Good Man Bad Man
By Carmina Eliason

During the spring semester of 2004 I was in an art class that required students to create a collage based on the theme, “good man, bad man.” The words “bad man” immediately groped at my emotions. Only a month and a half earlier I had ended a long-term, unhealthy relationship with a controlling and aggressive person. In order to complete the assignment I had to reflect on what a “good man” and a “bad man” meant to. I already had an idea of what “bad man” signified to me, but the idea of a “good man” was almost an abstract concept. Because of this relationship I had been left with a lack of experience in healthy relationships with those of the opposite sex. I was frightened by the prospect of interaction, but I didn’t want to be one of those women who came to distrust men completely and to say “all men are bad.” The assignment forced me move beyond my bad experiences, and realize that there are good ones as well.

With this in mind, my piece became a story about the good and bad, as well as a reflection on past and future experiences in relating to men. This water color version of the collage was the final step in completing the assignment for that art class, but it was only the first step for me in a healing and self-learning process, what it means to be in a relationship, and what influences me to see a person as a good or bad man.