

# English I Pieces

2018-2019

## Crashed

by Tristen Stoll

The old man in the cockpit  
soars through fresh spring air.  
Wisps of wind lift his long wings,  
which scramble for air like fish out of water.  
His engine beats exhaust.  
A smoke trail chases the plane,  
catching him; sputtering to a stop.  
An open field lies beyond tall pines.  
Gliding, gliding gone. . .  
almost past the trees.  
Pulling, pulling, pulling up on the stick,  
trees growing out of the sky.  
He holds on to air for as long as possible.  
One pine reaches out,  
grabs him, sucks him in,  
stopping him in his tracks.  
Suspended in mid-air the man begins to call.  
Distant sirens howl,  
arrive on scene with much dismay.  
Shocked at the sight, a volunteer begins climbing,  
lashing the perched plane in place.  
Holding tight to taught rope, the old man starts to  
descend.  
"Sweet, sweet, ground at last!" the man cries out.

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## Night Terrors

by Sophia Ririe

Paralyzed: muscles frozen, mind numb,  
peering into dark, gaping shadows of an unfamiliar room  
--  
known by day, but not by night.  
Tension settles like smoke, suffocating any  
remaining calm thoughts.  
Terror so strong, no breath  
can escape. Minutes  
tick by slowly. Night patiently  
waits for morning light to stream  
into rooms, drowning  
monsters for another day.

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## Free Solo

by Ella Klasner

Alone, the boy clings to the line in the sky  
with nothing more than fingertips,  
and two thin slips of soles on his feet.  
He inches up with no rope to save him.  
Breeze blowing on cold slick rock --  
the boy continues his ascent.  
Some say it's a risky stupid act of pure adrenaline.  
But the boy knows best. This is simply for himself.  
If ever an adrenaline rush arrives,  
something has gone terribly wrong.  
He is not afraid. Along his ascent,  
up and up he goes  
the boy alone on the line in the sky, until  
he reaches the summit of El Capitan.

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## Blue Wonders

by Sascha Stoll

Blue supergiants appear like ghosts,  
and disappear  
in the blink of an eye.  
Barely seen,  
nothing is known about them.  
Knowledge appears only through  
a gleaming metal tube  
which magnifies.

The sparkle of blue supergiants  
is caused by waves unseen  
by the naked eye.  
The telescope  
exposes unseen, sonic seismic waves.  
Earthquakes, also  
seismic, symbolize  
change.  
Stars now adjust  
their lives; shifting goals.

Astronomers' telescopes reveal large stars with short  
life spans; small ones with long life spans.  
On the brink of death,  
a blue supergiant knows

## The Moment

by Diesel Messenger

Reclined in bed,  
the girl checks Snapchat,  
immersed in the inertness it actualizes. Like all,  
she knows that this is bliss,  
bliss like none other:  
the privilege of surprise,  
the excitement of it all,  
the moment of realization,  
swinging out  
over a ledge.  
Her rope is frayed and tattered  
*(heavy smell of propane);*  
her tether is burning.  
The leak whispers a spiteful prayer  
like a soldier about to march into battle.  
It rears its head and roars,  
while the house,  
built of tissue wrapping paper bricks,  
happily leaves this world.  
The grandfather goes too.  
They are not condemned to suffer.  
Why did the gas spark?  
Was the pipe angry?  
Was it lonely?  
It left the girl  
under burning tragedy:  
hell unleashed in a second,  
a flash flood of fire,  
flesh violated by inferno.  
The flame must have hated her,  
for it left her alive: lain across hot rubble  
as red and blue alarm clocks approach.

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## The Game

by Sascha Stoll

It was a beautiful day in the Angels ballpark, in Los Angeles, California. My dad and I were sitting to the right side of home plate. With a hotdog and soda in hand, I watched happily and intently, as the Oakland Athletics and the Los Angeles Angels played. I was determined not to miss a second.

For a long time, baseball had been my favorite sport to play, and my dad's favorite sport to watch. The batter always steps into a rectangle on a certain side of the plate depending if he is left or right-handed. The pitcher throws

the end draws closer.  
Mirroring Dmitri Mendeleev's table of elements,  
stars create them all.  
Astronomers' eyes open,  
finding frequencies of sound waves in each star.  
From that shimmer comes everything else.  
Quivering blue supergiants  
reveal timeless mysteries.

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## Bittersweet Memories

by Sophia Ririe

Stars shine like fireflies in the dark sky. My mom scrolls through songs on her phone, face relaxed and the hint of a smile on her lips. I had recently turned thirteen. About two years before, my mom became sick; she showed no sign of getting better, so nights like this didn't happen very often anymore. I soak up every second while I still can. Gazing back up into the starry sky, I wonder if I can make a wish, even though there are no shooting stars.

Finally she chooses a song, an old Soviet classic we both love. I stretch out, as the deep voice and sad lyrics echo through the night. Outside, in our backyard, the stream gurgles softly.

"Can you bring me a bowl of raspberries?" my mom asks. Earlier, I had picked nearly a gallon of berries while she sat on the porch watching, joking and making fun of me. I resentfully picked for more than an hour, complaining the whole time about my back. I shrug my shoulders, playfully roll my eyes at her, and trudge into the kitchen. The wood floor feels rough beneath my feet, and it exudes a promising feeling. I recall all the years I've spent growing up in that house with my parents.

As I hand her a metal bowl filled to the rim with fresh, ripe berries, I dance a bit to the music, making her laugh. The edges of her eyes wrinkle as she smiles at me. I hope never to forget this night.

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## Love

by Sascha Stoll

The box was brought in.  
*Thump.*  
*What is it?*  
Flashes of chocolate brown:

the ball to the catcher who is behind the batter and off to the side a little. The batter has to try to hit the ball into fair territory before it reaches the catcher's glove. Though I had been playing since I was four years old, my dad and I did not often go to professional games, making this a special occasion.

*Crack!* Bat and ball meet, propelling the ball to the right foul line. Quickly, the on-deck batter, who is next to hit, sprints out, picks up the ball from the grass, and lightly tosses it to the crowd. This usually only happens in college and professional games. The umpire then hands a new ball to the catcher, who turns and throws it to the pitcher, beginning the start of a new play.

The Oakland A's pitcher checks the runner who is leading off on first, winds up, and throws again. *BAM!* The new batter speeds the ball right to the dugout. As Albert Pujols, the on-deck batter and the Angels' first baseman, jogs out, my dad starts yelling, "HERE, RIGHT HERE!" hoping to have the ball thrown to him. Seeing my dad's Oakland A's hat, he lightly raps his head, as if saying, "*you're rooting for the Athletics, the team we are opposing.*" Seeing this, my dad throws down his hat and starts jumping up and down yelling and pointing at me, "IT'S FOR HIM!" *Whizz*, the ball flies towards my open mitt. The ball thumps against my glove and my dad and I both smile with happiness.

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## The Tidepool

by Diesel Messenger

Eternally frozen in perfection.  
A city of bronze and brick;  
rusting nails among both bloom and decay.  
Twinkly distractions disappear, leaving  
only contemplation and fascinated peace:  
each tide of drifting leaves  
calls me out of myself.

Silent.  
Suspended.  
Just before the wave breaks in a cacophony  
of shattered thoughts, treasured stillness  
lasts an instant longer.  
Fall's gentle tide crescendos into a riptide  
washing away peace and serenity  
with every brass flake.

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*wiggle, wiggle.*

It emerges:  
magenta pink belly,  
cocoa brown fur,  
ivory teeth.

*Thwack*

*thwack, thwack*

slivers of fur swish around;  
full cocoa body squirms like crazy.  
Sounds of baby Bosco.

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## Remembrance

by Tristen Stoll

Sophia Ririe has a special fountain pen. "It makes me remember and appreciate the experience I had when I was living in Germany for a few months," Sophia says. She was about six years old then, so her appreciation for the experience was limited: "At the time," Sophia says, "it did not have as much meaning to me as it does now." When she left Germany and came back to her hometown, she started to grow up. The pen helped her realize what a really unique experience she had had as a child. She reflects, "It reminds me of the fact that I was a little nervous moving to Germany, learning the language, and trying to make some new friends. It makes me proud to look back and say I did that." Recently Sophia flew on a plane back to the place where she lived during her childhood stay in Germany. She has great memories of making friends and learning a new language, all in the short time of about four months. Sophia cherishes the memories her German fountain pen calls to mind, as if she were still there.

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## New Day

by Sophia Ririe

Fresh, soft snow glistens  
in early morning light. Rosy hues  
silhouette gnarled, black trees, illuminating  
all the world with light as soft as feathers,  
melting frost and shadow back  
into night.

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## Wild Imagination

by Ella Klasner

*Wssshhhhh...* ocean waves wash up and down. The ground appears to slip beneath my feet. An albatross swoops down, grabs a clam, and flies back up before the wave washes onto shore again. My board feels bumpy, but smooth at the same time: it's waxed so my feet don't slide off. I swim out over smooth, glassy waves. Every once in a while, a wave crashes over me or kelp brushes under my legs. Got to keep paddling till the wave is big enough to ride back into shore.

Still not very good at standing up, I am very unstable. Yet at the same time I feel part of the wave. *Ooooo* this wave is good. I start to swim out, trying to not let the wave pass me. It's like we are in a race. The wave begins to fold over, and it is no longer smooth like glass. It is white and curly. Kneeling on my board, I jump to my feet. Ahead of me, water flies under my feet. *Crash...* waves slowly collapse. I sit on my board and float back to shore.

The beach house we rent in Ventura, California is just a short walk from the sandy shore. Glass and sand on black pavement feels good on my bare feet. The pavement is warm and comforting. Around the corner is the condo where we have had Thanksgiving dinner in Ventura for two years now. Family and friends all gather from New York, Michigan, and California. Cousins, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and us. It smells like people and turkey; everyone's telling stories and talking.

After dinner, we all walk down to the beach and watch a golden sun set into the great Pacific. The sun reflects onto wet sand. People look like silhouettes against the ocean, (which makes me want to get my surfboard). The next day my board feels the same, except now there's sand in the wax. Today I decide to go over to a new part of the beach. I paddle out. Even though it's a new area, the feeling of excitement is the same. As I swim out, the salty breeze blows in my face: it is redolent of childhood memories. I sit on my board, waiting for a wave big enough to surf. Smooth glassy waves roll under me. Then I feel something brush under my legs. *Kelp? No, it couldn't be: I'm too far out.* A ring of bubbles circles my board. *Could it be a shark?* I swim back fast, breathing hard. Then a big something bumps me, like someone shoving me in a soccer game. I swim harder.

Suddenly a furry whiskered seal pops out right in front of my face. It seems to smile at me with big brown eyes. Relief fills me; thank goodness it wasn't a shark. The seal

## Darkness

by Sascha Stoll

Darkness surrounds Diesel Messenger. Not necessarily darkness of heart, but a different kind, the darkness of night. "It makes me feel calm, and free to do what I want," Diesel says. "The contrast between my and others' rest periods makes me feel creative and awake." His satisfaction does not just reside in the feeling of freedom lying awake gives: "I think about whatever has happened in the day and process it before I fall asleep," Diesel says. For many people, lying in bed is truly a time to relax with nothing else on your mind, a time to let loose all the anxiety of a day and reflect. But staying awake is not just a time for processing reality; it can be a time for fantasy too. Diesel says: "Sometimes if I am lying in bed I will think of a story and put myself in one of the main characters' shoes: a story I have read or watched recently. I think it helps me relate what I have read or watched to real life." For some, fantasizing may be a way to force themselves to sleep, but for others it is just a way to escape. Other times Diesel wants to get up and do things: "Sometimes I feel a little repressed because I don't want to wake people up," he says. Darkness of night helps change Diesel for the better.

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## Gift

by Ella Klasner

Spring brings this meadow  
a promise, a new beginning:  
Ready to start anew,  
marigolds & blue bells flourish,  
bees buzz out of cracks in  
barren wintery rock,  
blue jay's chirp.  
Swaying leaves, gurgling stream;  
fields of emerald  
dance in warm light:  
new fresh spring air  
is full of anticipation.  
Golden rays shoot like arrows,  
spear the stream of glimmering sapphires,  
create each first symphony of sounds.

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and I surf the wave for a bit. Then my playful surfing partner disappears under glassy waves.

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### **Breathing Life**

by Tristen Stoll

Soft afternoon breezes blow from the south  
like the beat of butterfly wings.  
Wet, cold, mud consumes all.  
Blackbirds boast; New life  
starts; joy fills warm, fresh air.  
Bright, crimson, daffodil, and indigo explode  
rapidly. Spring is finally here.

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### **Musical Notes**

by Diesel Messenger

Sascha Stoll is addicted to piano. "It just kinda takes me away from the world and it's peaceful to listen to a song perfected," Sascha says, "I think I also like the feeling you get when you a master a hard song." Whenever he's upset, Sascha loves hearing songs and trying to play them on piano. Sascha says, "My favorite thing about piano is you can play multiple notes or chords and it sounds better than a clarinet or a saxophone that can only play one note at a time." His first piano was a three-foot keyboard, and as he became more enveloped in playing, his band teacher recommended that his parents buy him a full-sized keyboard with weighted keys. It felt so natural and easy that he took it to school:

"I tried to play piano this year for school band but they don't have piano for 6th grade band, so I decided to play clarinet because I had played it before. I take lessons from someone named Treva Han who lives close to me. Before we moved here, I went to a place called New Day Music Studios, taking lessons from Darren."

Sascha has played in many recitals and enjoys jazz, blues, and pop. There is no one favorite memory of playing piano that he has, but he enjoys making up songs and playing by ear. Sascha says, "It's awesome."

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### **Bosco**

by Sophia Ririe

Tristen's family dog is an English chocolate lab named Bosco. One day when Tristen and Sascha came home from school, their dad was home early from work. "There was a box in the middle of the room and there was ruffling," Tristen says. He went over and pulled out a new puppy. Bosco is now a very happy family dog, but he is mostly Tristen's because he taught Bosco most of the tricks he can do, such as sit, lie down, and shake paws. Tristen likes that Bosco is very sweet, super fluffy, and nice to come home to. Tristen says, "Bosco is named by my dad; his name originally meant chocolate syrup, and that's Boscoe's coat color."

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### **White Winter Wolf**

by Tristen Stoll

Winter is  
dead; cold.  
White sheets of snow cover cold, even ground  
like blankets. Alone wolf howls  
alone. He moves on,  
tracking his  
prey,  
footsteps light, soft and swift.  
Sounds are  
few and  
far.  
From the north  
wind blows a particular scent.  
He is far too familiar with this one:  
Man.  
Picking up pace and jumping with purpose,  
each step becomes heavier; less soft.  
The wolf is now the prey.  
Alone,  
as he runs, white sheets of snow cover cold,  
uneven ground like blankets.  
Winter is  
Dead; cold.

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## Self Perception

by Sascha Stoll

Long honey blond hair covers my face.  
"Get out of the way!"  
my hazel eyes scream,  
scanning surroundings for goodies.  
Mmmmmmm. . .  
Chocolate.  
Face beaming with joy,  
smiling and squinting, both at the  
same time. *Where did I just put  
my jacket?* Oh well,  
I want to read.

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## Bosco

by Tristen Stoll

Dogs have accompanied man for centuries. One of those dogs has a special place in my heart. His name is Bosco DeLaRosco Brown. But we call him Bosco. Bosco is a cute purebred English Labrador Retriever. He is also a stumpy, brown, cinder-block-headed dog. Every day when I come home, he is always the first thing I see: sitting waiting for me, lying on the porch, or taking a nap in his chair.

When I hop out of the car, his ears and tail immediately perk up. As he spies me walk toward the porch, like a fish jumping out of the water, he flings himself in the air. Every step I take makes him wriggle higher and higher into the air. Sometimes when I step on the porch he is so excitedly wriggling and hurling himself so high that he flips himself over and lands on his head, back, or butt. When I reach the porch, I drop my school gear and give him a huge squeeze. As I hug him looks at the person closest and makes his sad face look: *help me*. After I put my gear inside I come back to release him from the rope that holds him on the porch.

Bosco then darts away as fast as he can, turns around, and starts running in circles or patterns, longing to be chased. When he runs, the wind blows his stumpy, soft, fluffy, brown ears around like rag dolls. His tail tucks in a perfect curling loop between his legs. His tongue flops around his mouth. He looks as if he is screaming and running around shouting, *"My boy is here! My boy is here!"*

## The Gambler

by Diesel Messenger

I often spent my afternoons here,  
pumping quarters into a machine  
that only spits out  
shattered promises. It's a song  
that I like to sing.  
*Clink, whiiiiiiiiirrrrrrr, click,*  
over and over.  
I enjoy the simple  
madness of the luck  
of the draw; the passing  
of time; the butchery  
of many a night. Another  
free drink. Empty space.  
I lie in wait  
an eternal  
Nanosecond. Only the scroll  
of fate  
can silence  
this insanity.

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## Sloths

by Diesel Messenger

I watch the hummingbirds circle my perch. They buzz around excitedly, extracting sweet nectar from flowers. My algae-covered paws reach out and try and touch them; but I'm always too slow. The birds aren't the most sagacious creatures. They are always worrying about something, but they're lots of fun to watch. Some of them have beaks the length of their bodies, which helps them reach into the deepest flowers while gathering nectar. They're well-fed but ruffled from the lack of an adequate beak to groom themselves.

I don't do much, but then again, I don't need much either. My hobbies include napping, eating, and watching life go by. Frozen in my position, I can view a diverse menagerie of life and death. One of the perks of being very inactive is that an algae the color of the forest grows on my fur, making me almost undetectable. Jaguar would almost have to step on me to find my hiding place.

However, I have one major vulnerability: every week, I must descend to the forest floor to relieve myself. If I had to describe it using only one word, that word would be: **intense**. Every second counts. Heart racing, every muscle in my body straining to move at my top speed (three meters

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## Grievous Destruction

by Diesel Messenger

My brother qualifies as a weapon  
of mass destruction.

*CRASH! Tinkle.*

He's on the rampage

The fighter screams past  
firing every concealed missile  
in random directions.

The blackened heap of rubble  
that used to be my mother's patience  
is all that remains.

*ka-BOOM!*

He streaks through the house like a tornado.

Grenades fall on each unsuspecting organized party.

He rockets to the ground  
creating a massive crater in the earth.

When the dust clears,  
there is only my brother,  
fast asleep in a pile  
of broken plane parts.

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## Typing vs Handwriting

by Sascha Stoll

Typing is easier than handwriting. It is definitely easier to type speedily than it is to write fast. Last year in my school, my grade received Chromebooks to take home for doing our work on them. Handwriting something always takes much more time than it does to type on a computer. When I was learning to write, it took me approximately one-and-a-half years, whereas I learned to type in a few months. This was also true for everyone in my class.

When learning to type, students could see the keys and identify the letters they wanted. While writing by hand, it is necessary to call the letter to your brain then write it down. It is much easier to identify and press, instead of identify, recall, and write. Handwriting makes your hand sore so you can't write well anymore.

Handwriting is also sloppy. Handwritten work is always much harder to read than it would have been if the same document had been typed. Typing also makes it easier to remember indenting paragraphs. I much prefer typing to handwriting, as it feels easier to type fast, easier to learn to type, and easier to type neatly.

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per minute) I strive to reach sweet relief. After doing my business, I make my way back up the tree. Exhaustion then causes me to collapse on a branch and sleep for twenty hours.

I accomplish my business relatively quickly and quietly, while not attracting much attention. However, in my youth, I developed a capriciousness which ultimately led to the loss of my mostly useless, but still existent, tail. *Ahe-hem.* Once upon a midnight bathroom break, I crashed through the canopy to the forest floor. After pooping at the base of a tree, I felt distinctly dehydrated. Normally sloths get all the water they need from fruit and vegetables, but I had only eaten a single dried-out mango. Thirst must be quenched, and conveniently, there was a river very nearby. Being the reckless young sloth that I was, I decided to crawl over land rather than safely climb over to it, hang from a branch, and drink. At the water's edge I decided that I not only wanted a drink, but felt the need for a swim, too. While sloths are very slow creatures, our speed is slightly increased in water; this ability is sometimes necessary to find a mate if one is unavailable on your own side of the river.

Being a young soul, I wasn't a particularly good swimmer. My stroke was accompanied by much unstealthy splashing and flailing about. When it was time to dry off, I made my way to the edge of the river, but before I climbed out, a *hangry* piranha gripped my tail in its jaws. I let loose an exclamatory noise and grabbed onto a bush with my immensely strong claws. I pulled myself free, intact, except for my tail.

I made my way up the tree to lick my wounds and recuperate. A tail is one of the only sources of a sloth's vanity; it's a way to show your grandness and compete. Now all I have is my beautiful, moss-covered coat. The stump on my behind will forever remind me of my foolish audacity.

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**Me**

by:

Diesel Blue Messenger  
stands six foot three.  
Looking through smart,  
turquoise eyes, he  
soars above turmoil,  
a gull over troubled water:  
thirsty for knowledge,  
desiring accomplishment.

## **Mindset**

by Diesel Messenger

Hovering through darkness:  
inspiring tremors of body  
and mind.

Chest clenched.

Terror squeezes the mind  
sets fire to the heart,  
contorts every substance.

Bolting through a hall of mirrors;  
reflecting fear. Fleeing,  
It is already on top of you.

Each demon comes from within:  
mandibles ripping  
from inside out. Struggling  
to be free in the night.  
Darkened objects  
have flexible identities:  
hung clothes become monsters,  
inept for fight or flight.

Defenseless.

Reality is far less paralyzing  
than demons  
within your own mind.

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Never satisfied with unhappiness,  
creative fire fuels  
the fury. Finding  
his place  
among legacies:  
artists, writers, musicians  
of past eras.

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## **Tarantula Catching**

by Diesel Messenger

The desolate horizon spread out in front of me, burning like a molotov cocktail. The slow shallow river wound through scarred land, slicing it in half. Yucca and cactus speckled mangled landscape with patches of pale green. My brother Steel and I sat on a spire of sandstone towering above our camp. We had scaled a flood shoot that bordered the Escalante River and sat there, waiting. After chef Kasey called for dinner, we drifted back to camp. We paused often to throw rocks or inspect the sienna and terra-cotta cliff, noticing amber and titanium bands that cut the red rock.

As we joined the dinner scene, Eric came over to me. "Dude," he said in his "bro-talk" demeanor, "you know how warm it is around the fire right now?"

"Yeah," I said.

"And remember how that one night was not warm?" he asked.

"Dude! That was robust!" This is pretty much my relationship with my dad. About eighteen months ago, he had learned the word "robust". I was never sure where he picked it up or whether his definition was correct, but we always interpreted the word as indicating a potent or (more usually) funky quality. We liked to use it as much as possible. This time, we remembered the night we camped in the high desert on our way to the Grand Staircase. We were dressed for the desert heat and had not prepared for the actual eleven degrees Fahrenheit night. To this day, that was the worst night I have ever spent. None of us ever fully fell asleep; we spent the whole night shivering, trying to keep warm. The experience was definitely "robust".

After dinner, Steel and I took a walk. We didn't have any location or reason in mind; we just started up the flood-zone, and meandered along another side shoot. At the cliff line, we looked out across the plain once again and breathed in the evening air. Small deposits of sand and



pools of water scattered about the chute-bed. We had heard about tarantulas being nocturnal, so naturally we desperately had to find one.

We never did find a tarantula, but we did find happiness. We were there in the present and alone: unsuppressed despite closing darkness. This night was much warmer, although we will never forget the one under the frigid high desert sky.