

Passing a Graveyard North of the City

A poem by Ellie Francis Douglass '12

I wish I could park the car
and plant myself in the rectangular plot
with your name on it.
There is no plot.
I don't want to visit your old house.
You are sealed in the urn
on the table next to the bed
where your wife still sleeps.
The dogs and my sister's baby
are running around
and the cat is meowing for food
and the man in the TV is laughing
and my mother is crying
and your urn sits there —
another object.
In a graveyard
I could let time pass without me
and come back only after
absorbing my share of stillness.



Douglass' poetry has been published in the Sorin Oak Review, the Poetry and Round Top anthology, J Source and The Dirty Napkin. She spent this past summer attending a writing residency in Florida, where she worked with poet Marie Howe.

Letters of Sacrifice

An art exhibit brings the costs of war to life at St. Edward's.

By Shelley Seale MLA '08



Jennifer Hassin '12 knows the panic that can be triggered by the arrival of a uniformed stranger at the doorstep of a service member's house. Hassin served in the Air Force for four years before enrolling at St. Edward's and became well-versed in the risks of her military service.

So when it was time for Hassin to develop her senior art project, she wanted to create something that would honor fallen military personnel and the sacrifices made by their families. She used condolence letters for the sculpture, called "Letters of Sacrifice," and recreated more than 6,000 letters to reflect the sacrifice of military personnel since the start of the Global War on Terror in 2001.

"A condolence letter is that feared letter that so many families have received," says Hassin. "It puts the emphasis on the unfortunate parent, [spouse] or child left behind to read that letter."

To start the project, Hassin contacted her former commander and asked him to write a letter to her parents, as if she had died in service. That letter became her template. "When I read the letter, I cried," she says. "He put everything together about my service, as well as being active with my church and volunteering for deployed family members. I was surprised that he remembered all that about me, and it became obvious to me what kind of impact I had."

Assistant Professor of Art **Hollis Hammonds** says that Hassin has taken an emotional topic and created a work that is hopeful in some ways. "I think it is because so much care has been taken in making the piece, and the community aspect of the work is very strong," Hammonds says. "Jenn is an intelligent and sensitive artist who is conscious of the issues surrounding artwork dealing with social issues and, in this case, the tragedy of our current war."

As Hassin built the sculpture, she intentionally left empty space at the top of the installation. With many men and women still deployed, more condolence letters will be sent — and "Letters of Sacrifice" will grow taller as an ongoing work.

Hassin says that the work would not have been possible without the support she received from the university community. She held events, during which people helped roll the letters. Hammonds says students seemed genuinely thrilled to contribute: "Her peers really appreciated her ability to create a work of art that was so current and relevant to what is going on in the world today," she says.

"Letters of Sacrifice" was exhibited in the Fine Arts Gallery from April 13 to May 12. Afterward, it was installed at the Texas Military Forces Museum at Camp Mabry, where it was exhibited for two months this summer.