

Windows

Fine Arts Magazine

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We are so pleased to present the 34rd issue of *Windows Fine Arts Magazine*. We sincerely hope that these outstanding works of verbal and visual art will challenge your imaginations and expose you to new perspectives from which to view reality. Inspired by The Celebration of the Humanities Arts and Ideas Series created by Dr. Ewa Bacon from the History Department, this year's volume contains works that, each in its own way, contributes to a true understanding of the interdependent nature of the humanities: photographs reveal the inner conflicts and emotions of human psychology, non-fiction essays elucidate the impact of the history of ideas, and poems reveal philosophical truths. These works make it clear that, no matter the discipline, we are all united in a common search for meaning.

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to everyone who provides invaluable support for both the print and online versions of *Windows*, especially Br. James Gaffney, President of Lewis University, as well as Dr. Bonnie Bondavalli, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Their sponsorship enables *Windows* to continue its longstanding and significant tradition.

Special thanks are due to all the administrators and staff credited on the Acknowledgments page. We would especially like to extend our gratitude to Audrey Heiberger, who designed this year's imaginative cover, and to the judges of this contest whose collaboration and sound judgment enables us to showcase the myriad talents of Lewis University students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

It is never easy for the judges of *Windows Fine Arts Magazine* Contest to choose winners when there are so many high quality entries that explore the complexity of the human spirit through images and words. Winners were selected from two groups, students or faculty/staff/alumni, in the genres of visual art: computer design, drawing, photography, sculpture, and writing: essay (fiction and non-fiction), poetry, and research essay. The winning poems, stories, essays, photographs, sculptures, designs, and drawing here represent the rich range of talent of those who belong to the Lewis University community. To ensure a wide range of representation, an individual can win only once within any given category. Prizes are awarded based on the following scale:

First Prize: superior insight, imagination, technique, and knowledge of the genre

Second Prize: outstanding insight, imagination, technique, and knowledge of the genre

Third Prize: high quality insight, imagination, technique, and knowledge of the genre

Honorable Mention: publishable quality insight, imagination, technique, and knowledge of the genre

(If a category skips one of the levels of prizes, this is due to the quality of the submissions received).

We congratulate everyone whose work appears in this volume; your verbal and visual artistry will leave a lasting mark on the Lewis University community.

Sincerely,

Catherine Hancock

Asst. Prof. Dr. Catherine Hancock
Editor of *WFAM*

Therese Jones

Asst. Prof. Therese Jones
Asst. Editor and Coordinator of *WFAM*



STUDENT FICTION

First Place

“Excerpt from the Book of Short Stories *Letters In Time: “In a Time of War”*”

by

Erika Young

Captain James McDonough,

If you're reading this, I'm dead. So you don't have to worry. When you've finished, all I ask is that you consider what I've said.

I was never made for war. Stateside, I did well in school. *I had the makings of a fine English teacher*, people would say. When the draft went out I cried over my letter while my classmates celebrated and kissed their girls. I wasn't made for war. My dad made that very clear. *Too soft*, he'd say. And I knew it was true, I did. My mom believed in me, though. *Fight bravely*, she'd said, *and I'll see you soon*. I remember sticking my head from the window of the train watching them disappear behind me. Mom stood with a raised gloved hand, a tear in her eye and a handkerchief at her nose. Dad stood stoic, but by the perk of his shoulders some part of him, small, deep, yet present, was proud. I blinked their image into safekeeping, a small memory of the little life I was leaving behind.

They say fear is in a man's eyes. This is true, but for me fear was everywhere. It was in my eyes, ears, arms, legs, the dirt beneath my fingernails, the muck beneath my boots. I was constantly being yelled at for not straightening my back or clumsily holding my weapon. As if I wanted to hold it.

Being called to service is supposed to make men from boys. We're supposed to come home stronger, prouder and ready to face any challenge with the valor and grace of storybook heroes. I've seen battles transform people, alright. But there are no fairytales under the layer of death and dirt and guilt and gunpowder and hate and hope and fear and fire and relief and rain and God knows what else. The boys who went to war are no longer themselves, but changed into something entirely different. Those boys lay dead, scattered in the dust of the frontlines. The men, or rather the shadows and shells of men, who return somehow have to take their place.

There's no nobler a cause than for a man to lay down his life for his country, someone said. I don't know if that's true. The longer I'm here the more I realize that there is nothing noble about this place. Or maybe I've been here too long; I just have lost sight of it. Maybe you can tell me where it is. Is it in the eyes of a dying soldier, arms and legs crushed, bleeding like the rushing river? Is it in the rain that washes his blood away, preparing the soil for the next lost soul? Or is it in the screams of a town being burned to the ground? I think it's the idea of war that people love so much, an ancient warped idea that we're all out here to literally lie down on the battlefield and use our final breaths to bless the country we fought for. Idiots, all of them.

Up until my first battle the scariest moment in my life was riding the Ferris wheel when I was thirteen. I only got on to win a bet, but I hate heights. God, I hate heights. The higher I got, the more scared I got. It felt like every part of my body was afraid and reacting independently of each other. But somehow the opposite happened in battle. I only pulled the trigger one time, and it only took one time to take a life. Instead of the fear-filled Ferris wheel spasms, my body worked in concert to freeze itself. Shock. Denial. Empathy. Every emotion sent me to a place where there was no existence besides a ringing in my ears and an utterly silent weeping family in my mind's eye. I could almost hear their cries of mourning when they got the news: his mother falling to her knees shaking with tear-filled prayers, his wife

clutching the small living memories of him that she would have to now raise alone, his eldest son growing up wanting revenge, only to go to war and have his blood fall the same as his father before him. And in my head I was trapped along with it. That silent place I went to... I didn't think I would ever come back from.

Until you sat down beside me.

Just another soldier the captain's talking down from a ledge, I heard a man say.

This is war, you said, it's young men dying and old men talking. Sometimes you have to take a life, to give life. Think of a kid back home. Think how one man dying puts us one step closer to winning this war and puts that kid one step closer to not having to join us out here in this hell hole. War is death, son. You just have to believe in something. Put your faith in something. Fight for something. It doesn't have to be the cause that the "old men" say we're here for; I know mine sure as hell isn't. But if you're not running towards something soldier, you're standing still. And out here standing still gets you killed. They brought you here, now it's your job to get yourself back. You have to work every day to get yourself back. You can get yourself back.

You brought me back to our tortured reality with a new, growing hope that I might be able to survive it, to survive this God-forsaken war. You led me away from the place in my mind where I was suffocating in my own sorrows and fears and gave me a goal. Part of me thinks you said that stuff just to make me better. Part of me doesn't care. I play back what you said word for word in my head every night before I sleep as I wipe away the scum of the day.

When I got the letter that my parents had died you came looking for me. You found me at the river. You placed a hand on my shoulder. *We're moving on soldier, fall back in line,* you said. And for the first time since I had left my home, since waving goodbye to my parents on the train, since being yelled at to stand up straight, since shooting a man in the chest and feeling my own rip apart in repentance, I cried. I cried for the man I'd killed; I cried for my family; I cried for you, for me, for our allies, for our enemies, for our country, for the women and children back home waiting for men that would never come, for that kid who I saved from coming here to die. I cried until my tears filled the river and I felt too weak to stand. And you let me cry. You never let go of my shoulder. It started to rain. Do you remember that? It started to rain and I looked up, letting the rain wash the tears from my face. I couldn't feel anything anymore in that rain: no pain, no anger, just your firm, gentle hand on my shoulder.

The fear doesn't bother me too much anymore. Instead of praying for a swift end, I'm praying to win the next battle. I'm stronger, Captain. I feel like you'll be proud to know that.

We moved on, and the battles were few and far between. I started to hope. Hope for home, though not much of one exists for me anymore. Hope for peace. Hell, I hoped for ice cream.

And then the shots returned once again. One shot, one little insignificant shot, barely heard, hardly noticed, kissed the end of a breeze. I surely should have died on the spot from the immediate crying out of my senses... That was the shot that struck you.

You fell slowly. From the tree line I crawled to your body and placed your head in my hands. The world went silent around us. You cried out, praying for your family, for the pain to go away, for strength to face death as your brothers in arms had before you. You were afraid, an emotion I never believed you, my captain, could ever feel.

You were defenseless, weak, and so very, very beautiful. Soon you weren't even saying words. Your lips just parted

and closed over and over; what sounds escaped were incoherent. I wanted to stop your cries, so I dipped my head and pressed my lips to yours. I kissed your lips to silence your screams and to seal your prayers. I cradled you on that battlefield Captain, consecrated with the blood of fallen soldiers, fallen boys. My tears mixed with your blood and theirs. We're all brothers, all we have. You are all I have. I loved... love you James, you who knew me so well, yet not at all.

Three miles I carried you, through the battle and away to safety. Enemies shot from near all directions, but I shot every one that got close to you without so much as a blink. They came to collect you, and now you're on your way to a hospital, away from all this death and sadness and nobility. I saluted the boat, just as you taught me to, to say goodbye as they sailed you away. They say you'll be fine, that you were lucky, that the bullet struck in a good place. I pray every night that you live on to save more boys; maybe so many won't become casualties of war. They might even go home somewhat the same. Or maybe they'll change, as I have, for the better. I'll do what I can in your stead.

You taught me to keep my letter in my breast pocket in case I die. That's where this letter will remain.

You have my undying loyalty Captain, my everlasting gratitude for giving me peace in this war (if only for a short while), and all the love I have left in the world. I send it to you before this place rips it from me entirely. I'm a man now, Captain. If you get this, a man died on the battlefield, not a boy. You told me to believe, have faith and fight for something. Well, I believe in all of us. I have faith in love. And I'm fighting for you, James.

Thank you, a thousand times thank you. And good luck.

Lieutenant Geoffrey Gaytes

Second Place

"The Mouse Conductor"

by

Erica Swanberg

The statue stood tall next to the building as the snow gently, sweetly fell to the untouched ground. A blanket covered the earth, leaving a white canvas for those who enjoy the outside world. As the statue stood there each snow crystal glued itself to it, never letting go for a second. But there was a silence surrounding the music hall this late at night. Usually there would be melodies glistening out of the building, bouncing off the surrounding trees. Tonight there was none of that, just two little children traveling out of the woods. They both glanced at the statue, the little girl stating she knew exactly what it was while the young boy tried to contradict her.

"It's a rat!" young Taylor yelled as she threw a snowball at her older brother.

"No it's not, it's a snake."

"A snake with arms and legs?" Matthew looked up, dodging the snowballs as Taylor threw them.

"The artist was having a moment of inspiration," she retorted, without missing a beat. He shrugged it off, and the two began bickering about the statue, pretending each was right while the other was wrong. An old man watched the two argue from his window, giving a slight grin. He walked out and startled the two children. His tall, lengthy figure

made him look like an authority figure, while his carved-in wrinkles and frail body made him more sympathetic than intimidating.

“I believe you both are wrong; this statue is far more than a statue. It’s a story . . .” Taylor and Matthew leaned in towards the old man, hoping he would grace them with this story.

“It started long ago . . .”

The concert hall was filled to the brim with beautiful music, each note swaying with the conductor’s baton. Everyone had their place on stage, even the little mouse who had always watched the musicians from his crack in the wall. He watched the conductor glide back and forth in a fluent motion, dancing with his hand and the instruments. Miko smiled; his grin reached from one end of his face to the other. It had always been a dream of his to conduct where the man stood. He spent years perfecting the piece he wrote, and during each practice he tried to work up the courage to confront the conductor. But he was content with watching and waiting until his turn at midnight to conduct the music box while no one was around. He just wished that he could make the crowd swoon over his music. Coming back to reality, Miko saw that the piece had come to a close, and each musician stood up to take a bow before the crowd. And then the last was the conductor, the mastermind behind each of them.

Finally midnight came and the little mouse scurried his way up to the podium. Every time he did this butterflies filled his stomach. Taking the music box in hand he pressed the triangle button, setting off beautiful orchestral pieces. “How wonderful,” Miko thought, as he placed his music out and began to conduct with the other instruments; although they did not match his notes they created a magical rhythm. The brass bounced off the walls as the flutes hid quietly among the clarinets. He tried to envision everyone on stage: the strings in the front row, woodwinds, brass, and then percussion. Oh how he wished he could do this in front of the actual musicians. But he never would, because he was just a mouse. His father would say, better to be hidden than exposed. So instead he just conducted during the late hours. One day, he thought, one day I will be the conductor.

The night quickly grew to day and it was time for the little mouse to leave his dream spot. As Miko started to clean up his music that was sprawled out on the podium, the two big wooden doors leading to the concert hall whisked open. The conductor had returned for the day. Desperate to avoid detection, Miko ran off the podium, leaving his music behind. *Oh no*, the little mouse thought, *I have to get my music*. But by the time he had reached the podium, the conductor and his music were both gone.

Days went by and Miko did not emerge from his crack in the wall to listen to the musicians; he even debated whether to go to the concert that night. As he sat in the crack, the conductor raised his hands to start rehearsal before the curtains lifted. The music started off sweetly and then a rich brass sound emerged. He caught himself tapping his foot to the drum beats. *Wait a second*, he thought, *that’s my piece!* Miko was in shock. He could not believe his music was being played by others. But soon that amazement turned into frustration: the conductor was playing his song, his music that he spent time writing. Unable to control himself Miko ran up to the conductor, climbing up the podium and stared him in the eyes. The conductor just stared back, not moving an inch from the mouse.

“You stole my piece!” Miko was frustrated beyond belief. *How could he do this? How could he use my music?*

“I did not steal it; I put life to it. I have watched you for quite some time now little mouse, and I believe this is your piece.” The curtains rose leaving Miko on the podium by himself. He glanced at the conductor who was off stage. He

motioned to the baton lying next to the little mouse.

“It is your piece: therefore you conduct it.”

The strings began to play a graceful little tune, swaying back and forth to the motions of the little mouse hands. Flutes and clarinets accompanied them playing a background, then out of nowhere the brass section blasted huge chords, leaving the crowd oohing and ahing. Miko smiled and thought, this was really happening. His dream had finally become a reality. The conductor was left at the backstage watching the little mouse conductor, just as he had done every night. He had watched the little mouse conductor grow throughout his life. A smile had spread across his face, thinking back to when he first watched the mouse conduct. Now it was his time to watch the mouse conduct the musicians.

“The end.” Taylor and Matthew jumped for joy at the statue of Miko, the statue that was brought to life by the old man’s story. “Mr. Conductor, did you ever meet Miko?” Little Taylor asked, and with a small grin the conductor responded with a yes. The doors to the concert hall opened once more; this time the mouse was there to greet the children. “Would you like to hear my piece?” The children gleefully ran into the concert hall, leaving the old man behind. He thought how they both had aged so much: neither he nor Miko were the same young men they had once been. The statue stared back at him as the conductor went into the concert hall, enjoying the sweet melodies as the others were. As they danced and listened to the music snow began to cover the earth once more.

A snowflake had flown through the wind, landing on the statue. The hand of the mouse held a sheet of music with notes written all over it. Before the wind could whip any more chilly snow upon the mouse words could be seen. On top of the music that the little mouse conductor held was Miko’s piece he had written for the musicians. Then the wind blew snow, blanketing the sheet, leaving it up to the next person to create their own piece; everything was covered except the title, which read: *Reality Starts With A Dream*.

Third Place

“Words: One Word Can Touch A Million Hearts”

by

Michael Harris

Prologue: Enter Into My Mind

I must warn you first that I am a deep thinker. My words mess me up sometimes and they help me out at others. By the way, my name is Leonardo White. I live and love to write. I come from a decent size family. I have one sister, Alyssa, who is one year younger than me. My mom and dad are still with us. I am a twenty-year-old college student. Let me stop ranting on about my whole life. Well, I will be twenty-one in a few days, but who’s counting? I know I am.

This story is not just a mere story. It is my vivid picture of life with words. My words carry and destroy me. I just hope that these words enter into the love of my life’s ears. But I don’t know who that is quite yet. Summer is ending fast and school is right around the corner. Buckle your seat belts ladies and gentleman and prepare for this

roller coaster ride. See you all on the other side.

Chapter 1: Home

It is always relaxing to sit and reflect at home in a comfy, lazy chair. That's until your mom asks you to go do something. "Leo come clean the kitchen," said my mom. That's the first call and you just try your best to lay low. Fake like you are going to sleep. Then there is a second scarier one. "Leonardo James White get your butt in here now," said my mom angrily. I seriously thought that smoke was coming out of her ears. "Yes, ma'am. Here I come," I said with a huff.

"What was that," said my mom, ready to backhand the hell out of me at will. "Nothing mom, I just said I love you," I replied, trying to win her over even though I lost the battle at the beginning. "You better keep it that way. Don't worry: Alyssa will be up doing something soon," she said as she walked away. Now that she is gone I jam out to my music while cleaning. I was listening to this rapper called Marcus Graham. He is my sister's and my favorite rap artist. His words are about life and there is no pretending in what he is saying.

I was rapping along with one of the songs when my sister Alyssa jumped out at me. I dropped the dish towel and jumped as if I was electrocuted. She was just laughing like a hyena. "You a wimp son; you can't rap," said Alyssa, smirking with her evil face. I was so mad, I pushed her and then we got into a fight. We get into a lot of fistfights. For some reason my sister came out of the womb boxing and she is a good one. It doesn't help me out that we used the same trainer. We were going blow for blow. We agreed when we were younger to never do face shots, just body shots. Luckily for us my mom was outside when the commotion started. "You're getting good sis," I said smiling. "You're not so bad yourself young Ali," said Alyssa in return. In the midst of fighting we stopped and we started laughing and then my mom and dad entered the house. My mom noticed our bloody clothes and said, "You better not have any blood on my dishes or you will have to face a true boxer." We all laughed. Despite everything I really love my family.

"At least you are both bonding," said my dad, smiling, as he walked to his room. Alyssa and I went to the basement to watch some TV. I handed her a towel so she could wipe the blood off her. "I need to get a new T-shirt," said Alyssa. My sister took her shirt off to put a clean one on, but I spotted a deep scar on her back. "Alyssa where did that scar come from?" I asked, curiously. Alyssa tried not to listen to me. "Alyssa," I said sternly and she turned around to glance at me. "Everything is fine Leo," said Alyssa, but I can easily see hurt in her eyes.

"Is it Brett? I'm going over there," I said. I shot up so fast I thought I was going to bust a blood vessel. "Leo, no, he didn't do anything. I just scared myself by falling off my bike," said Alyssa, trying to calm me down. Brett was her boyfriend and I did not like the guy at all. You know those know-it-all type blockheads. Well, that is Brett for you. "I just want to talk to him, to see if he is trying to break your heart or something," I declared. Alyssa smiled and hugged me. "Let's forget about this for now and talk about something else. Like do you have someone who like you yet, lover boy?" joked Alyssa and I playfully pushed her. "Not yet, but do you want to go to the mall?" I asked. Alyssa said yes and we went to tell my parents where we were going.

"Mom and dad can Leo and I go to the mall to hang out?" asked Alyssa, trying to use her puppy dog eyes on them. Although it's cute, Alyssa knows even if they said yes that they won't ever buy into that look since she is not ten years old anymore. "Sure, as long as you guys don't box each other," said dad and we all laughed. As we walked out

of the house I said, "Alyssa, if Brett is there I'm talking to him." Alyssa looked at me and said, "If you mess anything up my fist will be talking to you." We both laughed although I knew if I tarnished Alyssa's name she would try to tap dance my face in.

Chapter 2: Bonding At the Mall

Going places with Alyssa is very fun. We just need to find more time to do some more sibling bonding. "Leonardo, let me help you find a girlfriend," joked Alyssa. I just glanced at her and she laughed. "Naw, sis. I'm alright for right now. Just being laid back waiting for the right one to come and not forcing anything," I said. Alyssa nudged my arm. "If Ashley is at the mall I'm going to try to hook you all up. She is single and is very pretty and smart. It would be a good fit," said Alyssa while typing something into her Cherry five phone.

Ashley Jones is a very beautiful Swedish girl that is my sister's best friend since they were in pre-school. She is Brett's younger sister. Ashley is nineteen years old like Alyssa. My sister just doesn't understand that I don't want to get into a relationship right now. "Alyssa, come on. Don't do that. We're just friends," I said, pleading for Alyssa to abandon her plan but I was too late. "Sorry big bro, I already sent the text," said Alyssa, laughing. If we were at home, I would tackle her to the floor and take her phone, and then we would start boxing. We started talking a little bit about various things before we finally got to the mall.

"Leo, let's go to Clothes For You to get some new clothes," said Alyssa. Therefore, that was going to be our first stop. As we were walking to the store, we saw Ashley and she and Alyssa hugged each other. I knew what was going through Alyssa's mind. I could see the engines working in her brain and the sinister smile on her face. Ashley and Alyssa walked away to talk. They were giggling and glancing over at me while they chatted. I always hated having to read girls' minds. The first time that happened to me was in first grade.

This girl Jillian Bird was at the swings with her friends. My friends told me that if I kissed her on the lips, that she would like me. We were all naïve and I wanted to see if cuddies were real. Therefore, I walked up to the group with my two closest friends, Fred Grayson and Jackie Ramirez. I still crack up remembering this. It felt like a movie. Jillian and her two friends Coco Lee and Mary Fielder walked up to meet us.

The other girls were looking at us from the swings and the other guys from our monkey bar hangout did the same. No teachers were by us. Jackie said to Jillian, "Hey girl, he got something to say." Jackie was so cool and funny; all the girls liked him. I was a little shell-shocked by his statement and a little nervous. The girls were impatient. Jillian put her hands on her hips and said, "What is it boys?" She rolled her eyes and blew a strand of hair off her face. I thought that was very cute. "Go on bro and plant one on her," said Fred, whispering into my ear. So you want to know what I did? That's right: I kissed her and it was so amazing it took my breath away. After I separated from her lips I could see in her eyes that she liked it until her friend Coco made an outburst.

"Cuddies, ugh, he has cuddies! Let's get away from them," said Coco and all the girls screamed. The girls cheered me on and I felt like Rocky that day finding my Adrienne. Her friends messed up everything. I still have the Valentine card that I made for her telling her how much I loved her. I was too scared to tell her and I've regretted it ever since. That's why I wasn't interested in a relationship. I always wonder, will they like me or not? I ended up going to prom with Coco because Jillian went with Victor Quigley. I went out with Coco for some time, but we are still good friends. Don't get me wrong; Coco is nice and super cute. I just want Jillian and no girl ever filled that

void inside of me unless it was her.

Alyssa and Ashley walked back to me. Ashley kissed me on my left cheek then they both laughed. I blushed slightly but I gave her a slight sinister smirk. “Oh come on grumpy cheer up. Now you have my lipstick on your face, but don’t wipe it off babe,” said Ashley and they laughed again. OK, that time I laughed as well and I nudged her slightly. “Leo, really: you need a girlfriend. You are nice and handsome. I’m sure someone’s out there for you,” said Ashley. I thanked her for the confidence. “Thanks but ever since Jillian . . .” I began, and I didn’t need to say anything else. “OK Leo, stop right there; that’s the past and Jillian is probably with someone else now. Go get back with Coco; she goes to our college. I know she still loves you,” said Alyssa harshly, looking deep into my eyes. We remained silent walking to the store after that. I might call Coco tonight to see what’s up with her.

When we got to the store, I spotted a newsstand with flyers for this Spoken Word Competition. “Hey, Alyssa, I should sign up for this. It’s in May. I could win ten thousand dollars and get published for works of literature that I write or a record deal,” I said excitedly. This could be my big break. I just have to tell Fred and Jackie about this. “Yah go for it bro. Just give me some money when you make it,” joked Alyssa, and we all laughed as we walked into the store.

We were in the store for quite some time and my sister and Ashley asked me to tell them if their clothes looked cute. I just hate it when my sister wears short-shorts or yoga pants. I just feel like pounding the jerk’s face in that makes googly-eyes at her as she walks by. I know I look at girls because I am a dude, but I have a duty to protect my little baby sister. When the girls came out of the dressing room they displayed their sundresses to me.

Ashley did a little twirl and curtsy. “Leo, how do I look?” asked Ashley, smiling at me. She looked very beautiful, but I didn’t want to have any feelings for her. She was like a sister to me. “You both look beautiful,” I said and they thanked me, smiled, and gave me a huge hug. “Thanks bro, now we have to put those shorts on Ash,” said my sister and they both went back to change. “Girls, I will just sit this one out,” I said and I walked away to go look at some clothes for myself. I just felt weird seeing Ashley like this, and I didn’t want to experience any feelings that would cause me to love her. While I was waiting I saw a familiar person: Jillian by the gym shoes with some guy. I haven’t seen her since freshman year of high school before her family moved down to Nashville, Tennessee. I feel guilty that I still love her for all these years. I should have said something to her back then. Then I noticed that she had a toddler by her side. Does she have a child? I wonder who is paying child support. I’m not creepy; I just need to make observations of my surroundings. Anyways . . . Wait a second: she sees me! I quickly hid inside a clothes rack—the ones that are in the shape of a circle.

I thought my hiding place was good but it really wasn’t. I had no choice; it was the closest place for me to hide. She got closer, closer, closer, until she found me. I somehow forgot that everybody else was in the store still. They got creeped out by me to say the least. “Do you know this guy?” asked one of the store’s employees. He was frustrated and I perfectly understood that, but can’t a guy get some privacy? “Yes, sorry sir, I know him. He is an old friend of mine. Leo, what are you doing down there?” asked Jillian, giving her cute little investigative look. Since I’m a goofball and class clown, I had to have a smart answer to make someone laugh. “I needed to get some signal to call my mom,” I said without missing a beat. They laughed but the employee was still mad slightly because he chuckled a little bit.

“Just don’t do it again bud. I hope you got your signal,” said the store employee, and we all laughed. By the way, my sister and Ashley were at the incident. I saw his nametag with the name Bob Gergiev. I can see him being an oversize plumber in his future. His butt will be sticking out when he fixes things. That is such a pleasant sight, isn’t it? While you eat, you will think, look at his butt. That is my vote for the plumber model of the year! There will be a special category for every plumber with big butts out there. I just want you to know that I respect your skills and well-being, now please put a belt on son. Now that I prettified all your young minds with this pleasant image, I will resume where I left off.

I got out of the clothes rack. “That’s my wacky big bro,” joked Alyssa to Ashley, and she laughed. Alyssa, Ashley, and Jillian all gave each other big hugs. This situation quickly changed to a day at the spa. They would be like “Girl, what did you put in yo ha (slang for hair)? That dude is so dope. You get some new weave or somethin’?” But this gathering wasn’t that comical. “Hey Jill, I haven’t see you in a while. You look so pretty,” said Alyssa, smiling. Jillian slightly blushed, and I just wanted to hold her face. Wait, forget I said that; don’t be freaked out. Keep reading my book. “No, you girls are beautiful,” said Jillian, brushing her bangs away from her face. Alyssa and Ashley thanked her. Eventually Jillian saw me and remembered that I was in the conversation.

Jillian gave me a huge hug. She had a smell of some type of cherry perfume. Her hair was thick, long, wavy, and dark brown. Her Native American and African American complexion almost made me pass out. And her eyes: oh my, they were a light hazel. “Jillian, I thought you moved out to Nashville,” I ventured. She smiled and said, “My mom got her old newspaper job in town, so we moved back home.” I am so glad to see my friend back living in our town. It would be fun to hang out with her little brother Joseph (we call him Joe) again. “Cool, I’m glad you’re back home,” I said, smiling. My day was good until I found out the guy who was with her wasn’t Joe. He shook my hand and said, “My name is Brad, Jillian’s boyfriend.” I put on a fake, friendly mask but it truly did hurt me. Then he kissed her left cheek and they both smiled.

I just wanted to punch his teeth out to release my emotions for some reason; you can guess why. “Ya we been going out for about a year now,” declared Jillian and I could tell how happy she was with him. Seeing her put her arms around his neck dancing in the store hurt me because that could have been me but instead it was thee. “That’s nice, and I hope the best for you both,” I said and we hugged and said our goodbyes. “Here’s my number Leo. Text me or call me whenever. We’re going to Paradise University in the fall,” she offered. “We go to the same school,” I replied, faking a smile. She gave me another hug and said, “Yes, finally we’re in school again together.” They left but this scene will never leave me.

Alyssa, Ashley, and I bought our stuff and we left the store. I guess I wasn’t listening because Alyssa and Ashley were trying to talk to me. I finally snapped on them, which I didn’t mean or want to do. “Can you guys just leave me the Hell alone right now?” I whispered to them angrily. They were both shell-shocked, and it looked like Alyssa was going to tear up. “I was trying to help, but I will let you be a big jerk if you want to,” said Alyssa angrily. “Come get us when the real Leonardo comes back,” said Ashley in a tense tone and they walked away. Some people were looking at us when the argument started. Then those people walked away to get back to their day. I just needed to get away to let my emotions out. Exhausted from the release of pent-up feelings, I headed to Starbucks to write some poems while listening to music.



FACULTY/STAFF/ALUMNI FICTION

First Place

“Oubliette”

by

Donna A. Lordi

“Why are you fat?”

Two eyes, blue and curious, looked up at her. Waiting. Usually she would provide the canned response: *this is what happens when you don't take care of yourself*. Usually, she would shrug the adult's inquiry off as ignorant cruelty. It was harder when children asked because she could never be angry at innocence—and it was a good question to ask. A very good one, indeed. Children deserved better than that, better than a pat answer, and her mind reached for one.

She remembered being thin and hated it, not because of lost joy, but because her memory was frightening in its ability to recall detail. She remembered what it was like to be free, to be agile, to be human. She remembered climbing a mountain, walking the streets of Toronto, hiking a path in Maui when her car broke down, walking a North Carolina beach, playing softball, playing tennis, fencing, scuba diving, playing volleyball, jogging in Central Park, running across the yard without effort, walking across the yard without effort, attracting men without effort, engaging said men without effort, salsa dancing, ballroom dancing, any dancing, camping in Montana, camping in California, camping in upstate New York—so many lost moments, lost physical joys, that were beyond her grasp right now.

She remembered being thin, and mused that she also could do more than the average ignorant observer wanted to acknowledge. Her mind remained fearless. Her thoughts still raced. She still had the innate deftness of her hands doing minute work. She still had sex just as easily, and in some ways it was better (though even most adults would argue about that one, refusing to believe it). She was still pretty, so she was told, though she didn't believe it. Who she was didn't matter, for she wasn't thin enough for the boy she loved so much it hurt—he was cruel lately, either consciously or not, most of the time, but she knew there were many like him.

She remembered waking up one morning and realizing this—realizing that she was in over her head, that her body was slowly suffocating itself from the inside out. She remembered the pain of looking in the mirror for the first time and seeing herself, distorted beyond what she recalled. She remembered feeling the pain in her joints and bones and hips, feeling the agony of walking twenty feet, the torment of standing more than thirty seconds.

She rolled answers around in her mind, but none were fair enough, true enough, to give a child simply and plainly. None were easy to explain. How do you tell a child that you're morbidly obese because your thyroid died long ago, and losing weight is all but impossible? How do you tell a child that years of mental and physical abuse took their toll, piling weight on at an alarming rate—much faster than it would take to reduce it? How could she explain what it was like, to find yourself here, trapped, in a prison of flesh and bone and sinew? How could she explain that whenever someone asked this question she didn't eat for days then ate too much when her body finally could no longer take deprivation? How could she explain her own self-loathing, her own self-anger, that had gotten her here?

Nothing adequately described her own solitary confinement, made by her hands and mind. She wanted to explain to him that she was in an oubliette—a small tunnel buried beneath the ground. People walked over her all the time, walked over the one small window at the top. People walked over her, hoping not to see the three hundred and fifty pound woman, as if you could miss someone so damn huge. She sat at the bottom of the pit, walls pressed tight against her sides, as her hands always reached towards the light. The work started when she was thin, the bricks shuddering into place with each decision, the mortar smoothed by her own fingertips to seal them off. The darkness in the oubliette stained the heart far too easily—stained it beyond recovery.

How to explain that to a child? Hell, to anyone?

“Hey.” He tugged the collar of her polo shirt. He wanted his answer. She put on her counselor face as best she could, trying her damndest not to cry. Only a few moments had passed but he was impatient, and she wanted to get it over with. In the end, the answer was easy. Effortless. Simpler than she imagined.

“Love,” she replied, surprised at the ease with which it flew out. He looked back up at her, perplexed.

“I don’t love myself enough.” He threw his arms around her unexpectedly, hugging her with only the strength a six-year-old could. She froze as she always did, unsure of how to act.

“That’s okay. I’ll love you enough for the both of us.”

The light so far out of reach seemed to grow closer to her as she smiled through the boy’s blond hair that stuck to the wetness of her face.

Third Place
“The New Road”
by
Dr. George Miller

“Barry is just fascinated by the new road,” my wife laughed to her best friend Molly Macon as they downed Margaritas and quiche during their early Friday evening unwinding time together. Molly wore a push-up bra, which exerted what must have been trash compactor-like pressure on her poor boobs and had my wife, still with glistening long black hair and a form that filled out jeans in the right places, in an envious tizzy.

“It is exciting,” I responded, gently laying out another piece of spinach quiche on Molly Macon’s plate like a corpse on a coroner’s table.

“He goes up there every day and reports back to me the progress,” my wife said, even as I waved her off. “I have to hear about every sewer, every manhole cover, every curb, every tree that’s cut down, and every stone on that new road.”

“At least he’s not cheating on ya,” Molly said, slapping my wife on the knee. “Barry, you’re not meeting up with some skank up ‘ere, are ya?”

“How about another piece of quiche?” I asked Molly.

She pointed to her full plate, but I piled another corpse on top of the first, whether she liked it or not. I could see

her tummy bulging over her way-too-tight belt and hoped it would snap.

“It’s almost like this road is like one of the Seven Wonders of the World to him,” my wife replied. “He’s mesmerized.”

“The Seven Wonders of the World,” Molly repeated abstractedly. “There are only seven wonders in this whole world? That’s it? I can think of seven in our village, including the new mall. Where are the rest of them?”

“It’s not one of the seven wonders,” I said, “but it’s the last road they’re going to build in our village.”

“Who told you that?” my wife asked.

“Mayor Eaton, at the village picnic last week,” I replied.

“Do you think that man has a clue?” my wife yelled, probably because at a town hall meeting the mayor had put the kibosh on her idea of naming the new ten-story supermall the Tower of Babel.

“It was in the newspaper last week, too,” I pronounced.

“George thinks that this road is his Road to Damascus,” my wife grinned to Molly’s blank stare.

“What’s the Road to Damascus?” Molly finally asked, after wracking her brain for a good two minutes.

My wife with the patience of a saint explained it to her: “You know about the Yellow Brick Road, don’t you, Molly?”

“Yeah. Off to see the wizard ...”

“And you’ve heard about the crazy curvy Lombard Street in San Francisco, haven’t you? Everybody has.”

“If everybody has, then so have I because I am everyone,” Molly sighed.

“And you’ve heard the songs about Lake Shore Drive and Ventura Highway, right: ‘Driving south on Lake Shore Drive coming into town.’”

“I’ve heard of all those roads,” Molly said.

“But you’ve never heard of the Road to Damascus?” my wife asked, shaking her head with disbelief. “That’s where Paul was converted.”

“Oh, yes, I’ve heard of that ... I’ve heard of that,” Molly exclaimed ... “I think I heard it on *Jeopardy* last week.”

“That new road is my husband’s Road to Damascus,” my wife asserted.

“It’s not really spiritual to me,” I insisted. “But it’s a connecting of two things that have never been connected before. It’s a new connection.”

That was a lie. It was spiritual to me. Very, very spiritual and I couldn’t tell you why. I had been to different places that were supposed to be spiritual and they frankly did nothing for me except make me hungry for a Grand Slam at Denny’s with so much starch it would have made any dress shirt cringe and run away. I had been to the Grand Canyon before. It did nothing for me, I must confess. I didn’t even gawk. I kept on thinking: “Big hole in the ground, that’s all” and just thought about how many shovelfuls it would take to fill it in. I felt ashamed of my lack of spirituality on many occasions, especially when I attended the baptisms, weddings, and funerals of friends and relatives. Just didn’t feel the connection. Just didn’t. Sorry. I guess I just didn’t get the spirituality gene.

But the new road did something for me. It was just a road that connected two subdivisions in a pedestrian suburb pilloried by urbanites 30 years ago as a bedroom community and today as a nook of narcissistic nobodies more intent on filling their shopping carts with cretin commodities to crowd their garages, attics, and basements than their hearts

with Weltschmerz and their minds with Realpolitik.

After Molly left and my wife had a few more drinks, she put the issue in perspective.

“Your problem is that you’ve never been anywhere. When Marcel and I were together . . . “

And I immediately tuned out. Didn’t want to hear about Marcel, the great Marcel, the wonderful Marcel, and their travels together when they were young. But, unfortunately, I heard snippets.

“If you really want to see a real road, you should see Highway 1 in Los Angeles . . . Or Ruta 40 in Argentina . . . Or San Juan Skyway . . . Great Ocean Road in Australia was magnificent . . . The Touge Roads of Mount Fuji are magnificent . . . And, of course, the Stelvio Pass in Italy, not to be missed . . .”

She rattled off ten more famous roads. I just sat there contemplating the new road. All this talk tonight just made me want to take a walk on the new road. It was summer and it would be light for a while. Before I left my wife came down and hugged me.

“It was wrong of me to bring up Marcel,” she said. “I know that upsets you.”

“No, it’s okay,” I lied.

“You and I have to do some travelling together,” she smiled. “We could do a trip and see all the great roads of the world. Wouldn’t that be fun?”

“That would be great,” I replied, feeling her bony pelvis dig into mine.

But she had done the same trip with Marcel, and that didn’t appeal to me on so many levels.

She said nothing more and went upstairs to take a bath, down a carafe of Chardonnay, and fall into one of her patented fourteen-hour slumbers. There was now plenty of time for me to walk the road.

They were moving slowly finishing the road. If they wanted to, they could have knocked this project off in a couple months, but the work had lingered on for over two years now. The road was only one mile long and would connect two already existing roads. The new road was merely a fill in, that’s all. But when I walked the inchoate road on humid summer evenings in shorts, no shirt, and Nikes without socks it felt I was embarked on something that was new and bold. I felt a little intoxicated about being on this path by myself: dancing on the very edge of my psyche with mosquitoes munching on me and hot air breathing down my neck. My ankles buckled as I made my way down the uneven road, but it wasn’t a buckling that hurt but expanded the elasticity of my feet and legs. The primary scenery consisted of For Sale signs on barren dirt lots that would soon host all the accoutrements of twenty-first century family life.

After that midsummer walk and with the completion date of the road looming, I lost all my interest in the new road. The signs said it would open the day before Thanksgiving, but I no longer desire to drive or walk on it. On the day I saw them laying the asphalt I told myself I would never drive or walk on that road. It would be easier on my ankles and definitely a joy for the old tires on my old car, but its completion just ended the romance.

My wife wanted me to pick up Molly at the mall because Molly’s car for what seemed like the hundred and fiftieth time had transmission problems. My wife always seemed to put us in situations where Molly and I were alone and I felt uncomfortable. Molly sat in the front seat with a sense of entitlement as crass as the boobs that bobbed under chin. Except for hello, we didn’t speak until Molly saw signs that the new road was open.

“Take me on the new road!” she said. “Let’s see where it goes.”

“We know where it goes,” I muttered.

“Let’s go on the new road!” she exclaimed.

“It’s an old road,” I said.

“It’s not old, it’s new! You are so dumb!” Molly blustered. “That’s why Sherry is seeing Marcel again, but she doesn’t want to hurt you and wants me and you to get together.”

I made a sharp turn onto the new road and Molly was scared.

“I shouldn’t have told you,” Molly Macon said. “Now stop driving like a crazy man. Stop it—you can have me if you want.”

“Don’t worry, we’re getting off the road right now.”

I drove the car off the road and over the bumpy lots that would soon have foundations, driveways, grass, and new homes. Each time I hit a bump I wanted to find another bump that was even bumpier. After what seemed like 20 bumps but in retrospect was probably only like 10, I looked over at Molly Macon to see the expression on her face.

Her boobs had popped out. I was no longer interested.

Honorable Mention

“Martin Fillmore Does Not Dance”

by

Lois Mintah

Martin Fillmore stood against the wall, the only male “wallflower” at the junior prom. Suzi Drummond came up to him, hair teased and sprayed about three feet tall; so did Harriet Lynze, wearing a feather boa, with which she tickled his face until he sneezed. Next came Polly Peterson, with enough gum in her mouth to stop up a hole in the Hoosier Dam. They all asked Martin to dance.

To each of the young ladies, Martin said in a monotone: “I don’t dance.”

Polly fixed him with an icy glare, and said, “Like you could do any better!” and sashayed off to find another hapless chap with which to cut a rug.

Martin wiped his brow. This was getting ridiculous. Where was she?

Suddenly, he saw her: Kitty Olsen, with enough curves to make the Autobahn jealous. Kitty Olsen, a teen model for Neiman-Marcus. Kitty’s blond hair was perfectly coiffed, and her sheath dress was modestly cut, yet on Kitty, it looked as titillating as a fifty-cent geisha’s kimono, ready to hit the floor. Kitty arrived fashionably late, without a beau, and scuffles began to break out, about who would dance with her first.

Martin took out his comb and straightened his hair. He adjusted his bow tie and glasses. He marched up to Kitty Olsen, and he marched right past her.

He marched right past Kitty to Tiffany Glass. Tiffany was a Nobody’s Nobody. Her mother was a maid for a lot of the kids’ parents. Her father had run off with his secretary. Kitty made it a point to belittle and bully Tiffany every day. One time, Kitty made Tiffany chew the gum off the bottom of her shoe.

Martin stood in front of Tiffany, whose eyes were lowered. She raised her eyes and saw the form of young Martin, silhouetted against the lights, and did he ever look like a savior, a knight in a bow tie and glasses. He did not say a word: he just held out his hand.

By now everyone had stopped scuffling and watched to see what was going on. Chip Clough took advantage of the distraction to put some spirits in the punch bowl.

Tiffany nodded dumbly, and Martin Fillmore led her out on the floor, as the notes of “Hernando’s Hideaway” began. This was pre-arranged, with a little bribe from Martin. Martin pulled her against his body, in utter disregard of the “arm’s length” rule. Mrs. Grisby, the chaperone and issuer of said rule, opened her mouth wide in shock.

As Martin held his partner close, he could sense her absolute nervousness and fear. He whispered in her ear: “Stay with me. I got you.”

Martin flung his partner out again, only to reel her back in, press her back, dip her, and twirl her with the utmost elegance. He walked around with her leaning back against his elbow. When he lifted Tiffany high in the air, and her legs splayed open and wrapped around his waist, Mrs. Grisby’s dentures fell out.

When the last accordion notes crescendoed and ended the faculty turned the lights on. Applause and whistles broke out. Girls swooned. It was complete pandemonium. Kitty was forgotten and leaned dumbly against a wall.

Martin headed for the door, his mission accomplished. Tiffany’s eyes were shining, and she did not look down at the floor again.

“Martin! Martin Fillmore!” Harriet Lynze chased after him, her feather boa trailing behind her. She caught up to him. “Martin! Why did you tell me you didn’t dance?”

He looked at her and delivered a line that would be repeated in stories told for generations: “I don’t dance. I tango.”

By unanimous decision, the school board ruled that the Tango, and any such “exotic fandango-ing,” would be prohibited at school dances and proms.

That was the first (and last) time Martin Fillmore danced the tango at Buck A. Beauford High School.

STUDENT NONFICTION

First Place “At the Very Least”

by
Mark S. Jacobs

When I grow up, I'd like to put the dishes away. I want to take the trash out. I want the bag to be too heavy, threatening to tear; I want to be intractably determined to take the can with me as I tug at it while the dog looks on, quietly amused, and the cat gets underfoot.

When I grow up, I want to live in an older house, a house that has been lived in for many years before, that is not in perfect shape. I want there to be places where one can tell that something was changed, where the floor has a mysterious bump, or a patch that's not flush in the ceiling ... a house which sometimes makes strange noises, a house with stairs that creak a bit, with a basement that is musty and has one big crack that has been sealed off, with cobwebs in the ceiling, between the floor beams ... a house with a stairwell that is too narrow or too steep, that turns across a lower hallway so that when I walk through it, I have to duck a bit to avoid smashing my head, which I surely will anyway.

When I grow up, I want to have windows with wooden frames, windows where the glass has started to run, so that what lurks beyond is distorted the way it would be if water were running down the panes ... windows that rattle tremendously when it thunders or the movers drop something that should have been set down gently. I want windows which are not floor-to-ceiling or floor-to-anything else, windows which can be opened, so that I can stick my head out and later wonder how bugs got in. There must be lots of windows, and they must have wooden frames.

When I grow up, I want to have carpeting. Thick, not especially attractive carpeting, perhaps in an inadequately subdued shade of yellow or olive green, like refrigerators from the late 1970s. But if there must be hardwood floors, I want the wood to be like that from the decks of ships, worn and beaten, friendly, unpolished. I do not want floors that I fear scratching. I want floors than can take a beating. When I grow up, I intend to beat my floors.

When I grow up, I want a sofa that is not upholstered in leather. I do not want an easy chair. They make me uneasy. I do not want one of those recliners as large as a caboose. I have never seen anyone get into a recliner, recline it fully, and be able to restore it to an upright position without quite a bit of wrangling about, cursing, and occasionally sandwiching the cat beneath the retracting footrest. Rocking chairs are nice; I would like to have a rocking chair and a sofa, and perhaps some other furniture—beds and tables and something purposeless but decorative, in a suitably new-American pretending to be old-European way.

When I grow up, I want a sink with one faucet, two knobs, no gadgetry. I do not want there to be a man-eating device crammed down one of the drains. I intend to be married to one of those, and one will be more than enough. And, I do not want a garbage can that opens itself. I will be the judge of when the garbage can should be opened, and I will open it manually, being as I am a man. Also, I want a toilet with sufficient conviction for the task of flushing that it does not clog every time it is tasked with its users' posterior obligations

or the occasional goldfish exequy.

When I grow up, I want to annoy people confidently, knowing I am free to be who I am and do as I please and if they don't like it, then they can get into a bus and drive it into the sea. I want to be a good neighbor whose only yearly rowdy get-together is accepted as part of life, not an atrocity against the freedoms and entitlements of mankind of which, rather, it is an expression. If my grass is too tall, I want the first word I get of the problem to be from a friendly neighbor who asks if everything is alright, who says yes when I ask if I can borrow his mower—not from someone representing people who have paid to live in a place the collective mindset of which is manifest in bylaws defining the height of my hedgerow. As for the lawn, if the mood strikes, I shall take out all the grass and plant in the midst of the bare soil one particularly large, cocky sunflower which will loll lazily and leer at my highfalutin neighbors when they come home. If they irk me further, I will ask that they not stop and gawk, as it makes my sunflower self-conscious. If this is not sufficient, I will install a goat, and it will bleat discordantly. And eat the sunflower, no doubt.

I want to have cloth curtains, the kind which fray at the bottoms and catch fire when something isn't plugged in properly, the kind which get in the way when trying to clean the windows ... the kind which billow slowly in and sigh gently out when there is even the slightest of breezes—the sort of breezes so slight you wouldn't notice them were it not for the flowing of the curtains.

When I grow up, I want lights that are affixed to the ceiling, that can be turned on, and that can be turned off. I do not want lights that fade or are motion-activated or do anything besides light up. I do not want ceiling fans with lights at their centers, because no one in history has ever been able to recall for more than a day or two which of the equally long pull-chains controls the light and which the fan, or which setting the fan is on, or how many tugs it takes to turn it off, or whether there is a light switch on a wall somewhere which controls this thing that has its own controls on it, because I have had one too many encounters of entering a room and flipping on the light switch only to fumble forward in the unexpectedly lingering darkness as the fan innocently spools up because some thoughtless oaf (myself, usually) earlier that day turned the wall switch on but the pull-chain off. Also, no one likes dusting ceiling fans, which is regrettable since they seem to accrue dust at a greater rate than cities in the shadow of Icelandic volcanoes. And, I do not want remote controls for my lights—or ceiling fans. I do not want to spend hours in the dark looking for the thing that turns the light on, which, had the light been on, I could have seen plain as day. An ordinary, protruding, unimaginative, old-fashioned light switch will work quite well, preferably with up corresponding to on.

When I grow up, I want to have one television, and only one, and one no larger than my arm span. I want it to be the case that it is rarely on when the sun is up. I do not want to have more television channels than I have friends, and I do not want a remote control with more buttons than the command center of a submarine. I want it to be something I use from time to time, such as when cuddling up with my man-eating machine after a hard day tangling with recliners, irritating the neighbors, colliding with low-hanging stairwells, dusting ceiling fans, and extinguishing the curtains.

When I grow up, I want a dog. Either a very big one, or a dachshund, but under no other circumstances something I might accidentally step on while on a midnight run to the restroom. And perhaps a couple of

abnormally large fish. Large fish are especially amusing because they appear to be permanently mesmerized by the realization that when they cross their eyes, they are, in fact, looking straight ahead. The dog I would name Hagar, and the fish I would not name for the same reason one does not name trees: calling them does not elicit a response. Of course, by that logic, one's children shouldn't have names, either...

When I grow up, I want automation to be kept in check. A thermostat will do, but only that. I want a vacuum cleaner with handles and hoses. I do not want to come home, forearms full of grocery bags, ducking out of the rain, only to trip over an automaton of a sweeper which has taken it upon itself to roam the floors, bumping into the floorboards and agitating Hagar, who will have chosen to snooze in the entryway so that I can trip over him instead.

When I grow up, I want to be busy enough keeping my castle that I do not spend all day staring at a computer screen. I want a roof to patch, a lawn to mow, gutters to clean, weeds to eradicate, leaky faucets to fix, a woman to satisfy, a driveway to seal, dishes to put away.

When I grow up, I want a few friends. Four, perhaps. Maybe five. Small-town friends--the kind you can go to when you need to borrow a pickup truck next Saturday, or who will hang on to your kid until you get home if it has wandered off and was found climbing the water tower.

When I grow up, I want an upright piano. I do not intend to have a big enough house for a grand piano. Grand pianos belong in concert halls and chancels, anyway—and I do not intend to live in a concert hall or chancel.

I want a stove which will work even when the power goes out, which produces heat through a chemically complex energy process known as "fire." I do not want people to come over and look at my stove and say, "Is that a stove?" Also, I do not want a microwave too small to fit a full-size baking pan. I intend to make casseroles from time to time, and I intend to reheat them. I want a microwave which can be of assistance in this capacity. And I do not want a refrigerator larger than a walk-in closet. I do not intend to walk in to my refrigerator.

When I grow up, I do not want a security system. I do not want to live in a place that thugs would think of breaking in to. I do not want to come home and have to dial a code into a plastic box on a wall lest I be beeped at. I do not want to have the fire department automatically deployed and knocking down my door desperate to save my life because cobbler filling happens to have spilled onto the bottom of my oven and produced some trace wisp of smoke. Instead, I will have a gun. If someone breaks in while I am home, I will use the gun. If someone breaks in while I am away, I will ask my neighbors who it was, go to that person, and ask for my gun back.

When I grow up, what I really want—and that for which I'd be willing to compromise on almost all the rest—is love . . . To find my own man-eating machine, who can meet me at ground level, devoid of assumptions and hard to surprise, quick to laugh but slow to mock, hesitant to judge but opinionated, vocal but humble, strong but perfectly willing to ask for help, who is independent but who understands independence not as insisting that we're not lost, but, rather, as being more than happy to holler at a nonplussed stranger and demand directions . . . someone who enjoys a quixotic sense of humor, who is brutally honest but sensibly sensitive, who isn't offended by socially questionable forwardness and etiquette-violating frankness, who enjoys furry things, going places, eating really good food, and having conversations that matter, who delights in being a woman,

who communicates utterly, even when it hurts or is hurtful, who knows her worth, and who knows how to cook, clean, and copulate, so that she and I will have that much, at the very least, in common. Princesses need not apply.

And I want to host Sunday dinners, which will begin just after lunch. I want family to be there, and some friends—a dozen persons or more, old, young, in-laws, children, and all, sitting around two tables which aren't quite level, eating homemade food and talking loudly about the strangest of things, arguing with intellectual fervor, and laughing uproariously for a long, long, time, until late in the night, until the leftovers still sitting out have grown cold and the children impatient and the infants sleepy and the neighborhood quiet. And when some have gone, little conversations will linger, those which broke from the sweeping, galactic discourse earlier, before sunset, which go on in the form of overextended goodbyes as we wander from the living room which has been used as a dining room because the dining room was not big enough to hold all the guests, where the last few of us will lean on counters and continue to laugh about things and once in a great while break the fourth wall of sincerity and ask if someone is okay, and finally say our real farewells, and wave and watch as cars drive off, and look at the terrific mess they've left behind, and feel good to be alive.

Or, failing all that, I'd like to put the dishes away.

Second Place

“Making Connections: A Literacy Narrative”

by

Tony Kortas

The theatre was dark, save for the small pool of light on the stage where a beautiful, heart rending scene was occurring between a couple that had just had a baby. Of course they weren't really a couple. I'm not sure if Lori and Dave even liked each other. On stage though, their connection was undeniable; their chemistry made the scene all the more touching. I was watching this rehearsal because I was the understudy. If someone got sick, I would have to go on in their place. I should have been paying attention to Dave's movements, gestures and other actions so that if the need arose I could move seamlessly into the role. Instead, I was really drawn into the scene, the moment. The dark but not pitch black theatre made it seem as if I was outside on a clear, moonlit summer night, peering in at the window of the small cottage on the prairie. I had been transported to just outside that tiny room where a young woman had just brought a new life into the world. Though the theatre's air conditioning was on, I could feel the heat of the warm summer evening. The moment was almost uncomfortably intimate and private; it was so real that I became totally immersed in the experience.

He may have been sitting next to me for a couple of minutes. He may have just sat down. I'm not sure which. But suddenly there was a voice, speaking gently in my ear, “Powerful shit, huh?” John Marquette, my high school drama teacher, then got up and moved to another part of the theatre to watch the scene from a different angle.

The 65,000 people in the open air stadium that night were all screaming his name. They listened, rapped, and sang along with him. I did not. I didn't know all the words; I would learn them later through repeated listening. It was a warm August night, but the fans didn't care about the heat. They stood there, communing with each other. Dancing, hugging, and connecting with each other, and the singer, and his band. I went into the concert, my first concert ever, as something of a fan but not to the extent of many of the disciples that surrounded me. By the end of the nearly four hour show, I was one of them. The power of the singer's voice—sometimes a growl, at other points a whisper—and the lyrics that he sang connected me to him. He told stories too: stories about family, stories about longing. But mostly, he sang. He sang songs about people trying to find their way in the world—trying to fit in. I felt the various characters' isolation; their desire to run away was palpable. Well, *I* never felt the urge to run away. But I certainly felt a restlessness within that I found in those songs as well. I connected to the stories he told, both through the spoken word and in his music. I connected to the poetry that was in the lyrics of those songs. I connected to the larger-than-life energy that he brought to his performance. I connected to the intimacy that he still managed to bring to the show though the crowd was enormous and packed in close. I connected to Bruce Springsteen that evening—he talked to me along with everyone else in Soldier Field that night. I joined the chorus that shouted in unison: “Bruuuuce!”

I'm on stage, playing the role of a man who will change the future, though he is not yet aware of that fact. He's talented and he knows it. His arrogance is warranted though. He's damn good. His style changes art in the 20th Century and brings about scores of emulators. At this point in his career, he is restless and feels that he is on the verge of breaking through. I am sitting in the bar—well, the set of the bar where the play takes place—and I'm really feeling a connection. I'm feeling connected to the other characters who are in the bar that evening, one of them also on the verge—of becoming a world renowned physicist. I am also feeling a connection to the audience. They are all laughing in the right places and are experiencing everything as if they are in that little dive bar in Paris right along with us, that little tavern where greatness is seated—or soon-to-be greatness anyway. Discussions are being held, deep discussions about the nature of science and art and where the two converge. The audience comprehends the momentous arguments being made in that humble bar. At this moment, the stranger, a messenger from the future, bursts upon the scene. He glitters, or his jacket does, and he combines a small town, “aw, shucks” attitude with incredible charisma. The women swoon. The men pay attention. He reveals something to me—to my character rather—a work of art that I, my character, will paint a few years from the time of this story. It's a work of art that perfectly represents this artist. Though I, I mean the artist, has never seen it before, he knows immediately that he will paint this. The connection is so there that I begin to weep over the beauty of the painting that Pablo Picasso will soon create, aching over the fact that he will have to wait several years to do it, feeling the desire to pick up a brush and communicate my emotions in that manner though I do not have the skill. I know that the audience was right there with me.

The previous stories all illustrate what literacy is to me: Using different manners of communication to convey meaning and using that meaning to make connections with the world around us. All of these examples have a

performance element to them, because I have had a passion for theatre since at least 4th grade, when I went on a field trip to the Mill Run Playhouse—an in-the-round theatre that was at Golf Mill Shopping Center at the time—to see a production of *Tom Sawyer*. I had been in school plays and had enjoyed doing them, but this was the first “real” play that I had seen. It was magic. It was the first time that I felt something like that connection that I felt in high school. I knew that I wanted that to be a part of my life. In addition to the performance element, you can see that these stories have other foundations of literacy at play as well, if you look closer. All of them have a written word component to them. Bruce Springsteen agonizes over lyrics and has been known to take months in the studio, working at getting his songs just right. The two playwrights (George Herman, who wrote *A Company of Wayward Saints*—the play that I watched in that high school theatre long, long ago—and Steve Martin—yes, that Steve Martin—who wrote *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*) spent long hours researching commedia dell’arte and the works of Picasso, Albert Einstein (the physicist), and Elvis Presley (the stranger), respectively. They worked hard to craft those scripts so that they would make people laugh, cry, and, most importantly, think.

All of these events energized my mind and my creative side. I occasionally doodled, but before playing Picasso, a trip to a craft store with my wife never had me lingering in the art section, wondering if I should buy drawing pencils, or if watercolors, acrylics or oil paint would be the best way to exercise the artist within. I love to write poetry, but before seeing Springsteen on stage, I don’t think that I did so with any regularity—except for a high school creative writing class where it was required.

As for that long ago high school moment? I think that it was the most important moment for a few reasons. First, the play had, at its heart, a deep conversation about the nature of God, salvation and/or finding your true self and place in the world. It’s a conversation that I still have with myself to this day. More important than the play’s theme though was the private moment that I had with Mr. Marquette. It was the moment that I knew that I would become a teacher. He saw that I was moved by the scene unfolding before me, validated my feelings, and made a connection with me. From then on, Mr. Marquette could do no wrong in my book. He inspired me to be a better actor. He inspired me to be a better student. Though I often still struggled, I cared more about my future because John Marquette took a moment in the middle of a rehearsal to make a connection with a student, to make a connection with me. I knew that I wanted to do that. I wanted to show that caring, to have that kind of influence. I doubt that he remembers the moment, though I had numerous opportunities to ask him when we performed together many years later in *Inherit the Wind*, another play that asks people to think. I doubt that he remembers this because I imagine that he did things like that all of the time. His caring for his students, his treating us like adults (he could have said “stuff” instead of “shit”) which I saw time and time again while in school, are things that really stuck with me over the years. If not for that moment, my passion for the arts may not have stayed fueled; I may not have been ready to receive those other moments, to make those connections to the Boss, and Les Demoiselles d’Avignon (the Picasso painting), many years later. I am sure that countless students have had similar experiences, whether with Mr. Marquette or with another favorite teacher. I hope that I can have a similar impact by emulating his excellent example.

VISUAL ART CATEGORY

VISUAL ART CATEGORY



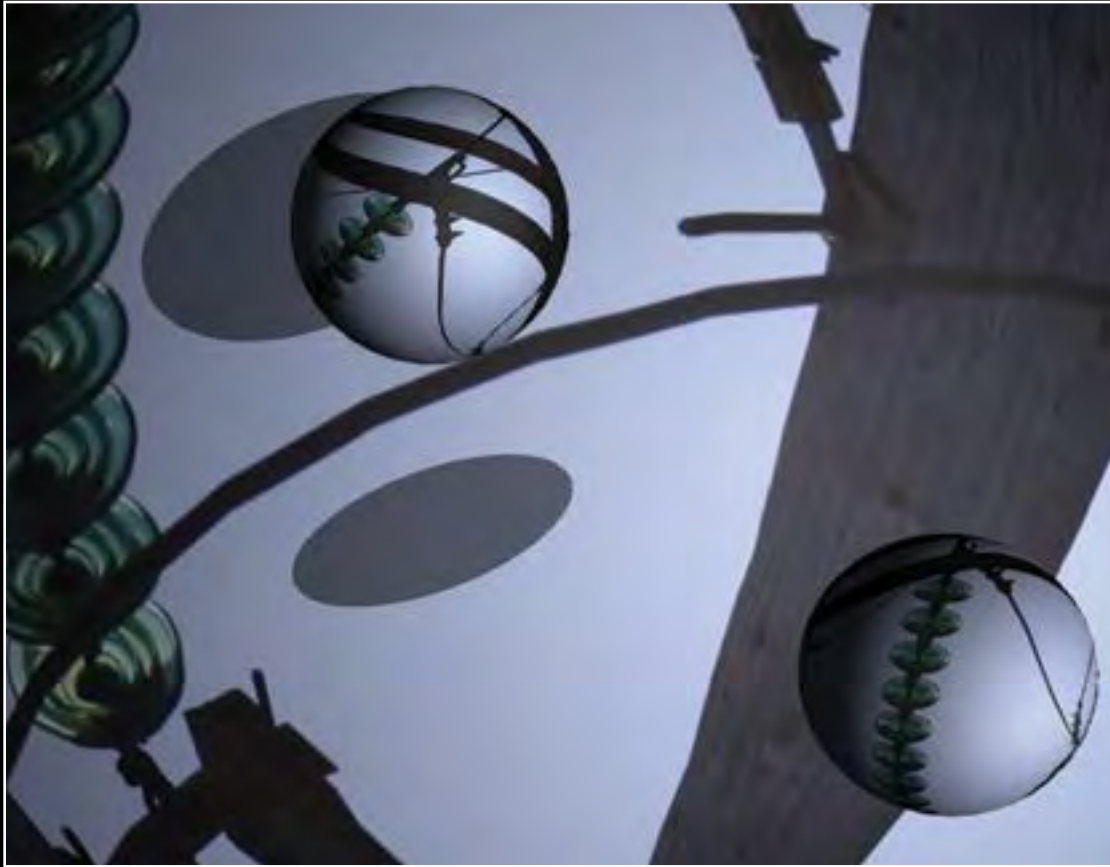
First Place Student Drawing:
"Self Portrait"
by Monika Mlynarczyk.



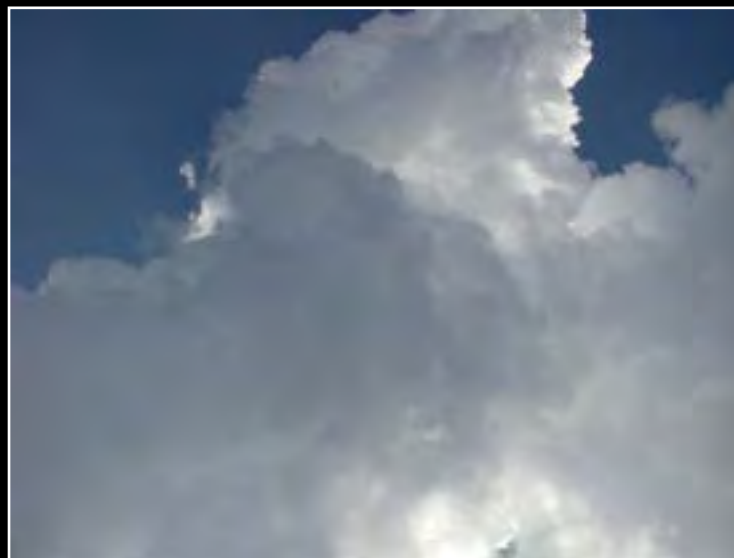
First Place Student Sculpture:
"Descent to the Forest Waves"
by Sean Lillis.



First Place Student Photography:
"All Clear"
by Connor Marchetti.



First Place Faculty/Staff/Alumni Photography:
“Electric Pole Fragmented”
by Michael Progress.



Honorable Mention Faculty/Staff/Alumni Photography:
“Madrid”
by Dr. Clare Lawlor.



Second Place Student Photography:
“Road to Joy”
by Kate Stevens.



Honorable Mention Student Photography:
"Untitled"
by Cason Kirkpatrick.



Honorable Mention Student Photography:
"London Bridge is Not Falling Down"
by Maureen Reilly McCormick.



Honorable Mention Student Photography:
"Reach"
by Sandra Zuchara.



Honorable Mention Student Photography:
"Contrast"
by Lauren Trzeciak.

VISUAL ART CATEGORY

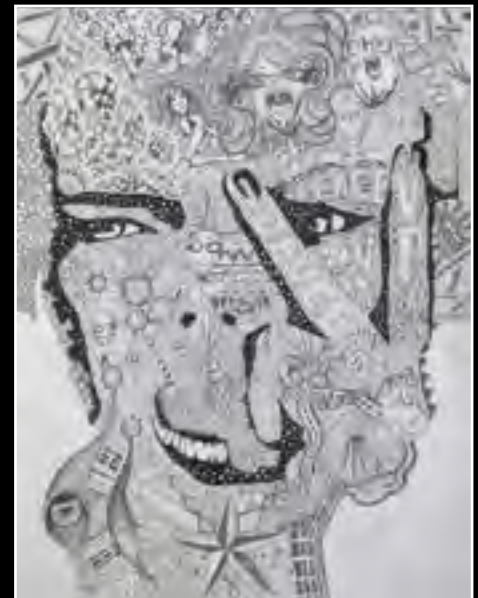
VISUAL ART CATEGORY



First Place Faculty/Staff/Alumni Computer Graphics:
“The Origin of Species Endangered”
by Shaun Reynolds.



Honorable Mention Faculty/Staff/Alumni Photography:
“Her Fourth Year”
by Allison Rios.



Honorable Mention Student Drawing:
“Deuces Up”
by Nicole Nellen.

Third Place
“Twelve is the New Eighteen”

by
Yesenia Vieyra

Smart phones, laptops, tablets, skyping: technology has come a long way over the past few years, but this increase has taken an unexpected toll on today's generation. Although many Americans and parents refuse to acknowledge it, the use of technology by young adults is causing great damage, and we need to acknowledge the problem and put a stop to it before the future of our society is completely ruined. This new generation, Generation Z, is beginning to hit their teens and as they mature, we begin to see their main characteristics. Some of these traits include poor eating habits, the inability to communicate, and the lack of interest in the world around them. This generation is one coming of age post 9/11, in a world where advanced technology only increases day by day, and where one can access the internet 24/7. This availability is damaging the new generation not only physically but mentally.

While those from my generation, the Millennials, were gradually introduced to the internet, and only started using cell phones/smart phones in our early teenage years, the new generation uses this technology within their first few years of life. The Millennials were raised in an era where technology was in its inception, and therefore our childhood consisted of playing all day outside, riding bikes, seeking adventures, going to the park, and meeting up with all of the neighborhood kids. The only time we watched TV such as the Disney Channel or the Cartoon Network was during the early morning before school and late at night. The highlight of elementary school became recess where we could run around like chickens with their heads cut off. It was not until middle school that we became interested in dating and the only communication couples could have was through handwritten notes and the “house phone.” The first major social network, Myspace, was also being introduced. It was not until almost high school that cell phones became more widely available, as well as increased internet/computer access. Girls were beginning to use make-up, although to us, this meant simply eyeliner or mascara at most. The current lifestyle that Generation Z was born into did not come about until high school or early college for most of the Millennials. The values of Generation Z have completely changed from those of previous generations. This generation is now interested in having the latest phones and tablets. They feel a necessity to wear expensive brands of clothing, the latest shoes, and cannot leave the house without make-up and a cell phone. Reading books for fun has now been largely exchanged for social networks. Playing tag and riding bikes has been replaced by video games and laptops. Ideas and feelings that were once expressed in depth through written notes and diaries are now communicated through a series of brief text messages. Young adults buy iPods and subscribe to internet radio instead of buying CDs. The curfew to “be home when the street light came on,” is now “be home before midnight.” Previous values, morals, and opinions have eroded.

The differences between those from previous generations and the members of Generation Z are clear. Although the drastic changes are no surprise, few stop to think about the consequences of these changes. It is clear that the biggest transformation of all has been the advance of all types of technology, from laptops to tablets to smart phones. The change in technology has altered the values, morals, thoughts, and lifestyles that members of this new

society hold. Not only has this technology transformed morals and values, but in a sense, it has drastically reduced their presence in today's generation. Even though technology has influenced these changes, it is not the availability of it that is the central problem. The fault and consequences come from what it is offering and teaching the new generation. Technology too often facilitates their lives.

One consequence has been the change in lifestyle and health of the children and early teens of Generation Z. Obesity is increasing year after year and to no surprise, since children and teens who once loved being outdoors are now spending their playtime in a cave full of video games, TV's, laptops, tablets, cell phones, and countless other goodies. Virginia Mathews asserts that "These Generation Z employees will probably be the least physically active generation of children yet." She is 100% correct. The new generation would rather go on social media and text their friends instead of taking a run. Obesity in America is already at an all-time high due to the lack of exercise in Generation Z. With obesity also come diseases such as diabetes. Not only are kids exercising far less but they are also becoming extremely lazy and in the long run, damaging only themselves. Instead of getting up and walking to the kitchen, this new generation texts a person in the same house instead of getting up and walking a couple feet to find an answer. This is laziness at its most extreme.

With internet access available anywhere and to anyone, these children are now being exposed to adult content that previous generations did not encounter until their late teens. Sex-based media is all over the web and children as young as five years old are viewing sexual ads on the internet. A sexualized media is using celebrities to promote all types of products. The use of celebrities may seem unlikely to cause any damage, but it can have a harmful effect. Marketers are using celebrities and models that are extremely thin, influencing these children and unconsciously teaching them how they should look, dress, act, and feel. Because of this, Generation Z believes that weighing 90 pounds is pretty: the more bone you can see, the better. Many are now obsessed with being skinny, leading them to develop diseases such as anorexia and bulimia, which again damages their health. While many of the current generation are unmotivated and unfit, still others starve themselves to attempt to look like the models and celebrities on the cover of magazines and clothing lines that society glorifies. Mathews cautions that "Generous access to technology as children but limited physical freedom means Gen Z will grow up fast." Mathews' concern that easy access to technology prematurely exposes children to adult issues and ideas is a valid one; we can already see the effect of this technology on children during their formative years. For example, fifth graders, who during my time were just beginning to learn sex education and excited to be drug free (D.A.R.E- drug awareness resistance education), are now piling on layers and layers of make-up, already exposed to sexual encounters and drug use, and thinking about how to get any type of attention from others. Boys who during my time were also still learning about why their body was changing are now trying to change their body to look like famous muscular celebrities, and get the "ladies." We see kids as young as twelve years old already in gangs, doing drugs, and committing crimes. The once innocent twelve-year-olds are now engaging in risky, adult behaviors. All of this due to the immense amount of sexual media in the internet, advertisements, music, and TV.

Not only has the lifestyle and health of Generation Z changed completely from those of previous generations, but so have the values and morals. Members of previous generations valued money and hard work. We know what it is to work hard for something and earn it. Nothing was just handed on a silver plate to us. In contrast, many members

of Generation Z want everything handed over to them in the blink of an eye with little work necessary on their part. It is easy for them to disregard the value or expense of things. It often seems that all they care about is that their requests are granted; they have a Christmas list every week and in their eyes, they better get every item on it or else. They do not feel the need to work for these things or even thank their parents for them. Generation Z tends not to value all of the hard work that parents and guardians do to satisfy their wants. They are often self-absorbed. In contrast, the Millennials and members of prior generations found value in their opinion, cared about what happened in the government and about doing the right thing. Those who belonged to these generations were more actively connected with their community. Matthews predicts that Generation Z's preference for virtual communication will cause many to retreat from civic engagement: "Politics will become less significant as Gen Z-ers exercise power via their online identities, rather than the ballot box." Here, Mathews also argues that politics, which was once a priority to many, is becoming less and less important. The ability to decide for one's own country does not have the same value to those in Generation Z. I believe that the generation today is so engaged with their virtual world and technological devices that they become detached from what is going on in the government or the rest of the world. So many issues in the world need to be addressed, but this new generation, although involved to a certain extent, is very passive. Many would much rather be communicating with friends and family via text, Facebook and Twitter than trying to resolve serious social issues. Technology is also being grossly misused; some exercise their right to free speech by using social media to bully other children and teens. This is reaching a breaking point, and some teens who are cyber-bullied are now even committing suicide because of the severity of insults. The use of technology has caused some members of Generation Z to become desensitized to the suffering of others.

It is clear that there are many characteristics of Generation Z that need to be addressed, from their dependence on technology to their ignorance of the issues the world faces. These attitudes are typical of their generation, but the fault is not entirely theirs. These kids were born into this type of society. The challenge is to change the way these kids are thinking and inspire them to question their own values. However, attempting to find the root of the problem is not so easy. There are two perspectives from which one can view this issue. First, one can say that society is to blame for priming children to think a certain way. Society today is much different from the one in which previous generations grew up. Its main focus is often money and self-promotion. Everywhere we go, we see engineers from our generation attempting to invent the next big phone, tablet, or computer. Skinny models are being used to promote make-up, clothing, technology, and even hygiene products. Sex sells, and that is the foundation of marketing. Yes, these children are trying to look and act a certain way, but could this be because this is the image that society has put into their heads?

A second way to find the source of the problem is by looking at the parents. As mentioned above, society has prevailed in creating an image of what one should look like and the materialistic things that are "important" and "essential." We can see how this reflects upon today's generation just by looking at them and hearing the way they speak. Society does play an important role in shaping the new generation, but parents are just as important. Many parents do not monitor their children's online activities and allow their children to follow the so-called norms and buy the latest technological gadgets. Children who are not even in their teens are all over social networks nowadays and we often see little girls dressed as teens, wearing as much make-up as an adult would. Parents do tell their children

not to wear as much make-up or put on certain clothes but in the end, they often enable this inappropriate behavior. It is not as simple as telling your children “no;” parents need to actually take action. There is no use in disagreeing with society if at the end of the day they are going to go to the store and buy their children anything they want. Many parents complain that their children spend too much time online and on cell phones, but come Christmas or a birthday, there they are, buying the latest phones and technology, satisfying their children’s wants, only to complain that this generation is heading in the wrong direction. These overly-permissive parents need to accept responsibility for their mistakes and come to reality.

There is no one we can blame for all of the changes, both negative and positive, that have occurred in Generation Z. We could easily blame the members of Generation Z for their shortcomings, or we could easily find fault with society for shaping the values of this generation. We could also hold parents accountable for allowing all of these changes to occur in their children and for encouraging their worst tendencies. Pointing the finger, however, would not create a solution. There is no easy answer as to how to fix or improve this new generation. The only thing we can do is take small steps to encourage action, and instill new values in this present generation. Because no one person can change society, it is up to the parents to take initiative on their part. In order to see a change, parents could simply increase their vocabulary with the word “no.” Saying no to many of their children’s requests would allow them to see more value in the things they already have and teach them to work for them. Parents could also spend more family time together, bonding time where no electronics would be used. They could also encourage outdoor activities or even exercise together. This again would also increase the time spent together and improve families’ health as well. There is no way to radically change an entire generation but with small steps such as these, parents could change children one at a time.

Honorable Mention

“Say My Name, Say My Name”

by

Adam Smetana

We don’t analyze people based on their name as much as we should. Usually when I hear about someone I don’t know, I imagine what they look like by their name. Such classic names as Chad, Billy, and Randy remind me not only of typical names in an 80’s John Hughes movie but also of what would seem to be one section of your local high school’s varsity football team. I didn’t choose my own name: I was born with it. However, it does fit me nonetheless. To me it seems difficult to choose a name for a person without even knowing what their personality will be when they’re born. Some parents come up with a name the moment they hold their child, not really knowing that the name might define who they are in another 20 years. Take a critical name mistake like Poindexter, for example. I’m sure we can all tell where that kid will end up: the same place Amy Winehouse couldn’t stand to go.

Our names define us more than we’d like to admit. In a sense, we are who we are based on our title, therefore, our name. Remember how Chris Martin and Gwyneth Paltrow named their child Apple? Well that child will grow

up knowing exactly who they are and what they are. Luckily, I was given a name that not only suits me, but makes me happy. My name is Adam Smetana and that is who I am. Upon hearing my name you might think of things that pertain to the name Adam. Some people immediately think of the first man on Earth, who was obviously an inspiration for my name. It is widely believed that Adam, the first man, committed a horrible mistake, leading to the creation of original sin. I, however, believe that mankind was doomed by the notion of sin the moment our human race began. Please don't blame me, the reigning first man on Earth, for the world's problems.

Those who enjoy movies may hear my name "Adam" and the "S" in my last name and think of Adam Sandler. Now when I think of Adam Sandler, the first image that comes to mind is this actor in *Billy Madison* dressed like a thirty-year-old child. To make this point clear, I am not Adam Sandler. I forget we even share the same name sometimes, but in grade school I had plenty of people that reminded me that we were alike in that way. I agreed that our name was the only relative thing we had in common, since my speaking voice isn't that of a twelve-year-old in the body of an adult.

Now my last name is a bit harder for people to put their finger on because it's such a unique name that, unless you have a background in music, you might feel clueless. Most people ask me about the origins of Smetana, that is, after I explain to them how to properly say it in America. When I finally explain that it isn't pronounced as "SmEEEEtAHHHHHna" we get to the root of the matter. Is it Dutch? No, not quite. Is it Polish? You're getting closer. Oh, I got it, is it Irish? No one is capable of realizing its Czech, but that's something I shouldn't even expect. The thing that makes me happy and even more proud of my last name is when someone notices that there is a famous classical composer named Bedrich Smetana. Bedrich was my great-great-great grandfather; or at least that's what I like to tell people. You see, this is an aspect of my last name that I'm not too confident about even though I wish I was. I don't actually know if I have any relation to Bedrich Smetana even though I like to pretend I do. It would explain a lot since I am a musical person who sings and plays three different instruments. I grew up seeing Bedrich's records around the house sometimes and made the assumption that we might be connected with him because of our name. Whether we are or are not related, I might never know. Maybe I don't even want to know because it's more fun to think that maybe he was a part of the family.

If you analyze a person's name it seems you can find out much more about them. It also seems that the name gives us insight as to just who they are and why. There's a reason behind everyone's first name, which is the interesting part when it comes to telling stories explaining why the name was chosen. I feel badly for the people who are named after inanimate objects because of their parent's hopes to break the trend of boring names and do something unique. (Fedora or Burger, anyone?) The truly fascinating part of a person's identity, however, is their last name: a title shared by a whole family, which a person receives at birth. Through the last name we can trace exactly where we came from and from whom. While it might be painful for some to enjoy the idea of their last name, it is actually a centerpiece for who we are, even more so than our first name. Whether it's Smetana, SMEEETTANA, Smitana, Smatana, or however you pronounce it, I can, with all certainty say that I love my name. It's me and it's makes my identity. Say my name however you would like.

FACULTY/STAFF/ALUMNI NONFICTION

First Place

“Is Philosophy Esoteric?”

by

Dr. Arsalan Memon

After teaching for many years, some non-philosophy majors have expressed that they do not quite understand philosophy because it seems *esoteric* to them. By “esoteric,” I mean something that only a few individuals study or understand, especially, but not exclusively, those individuals with an atypical interest, an eccentric taste, or a specialized knowledge of some sort.¹ Is philosophy esoteric? If philosophy seems esoteric to some non-philosophy majors, then there may be at least three reasons for it: 1) the kind of questions philosophers ask, 2) the kind of responses philosophers provide, and 3) philosophy is just difficult. In what follows, I discuss each reason, while challenging it at the same time. In conclusion, I urge non-philosophy majors to give philosophy a second look.

I. The Kind of Questions Philosophers Ask

Philosophy may seem esoteric to some non-philosophy majors because of the kind of questions philosophers ask. What may make the questions esoteric is the lack of relation of philosophical questions to their own major. Is this accurate? Are there any questions that philosophers ask that may be related to psychology, theology, physics, pre-law, criminal justice, and political science, to name a few?

If *psychology* broadly construed studies the mind and its behavior (among other things), then philosophers ask: is the mind the same thing as the soul or is the mind reducible to the brain? If there is a soul/mind, is it immortal? Is there a distinction between the soul/mind and the body? In other words, if there is a soul/mind, is it material or immaterial?

If *theology* broadly construed studies the existence of God and how we ought to live our lives (among other things), then philosophers ask: does God exist? If God exists, how can we *know* that God exists? What can we know with certainty, if anything? If God exists and God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good, how can there be evil? What do we mean by *evil*? Do we mean an event occurring in nature where the end result is human suffering (i.e. natural evil)? Or do we mean a freely chosen, human action where the end result is human suffering (i.e. human evil)? What is the difference between right and wrong? Is every ethics a religious one or can ethics be thought beyond and without God as a criterion in determining the rightness and wrongness of actions?

If *physics* broadly construed studies Nature in general and its laws in particular (among other things), then philosophers ask: do human beings have free will or are they completely (or partially) determined by the physical and perhaps mechanistic laws of nature?

If *pre-law*, *criminal justice*, and *political science* broadly construed, study justice, in one way or another, then philosophers ask: what is justice? Am I being just by acting in accordance with God’s commandments? Am I being just by following the laws of the state/country in which I reside? What is the most just way of distributing the goods of a particular society (i.e. rights, wealth, opportunities, property, etc)? Is the question of justice or the distinction between right and wrong actions connected in any way to what will happen after death—eternal damnation (i.e. hell), eternal bliss (i.e. heaven), purgatory, reincarnation, or something else? Is there even life after death?

I can imagine a non-philosophy major raising the following objection to some of these previous questions: some

questions cannot be answered with certainty because they cannot be verified by our direct, first-hand experience. One may ask, however, do we need to verify everything by our direct, first-hand experience and more so, is everything even verifiable by our direct, first-hand experience? For instance, in contemporary physics it is argued that at the sub-atomic level, rightly or wrongly, there are no clear and strict laws of cause and effect as traditionally conceived in physics. For instance, theoretical physicists Caslav Brukner, Fabio Costa, and Ognyan Oreshkov argue that at the sub-atomic level, an event is both a cause and an effect at the same time and without contradiction.² Given that we cannot directly experience what goes on at the sub-atomic level, does it necessarily follow that we cannot answer with certainty the questions of cause and effect at the sub-atomic level? What do we mean by certainty?

II. The Kind of Responses Philosophers Provide

Philosophy may seem esoteric because of the kind of responses philosophers provide to the previously mentioned questions. What may make the responses esoteric is the seemingly puzzling nature of the responses. For instance, regarding God's existence, some philosophers argue that God exists, but God is completely coextensive with the entire universe and not beyond it (e.g. Baruch Spinoza [1632-1677]). What may seem puzzling about this response is that it may typically be thought that although God intervenes in human affairs and in worldly events, He – assuming it is a “He” – however remains beyond this universe. How should we think about God? Is there only a theistic way to think about God?

Regarding the immortality of the soul, some philosophers contend that the soul is composed of material atoms and since material atoms are indestructible, it follows that the soul is indestructible or immortal (e.g. Democritus [c.460-c.370 B.C.E.]). What may seem puzzling about this response is that if the soul is indeed composed of material atoms, how can something be material and be indestructible or immortal at the same time and without contradiction? Is immortality always a personal immortality? Is there no way of conceiving material atoms existing after death in an impersonal way?

Regarding the difference between right and wrong, some philosophers maintain that ethical claims – x is wrong or y is right – do not express propositions at all, and therefore cannot be true or false. Instead, these philosophers argue that ethical claims are our *feelings* of approval or disapproval about the issue in question (e.g. A. J. Ayer [1910-1989]). For example, to say that “lying is wrong” is simply to express one's feeling of disapproval of lying: boo on lying! What may seem puzzling about this response is that if ethical claims are indeed expressions of emotions, then can there really be a moral debate between people who disagree? Should ethical claims always be propositional claims?

III. Philosophy is Just Difficult

Philosophy may seem esoteric to non-philosophy majors because philosophy broadly understood may just be difficult. Non-philosophy and even philosophy majors may encounter difficulty in 1) reading a philosophical text in general, 2) writing a philosophical essay, 3) comprehending a specific philosophical point, 4) arguing for or against a particular philosophical position, or 5) any other aspect of philosophy. Admittedly, philosophy is difficult. But the fact that a field of study is difficult could be said about any other academic field. Like any other discipline – aviation, art, nursing, engineering, computer science, history, literature, mathematics, biology, chemistry, sociology etc – some particular texts, arguments, and/or concepts in philosophy can be difficult for not only non-philosophy majors but also philosophy majors, scholars, and specialists.

There are many ways in which a non-philosophy major and even a philosophy major can overcome the difficulty s/he encounters in any aspect of philosophy. More often than not, philosophy requires 1) patience, 2) reading a text more than once if not twice, 3) recognizing and challenging assumptions, 4) taking into account the context of the entire argument, 5) isolating and clarifying the definitions of key philosophical terms, 6) relying on examples from all affairs of everyday life—personal interests, current events, thought experiments, pop culture, case studies, etc.—to better understand a particular philosophical point, 7) identifying, constructing, and evaluating arguments, 8) formulating objections, 9) providing responses to objections, 10) interpreting in an unbiased manner (at least to the best of one’s ability), 11) detecting and avoiding errors in reasoning, 12) suspending judgment when lacking adequate knowledge about the subject-matter at hand, 13) questioning what the philosopher takes as facts, 14) thinking about necessary and sufficient conditions, and 15) being rigorous, clear, coherent, and concise. These are hardly a sufficient set of requirements for overcoming the difficulties in philosophy; they are, however, necessary (all other things being equal).

In retrospect, I have argued that philosophy may seem esoteric to some non-philosophy majors for at least three reasons: 1) the kind of questions philosophers ask, 2) the kind of responses philosophers provide, and 3) philosophy is just difficult. If philosophy is esoteric for any one of these three reasons, then I hope to have challenged them. I also hope to have motivated some non-philosophy majors, if not all, to give philosophy a second look. This could take any one of these forms or any combination of these forms: 1) challenging my claim by showing that it is still the case that philosophy remains esoteric perhaps in a way that is not mentioned in this article, 2) taking a philosophy course, 3) simply recognizing the importance of philosophical questions and perhaps, even of philosophical responses, 4) incorporating philosophical questions and responses in other courses, 5) changing your minor to philosophy, 6) changing your major to philosophy, or 7) encouraging and convincing others to join you in pursuing any one of these seven ways or a combination of these seven ways.

¹ Throughout the article, the term “esoteric” is used in this sense.

² Caslav Brukner, Fabio Costa, and Ognjan Oreshkov. 2012. “Quantum Correlations with No Causal Order.”

Nature Communications 3, Article Number: 1092,

<http://www.nature.com/ncomms/journal/v3/n10/full/ncomms2076.html>.

STUDENT POETRY

Honorable Mention

“Eulogy”

by

Mark Jacobs

for Charlotte Rae Browning

September 15, 1930 – October 1, 2012

I have never been to heaven,
and by reason, never will,
yet I can speak with some authority
of what it's like there, still:

For once there was a woman,
feisty in her day,
who we've every reason to believe
has headed up that way.

And it would not be like her,
to meet St. Peter at the gate,
and accept without objection
that dogs deserve a different fate.

No: Charlotte would have said,
“I did not play that organ at the church for all those years
just to find that my Dino, Sally, Molly,
were not welcome here.

They were just the gentlest souls I knew,
so much sweeter and more kind
than many of the sinners you've admitted
or any man you'll ever find.”

And I imagine when they fitted her
for a halo and for wings
she'd have asked for one or two
other useful things.

Oven mitts, perhaps, a timer,
and if God asked what for,
Charlotte must have said, “A jar of cookies
to leave at the front door.”

Then he and old St. Peter
must have exchanged a glance or two,
for when Charlotte Browning went to heaven
homemade food and dogs did too.

Honorable Mention

“The Clown”

by

Victoria Schwartz

A shadow: a puppet,
we're watching his act;
his veil of hatred
we think is a fact.

On our side of the curtain
he looks all the same,
yet a liar, star actor,
who's covered with shame.

A shadow of himself;
alter ego is here,
yet deep in his eyes,
he has disappeared.

A magician, a circus,
down the tightrope he goes,
through the fire of the spotlight
on the freak of the show.

Lions encircle,
hemming in close,
tearing each ugly layer
as the rope only grows.

She is his ringmaster,
his puppeteer,
as we watch and applaud
he lives silent in fear.

FACULTY/STAFF/ALUMNI POETRY

Second Place

“Tonatiuh”

by

Linda Strahl

earth surrounds you—
 reject its pauper’s pillow
 where so many have nestled before;
 earth marinates your lungs
 while plastic wreaths are tributes
 to dead loves—the smell
 of strawberries
 and formaldehyde, wake you from
 this Ladybird infested slumber

bile lines the coffins where dead
 should have lain—
 beneath a brittle blue moon highlighting
 ravaged frames, flesh weeping, like lace
 from clavicles, pocked faces:
 turn towards a blaring whistle, screeching,
 the dead have risen, Tonatiuh, makes them equal

Third Place

“Otto Dix”

by

Dr. Mike Cunningham

This poem is from a series of poems inspired by self-portraits of artists at their easels.



Otto Dix stands by his easel,
 Tortured, suspicious, eyes like a weasel.
 Unwilling to let us see what he’s doing,
 What horrendous new vision he’s
 pursuing

This painter of the poor’s acute deprivation,
 Of bourgeois professionals frozen by enervation.

He’s produced a gallery of the maimed and downtrodden,
 Hysterical joy-seekers, the pathetically sodden.

A crude pile of skeletons fills up a trench,
 Gas victims in Flanders, imagine the stench.

The amputated soldier collapses in a lump,
 A bony dachshund pisses on his stump.

The banker, the doctor, the war profiteer,
 Bloated on venison, drunken on their beer.

An aging prostitute awaits an assignation,
 A withered tit sums up her degradation.

A naked dancer, convulsed in pain,
 A sable boa, a pet monkey, a locket of cocaine.

Cabarets of pleasure, bordellos of sin,
 The spectrum of grotesques in 30s Berlin.

So, Otto, let us see what you’ve done.
 We’re eager voyeurs, let us in on the fun.

We take perverse delight in misery’s new edition,
 Embrace your depictions of the human condition.

For the Nazis your degenerate art meant condemnation,
 For us weary skeptics, hardly a cause of indignation.

Honorable Mention
“Can I See The Stars?”

by
Lois Mintah

I cannot see the stars tonight.
At such an hour, there's too much
white: clouds filling up the dome,
that is the heavenly twinkles' home.

I cannot hear my heart tonight.
At such a time, there is no light.
Inside my chest, there is no beat:
where once it thumped with constant heat.

I cannot feel my soul tonight.
It's off somewhere, in errant flight.
A lonely spotlight sweeps the sky:
effective as a blinded eye.

The heaviness of clouded sky
will pass, even by and by.
But white on white presses down on me:
just where my heartbeat used to be.

Honorable Mention
“There Is Dancing”

by
Lennart Lundh

There is dancing,
empty-armed or child-filled
across the living room or through
the last leaves of late summer.
Wiping at the tears, I only dance,
for I have tasted rain
and wind on empty highways to some place,
and found them sweet.

STUDENT RESEARCH ESSAY

First Place

“Chicago Red-Light Enforcement Program”

by

Cory Pitts

Most Americans can recall a time when they have driven through an intersection as the traffic light turns yellow. After anxiously looking around for a squad car, they notice a sign that reads, “Red Light Photo Enforced.” For the following few days the trip to the mailbox becomes the walk to the electric chair, as most fear the ticket that is potentially waiting for them. This scenario will become increasingly prevalent in Chicago, as “roughly 50 new traffic cameras are being added throughout the city” (D’Onofrio), officials say that the purpose of the cameras is to “change a culture that suggests speeding is tolerated,” yet many studies have suggested that this isn’t the case. Several studies have even pointed out that after traffic cameras have been placed, the number of accidents actually increased. The question remains: how effective are traffic cameras, and should they continue to be implemented?

In 2003 Chicago first began their red light photo program, by placing cameras at both Peterson and Western, and 55th and Western. The Chicago Department of Transportation, also known as CDOT, “determines which intersections are chosen to be enforced with cameras. The agency also handles the installation and maintenance of red-light cameras” (CDOT-Crash analysis). They make their decisions by analyzing crash data from previous years in order to figure out which intersections had become problematic. Different aspects of crashes are taken into consideration by CDOT when identifying intersections in need of traffic cameras:

Intersections are chosen for installation of red-light cameras under the Chicago Red-Light Enforcement Program based on the crashes experienced at the intersection. Intersections are ranked based on the number of total crashes, angle crashes, and the angle crash rate. The angle crash rate is the primary criteria to identify red-light cameras for potential relocations. Angle crashes are most likely to result in serious injury or fatalities. The likelihood of serious injury or fatality in a right angle crash is increased when the red-light running vehicle is also speeding. (“Red-Light Camera Enforcement”)

Rather than solely looking at the sheer number of crashes, CDOT’s program looks at each crash in depth to greater understand both the type of crash and the severity. As stated above, a key indicator is the amount of angle crashes, also referred to as side collisions and T-bones, since these tend to be the most severe in nature. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, “Side crashes account for about a quarter of passenger vehicle occupant deaths in the United States,” so a priority for the City of Chicago is minimizing the amount of angle crashes” (“About Our Tests”). Once a location is agreed upon installation begins, as digital cameras are linked to traffic lights and sensors beneath the pavement, which are placed just before the solid white stop line. The moment the traffic light turns red and a car passes over the white stop line, it triggers the digital camera to take not only a picture of the license plate, but also record the incident on video. After review by the camera vendor, the information is then sent to Chicago’s Department of Revenue, which then sends citations to the registered vehicle’s owner. Pictures are included, and recipients have the option to

review the video on the City of Chicago's web site within 30 days of the incident.

Although all of this may work in theory, both preventing serious accidents and generating revenue, only a review of the data of recorded crashes can confirm the success or failure of the Red Light Photo Enforcement Program. A study done in September of 2010, consisting of 50 intersections where traffic cameras had been placed, confirms that the traffic cameras were functioning as intended. Based on the data analyzed,

62 percent of all intersections saw a decrease in the number of side crashes—deemed the most fatal of all types of accidents. Additionally, 14 percent of intersections maintained their pre-existing number of crashes, meaning that only 24 percent of intersections had an increase in the number of side crashes. The traffic cameras were able to decrease the number of total angle crashes by a staggering 29.2 percent in the few years following their installation. Further study only confirms this data, as an analysis done in August 2011 compared crashes between the years 2005 (pre-installation) and 2010 (several years post-installation). According to the 106 intersections under observation; 72.64 percent saw a decrease in the number of side crashes while 11.32 percent experienced no change, meaning that only 16.04 percent of intersections were negatively impacted. One of the most convincing pieces of information is the total percentage reduction in side crashes, which dropped from 700 collisions to 399, a 40 percent decrease. An analysis of the data thus shows that the CDOT was successful in lowering the number of side collisions by nearly 50 percent in a short five-year period. (CDOT-data)

Although the Chicago Red-Light Enforcement Program was successful in lowering the number of side collisions, it had also, somewhat expectedly, raised the number of rear-end collisions—which are deemed far less fatal by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. An analysis of the 2010 analysis reveals that

72 percent of all intersections experienced an increase of rear end collisions. That implies that 36 of the 50 observed intersections had an increased number of rear end collisions. In total, there was an increase of the number of rear end collisions by 22.6 percent—66 collisions more than the years preceding the traffic cameras. This data is further confirmed by the later 2011 study, where it was noted that 74.53 percent of intersections had an increased number of rear end collisions. The total number of rear end collisions had increased by 51.66 percent—an addition of 295 crashes. (CDOT-data)

This is extremely problematic, as the cameras are significantly increasing the quantity of rear end collisions.

The final, and perhaps most important, piece of information is found in the second study, where the number of all collision-related injuries (not limited to only angle and rear end collisions) was compared between 2005 and 2010.

In 2005, before the installation of the traffic cameras, there were 387 reported injuries directly related to the collisions, whereas in 2010, several years after installation, that number had been reduced to 284. That is a decrease of 26.61 percent; the number of injuries had been reduced by over a quarter. (CDOT-data)

Although the traffic cameras may have caused more of one type of accident by attempting to prevent another, they have served their purpose thus far by decreasing the number of side collisions, and in turn reducing the number of traffic collision related injuries.

Whether or not the city of Chicago will continue its campaign for photo enforced intersections will depend mainly

on the continuation of its success. Although there will most likely be many disgruntled city-goers and residents, the city will place the safety of their transportation over the public's phobia of traffic cameras. As long as the cameras lower the number of car collision injuries, while also providing the city with revenue, there is no real reason for Chicago to discontinue its Red-Light Enforcement Program.

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Second Place

"The Reciprocal Relationship Between Criminal Justice and Creative Writing"

by

Seth Veloz

Legends, epics, poems, and fairy tales are just a few examples of the variety of writings that have emerged since mankind started to record its own history. These tales arise as a result of people's inability to explain what has occurred before their eyes, their desire to comprehend as well as expand upon the plots they encountered while reading as children, and their wish to elaborate on tales of mysticism which reflect a curiosity of the philosophy of life. The plots are endless and new ones are born as the centuries pass by. As societies develop and expand, we as readers see this in the literature produced and the scientific and technical innovations that inspire them. But sometimes literary plots reflect the prophetic vision of authors. Ideas that were once considered impossible and theories viewed as pure fantasy for their time have later proven to be viable. The world of criminal justice has undergone such a process. From the novels of Sherlock Holmes to the variety of graphic novels available today, the bond between creative writing and criminal justice has been mutually influential. Writers have created characters

that have come to play important roles in the criminal justice system, offered methods of crime solving, reinforced the methodology of the criminal justice system and even written stories reflecting on the actions taken by the government.

Sherlock Holmes's famous catchphrase, "Elementary, my dear Watson," is to this day an inspiration for many crime-based television series and books. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* have proven they withstand the trials of time. "The Scarlet in Red," the first big hit by Arthur Conan Doyle, published on November 26th, 1886, was just the beginning of a wonderful series. But Sherlock did not come to flourish on his own. Arthur Conan Doyle was born on May 22, 1859. Doyle was raised in Edinburgh, Scotland. His immediate family was not wealthy, but he was supported by more prosperous family members who helped him attend school and eventually graduate with his M.D. from the University of Edinburgh. The man inspired the unforgettable character of Sherlock Holmes is none other than Joseph Bell, who was born on December 2, 1837. Joseph Bell was a well regarded lecturer at the University of Edinburgh. He had graduated from the University of Edinburgh Medical School and due to his knowledge was consulted by police about several criminal cases. Arthur Conan Doyle attended the same University and after taking classes with Bell and proving his promise as a physician, Bell took Doyle under his wing as his assistant. Throughout his time with Bell, Doyle was amazed by his eccentric and energetic personality, and the tales of the cases he worked on. "From having a look at a hand," Doyle wrote, "he told the profession of its owner" (<http://www.sherlockian-sherlock.com>). Doyle eventually graduated from Edinburgh and ten years later "The Scarlet in Red" was published and the inspiration Bell provided would be available for the world to see.

Many would be influenced by this series of stories and novels, among them Edmund Locard, a French criminalist born in 1877 and a pioneer in forensic sciences. He once admitted, "I must confess that if in the police laboratory of Lyons we are interested in any unusual way in this problem of dust it is because of having absorbed the ideas formed in Gross and Conan Doyle" (qtd. in Nickell and Fischer 10).

Locard's experience with this case was supported by his expertise in both law and medicine, and would lead him to create his concept known as "Locard's Exchange Principle," which states that a cross-transfer of evidence takes place whenever a criminal comes in contact with a victim, an object, or a crime scene. The words of Edmund Locard emphasize the impact creative literature can have on its readers. Locard would go on to found the first forensic laboratory in Lyon, France in 1910. What would start as a small room with chairs and a little equipment would soon be globally recognized as a leading laboratory in the field of forensic criminal science. Ripples of this early exchange between fiction and reality would be noticed later down the road.

To this day the use of Locard's Principle of Exchange is applied and taught as a result of the influence of writers like Doyle. But as time continues its course, ideas and methodologies develop and along with them come new inspirations. Creative writing adapted alongside developments in science and history. A new genre of literature arose. The era of the comic book arrived during WWII and since then this genre has flourished to create a variety of subgenres, including the superhero comic. Superhero comic books such as *The Flash* shine a light on the criminal justice system established in the U.S. *The Flash*, created by John Broome and Robert Kanigher and sketched by Carmine Infantio, tells the tale of Barry Allen, a forensic science investigator who comes to attain his abilities through a scientific accident in his laboratory. Barry Allen's powers give him the ability to travel at the speed of light, think

of and see the outcome for different scenarios in a matter of seconds, travel in time, and tap into the “speedforce,” which is the source of his power. Despite having all these different superhero abilities Barry holds down a job as a forensic specialist. His knowledge of physics and his extraordinary abilities are a reflection of the advancement in this scientific field. As different writers took over continuing the legacy of *The Flash*, some examples of this crossover between science, criminal justice, and fantasy are contained in *The Flash New 52* #21. Barry is currently in search of a murderer. While investigating the case he conducts experiments from the collected evidence and while doing so finds that each of these people was exposed to his power source. Using this recent discovery he determines his prime suspect to be Kid Flash. Barry runs out to find him and question him, but it ends up in a high-speed chase. As the chase continues, Kid Flash starts to elevate and fly:

Kid Flash: “What the Hell!?”

Flash: “Kid Flash you’re reaching escape velocity! At this speed, your kinetic energy is equal in magnitude to the gravitational potential energy that keeps us on the ground . . . ”

Kid Flash: “Dude . . . less talking and more saving.”

Flash: “You obviously don’t share my love for science” (Manapul 19).

Even during a stressful chase, Barry humorously manages to squeeze in a little lecture about physics. The theory of escape velocity reveals the necessary velocity to escape the gravitational pull of a specific area. Here in this comic we have a demonstration of the involvement of a forensic scientist in the criminal justice system. This exchange of knowledge and fantasy gives birth to an innovative story and one that shines light on different fields such as writing, art, criminal justice/forensics, and physics. Barry Allen, The Flash, is an icon in the comic world community. A character with Barry Allen’s features illuminates not only the creativity of the authors but also sparks readers’ interest in other fields such as criminology.

Since the works of Doyle, many writers have published great superhero comics that have elements of murder mysteries and detective fiction such as *Watchmen* by Alan Moore, Len Wein, and Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen* is a landmark comic book and has stirred many topics of conversation such as the concept of secret identities, justice, taking responsibility and historical events that have been engraved in the history books of the globe. Dr. Thom Giddens highlights the enormous influence comics have on their readers. Giddens, a lecturer in law at St. Mary’s Univeristy College, Twickenham, London, is also the creator of a blog known as *Graphic Justice*. Giddens’ published works focus on criminal justice, comics, and the proper role of the public defender. His works include “Criminal Responsibility and the Self,” “Towards a Metaphysics of Comics,” “Comics, Law, and Aesthetics: Towards the use of Graphic Fiction in Legal Studies.” During his interview with Paul Gratts, a well-regarded British publisher, writer, and editor, Giddens was asked, “What is your particular expertise in law and how does it relate to your interest in comics?” In his response, Giddens expresses his view that comics can play a vital role in our understanding of art, ethics, knowledge, and ourselves:

My field relates mostly to criminal law and justice, with a large helping of moral philosophy. My underlying research theme is basically that life and morality are both extremely complex and ultimately involve real, living humans. Comics not only have obvious criminal justice relevance in the huge variety of mainstream publications, but like other cultural forms such as literature and film also explore the complexity of life and

human morality. Much of academic (and especially legal) discourse focuses more on the “rational” ways of understanding the world, but there’s a whole other discourse around aesthetics and the use of artistic and cultural expressions to do the same thing--to understand the world, but in a more “enriched” or “living” or phenomenological way. People have used film and literature to explore legal and moral concerns, but comics have been largely overlooked. I see comics as a vital tool in exploring morality and philosophies of selfhood from an aesthetically enriched perspective, not just because of their “cultural” or “artistic” nature, but due to their “in-betweenness”: the dual textual-visual dimensions explore the boundaries of rational knowledge and the limits of text. The basic idea is that comics can enrich our understanding not only of human moral experience, but also of how we construct (orthodox) knowledge about human moral experience.” (qtd. in Gavetts)

Comic books have a reputation of being a fun hobby for the young, but many people miss the underlying thoughts of the writer, his or her attempt to bring to the surface political issues, personal views, different philosophies, and simply food for thought. For an influential thinker such as Dr. Giddens to hold such regard for the stories written by these authors who take a creative medium such as comics to express the ideas and views on current events is a clear demonstration of the bond between creative writing and the discipline of criminal justice that helps promote the growth of both parties.

Criminal justice has the ultimate goal to bring peace and maintain order. But those who go into this field often do not give much consideration to complications that can occur when their morality, philosophy of life, and even the nature of their existence is called into question by the suffering they will witness on the part of crime victims or criminals themselves. The stories these authors of imaginative literature create shed new light on the inner struggles people endure and on the outcomes on the decisions those in the criminal justice field may take to deal with a variety of scenarios. Those who work in criminal justice do much more than “protect and serve;” the symbiotic relationship between creative writing and criminal justice calls attention to all these different “forces” that drive individuals down the path they choose. From the works of Doyle based on the apt abilities of Joseph Bell to the variety of comic books and their genres, this relationship between creative writing and criminal justice has proven to be one for the ages.

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Third Place

“When Darkness Turns to Light: A Thematic Explication of ‘Greasy Lake’”

by

Jenna Saleh

In the short story “Greasy Lake,” written by T. Coraghessan Boyle, three nineteen- year- old male friends engage in risky behavior in an attempt to live a bad boy lifestyle. Tough and fearless, these three friends visit a popular site known as Greasy Lake. Although they believe that they are mature and experienced adults, they undergo completely unexpected, frightening situations that force them to realize just how inexperienced and unprepared they are to face the real world. Boyle utilizes various literary techniques, such as symbolism and sentence structure, in order to express his theme that male adolescents often perform extreme, detrimental actions in hopes of proving their maturity to others; through their mistakes, they learn that true maturity and identity evolve from life experience and wisdom.

Through his use of evident symbolism, Boyle portrays his theme that only through experience and wisdom do young men develop maturity and a stable identity. For instance, the nighttime serves not only as the setting, but also as an important symbol in the story. The majority of the violent, crazy scenes that take place in the story occur at night, in the pitch black darkness. Since darkness symbolizes danger and disorder, it foreshadows the troubling experiences the boys eventually go through. The near killing of a stranger, the attempted rape of a young woman, and the frightening chase all occur at night, without a glimpse of light or hope in sight.

Not only does Boyle utilize the night as a symbol of fear and misfortune, but also as a symbol of the unforeseen future. An individual’s future is just as gloomy as darkness itself. No one can be certain of what is in store for them in the coming years. Because Digby, Jeff, and the narrator become insecure and helpless immediately after an unexpected situation strikes, Boyle demonstrates that male adolescents should never attempt to fast forward to their future or rush into adulthood since they lack the proper maturity and preparation to overcome life’s unexpected obstacles. Through their experiences in this darkness, the teenagers ultimately discover that although strongly desired, a premature leap into adulthood only results in struggle.

The dirty, unclear swampy area of Greasy Lake also serves as another setting that Boyle utilizes as a symbol to represent the bewildered thoughts of the narrator. It represents the confusion and disbelief the narrator feels after he escapes the crime scene that just took place before his eyes: “I was breathing in sobs, in gasps. The water lapped at my waist...” (3). This murky water slowly covering the narrator’s entire body symbolizes the fearful, disoriented mental state overtaking him as he desperately attempts to escape his problems rather than calmly resolve them. Again, these unclear thoughts and reactions correlate to the inexperience of the majority of male adolescents who often attempt to act older than they actually are. According to Boyle, this desire almost always leads to the destruction of an individual and violence all around, which proves his theme that becoming fully mature is a process gained through life experience.

The lost keys serve as a final main symbol in “Greasy Lake” that symbolizes both control and identity. Boyle incorporates irony in his story by making the narrator the designated driver because despite being the driver of the car, he is not the driver of his own life. The narrator uses the keys, a symbol of control and identity, to start the car,

and then drives on a road, an object commonly considered in the American culture as a symbol of destiny, toward Greasy Lake to engage in what he and his friends classify as adult behavior; as soon as they arrive however, the narrator loses the keys, thus signifying the lost control of his life and his lost identity. This proves that the consequent actions he performs are not guided by his judgment, but rather by his sole desire to become a mature adult. The narrator is completely unaware of his true destiny and purpose in life. The actions he and his friends perform do not represent their true character; instead, they represent the false characters they play in an attempt to impress society. The narrator finds the keys the morning after he struggles through all of the traumatizing events the night before. This implies that all of the extreme actions he performed took him completely out of his comfort zone to the point where he could not even identify himself. The fact that the narrator finds the keys “almost immediately, no more than five feet from the open door, glinting like jewels,” the morning after the chaos erupts, proves that he is beginning to find his identity (4). The darkness vanishes and the “glinting” keys represent the narrator’s newly gained control of his life. Just as darkness symbolizes trouble and the unforeseen future, the sparkling light on the keys symbolizes the beginning of a brighter future. Boyle implies that the road taken by the narrator on the drive home will guide him and his friends toward their true destinies far away from Greasy Lake. Because the narrator is the one who locates the keys, Boyle allows the reader to infer that the narrator experiences the strongest change for the better. He may not know his exact purpose in life just yet, but he is certainly learning valuable lessons from his mistakes, which is the main theme throughout Boyle’s story. The narrator, who is also the protagonist of the story, remains unnamed because he still has not fully discovered his true identity and his true destiny in life, but as a result of the struggle he endures; he takes a step toward the right direction. He now knows the seriousness of life and the negative consequences of living with a falsified image just to impress others.

Just as symbolism portrays the theme of the story, sentence structure showcases the dynamic trait of the three main characters as they change from wannabe bad boys making careless decisions to maturing adults seeking a successful life, thus emphasizing that male adolescents learn the importance of experience in life through their mistakes. Boyle incorporates a mixture of long, complex, detailed sentences followed by one or two abrupt short sentences frequently throughout the story. This mixture stresses the relationship between fantasy and reality. For instance, the narrator goes into great detail describing the dangerous lifestyle he and his friends share, with their “torn up leather jackets and gin and grape juice” in hand (1). However, immediately after this detailed description, he adds, “We were nineteen” (1). While the teenagers attempt to live out their fantasy as fearless, invincible adults, this short sentence informing the readers of the teenagers’ age represents reality. These three words highly accentuate the inexperience of their young, innocent minds. Even though they claim to live this savage life, it is a completely false image representing who they want to be rather than who they actually are. Why do they wish to live this dangerous life? Simply because they are males. Most often displayed in American society, males, especially those between the ages of 18 and 21, are the gender most likely to engage in misbehavior, such as taking drugs and drinking excessively. Boyle portrays this belief in his theme by using three nineteen-year-old male characters as the main characters in his story. These three young males make the foolish decisions that lead to all of the chaos, showing the tendency of male adolescents to perform extreme actions in order to impress others and appear more mature. Even though they have barely begun to experience the real world, they attempt to rush through life just to be accepted by society.

There are also two instances where one short phrase is repeated at different times in the story: “This was nature” (1, 4). The time lapses between when these two phrases appear in the story represent the improved perception the narrator gains on life. This phrase is first used in the beginning of the story when the narrator describes all of the filth associated with Greasy Lake: “we wanted to drink beer, smoke pot, savor the incongruous full-throated roar of rock and roll...” (1). This phrase implies that the narrator initially believes that riot and disobedience are common nature in life; however, after suffering through his chaotic experiences that night, he wakes up in the morning and repeats the phrase, “This was nature” (4). This time, the narrator admires true nature, the chirping birds and the blossoming flowers. Rather than listening to the deafening “roars” of rock and roll, he appreciates the soothing sounds of the peaceful birds, thus displaying his changed view on life. The narrator now believes that living life in a calm, patient manner is more beneficial than a life of defiance and recklessness. He realizes that the dangerous, risky life he desired to live is not the one for him. Through his unexpected experiences, the narrator is beginning to find his true identity. He has learned from his mistakes and is becoming a wiser, more mature individual, thus emphasizing Boyle’s theme.

Boyle clearly expresses his theme that male adolescents often engage in extreme activity in attempt to prove their maturity to others, but they ultimately learn that true maturity and identity are gained through life experience and wisdom. Boyle illustrates this theme through such literary techniques as symbolism and sentence structure. Despite the false image the narrator and his friends possess initially, the events they go through help them begin discovering their true identity, especially the narrator, who realizes that a calm, steady life yields more benefits than a dangerous, disobedient one. Through the experiences they go through, they begin gaining maturity and identity, but they learn that patiently facing life’s stages, rather than rushing into adulthood unprepared, will allow that maturity and identity to continuously strengthen.

Honorable Mention

“Homosexuali-sea: Gay Subtext Aboard the *Bellipotent*”

by

Kelly Lyons

Herman Melville’s *Billy Budd* is a tale of the trials and tribulations of Billy Budd, a charming and well-liked impressed sailor who finds himself aboard a new ship. The storyline of the book is relatively straightforward; it is the finer details and subtext that truly make an impact on readers. Because the plot is quite simple, the dynamic between characters is extremely important. However, Melville does not spell out exactly what kind of relationship the characters have with one another. A lot of this is left up to the interpretation of the reader. It is very clear throughout the story that John Claggart, the master-at-arms, does not treat Billy Budd very kindly. But what reasons would he have to dislike Billy? Billy is a kind young man who is described as generally very pleasant. Claggart’s hatred is definitely directed toward Billy, but in a strange way. Perhaps he is envious of Billy. As a master-at-arms, Claggart cannot be like buoyant Billy. Claggart must be serious and stoic and cannot form close bonds with the crewmembers. This envy probably stems from the latter; he wants what he cannot have. More specifically, he wants Billy. There

are not many other logical explanations as to why Claggart acts the way he does with Billy. There is no source for the hatred, other than perhaps pure envy. Claggart is attracted to a persona which is the opposite of his own. While Billy may not pick up on or reciprocate these feelings, there is most certainly a homosexual subtext between the two characters throughout the story.

Before diving headfirst into the sea of subtext, it is essential to first assess the intrinsic differences between the personalities of Billy Budd and John Claggart. The fact that they are so different is an important premise in the equation. Whatever sort of feelings Claggart has for Billy, whether they actually are romantic or not, appears to stem from their differing personalities. Even without defining Claggart's feelings, it is clear to see that something about Billy fascinates Claggart to the point where Claggart becomes obsessed. And most obsessions with actual humans typically stem from a need for companionship, jealousy, or perhaps even lust.

From the very beginning of the story, Melville makes it clear that Billy is innocent and naïve. Billy grew up uneducated and seemed to rely on his charisma rather than his knowledge. But above all things, Billy was popular. He was a free-spirited individual liked by all – that is, until he met Claggart. Many critics bring up Billy's purity and absence of sin and unjust qualities. Some even go so far as to liken him to Jesus. However, Billy's actions are not exactly Christ-like. Christ is not naïve, nor does he make thoughtless decisions (like the one that eventually got Billy hanged.) Billy's actions are much more akin to Adam's in the Biblical story of Genesis. Justin Sfariac describes several similarities between Billy and Adam: "just like the latter, the former is characterized by physical perfection and, as far as his moral nature is concerned, by sheer ignorance." Sfariac goes on to describe how Adam's poorly conceived actions led to the loss of Eden. Adam made mistakes that caused God to punish him. Billy, like Adam, was not supposed to be seen as a "role model." He made bad decisions and tried "burying annoying incidents deep in his mind," which resulted in his physical flaws, like his stuttering (Sfariac). This flaw ironically serves as the catalyst that brought Billy to his trial and death.

Similarly, Billy's life was taken from him because of his mistake of panicking and killing Claggart. While not directly related to the subtext theory, Billy's Adam-like tendencies certainly draw a parallel between himself and Claggart. This comparison highlights their differences and helps explain the source of Claggart's jealousy. This correspondence, which many critics analyze, is the parallel of Billy Budd as Christ (or in this case, Adam) and Claggart as Satan. Interestingly enough, the name Claggart comes from the German word *Anklaeger*. The stem of this word, *klaeger*, can be translated as an accuser or complainer (Narveson). In the story of Genesis, Satan uses his cunning mind to play all sorts of tricks on Adam to get him to eat the forbidden fruit. Adam did nothing to Satan, but Satan is envious and angry about Adam's position. As a result, Satan wants revenge on God and God's creations. As an outsider, Satan seems to have many repressed feelings that cause him to act out. He is not happy with his position as an outcast in the world, and could possibly be longing to be someone like Adam who has everything given to him. But this possible jealousy is misguided, and Satan ends up destroying Adam's happiness in order to get revenge.

Similarly, Claggart's misguided feelings cause him to make strange decisions as well. Billy has not done anything wrong to Claggart, yet Claggart is still set on ruining him. Claggart cannot be like Billy, nor can he have Billy. Claggart's position onboard forces him to be somewhat of an outcast. His feelings are then directed toward Billy, as

if *accusing* him of something, just as an “accuser or “complainer” might do, sowing suspicion and mistrust. And just like the relationship between Adam and Satan, the relationship between Billy and Claggart is motivated by the latter’s extreme envy, and in Claggart’s case, possible sexual desire. The homosexual subtext in the story is often misconstrued because many readers attribute Claggart’s attitude toward Billy as hatred and think no more of it (Loges). Claggart is described throughout the story as stoic, malicious, and rather cunning, among other traits often associated with “bad guys,” of which Satan is the ultimate example. But as stated above, Claggart’s negative view of Billy has no legitimate reasoning behind it. He has no cause to hate Billy, such a charismatic figure who has done nothing wrong.

Once readers recognize Billy and Claggart’s individual personalities, it is important to analyze Claggart’s feelings and find a source for them. There is always a trigger to an emotion; emotions do just not occur absent of reason. The origin of Claggart’s response to Billy appears to be homosexual desire, although it is not explicitly described. As Albert Braverman finds, “the story does involve homosexuality, but it manifests itself through John Claggart’s hatred of [Billy].” This hatred, however, is founded on Claggart’s envy and lust. He is fixated on Billy, yet he cannot have him. These feelings of jealousy and longing eventually turn into anger. Because Claggart cannot display his true feelings, nor can he achieve what he really wants from Billy, his feelings become skewed. Instead of being romantic, there is a subtext that is hostility and violence. This is a very common sort of reaction to repressed homosexuality, often referred to as “latent homosexuality.” If individuals are not able to express their true feelings, they may suffer from serious mental damage, which can very often lead to excessive anger and violence. Claggart may be going through something similar to this, which further supports the claim that the story contains a homosexual subtext.

Braverman continues to discuss how Melville emphasizes Claggart’s envy of Billy’s youth and beauty (327). And while this subtext alone might not be enough to convince everyone that the homosexual tension in *Billy Budd* does exist, Braverman presents more intriguing evidence. He suggests that referencing homosexuality was basically forbidden in nineteenth-century literature. But Braverman believes that a clever allusion Melville used while describing Claggart suggests a gay subtext. Melville, somewhat irrelevantly, describes Claggart’s “prominent chin” (313) as resembling “‘the Reverend Doctor Titus Oates, the historic despondent with the clerical drawl in the time of Charles II and fraud of the alleged Popish plot.’ Oates was notoriously homosexual” (Braverman). It seems rather telling that Melville would use such a strange, outdated allusion to describe Claggart. A detail like this is likely subtext Melville did not feel comfortable writing explicitly. This is only further evidence that it is very likely Claggart did in fact have homosexual feelings.

But despite the homosexual subtext, the story does still not quite promote or offer a positive portrayal of a gay lifestyle. Literary critic Kathy J. Phillips suggests that teaching *Billy Budd* in the classroom can encourage and “help shape a new appreciation of sexual and cultural differences.” However, it seems odd that one would derive such a lesson from this particular story. Both characters involved in the homosexual subtext have tragic endings to their tales. Rather, it almost seems as if Melville associates negative connotations with homosexual love and relationships, or perhaps he was just writing a good story. This theory, however, is much more complicated than the one at hand and would involve further extensive research.

At the end of the day, it is truly up to the reader as to whether or not a homosexual subtext between John Claggart and Billy Budd exists in Melville’s *Billy Budd*. While there are many clues, Melville never explicitly states

whether or not the two characters' relationship was of a homosexual nature. However, unless Melville wrote Claggart as a very flat character whose anger stems from absolutely no cause, which would be unusual from an author of Melville's caliber, Claggart's feelings toward Billy must have some sort of intentional meaning behind them. Looking at the story through rainbow-colored glasses makes the characters' relationship dynamic and helps to explain the individual personalities of Billy and Claggart. Claggart wants someone unattainable and is aware he cannot have him, so his repressed feelings make him lash out toward the unsuspecting Billy Budd, who does not reciprocate these feelings. While no one may ever know for certain whether or not the homosexual tendencies in *Billy Budd* are intentional or not, the subtext cannot be denied.

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FACULTY/STAFF/ALUMNI RESEARCH ESSAY

First Place

“Crazy Wisdom, or How to Live without a GPS”

by

Dr. George Miller

Georg Feuerstein’s *Holy Madness: Spirituality, Crazy-Wise Teachers, and Enlightenment* details the teaching methods of masters, sages, saints, and holy people from diverse religions and quarters of spirituality who are stranger than characters in a John Walters film whom you would quarantine from good company. What the crazies keenly illustrate are the extreme measures needed to awaken people to wisdom as well as the vast differences between knowledge and wisdom. Awakening inherently involves turning off the GPS (symbolizing the directives of conventions, including those of knowledge), what I shall call “voices from without,” in order to live our lives according to simple intuitive wisdom, or the ineffable within.

A Cross-Section of Crazies and a Glimpse into Their Methodology

The “fools for Christ’s sake,” who believed that faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ would be considered insane by non-believers, are exemplars of crazy wisdom. In the middle of the 6th century A.D., for example, Saint Simeon left the hermitage to assume the life of a “crazy outcast.”¹ One of his crazy antics consisted of tying a dead dog to his cord belt and dragging it behind him² (to symbolize the excess baggage that humans carry).³ Another of his antics took place in Sunday church when he extinguished the candles as liturgy began and, as he was being ejected for this offense, threw nuts at women in the audience.⁴ In the 10th century A.D., we find Saint Andrew sleeping outside at night with the dogs and walking around naked year round.⁵ The 14th century Byzantine saint, Sabas, pretended to be deaf, dumb, and mad for 20 years.⁶ One of the stellar crazies of the Jewish tradition, Shebbatai Zevi (7th century A.D.), performed a marriage ceremony between himself and the Torah, much to chagrin of the rabbis present.⁷ The 9th century Chinese master Lin-Chi startled students with abrupt shouting, beatings, and riddles.⁸ In the Sufi “path of blame” tradition, shaykl Shibli, having renounced his high-ranking government position, held a piece of wood that was burning on both ends and proclaimed: “I am going to set Hell on fire with one end, and Paradise with the other so that men may concern themselves only with God.”⁹ Fellow Sufi Illah-Din of Narnaul wore iron rings around his legs, stood for hours on mounds of garbage, and freed prisoners in the stockades and took their places.¹⁰ To disrupt conventional habit patterns, Russian mystic Georgei Ivanovitch Gurdjief (1877?-1949) made teetotalers drink alcohol, vegetarians eat meat, and intellectuals clean the toilets.¹¹ The 20th century Indian avadhūta (a person unattached and indifferent to the world) Upsana Baba locked himself in a cage for 15 months to atone for his followers’ sins.¹² Nityananda, one of Upsani Baba’s contemporaries, was known for covering himself with dung and consuming it.¹³ Tibetan master Chögram Trungpa (1939-1987) would interrupt the solemnity of meditation by squirt-gunning meditators.¹⁴ One of America’s premiere crazies, Adi Da (nee Franklin Jones), who died in 2008, encouraged promiscuity in order to challenge marriage conventions.¹⁵

Crazy-wise teachers employ enlightened iconoclasm or what Chögram Trungpa terms *yeshā cholera* (crazy wisdom).¹⁶ Crazy-wise teachers utilize eccentricity to “surprise, startle, bombshell, or shock” people in order to challenge conventions and open up opportunities to experience enlightenment or authentic being.¹⁷ Their pedagogy is

meant to dismantle, diminish, and ultimately destroy the safe haven of these habits which continually categorize and separate us from cosmic unity—what we call the “I” or ego.¹⁸

The following description of Adi Da describes the crazies to a tee: “[H]e continually upsets every model/label that he assumes. Da Free John [one of the many names taken on by Adi Da] is literally like a Cracker-Jack surprise in the religious world. Just when you think he has run out of new games, Da Free John comes up with some bizarre clothing to startle you.”¹⁹ The point of the bizarre behavior, as Adi Da says, is a reflection of ourselves:

What I speak is not a reflection of me, but of you. People do well to be offended or even outraged by me. This is my purpose. But their reaction must turn upon themselves, for I have not shown them myself by all of this. All that I do and speak only reveals men to themselves.²⁰

The methods of the crazies shock us in two fundamental ways: either we are shocked into laughter or into indignation. What we consider as serious, we usually regard as sacred, or as Golden Calves. Conventions regarded in a seriously sacred way take on the air of inviolability. When we perceive an object as seriously sacred, the trivialization of it angers us. When we distance ourselves from the seriousness so that it’s not a seriousness directly affecting us, the trivialization makes us laugh because we are not so seriously invested in it. People who take themselves too seriously react indignantly to any humor based on their own behavior. If they didn’t take themselves so seriously they’d laugh at themselves so seriously they could easily trivialize and find humor in themselves. For those who regard modesty as a sacred value, nudity shocks them into righteous anger. For those who regard modesty less seriously, nudity shocks them to laughter (a common reaction to 1970s streakers). If you regard meditation or church as sacred, then you’d be shocked into indignation if Chögram Trungpa started squirting meditators with a squirt gun or Saint Simeon threw nuts at churchgoers. You’d be shocked into laughter if these activities weren’t considered sacred.

The Divergent Routes of Knowledge and Wisdom

The crazies help us realize that wisdom and knowledge take us in different directions. There is much “business and overcrowding”²¹ (from multiple GPS’s) in the knowledge-driven mind. There are ever-more facts and theories, which fit into a vast systematic web. For the crazies, wisdom is iconoclastic, challenging not only social conventions but knowledge conventions as well. When we look at the body of knowledge, we acknowledge it is growing, even though we regularly discard or disprove old theories. On the contrary, the body of wisdom is always shrinking. Wisdom resolves into the simple: the AUM sound of the Hindus, the single-pointedness of yogic meditation, the indescribable Tao of Eastern Philosophy, a manta, a mudra, silence, Kierkegaard’s leap of faith. Wisdom gains by losing, in particular, the knowledge conventions of the ego. Knowledge becomes increasingly complex, while wisdom becomes increasingly simple. The ideal of simplicity is what Buddhists call *shunyata*: emptiness, nothingness, void,²² in which the ego is finally silenced.

For a while, wisdom and knowledge carpool and use a GPS. We learn more to learn even more and more. To discern this knowledge, our minds must become more complex, learning the basic rules of reasoning as well as disciplinary criteria. As knowledge uncritically piles up, wisdom assesses the value of the heap of accumulated knowledge. But in the final stage of wisdom, crazy wisdom, we encounter a wisdom-knowledge bifurcation. Knowledge and moderate wisdom continue to use the egocentric GPS, but crazy wisdom is the “living experience” beyond relativity (*jnana*),²³ which transcends time and place. For crazy wisdom, the GPS must be discarded and

the voices from without tuned out in order to listen to one's inner voice, which is unutterable. For crazy wisdom to learn is to unlearn,²⁴ with the mind becoming emptier and simpler. By the end of the road trip, wisdom is ultimately subjective, intuitive, simple, and private, while knowledge is objective, logical, complex, and public.

A Very Mild Case of Crazy Wisdom—Very Mild

I have been known to walk over desks, perform poetry while in a headstand, break dance, rap philosophy, teach a class in an operating elevator, have students hoist tables over their heads and parade into other teachers' classrooms, pull strangers out of the hallway to participate in class discussions or dance the Waltz, and place a heavy lectern in front of a student so each can have a voice. Could I be one of those crazy-wise dudes? Compared to the crazies I've described, I'm ginger ale to their Jim Beam. Yet my rationale for my actions is the same as theirs: to challenge conventions and suggest a different way of knowing other than what is called scientism, which stipulates that consciousness arises from matter, the metamaterial (properties not found in nature) is unreal, and that the doubting subject or ego determines truth based on objective material evidence.²⁵

Crazy wisdom offers a critique of the assessment-obsessed, scientism-inspired educational ethos that has no place for the immeasurable ineffable. With the blare of Academic Quality Improvement criteria, Characteristics of the Baccalaureate Graduate, surveys, university mission statements, department mission statements, omnipresent rubrics, syllabi, and other requirements droning in our ears, teachers are constantly being steered by the knowledge GPS. The crazies show us that knowledge and wisdom can only take the same route for so long and that there is an inevitable divergence. We realize that the objective, logical, complex, and public path of knowledge fails to get us to the deeper truths of the spiritual universe. To get there, we need to ignore the voices from without that function as GPS's that comprise the ego and instead take the individual, instinctive path of wisdom. While the crazy-wise teacher can help us discard the GPS, each of us must figure out on our own how to navigate without a GPS. The way of wisdom is the craziest road humans can take largely because we actually have to turn off the GPS's and ride the road according to our intuitively simple wisdom, the indescribable within.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Georg Feuerstein, *Holy Madness: Spirituality, Crazy-Wise Teachers, and Enlightenment* (Prescott, AZ: Hohn Press, 2006), p. 14.
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 Georg Feuerstein, *The Yoga Tradition: Its History, Philosophy, and Practice* (Prescott, AZ: Hohm Press, 2001), p. 19.
- 4 *Holy Madness*, p. 14.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 111.

- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 94.
- 15 *Ibid.*, pp. 157-159.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 344.
- 17 *Ibid.*, pp. 161, 3.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 300.
- 19 *Ibid.*, pp. 160-161.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 164.
- 21 Chögram Trungpa, *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* (Boston and London: Shambhala: 2008), p. 65.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 219.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 278.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 232.
- 25 *Holy Madness*, pp. 326-327.

JUDGE'S HONORARY SELECTION

"The Leisure Class"

by

Madelyn Pedersen

Walking down our private streets
The only ones around with concrete
"Peasants," we call them, trudge through sludge
Slaving, doing jobs that don't make much

We consume the goods,
Spending.
Acquiring.
Hoarding things.

Paint us as the fruitful economy
Presenting our own autonomy
Collaborating our own culture
Eating away the city like a vulture

Chicago, the shock city,
Flashy.
Immaculate.
The blasé barbarians.



A Celebration of the Humanities

“There is no true expertise in the humanities without knowing all of the humanities. Art is a vast, ancient, interconnected web-work, a fabricated tradition. Overconcentration on any one point is a distortion.”

– Camille Paglia

