

The Scholar

March 2010

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Editors:

Paige Mason

Erin Creech

EDITOR'S NOTES

Prospect Weekend this past February was a huge success thanks to Dr. McDonough, Dr. Crews, members of the Honors Council, Erin Coates and Adam Travis. Be sure to congratulate all of our upcoming Freshmen Scholars once they are announced!

The current Freshmen class has been working on everyone's favorite project: World Builders. The other day I witnessed a group of Scholars listening intently to Dr. Thomas Payne as he advised them in economic matters of their world. Being in the presence of the World Builders groups allowed me a time to reminisce about Freshman year, as I am sure all upperclassmen have before.

Speaking of upperclassmen, I have heard of Juniors and Seniors making tremendous progress on their Senior Projects. Alyssa Braxton, Rachel Stevens, Amy Wilson, Adam Travis, and Lindsey Slaughter all came to the Sophomore Scholars' class to give advice about beginning and working on ***The Project***. They were all very helpful, as I am sure the rest of the Sophomore class would agree, and were willing to share both their successes and setbacks. Faculty mentors, both past and present, also spoke on their experiences with Scholar's projects. We would like to thank the Seniors who came to speak as well as extend our gratitude to Dr. Ann Gathers, Dr. Paula Gale, Dr. Lionel Crews, Mrs. Jenna Wright, and Mrs. Anna Clark for sharing their mentoring experiences. The best of luck to all Juniors, Seniors and Mentors as they continue work and finalize their projects.

Midterms are upon us, and the semester has moved quickly. We at *The Scholar* would like to thank those who submitted for this issue. There is quite a bit of variety in both form and subject among the submissions, which truly reflects the diversity of University Scholars. Please enjoy the works featured within this second issue of Spring 2010, and we hope you all have a relaxing Spring Break.

-Paige Mason

Upcoming Scholars Events

Spring Forum — Thursday, March 25 at 6:30 p.m.

Academic Speaker (Julien Clinton Sprott on "Wonders of Physics") — Friday, March 26 at 7:30 p.m.

LAST Academic Speaker (Robert Peoples on "Sustainability and Innovation in the Carpet Industry") — Tuesday, March 30 at 7:30 p.m.

Induction ceremony (officer nominations will open)— Thursday April 8 at 6:30 p.m.

Final deadline for submissions to *The Scholar* for 2009-2010 — Monday, April 12 at midnight

Officer nominations close and candidates announced — Thursday, April 15 after 5:00 p.m.

Elections and Talent/Untalent show — Thursday, April 22 at 6:00 p.m.

JOURNALS DUE LAST WEEK OF CLASSES

Geek

By: Cayce Wood

A new year is like a math problem
Subtracting bad habits, adding resolutions
For all of your problems,
Time to find a new solution

A new year is like a pair of glasses
With the right prescription, the world is clear
But with a tainted lens,
A bleak outlook will appear

A new year is like a science fiction novel
Pages filled with unusual things
Trudging along through awkward dialogue
To see what the ending might bring

A new year is like a Star Wars lunch box
It might seem strange at first glance
But take the chance to look inside
And give its contents a chance

A new year is like a geek
Happy, joyful, and optimistic
But don't be too quick to judge
Or you'll miss life's best gifts

Photo courtesy of Ariella Austin

Apparently

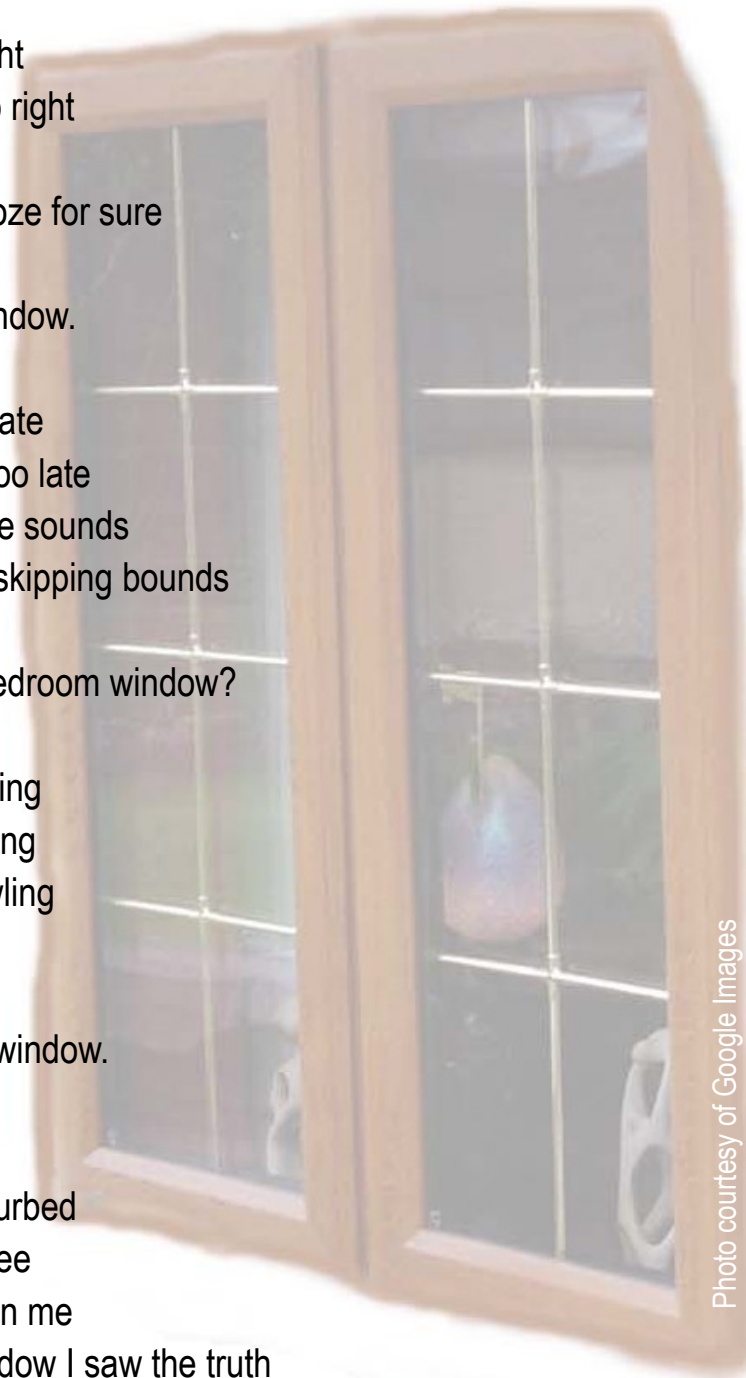
By: Ariella Austin

While up one late Saturday night
Studying for the test had felt so right
I finally had that A in sight
And then I began to doze, to doze for sure
And then, I heard the tapping
The tapping at my bedroom window.

Quickly alert, I began to speculate
It was possible I had been up too late
I told myself I was imagining the sounds
However, my imagination was skipping bounds
I began to wonder,
Just what was tapping at my bedroom window?

I continued what I had been doing
Acing the test was my true calling
If I did not I was sure to be bawling
So I went back to my biology
Not investigating the calling
Of the tapping at my bedroom window.

And then, the tapping returned
Louder, stronger, not to be disturbed
This once I would get up and see
If my ears were playing tricks on me
However, when I got to the window I saw the truth
A lemur sat there, looking at me, and said, "Apparently."



I was truly now questioning my sanity
For surely this was a product of some vanity
For how could a lemur be sitting at my bedroom window?
Sitting at my bedroom window
And answering me with the word
“Apparently”

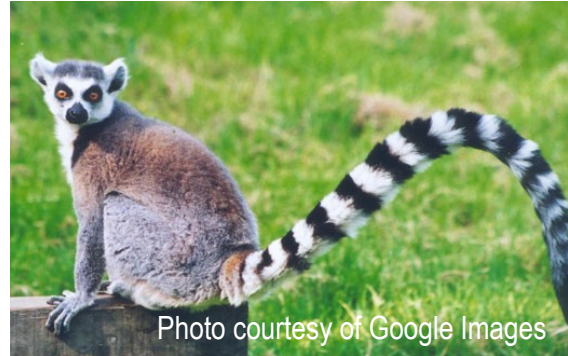
“Apparently what, I ask you now, you marsupial?
Do you mock the fact that I desire a high score
Although biology is sometimes a true bore
This studying makes me a tad sad, but my question to you,
Lemur, is why apparently?”
“Apparently,” stated the animal with a grin.

By now I was becoming infuriated
This mammal would truly break the back of a camel
“Fine.” I stated. “I will leave you to your perch.
And now I will return to studying before church.”
Again the lemur replied, “Apparently.”

While studying neo-Darwinism, evolution, and of course genetics
I began to feel quite hectic
My brain would soon refrain from the entreating
Of knowledge that would soon begin retreating
I began to groan in frustration
And again the lemur said, “Apparently.”

“What is it you want from me, lemur?” I asked
“I can state your family tree back for millions of years
And explain to you how you came to be
But I cannot for the life of me understand
Why you continue to state unto me,
‘Apparently’.”

And again the lemur replied, "Apparently."
At this point I knew the truth:
My biology had driven me to the brink of insanity
Apparently.



Picnic

By: Teresa Fowler

Before you became an old man constantly clearing your throat, or an old lady worrying over every detail, you were a kid yelling and playing. You were a shadow sneaking around trying to get the first bite of pie. You were the tears of a little brother that wasn't done with his toy you took away. You were a dog without a leash. Your mind wandered like it had no place to go.

And when you were the yelling kid, you listened to the wind and followed wherever it told you to go. You were the dog hoping for the scraps. You were the butter slathered on a baked potato. You were the jelly on a piping hot biscuit. You were the plaid tablecloth on a wooden table. You were the tie on the uptight preacher. You were the bug preying on the leftover cornbread salad. You were the spanking the little girl got for wondering off too far. You were the pins holding up your grandmother's hair. You were the sweet tea in the clear cup. You were the barbeque chicken falling off the bone.

And in those few seconds when the world pauses, old ladies stop gossiping, and old men stop clearing their throats, you bow your head and pray.

Spring Cleaning

By: Chad Holmes

I've lived for a good while now
Finally, 21 is my age
If you have trouble believing me
You can check my Facebook page

Facebook is the new way of life
Fraught with photo albums and such
But to be completely honest
I think it has too much

I ask you now to look at my page
It has tons of odds and ends
But you should see in quadrant
three
That I have 1,000+ friends

And therein lies my problem,
I hope you see dear reader,
I just have way too many friends
I need a friend deleter

My stalker feed is over cramped
With beyond useless information
I honestly couldn't care less
About your high school graduation

I just don't care who's "taken" now
Or if "it's complicated"
That's your own fault for not ending it
You never should have dated

I don't want to know
That you now have a cute farm pet
Is that what you do with your life?
Surely it's a regret

I don't mean to be mean
Or make you feel like you are roasted
But do me a favor and just look
At all the junk that you have posted

"Tag yourselves!" you say
Because you're just too idle
I swear if you poke me again
I'll turn suicidal

I guess the point of this piece
Besides me getting to vent
Is to point out why you're not my friend anymore
At last, I am content

Photo courtesy of
Facebook.com

Everything I Needed to Know

By: Amber Watson

“Brush your teeth sonny, I’m teaching you everything you need to know,” my big brother Charlie said to me that hot, sticky, windless day in the dog days of summer. Charlie always called me sonny for some reason, but my name is Cody. I was eleven and he was thirteen and he most certainly could have known everything about the world in my eyes. In any case, you didn’t argue with Charlie, so I got up off of the couch, put my comic book down, and brushed my teeth.

“What you gonna teach me that I don’t already know,” I asked when we got outside. He just looked at me with his crooked grin and said quite simply, “I’m aimed to teach you how to dance.” I tried not to let him see my confusion while I nodded; Charlie of all people did not know how to dance. I watched him grab up two of our old pairs of shoes from outside the house, and I followed him around back towards the shed. He had eight pieces of metal cut into smaller squares and he continued to squat and attach them with electrical tape to the bottoms of his shoes, one at the top and one at the bottom.

“Why ain’t you doing yours? You can’t learn to tap dance without tap shoes,” he said, as if it was the most obvious statement that had ever been said. I was glad that he answered the question in my head of what he was doing. I had been too confused to put the question into words. I grabbed up my shoes and followed suit on making my very own pair of tap shoes. In my head I figured that this must be how the poor folks had fun. We were just getting used to being poor; my dad had just lost his job two years before. I didn’t like to remember our old house on the other side of the tracks. I looked up and Charlie had been staring at me. I must have been in one of my dazes. I did that a lot in those days. Neither one of us said anything as we crept around the house and made our way out to the road. I followed

Charlie, like always, because he always knew where he was going.

We weren't supposed to go anywhere without letting my mother know where we were going, but that never stopped Charlie. His favorite thing to do was to break small rules. Charlie chit-chatted with me on our way to our destination, he told me all about every person in every house that we passed. Charlie was very observant for his age, and he knew which couples were in a fight, which children were grounded, and what fuddy-duddy old ladies had the most cats. I didn't make my way outside very often as I had always preferred sitting on the couch, so Charlie occasionally coaxed me out into the streets for a game of apple-ball or to show me something cool that had died on the side of the road. Something about today was different though, and I paid close attention to every word that Charlie said to me. Charlie knew a great deal about the world for a boy of thirteen, and he explained to me that there was more going on in the world than what went on in our house.

"People everywhere live differently than we live in our little house. There are some people struggling, some people prospering, some people crying and others laughing all the time. There are even people in different countries who are living very differently than we are. They speak languages that you would laugh at and eat things that mother tells you not to eat. We're all just flesh and blood though, and all pink on the inside. Remember that, sonny. There's someone born at the same time that someone dies. There's someone who is on the opposite side of the world as you chasing girls at recess just like you are. And the best thing that you can learn in life is to be kind to everyone because you never know what has happened in their life. There is always someone worse off than you are, no matter how bad you think you have it." Charlie summed up the world in those few simple sentences for me on that hot day. The world seemed both larger and smaller at the same time. I wondered how he got such a way with words while I struggled with a stuttering problem and never said more than a few

sentences at a time. While I was pondering life, we arrived where Charlie wanted to be. I could tell because he just stopped and dropped down and started to put his homemade tap shoes on. We were at the old rail yard. I dropped down and put my tap shoes on as well, although I was more confused than ever about how we were supposed to tap dance at a train yard. Charlie got up and told me that we were getting on top of one of the trains. I looked around and informed him of the sign that said "no climbing." Charlie just kept moving towards the train and said, "Ah, sometimes life's just better if you break some of the rules."

I followed Charlie up on to the top of the train. He immediately began kicking his legs out wildly and moving his arms in circles all around. He was moving from one end of the train to the other and covering every inch of it. I had to hop out of his way to avoid getting hit several times. A few minutes of this passed before he looked at me and asked me why I wasn't dancing. I didn't answer, but began moving my own body in the closest imitation of Charlie that I could manage. We danced until we could hardly breathe, and then we stopped and started again. We danced until the storm clouds moved in and until the sky burst open with thunderous rain. Then we danced some more because the rain felt so good in the hot summer heat. When we finally stopped, I had no worries in the world, and I didn't even miss sitting on the couch with my comic book. We climbed down, put on our regular tennis shoes, and headed home. We were almost home when Charlie spoke to me, "well, now you know how to tap dance."

I thought about this statement for a moment before I replied, "I don't think that what we just did means that I know how to tap dance, Charlie." He didn't look at me, but simply said, "Yes it does, and don't you let anyone tell you any different." I knew we were going to get in trouble for being gone so long and coming in wet, but I didn't care. I knew that I would always remember that long summer day that Charlie taught me nearly everything I needed to know.

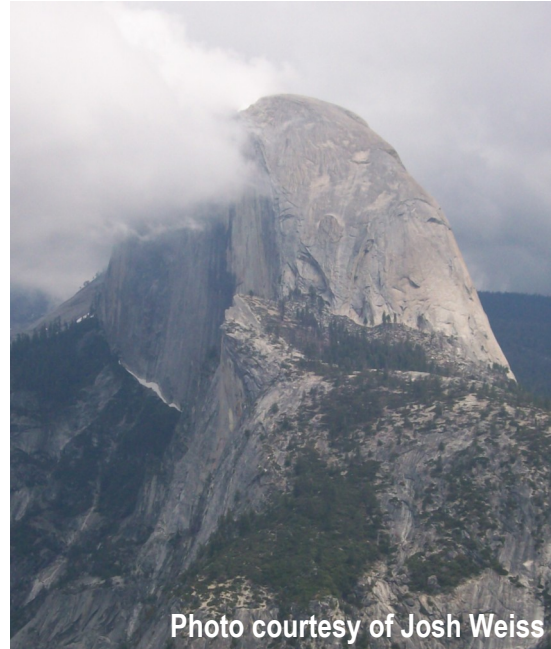
My Dearest Calypso

By: Justin Penrod

My dearest Calypso, how have you been?
Is has been so long since I have seen you.
My darling do you remember the day we first met?
The day was so bright with your shining light,
You illuminated the world, my world.

You were my world, my everything.
I fell asleep in your arms every night,
Holding me tight, keeping me safe and warm.
I was your calm throughout the storm.

My dearest Calypso, I was so sad to let you go.
I will always love you, this I know,
But I will hope to see you again,
And I hope you will still be my friend.



The park was yours, our own private island,
And how I never wanted to leave.
I still remember the heat of your skin, the fire in your eyes.
I can still taste your lips, the brush of your fingertips,
The words you spoke to me was music in my ear.

I just wanted to tell you my dear,
I never meant to break your heart.
I always loved you from the start.
I always wished I could make you mine,
And hold you now until the end of time.

I love you and that will never change.
Please forgive me for all the pain,
And even now I whisper your name
I won't forget you, this is true,
And one day I hope you can say you love me too.

Good Luck and Bad Luck

By: Katelin Turner

For anyone who knows me, it is no secret that I have the most bipolar and extreme luck of anyone I know. But for those of you not familiar, I will clue you in. Something my mother (who somehow passed her outrageous luck down to me) has dubbed "Turner's Law", meaning anything that can happen, will. To back up such a prestigious claim, I'll give you a simple recap of what happened to me this past January.

As a part of my Scholars project, I traveled to Washington, D.C. with Dr. Crews and Rhett Chrysler to present our poster on the UTM Observatory. As luck would have it, upon flying into D.C., a blackout occurred over the entire city, preventing us from departing the aircraft. Joy. I knew the adventure was just beginning, so I warned P.C. of what this could mean. Eventually, we got off the plane, and headed to the metro to find our hotel. As we were en route, the train stopped in the middle of its route and made every passenger exit, as there was terrorist activity at the next stop. Apparently, some guy tried to make a bomb on a train. Fun. At this point, I'm thinking that something good is bound to happen to balance out these ordeals. So we check in. The lady at the counter informs us that our rooms are not ready, and we have to wait two hours until they will be. Exhausted from walking all over the city and the early morning's flight, I started wondering if Lionel would simply send me home on the next flight so that he could try to experience a normal conference. After consuming a delightful meal of fish sticks, (why did I pick the restaurant?) we headed back to the Marriott to try our luck at getting our hotel rooms. Finally, things began to improve. After being upgraded to the \$5,500 per night *Presidential Suite*, I was able to unpack my things amongst beautiful china, 5 ½ bathrooms, and my own personal luxurious robe hanging in my room. Awesome, right? Well, unfortunately this was a little too much good luck, so I had yet another

adventure upon returning home. After trying to have the routine and classic wisdom teeth removal, I developed chemical hepatitis from the anesthesia (so rare, they don't even warn you about it prior to surgery) AND mono. So much fun.

The moral of the story is, be prepared when travelling with me for any length of time. And if you don't believe me, just remember that I attended the infamous Boston Massacre of 2007, and I'm sure anyone on that trip will agree that some things are merely more than a coincidence. And if you still don't believe me, I can promise that I've got stories that will at least be quite entertaining.

Life and All Its Friends

By: Brandon Smith

What brings happiness?

Is it the first kiss?

The breathtaking view of a roaring river?

The joy in seeing a child succeed?

Can we exist without sadness?

Does seeing a tragedy make us stronger?

A smile exist without first having tears?

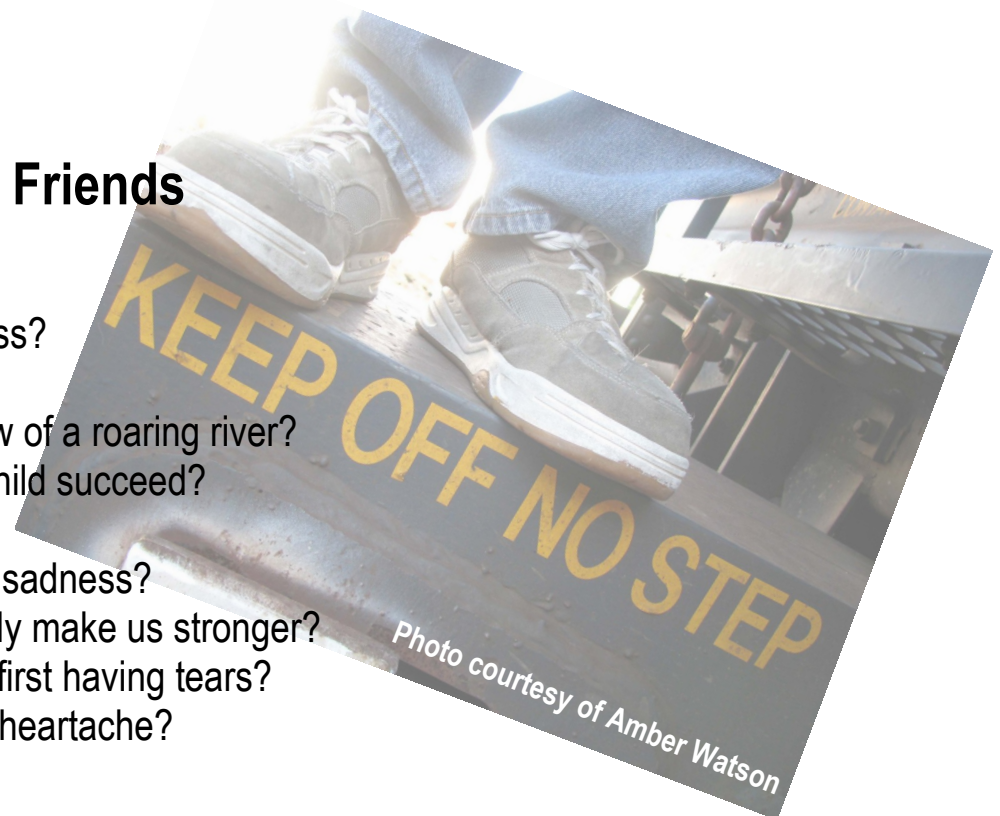
A bond form through heartache?

Is death necessary?

Does it bring us closer together?

Bring joy from the life lived?

Bring life through death?



The Spiritual Symbolism of Parker's Tattoos

By: Sarah Appleton

The title character of "Parker's Back" by Flannery O'Connor is a man who has spent his entire adult life feeling discontented. Parker is a former member of the Navy, but was discharged for being absent without leave. He has since worked at numerous jobs and entered into an unhappy marriage with a pious Christian woman named Sarah Ruth, only because she refused to sleep with him outside of wedlock. He has also gotten enough tattoos to cover almost all of his body, with his back the only place left bare. Although he does not realize it, Parker is spiritually hungry and has put faith in his body image in an attempt to fill a void in his soul.

At the beginning of the story, Parker's religious view could be referred to as apathetic. He rejected his mother's Methodist beliefs and is irritated by his wife's puritanical ways. He appears to care nothing for religion. O'Connor writes that his soul is "a spider web of facts and lies" that is "not all that important to him" (241). Throughout his adult life he has been constantly dissatisfied and restless, never staying long with one job or, until he married Sarah Ruth, one woman. Parker does not understand himself and sometimes even fears he may be going insane.

His obsession with tattoos is due to his spiritual longing. When he was fourteen, he saw a man at a fair tattooed from head to foot in what appeared to be a single arabesque design. This was almost a religious experience for him. O'Connor writes, "Until he saw the man at the fair, it did not enter his head that there was anything out of the ordinary about the fact that he existed. Even then it did not enter his head, but a peculiar unease settled in him. It was as if a blind boy had been turned so gently in a different direction that he did not know his destination had been changed" (223). Parker gets a new tattoo when he feels dissatisfied with his life, and this happens frequently. The tattoos can never satisfy him for long. In fact, even as he gets more tattoos, his dissatisfaction grows worse.

Parker experiences a profound spiritual awakening after he crashes a tractor he is driving into a tree. After being thrown from the tractor, he finds

himself lying on his back watching the tractor burst into flame and the tree burn. Like the burning bush through which God spoke to Moses, the burning tree is a wake-up call for Parker. Although he does not understand what it means, he feels something has changed inside of him.

Immediately, Parker goes into the city to get the religious tattoo he has been considering as a way to please his wife. The picture he chooses, a Byzantine Christ, affects him deeply. Parker feels the eyes of the Christ penetrating him. While it can hardly be claimed that Parker has quite "got religion," as one of the men in the pool hall suggests, he is starting to realize that the man who is now depicted in ink on his back may be more real than he has ever believed.

Finally, Parker realizes that he actually cares for his wife. He has never been able to understand why he has not left her, but after spending a night away he finds himself longing for her. He is eager to show her his tattoo because he believes it will make her happy. O'Connor writes, "It seemed to him that, all along, that was what he wanted, to please her" (241). He finds she has locked him out of the house, and she asks through the door, "Who's there?" Parker hates his full name and never says it aloud, yet, for her, he is willing to announce it instead of growing angry. And when he says the name, Obadiah Elihue, servant of God, he feels "the light pouring through him, turning his spider web soul into a perfect arabesque of colors, a garden of trees and birds and beasts" (O'Conner 243). This is the perfection he has actually been seeking when he thought he only needed more tattoos.

Unfortunately, when Parker shows his tattoo to Sarah Ruth, she is not as pleased as he had hoped she would be. She declares it to be idolatrous and proceeds to hit him with the handle of a broom. And so it is that at the end of the story Parker is beaten and bruised for his tattoo of Christ, just as the Bible says Christ was wounded for the sake of man.

Work Cited

O'Conner, Flannery. "Parker's Back." *Everything That Rises Must Converge*. New York: Noonday Press, 1956. 219-244. Print.