of the world as the Soviet Union began placing nuclear weapons

in Cuba, just 90 miles south of Florida. As United States planes drew close on Cuba, they were shot down, resulting in the deaths of two U.S. soldiers. As the two superpowers pushed the world closer and closer to the brink of utter annihilation, citizens prepared for the worst. After intense negotiations, blockades, and standoffs, the Soviets finally agreed to remove their weapons from Cuba. One fact that is often swept under the rug, however, is that the Soviets were simply retaliating. The United States had decided to put nuclear missiles in Turkey, with the missiles pointed right at the Soviet Union. The only reason that missiles were ever put in Cuba was because of the original U.S. aggression, and the only reason they were removed was because the U.S. agreed to take theirs out of Turkey.

Fast forward to 2017. Trump is doing the exact same thing as Kennedy by instigating North Korea. Not only has Trump called for "fire and fury" against North Korea, he has proposed

the redundant expansion of our already massive nuclear weapons program, has ridiculed Kim Jong Un with his schoolyard bully jab "Rocket Man," has put incredibly tough sanctions on an already harshly sanctioned North Korea, and literally has threatened to kill North Korea's nearly 25 million citizens during a speech to the U.N.

So, when North Korea's foreign minister, Ri Yong Ho, says that the United States has "declared war on North Korea" and that North Korea has the right to "shoot down United States strategic bombers," perhaps he's simply borrowing a legitimate play from the U.S.S.R.

What Trump should have learned from the Cuban Missile Crisis is not to instigate a foreign leader who is hellbent on destruction and war. As Americans, it's our job to be the bigger people, and as Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Speak softly and carry a big stick." The United States has enough problems without throwing a nuclear war into the mix, and Trump should have learned that by now.

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# Rock N Tribute

Dave Aston  
The Montgazette Staff

We pay tribute to fallen heroes and loved ones in many ways. Some lay flowers at the site of a tragedy. Others visit resting places or say prayers. This November, Montco Radio paid tribute to one of Montgomery County Community College's (MCCC's) own fallen alumni during its annual Rock N Cans charity event.

The all-day event featured special Montco Radio broadcast shows in support of Jenna Burleigh, an alum of MCCC who was tragically killed at the start of this semester. Dozens of people came to the Central Campus and donated nearly 500 cans of food for Jenna's Blessing Bags for

the Homeless, a charity set up by Burleigh's family in her memory.

During the Rock N Cans event, Burleigh's parents stopped by the Montco Radio station in the Advanced Technology Center, and were greeted by MCCC President Dr. Kevin Pollock. While on air and after, the Burleigh family expressed their gratitude for the overwhelming support and generosity of the likes of which Jenna was known for.

Montco Radio station co-manager, Donnell Peake, who also met with Burleigh's parents, expressed his pride. "I was very pleased with the members of

Montco Radio who came out [and] helped with sorting, counting and donating cans."

Peake's pride resonated throughout the event and with all involved in making Rock N Cans. Many MCCC Alumni donated canned food, and some won prizes donated by local sponsors. The prizes, donated from sponsors such as Buffalo Wild Wings, Yankee Candle and the Movie Tavern, were raffled away in a lottery drawing of those that donated cans to Jenna's Blessing Bags.

One of the most touching moments of the Rock N Cans event followed after the prizes were

raffled off. As members of the MCCC community were showing up at the Mustangs basketball game that was sponsored by the Veterans Club later on that day, many insisted on donating to the cause, knowing there was no prize to be won.

This is an act that exemplified Jenna Burleigh's life. All those who knew her and befriended her knew that this selfless act of helping the homeless was how she lived her life. Montco Radio is grateful to the Burleigh family for allowing Burleigh's memory to be publicly honored by her friends, classmates, fellow alumni and the MCCC community as whole.



A grand total of 500 cans were donated to Jenna's Blessing Bags thanks to the Rock N Cans event held in November.

Photo by Erin Ilisco



Montco Radio Co-Station Managers Donnell Woods (left) and Allanah Richman (right) in studio, holding one of the prizes - a Hohner acoustic guitar - raffled off during the Rock N Cans event.

Photo by Erin Ilisco



*Second Edition*

# Poetic Voices

Hello Montgazette readers and Welcome to the second edition of Poetic Voices, The Montgazette's poetry column featuring poems written by our staff! This issue we are featuring poems by Dave Aston, Justin Patrick Oakes, and Jay Galgon. If you'd like to submit poetry to Poetic Voices, please submit all poems via [montgazette@gmail.com](mailto:montgazette@gmail.com). Also, if you want to submit your poems elsewhere on campus, check out the submission information for the Art and Literature Magazine at the end of this issue!



## Over

by Justin Patrick Oakes

A nation clicks her heels  
Towards the highway.  
Would it matter at all to you  
If I stayed?  
Would your people still rejoice?  
Would they still give you a voice?  
Does it matter to you if I  
Go my way?

A goddess drapes her head  
In a black veil,  
With a letter and a word  
Shouting blackmail.  
Their cries and screams are lost,  
As I drag behind my cross.  
With force, the Romans pound in  
The very last nail.

A lively, shapely tongue caresses  
My front lobe.  
I'll never know again what it was  
I'd once know.  
Inhibition sweeping me,  
My arms clutching my knees.  
With so much hate in the air, where does  
The love go?

Suicide attacks cause terrible  
Night dreams.  
God was once, now, and always  
Very frightening.  
Soldiers at your side.  
We've got no place to hide.  
Bullets crack like thunder, explode  
Like lightening.

Blood spills into the streets:  
My voice is trembling.  
It don't matter how tough we are  
With the others assembling.  
Your sons and daughters died,  
But we all went out with pride.  
Some day we know those pigs will  
Fear their reckoning.

The revolution's gone; the war  
Is over.  
My childish face has aged;  
I'm growing older.  
The maiden buttons her dress.  
Her mind has been suppressed.  
The revolution's gone; the world  
Is over...



# Sunlight

by Jay Galgon

One thing that's constant in humans  
Is growth  
Mental, physical, emotional, intellectual  
We're all constantly growing  
What do plants need to grow?  
Food, water, sunlight  
What do humans need to grow?  
All those things  
And so many more  
But we need sunlight most of all  
If only for the warmth  
Or, perhaps, a reminder  
That no matter how dark your life may be  
How dark the nights are  
The sunlight will be there during the day  
It's constant  
And even those precious hours of light is enough  
To remind yourself  
That it won't always be dark  
So sit outside  
Close your eyes  
And bask in the sunlight

## Only in Dreams

by Dave Aston

Only in dreams your mother is still alive.

Only in dreams you stopped life's nosedive.

Only in dreams your head knows where to turn.

Only in dreams you don't watch yourself burn.

Only in dreams your mind finds peace.

Only in dreams you stay at ease.

Only in dreams your heart and mind are strong.

Only in dreams you live and love very long.

Only in dreams is everything right.

Only in dreams do you have hindsight.

But in life all these things are taken from you.

But in life many times lies are really true.

But in life trust and faith can lift your head.

But in life after life there is no such thing as dead.



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