

"Autumn Trees by a Rocky Riverside"
- Jason McDermott

manuscript

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Untitled

Please – a bullet speed through
the matrix of my brain and
annihilate the desensitized threads once
functioning in perfect symphony of controlled reaction
& rapid diatribe. No more, no less,
I'm still the best you're ever had but now
I'm dead, shot in the head as a means
to
an

End this infuriating silence, procurement derived as
drowning in a sea of mediocrity.

Fill the ear, the malformed utterances escaping mouths
pronounced cognitively dead since <i'm at a loss for this part, but I
know where I'm going with the next line)

lipid-saturated contact points brushing past in the masses not realizing
i guess, that i am from a different time, when hygiene was valued and not
a crime.

Engage, righteous martyr, in tales of accomplishment and introspective
contemplation. Engage, fecal paradigm, in gut-soaked convulsions
resulting from your company.

At Maximum A L T I T U D E you shall stand, prancing gleefully to
the orchestration of your internal bandgroupsession that only cease
their harmonious renditions as a means
to
an
End this infuriating silence, precurement derived as drowning in a
sea. This glowing, hive-like, self-inflicting ever-growing
mono-populated... this sea of mediocrity.

Joe Ruggerio

For Real

Grim is the look on life
When all that surround offer nothing that inspires
Moment of indifference becomes moment of torture
Pain and agony become part of the daily ritual
Life becomes a romantic ideal
How can one become what one will be
When all that echoes around are unwarranted criticisms laced with
prejudicial assertions that seek only to
dehumanized, denigrate and destroy
Grim is life
And grimmer life will be if the illness that plagues is systemically
ignored and covered.
May God be our helper!

Obed Addo

This Heart

What right do you have
Invading this fleshy heart,
Standing so dauntless,
With one hand on your hip,
And that duffle on your back,
Staining the walls with your muddy boots?

This isn't the place to relax your crown,
To cushion your pitfalls,
To infect with your endless distress about the world
And all it strips you of...

This heart is mine to conserve.

Anonymous

To my Dearest Karyn on the Occasion of Our becoming Roommates

My Dearest Karyn,

How ever can I express the deep feelings of happiness that our becoming roommates has afforded me! To be able to share in your wonderfully interesting life, and be with you every day of mine simply exceeds any feeling of happiness I have since known in my sorry little existence. And oh the lessons I can learn from watching you in your unselfish ways! You provide me with such a sense of altruistic feeling from your role modeling! I simply want to go out and be kind to every living being, just as you are kind to me! And also to walk in and witness the naked love that you feel for the same guy that I used to also care so deeply about is just heartwarming! (And not just once did I have the extreme fortune of witnessing this, but twice! Could I be so lucky I ask you, my dear best friend?) Along with all of these virtues you possess, you try to better me as well. I wish to thank you for showing me the error of my ways in public in front of so many of our friends, especially the night in which you attacked my character from every direction when I selfishly borrowed your blanket to protect my computer when the ceiling broke forth with torrents of water. Where was my feeble brain that night I ask? But you, being the good hearted and gracious friend that you are, made sure that I knew I was unbelievably wrong to do such a wretched thing! And again, you corrected my horrible ways when I forgot to give you that message that your sister had called while you were out. How dare I not write down that message! Even though I wrote down every other message since I had the pleasure of moving in with you, I was fit to be whipped for neglecting one. Can you ever find it in your generous heart to forgive such a person as myself? Oh, I simply know you must, since you are so open minded! I must apologize my dearest friend, for I must end this letter now, even though I am sure I could count your praises for another ten letters! Until I have the pleasure of seeing your charming, smiling face which is like sunshine itself, I now say so long. I shall count the minutes until your presence next graces my own, your loving unworthy roommate

Anonymous



Vases
Travis Keck

My God my Father,
How sweet Your sound.
I will listen forever,
For as long as your voice resounds.

Where did you come from?
Why speak silently for years?
What You've said is good,
It's a happiness that's brought tears.

Your purpose is my chance,
My decisions are your plan,
You've known this from the beginning,
And you've followed wherever I ran.

You've sent this young lady to me,
And have changed my life forever.
I feel your presence and glory,
It's to this I want to stay tethered.

Bless us Oh Lord,
With your servant's and sight.
Strength, commitment, and happiness,
And true love from only your light.

Wrap us in arms of love,
Rock us when we are weary,
Give us hope should we stumble,
And a shoulder when we're teary.

Bless us with good health,
And quality time well spent.
Laughter, joy, and comfort,
And teach us to be patient.

And we place into Your hands,
That which we hold dear:
Our lives and our future,
And all that we fear.

Be with us oh M'Lord,
May we live this life for you.
Shine a light unto our path,
And for our love we thank you.

P
r
a
y
e
r

By
Disciple

IMAGINE A WORLD . . .

IMAGINE A WORLD
WITH NO LOVE,
NO ONE TO APPRECIATE
WHAT WE HAVE ABOVE.

OR HOW ABOUT A WORLD
WHERE NO ONE CARES;
FEELINGS ARE UNIMPORTANT
PEOPLE SAID WHAT THEY DARED.

MAYBE A WORLD
WHERE THERE IS ALWAYS TENSION,
NO ONE WITH FRIENDS
OR TOO FEW TO MENTION.

NO IMAGINE A WORLD
WITH LAUGHTER AND HOPE;
IF LIFE DOESN'T GO AS PLANNED
WE LEARN WE'LL HAVE TO COPE.

EQUALITY IS PRESENT
NO DISCRIMINATION OF RACE,
EACH NEW PERSON MET
ADDS A FAMILIAR FACE.

A WORLD THAT IS FAIR,
CARING,
EQUAL,
TRUE.
DOES THIS SOUND LIKE A BETTER
ONE TO YOU?

Colleen Yacovelli

“Being a
gracious winner
is for losers.” *Anonymous*

The Wretched

They tear at me.
Slashing, Ripping, Flaying the flesh from my thoughts.
I can feel them.
Hovering just outside my mind's eye.
They want my soul.
They want my loss.
They want my fear.
I stab at the blurred shapes moving in my consciousness.
I need salvation.

I need to cast them into the light.
These demons of mind.
I fight.
I fail.
I fall.

I want to win.
I want the light to save me.
I am alone inside my own mind.
Alone and yet I have company, terrible fellowship.

They hunt.
They hurt.
They hunger.
The claws of these monsters pull at my sanity.
I can feel myself slip farther everyday.

I need a miracle.
Yet I stay in my maddening loneliness.

No one can help.
No one can save.
No one can know.
They close.

My defenses grow weak.
My mind pales in apathy.
They grow stronger.
They tear at me.
They tear at me.
They tear at me.
I've lost...

Dark Knight

Eerie Glow of Nothingness

The last man on earth
Put on his tattered shoes and climbed out of bed
He pulled on a cold metal cord
Bringing to life a long lost friend
A friend and devil all in one
Brining light to all things good and evil
And all that the darkness of day concealed

The light shimmered as if struggling against the pains of life
Crying in utter agony
And finally giving off a glow
That shown across the empty darkness that was the earth
and sky
Casting it's wicked radiance outward
Twinkling through little cracks in the walls

There stood the last man
Staring at the only light in the world
Feeling its pain
It's loneliness
And he began to cry
He felt so guilty
That he turned off the light
And climbed back into bed

Corbin

Everything I needed to know about life I learned in a kingdom of magic.

If you build it, they will come. You can't high-five a mouse, he only has four fingers, and it doesn't really matter because he likes hugs better. No matter how many times you go back and no matter how many times the theme is changed, the birds in the Tiki are still annoying. The three o'clock parade starts at three o'clock, but this only applies if you're standing at the start of the parade on Main Street. The three o'clock parade starts at three twenty if you're standing outside of Splash Mountain, where the parade ends. Tinkerbell does fly out of the window from Cinderella's castle ever night. What she's doing at Cinderella's castle instead of being with Peter Pan in Never-Never Land is a mystery, although Prince Charming is way better looking and taller than Peter. There is a never-ending supply of balloons set free during the day. There is a never-ending parade of children so excited to see their heroes in person. There is also a never-ending line in front of Splash Mountain, while there is never a line in front of It's A Small World. There are four doors leading to Mickey Mouse in his ToonTown tent, but there is only one Mickey. It's that damn Pixie Dust that Lets him be in one billion places at once. Goofy is a dog and he is not married to Minnie and Minnie is not married to Mickey and Goofy is not married to Mickey either, but I hear it's a good love triangle. Again, Pixie Dust applies in the following questions: "Where is Mickey's tail?" and "Why are Chip and Dale a foot taller than Donald Duck?" Walt is looking over you wherever you go. Princesses are in abundance and animals from the Hundred Acre Woods rule the main street. Dwarfs are sleeping in the hundred-degree weather and if you look closely, you may see a Cheshire Cat or a little wooden boy. "A dream is a wish your heart makes." And the kingdom of magic is for those who are young and those who are young at heart.

Jessica Alferio, former "assistant" to the boss woman herself,
Miss Minnie Mouse

A Better Place

“Happy are those who mourn, since they will be comforted. Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth. Happy are the peaceable... Happy are those who have been persecuted... rejoice and leap for joy, since your reward is great in the heavens.”

My name is Sedrick Scott. I am alive. How I got this way is one of life's great mysteries, but I don't really care, I just want to stay this way. In the beginning, I was born. I grew up. I fell in love. I've never felt that way since. I was young then, now I am not. People say that I've something wrong with me, that I'm a little slow. I don't see it that way. Sometimes I feel a little out of place, but it's not like I'm ready to be put away in an institution. I didn't know what the word was then. I do now. The people discussed it with me. Well, not actually with me. It was with my parents. They died a little after. First one, then the other. I don't want to be dead. That's why I want to stay alive. When my parents died I was sad. I think the people may have caused it. When they died I was sad. Then a nice man told me that they went to a better place. He didn't say where. He was a very peaceful man. I loved my parents. I fell in love with someone else once, too. Her proper name was Cristina. She said I was allowed to call her Cristie. Only I was allowed to call her that because I was special. The people said she was slow like me except she was different. I didn't see it that way. I think the people were trying to make her feel bad. I told her not to let them make her upset. She listened to me most of the time. One time she didn't listen and go angry. She got so angry that she started to shake and the people had to come over and hold her down so she wouldn't hurt anyone., I guess. After that they took her away. The people wouldn't tell me where she was going. All the people said was she was going to

a better place. I wish I knew where this better place was. I hope she said hi to my parents when she got there. I miss her. The people say that I am slow, but I think I know what love is. And I know that it can hurt. It did. The hurt has gone away since, but sometimes when I'm lying in bed I swear I can see her there. I was told I was dreaming. I don't know why I dream. I was told everyone dreams, even animals. I had an animal once. It was a bird. He was green and yellow. I took care of him very well and fed him and changed the cage every day. He became my friend after Cristie left. He was my only friend then. He was the best one I've ever had since. Really, he

had since. The people say don't see it that way. was blowing strong I had cage blew over and he window. I haven't since told me he flew to a be a lot of people there. hope he's being fed. I like schedule. Three times a people say I need comes

"The hurt has gone away since, but sometimes when I'm lying in bed I swear I can see her there."

was the only friend I've they are my friends. I One day when the wind the window open. His got out. He flew out the him since. The people better place. There must It must be a large place. I to eat. I eat on a regular day. Everything the packed on the same tray.

The fork is plastic and the knife is too. It's hard to cut food into bites so I can eat it. The people say it's for my own protection. I don't see it that way. I don't see a lot of things the way the people do. It's been that way for a while. The people say that we don't see eye to eye. I looked them in the eyes every time I used to talk to them. I don't talk to the people any more. The people say I'm living with some friends now. I don't see it that way. I've never seen any of them before and they dress and act just like the rest of the people. The people told me that it was a better place. I think I may have been tricked. My parents aren't here. Neither

is Cristie or my bird. Maybe they are in another room. That must be where they are. I would have seen them if they weren't. I wonder if they get their doors locked from the outside at night. I wonder how many people are here. I wonder if they have to wear a coat like mine. I'm not cold. The people say it is for my own protection just like the food. I don't see it that way. I smile a lot. One time one of the people asked me why I am always happy. I didn't answer her. I looked into her eyes. She just smiled and nodded. I guess she knew. I didn't tell her. Maybe the better place is in your mind. My name is Sedrick Scott. I am alive.*

Neil Yurkavage

Budget Performance

You try to hold us back,
Restricted by the columns in your
spreadsheet,
Blind to the greater loss of the
spirit and the soul.
Where is the accountability in that?
We are the arts,
And you need us more than you
know.

Terry Zipay, Ph.D.

Dreamscape

It's still raining in my dreams
while the sun hides its shining face.
The ebb of sleep keeps me far away
as songbirds drown in the trees
and puddles from their graves.

The dreary scene blurs and fades,
and a new dreamscape unfolds.
Flowers dance with stars
and trees hold hands with the clouds.
Whispers and breezes mingle
as symbols hide their meanings
behind touches and smiles.

Time flows toward colors and shadows.
Images linger in slow motion;
ethereal sounds spin and swirl.
Light reaches across the sky
to kiss the earthly senses
as my heartbeat echoes in another world.

Kara Chapple

Through
the
Eyes
of
a
Stranger

A man died tonight.
He was not my father,
nor my brother,
nor any sacred kinsman.
He was the eldest of my family,
but family means more than blood
here.
We all remember the tales he wove,
intertwining fiction,
reality,
and a little bit of magic.
And now,
as I stand over his funeral pyre,
the tales are retelling themselves
in my mind.
Our entire clan
shall miss him.
Deep within the forests,
even though they be
far from here,
the sounds of lamentation
ring out –
the crying of gypsy tears.
A new life was brought to us,
But one was, in turn,
taken away.
A beautiful young woman,
splendid dancer as well,
who had not yet danced
twenty years,
just gave our family another dancer.
The mother, however,
took her dancing tambourine
with her
to the place beyond the tears.
With the newborn babe's first cry,
we all heard it.
Buried deep inside her first
use of sound,
hidden among her cries of fear and disorientation,
was the sound –
the breaking of gypsy hearts.
Our caravan was shunned yesterday.

We set camp not two weeks ago,
and already we were forced to break.
“Witches!” they cried.
“Hang them!” they commanded.
We, however, did not see
our crime.
We sold jewelry
and danced
for coins.
yet they would have none
of our beautiful music
and movement.
“We are no different from you.”
we protested, to deaf ears.
Why cannot they see that
our way of life is equally
as sacred as theirs?
The sounds of packing families
were heard throughout the town.
The tambourines and colorful skirts,
flowing rivers of red, blue, and
green,
shall be seen here no more.
Inside our camp, we all heard it.
But the townsmen did not –
the anguish of gypsy souls.

Susan Gilroy

A Simple Kind of Life

I remember as a young child my mother telling me, "A simple kind of life, Madeline, that's all you'll ever need. Life's rough, kiddo, no use adding more drama to it. What you have here is *real* life... *real* happiness."

To me, mother seemed dull and lifeless. How on earth could she possibly be happy here? It's the same old routine: day after day, month after month, year after year. You could set a clock by it. There was no *real* life here... no *real* happiness.

A simple kind of life, huh? No way! I wanted more. I wanted excitement and chaos and turmoil and energy. I wanted things to be fast paced and made ot order and at my fingertips and on my command. I wanted *real* life... *real* happiness. Simple is not for me! I couldn't take that humdrum existence anymore. I needed to get out of that house and out of that town. So I did.

I moved to the city. I found a job, got an apartment and made a few friends. Things were pretty dull for a while. Then I met Charlie. He was full of energy and full of fun. He made everyday a new adventure and I loved him for it. At last, I had found *real* life... *real* happiness. He promised me the world. He said I could have it all if I just trusted him. So I did.

It wasn't too long after we met that I found out I was pregnant. Charlie wanted me to quit my job and move in with him. He said, "No woman of mine is going to work for a living. You belong at home with the baby, that's all." My apartment was bigger and much nicer, but Charlie said that we couldn't afford it and that I should move into his place. So I did.

About four months later, Charlie and I were married in a quiet little ceremony by the local Justice of the Peace. I, of

course, had to give up my new and exciting lifestyle for the baby. Charlie said that he wasn't giving up anything. I was the one who was pregnant, not him. I'd take care of the baby and keep house all day. Charlie would go to work, come home drunk and pass out on the couch. It was the same old routine: day after day, month after month, year after year. No *real* life... no *real* happiness. Things went on that way for a long time. I guess that Abby was about three years old when it all began changing. Charlie started drinking more and working less. Coming home less, too, I might add. I had my suspicions, but Charlie told me to watch myself. "Just mind your business and keep your mouth shut," he'd say. So I did.

Then, one night, I got "the call." She said that her and Charlie were in love. She said that I should get out of his life and that he didn't want me anymore. She said that they were starting their own family, now, and me and my "bastard kid" couldn't be a part of it. I sent Abby off with my girlfriend that

night; and waited. I sat in the dark and waited for Charlie to come home and lie to my face. I envisioned the scene in my mind at least two hundred times. When he walks through that door, boy, am I going to let him have it. But he didn't. He never came home. I sat in that chair for three days and waited. Then I sat there for three more and cried. I was left with nothing – no *real* life... no *real* happiness. I needed to get out of that hellhole. So I did.

A few weeks later, I packed up our things and took Abby to my mother's house: my home. It was just the same as when I left. Nothing had changed. It was the same old routine: day after day, month after month, year after year. You could set a clock by it.

Mother is gone. It must be ten years by now. Just the other day, Abby (now seventeen) came to me and said that she needed more. She wanted to get out of this house and out of this town. She wanted a *real* life. I wasn't surprised. I knew how she felt. She was just like me at that age. All I could do

was look her square in the eye and say,
“A simple kind of life, Abby, that’s all
you’ll ever need. Life’s tough, kiddo, no
use adding more drama to it. What you
have here is *real* life... *real* happiness.”
And, just like me, she said she had to
go. So she did.*

Amy Smeraglio

Organic Chemisty

To think that you’ll pass is silly of you
For your tests will lower that almighty 2.0
But it’s not all bad, one of my favorite things
Is racing to draw all those benzene rings
I think that organic would be so much better
If just one line of notes would contain a letter
All of my notes are just random lines
Made of arrows and shapes and some “equals” signs
It’s the hardest stuff I’ve ever seen
“Why should I care what will bond to propene?”
I never thought it would be this hard
All this Magnesium involved in the Grignard
Every night I pray that I’ll pass
Coz taking it again would be a pain in the ass!

Phantom

Still

Twilight, Twilight, moonlit sky
Mysteries held beneath the night.
Darkness dimming the golden world
As creatures fold into the lurking shadows.

Oh, moonlit wonder allow me passage
Into your world of fantasy
And a great unknown.

I join the spirits of the evening wind
Flying into a realm that reaches beyond this earth,
And break into the heavens
Where I rejoice this freedom.

Jenna Reuss

Souless

I am stagnant under his vicious eye.
He circles me like a craving vulture,
waiting to devour a premature carcass.

Can he really see through me?
My naked skin shivers,
And beneath, my soul quakes.

I am lost to this world of humanity.
Gone from sanity
And gone from sin.

I take with me a part of him.
As he lingers on this earth
Devouring and preying upon another.
Souless is his touch
And heartless are his words.

It's obvious
I'm not a beauty queen.
But you call me
beautiful.

I may not be
the prettiest or
the sexiest
but you love
the way I am.
The curve of
my hips.
The taste of
my lips
and everything
in between.

I can't wear
sexy clothes.
I won't wear
short skirts.
Baggy jeans,
extra-large tee shirts
and sports bras for me,
thank you.

I'll never wear
a gorgeous dress
to my senior dinner.
But you love
everything about me.
Beauty is in the eye of

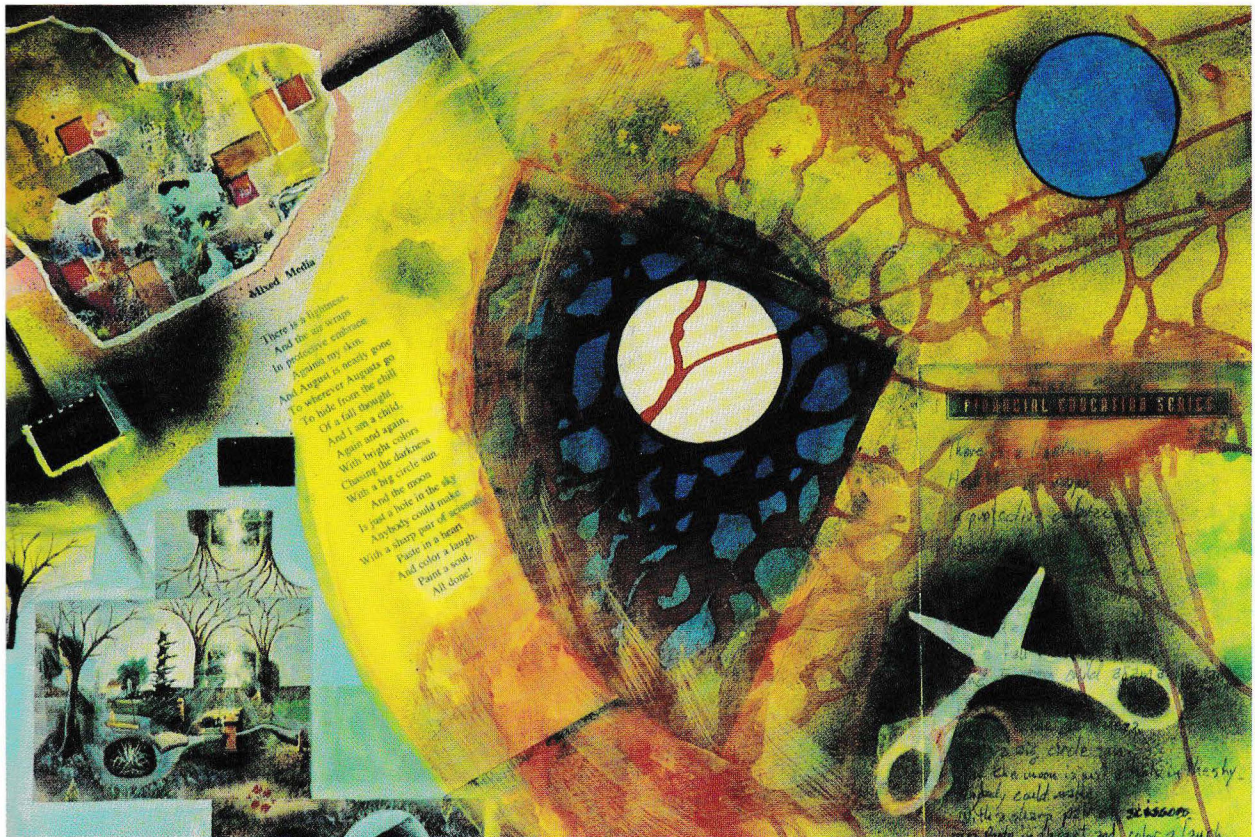
...you call me beautiful.

the beholder,
yet you are the
only one
who beholds my non-
existent beauty.
You love
the curve of
my hips
the taste of
my lips
and everything
in between.

...you love the way I am.

Shadowed Beauty

Susan Gilroy



Terry Zipay, Ph.D.

Mixed Media



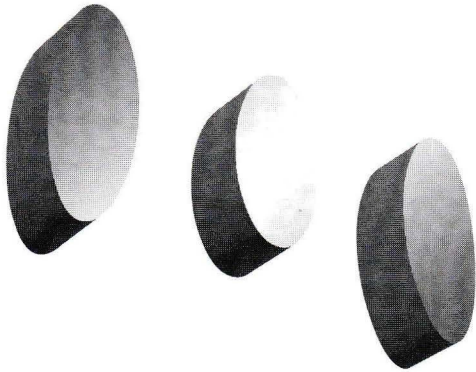
Katrina Protheroe
Untitled



Helen Dwane
Untitled



Angela Mikulski
Technology



The acorn descended, sifting gently from the ground,
met the sky and shattered, unobserved and unbeknown.
Aimless whispers breathed of silent gods disseminated
the brittle bark fragments of the infinitesimal seed.
There upon divesting the likes of the woman sheathed within.

Delicately engaged in but the simplest of tasks,
perched upon naught but silver torrents of blind intuition,
She lies back, weaving into her young double-edged tapestry,
the cosmos abounding her. Devoid of expression.
Wired by labor, succumbed to the moment, channeling its will.

Betrothed to the hand of time, cloning its signature kinesis
with cycles spired by her own effortless needle.
She welded the temporal into the physical, and gave birth
to unity. Then rose down to marvel, fixated upon the cloth.
Its lone, eternal witness.

And chaos made sense.
The acorn about her immediately restored.
And all was as was before the end had begun.
Before a consummate melody had riven asunder,
Before nature knew gender.

Brian Kelly

Muchacho X: Mr. Right?/ Mr. Wrong/Mr. Eh?

Sweet talker or sincere?

I only talked to him twice.

Says he wants to be my friend. Is this true or does he want something from me? I've only spoken to him twice and he completely broke me. Maybe it was all the crazy emotions I was feeling from the last 2 days of my grandmother's funeral that let me fall for him.

Muchacho X hardly knows anything about me: I go to a nice American university, live away from my parents, bilingual, he thought I was physically attractive, found my accent amusing.

Does he know... how obnoxious I am? I listen to metal and rap more than I listen to mainstream? It's been 4 years since my last date? I talk back to my mom? I curse like a truckdriver? I don't usually dress the way I did when I met him? I am not the typical girl? I'm hopelessly in love with him and I don't know why?

What I do know about him: physically attractive, charming personality, has a great singing voice, is tri-lingual (Spanish/English/Portuguese), lives next door to my cousins, used to race bikes for his country, wants to go into communications when he goes to university, wants to spend Christmas Day in the U.S. with snow on the ground, believes that aliens do exist.

He wrote back and he claims that I am a good friend of his. I don't feel I'm a good friend of his – I feel I have an intense crush on him, but I don't feel we are friends yet.

My mom says people over there welcome new people into their lives with open arms, they always put their whole hearts into their relationships.

I feel like I've cheated. I just happened to be in South America, when he happened to walk by while my cousin and I were talking out on the patio, he happened to find me attractive and now he waits for my replies everyday.

My friends tell me I should be a little more romantic and stop analyzing all of this.

If you think about it, I would never even consider going out with a kid like that in the US: no High School diploma, drives a taxi for his father who is sick, lives in a bad neighborhood, is poor and probably will be poor for the rest of his life.

My mind keeps telling me that his will only work out if I try to change him completely: make him move to USA, get him into college, show him how I really am and make him deal with it. That sounds cruel doesn't it?

So, I guess I'll save up my money to visit my cousins and while I'm at it, visit Muchacho X and see what he's really all about. Only then will I know if he was worth writing about.

Rosemary D. Cabailas

I am standing on your bubble that is a neverending revealer of rainbows that you throw at others who simply love your colors but I see the spots without the color without the rainbow and the very second I try to point out this void to another you change the lightning to suit your needs and another rainbow is spun I want to pop that bubble with a stab of truth about yourself that you really aren't what you think that you are, that you are a self absorbed person with an egocentric view of life. you are the center of your world and all others are made to bow to your commands isn't that right princess?? or is this really the void on my bubble showing through now?

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Nina Kocylowski

Each time she moves her feet,
the this-year's-new, but muddy white sneakers
squeak, wet from melted snow.
She crosses her legs like a pro,
dutifully hiding whatever might be seen
beneath the regulation length uniform skirt.
She's waiting for a music lesson,
Flipping through a large anthology of the masters,
No doubt imagining when she'll be able to play
the piece in the very back (the hardest one),
full of 32nd notes.
Perhaps in a few more years.

Her hair is natural blond,
wavy and unstyled, falling just below the chin.
It's frizz tells me she's not yet learned
to carry a brush in her backpack.
Eyebrows unplucked, lips unglossed,
Skin still oily and unpowdered.

Sweet, young innocent
you are at the breaking point –
Beautiful and oblivious.
Today you revel in music and knowledge,
The fun is playing.
Tomorrow, all too near,
you'll strive for age and beauty,
The want of materials and popularity soaring,
self-esteem and confidence diving.
And although you are perfect and satisfied
in every way, sitting pretty here in the lounge,
right here in front of me,
Next week you may not even be here,
anthology forgotten,
finding other, more important things to do.

So beauty,
I'll savor this moment for you,
As someone once did for me, I'm sure,
While you sit, oblivious and in perfection,
The portrait of divinity,
On the brink of adolescence.

Shaolin Soldiers, Part 1

The phone rang abruptly, startling Booker. He struggled to open his eyes and finally answered it.

“Hello?” he mumbled. The voice on the other end was anxious and vibrant. “Hey asshole! We’re late!”

Booker focused his half-open eyes on the clock and immediately jumped out of bed. Forgetting to hang up the phone he literally wrestled into a pair of baggy khakis. He then ran out the door and met up with Link who was still talking into his cellular phone on Booker’s front porch. Together they approached Booker’s car. They liked to call it “The Chariot” despite the fact that it was a piece of shit. It was a 1987 Honda Accord with manual locks and manual windows: the Rolls Royce of the Schmuck Together they got into the car and then were off.

Link and Booker had been friends for as long as they could possibly remember. Booker was a subtle spoken guy who took life in strides. He was never concerned about his future because he knew that he wanted to be a fireman since he was 5 years old. Many kids say that they want to be a fireman when they grow up, but who the hell actually follows through with that dream (besides firemen, of course)? Link was a different story. He was very outspoken and tended to dominate conversation. Some people said that he resembled an older Macaulay Culkin and that used to piss Link off. After all, who wants to be associated with the kid who sued his parents and got married and divorced all by the time he was 18? Link certainly didn’t. Nevertheless, the two boys were always together and everyone knew that. They hung out together, they dropped out of community college together, and they both worked together. Link began the conversation, as usual.

“You got money?”

“Yeah,” replied Booker, “Sold some Q.Z.’s last night. I got over 120 bucks.”

“HA! Weed? Weed’s for amateurs. Special K. Now *that’s* where the money is. Weed... pti!”

“Explain.”

“Well Bookski, the times have changed. Our economy is headed right into a recession so you gotta squeeze every last penny. That girl Serenity that I met last week, her dad’s a veterinarian, ya see, so she actually steals Ketacet bottles right from his office. She’s good, too. Sometimes she can get three or four bottles and other times she can get up to ten at a time. After that, she sells them for roughly 40 bucks a pop. Once I purchase my bottle I head over to Luis’ house. His mom works all day so it’s a good place to cook that shit up. Ya grab a standard casserole dish and dump the liquid in there. Throw that in the oven at about 350 degrees for a while. You have to keep an eye on it, though, ‘cuz Special K can burn easily and that’s the last thing you want to happen. Not only do you lose the drugs, you also gotta house that reeks of burnt cat tranquilizer. Once it starts precipitating is when you remove it from the oven. Ya know, like when it crystallizes. Leave it on the counter to cool for about a half-hour so it sets into place; just as if you were making brownies. After the half-hour is up you go get a razor blade and scrape it from the dish onto a glass surface. A mirror will do. Chop two white aspirin into it so that the ratio is even when you start bagging it up. You have to bag it in dime bags or else no one will believe it’s Special K. Sell each bag for 20 dollars and you’ll come up with maximum profits, my friend. A bottle for 40 bucks and you can usually get about twelve dime bags per bottle, so that’s 240 dollars altogether which translates to 200% profit. It’s fuckin’ beautiful!”

“That’s all there is to it, huh?”

“That’s it, but if you wanna keep wasting your time with marijuana then be my guest.”

Booker rolled his window down and lit up a cigarette. He started thinking about Steve Martin movies. One of his favorites was *Dirty Rotten Scoundrel*. The part where Michael Caine’s character keeps hitting Steve’s character in the legs always got to

Booker. Without realizing it Booker laughed out loud.

“The fuck are you laughing at?” inquired Link.

“Huh? Oh, nothing.”

“You ass nugget. So are you still on your little Andrew Dice Clay kick or is that over?”

“Nah... I still got it going on. He’s the king. Everyone knows that”

“What!?!? How could you be so naive? Everyone knows that Sam Kinison is the king. Don’t you remember the wars in the 80’s that those two had? On stage, offstage, and on the Howard Stern show, man, they were always going at it. But Sammy always put Dice in his place. It wasn’t even a challenge for him. Dice blatantly ripped off Kinison’s act. Damn, I thought you had more sense than that. I suppose you’re gonna tell me that Bruce Lee is better than Chuck Norris, too.”

“Ya damn right I am. Bruce Lee abused Chuck at the Roman Coliseum in that movie ‘Return of the Dragon.’”

The two boys drove on passing by rest stops and forests and Caravans and such. One thing that caught their eyes was a black guy driving a jeep with his shirt off. They felt that there was no need for that. Naturally, Booker felt it was necessary to let the guy know this so he honked his horn repeatedly. It didn’t get his attention so they decided to take their shirts off and keep pace with his car, making like nothing was unusual. The guy finally looked over and gave a look of disgust. Then Booker sped past him and they put their shirts back on. For the next hour they discussed a number of topics. The Holocaust vs. the Inquisition, Burger King vs. Wendy’s, and Denise Richards vs. Reese Witherspoon.

“That dirty slut?” barked Link, “You think *xhe* ¥ better than Reese? You’re crazy, dude!”

“Yeah man. She’s hot.”

“Oh yeah? Would you let her give you a Rusty Trombone?”

“A what?”

“A Rusty Trombone. Let’s say that you’re with a gift and you’re sportin’ maaad wood. You get that girl to get on her knees, but not in front of you. Get her behind you so that she’s eye level with the ol’ vertical smile. Then, you take her hand and have her start rubbing you off, like she was playing the trombone.

The rusty part is when you tell her to lick your dirty starfish so while she's doing that she's also giving you a hand job. Hence, the Rusty Trombone."

"That's fuckin' gross. You ever get a girl to do that to you?"

"Nope. There are certain things that even I wouldn't subject a girl to. Pull over at the next stop. I gotta take a wicked piss."

After stopping at a rest stop the two boys pressed on, braving a rainstorm. Link fell asleep and Booker was finally alone with his thoughts. It was quiet and Booker was only concerned about reaching their destination. It would be a while until then so he started to daydream... *

Ryan Gurian



Jessica Alferio

Untitled Wood

Waiting by the window for the woman who does not come,
With growing anticipation my heart beating like a drum.
God knows just where on his own green earth could this woman be.
I whisper "Is this her?" to myself with every car I see.
Is she late or did she change her mind; the who, what, where, and
why?
My cigarette burns and my heart yearns with every passerby.
Her car broke down, she hit a deer, or even another man;
Keeping my mind occupied with any excuse I can.
Maybe she isn't feeling well, maybe she ran out of gas.
Either way she isn't here, so I pour another glass.
"She'll be here," I tell myself and take a few more sips,
Wishing instead of Whiskey I was tasting the woman's lips;
Wishing instead of a glass my hands were around the woman's hips;
Wishing the back of my neck were caressed by the woman's finger
tips.
She'd have called if she wasn't coming, or even an hour late.
Well it's two hours now and she's not here. I suppose that it was fate.
It's useless I guess. It's useless I think. It's useless now I know.
I'll finish my cigarette and drink and on home I will go.
Upstairs to bed and I'll pass out, feeling down and glum
For waiting by the window for the woman who did not come.

Waiting by the Window

Anonymous

Banquet for One

Bob was driving to the supermarket. He could hardly wait. Bob loved going to the supermarket. It was a part of the ritual he loved deeply, but then again, Bob loved every pan of the ritual. As he was driving through the mid-day traffic, he fielt the adrenaline rush he always felt as he was going to the supermarket. Bob reveled in the excitement, anticipation, and even the touch of fear he felt when tie was going to the supermarket. The fear stayed with him though; he could never shake it. A part of him realized thru the whole ritual would not be the same without the fear, but another part of him wished it would go away.

They all know what I'm going to do, they all know what I'm doing, he thought as

he looked at the other drivers. If one of the other drivers made eye contact at a place like a stoplight, Bob would feel like that person knew even more about what he was doing than everybody else did. His mind reasoned that they didn't really know, nobody could, but he could not help thinking that they did, and lie could not stop feeling guilty. The guilt was another part of the ritual he would have liked to get rid of, but he knew that, like the fear, the guilt was part of what made the ritual so exciting and fulfilling.

Bob drove down the William Floyd Parkway and made the right into the Path Mark. He found a parking space for his Ford Festiva and parked. He lifted his large bulk out of the cramped automobile. Everyone who saw him either getting out of or getting into his tiny car thought the same thing; how does such a big guy fit into such a small car? Bob wasn't really a huge person. Overweight, but not huge. However, watching him maneuver into

his tiny car made him seem twice as big. Bob procured a shopping cart and made his way inside. He smelled the familiar scent of the Path Mark. He loved

that smell that all supermarkets seem to have, a strange combination of produce, freon, and bread. Bob looked at the produce as he began his shopping. He didn't feel much in the mood for vegetables, but lettuce would be nice. Bob selected a nice plump head of lettuce and placed it in his cart.

As he did, he noticed a young mother glance at him as she walked towards the rack of lettuce.

"He didn't feel much in the mood for vegetables, but lettuce would be nice."

young mother glance towards the rack of

She knows, thought. Bob made his case. He grabbed a large large container of three containers of hadn't found what he never used it, but great addition. Then he

somehow she knows, he way over to the dairy jar of Cheez Whiz, a cottage cheese, and yogurt. But Bob still was looking for. He had thought it could be a noticed it, right next to

the jars of horseradish, off to the side where they keep items for which there is not a lot of demand. Guacamole dip. It only came in one size, and it looked pretty small, so he grabbed four. As he did, he picked up a jar of horseradish.

Not a bad idea, he thought. Bob made his way across the store. The other items he needed were at the other end. As he passed people, he thought the same thought he always thinks.

They know.

Somehow they know.

A young couple, an old lady, a group of three nuns, a boy of about eight, a stock boy: he thought they all knew.

Bob turned down the cereal aisle. He was standing in front of the wall of different cereals, stroking his dark beard and trying to decide which kinds he wanted, when he noticed a young girl looking at him.

They know, they can tell by looking at me. I wear it on my face like a sign. Even this little girl, she can tell, and she thinks badly of me. They don't know me, and there's no way they could possibly know, but they all do. They know why I'm here and what I'm going to do, Bob thought with a shudder. He smiled at the little girl and she smiled back. She carefully took a box of Lucky Charms off the shelf and ran down the aisle. After watching her leave, Bob took a large box of Cap N' Crunch, a large box of Cheerios, and a box of Rice Chex. He had planned on buying a box of Lucky Charms, but couldn't bring himself to after watching the little girl get one. He would not be able to complete the ritual if he had the innocence of the little girl on his mind. Bob went to the next aisle and placed two three-liter bottles of cherry cola, a three-liter bottle of ginger ale, and a bottle of Coke in his cart. He proceeded to the check out counters, trying not to look at anyone. He would have enough trouble at the counter without thinking about others.

Bob found an empty lane and placed his groceries on the belt. The middle-aged woman behind the cash register didn't look m him, and Bob was grateful. This was usually the part of the exercise he found most terrifying; the look of the clerk checking him out. Bob believed the store clerks knew what he was doing better than everyone else he encountered.

He paid for his groceries with a minimal amount of contact and rushed to the car. Placing the groceries in the back, he struggled into his Festiva and began drive home down the William Floyd Parkway, anxiously anticipating what was to come.

Bob pulled into his driveway and parked the car. Grabbing his grocery bags, he ran inside his house, slamming the door behind him. He placed his bags on the floor in the living room. Bob began the pre-ritual preparations. He made sure all the doors were locked, all the blinds were drawn and all the windows closed. He returned to the living room with a large sheet of plastic he dug out of the hallway closet. He spread the plastic over the living room carpet. Once he was sure the plastic was covering every inch of the living room floor, he pulled each item out of the grocery bags. He disposed of the bags in the garbage and placed all of his groceries in a line on the floor. He took off his shirt, revealing his large, hairy gut. He then removed the rest of his clothing, sat down, and began.

Justin D'Angelo
Justin D'Angelo

So I sever it.
Just like that.

Severed the cord, rooted the bond,
sundered the lifeline.

Draining the vessel.

Waiting.

Just lying there sated,
As misery purges itself
from the old sullied temple
through the fleshy newborn sockets.

It is red pudding.

I can smell the acid.
It's a different kind of pain, a familiar taste of pleasure.
No regrets here, none I dare identify.
None on my behalf.

Over soon, it will be.
Though had I right now the lifeblood to propel such a feat,
I think I might have smiled.

Might have.
But for now, I just close these little eyes.
Waiting.

Alternatives have failed me. Sustaining my decision,
Swimming in truth and for once I can see it.
Wisdom for I have figured it, relief now that I've found it.
Certainly I should smile.

Warm wet scarlet tempest.
Sheath me here no longer.
I am now an umbrella that has fallen in the puddle.

The lotion is rouge and its caresses are warm.
Only a little bit now left to go.
A wise course of action,
Divorcing my blood.

Only a Little Bit Now Left to Go

Warm wet scarlet tempest.

\Though the heart flutters yet firmly.
As the veins pulse to empty, so the void fills my soul.
Quickly and quickly, although not quick enough.
Almost complete. Only a little bit now left to go.

Perhaps I should smile.
Perhaps I should not.
Perhaps it will kiss me.

Perhaps I should smile.
Perhaps I should not.
Perhaps it will kiss me.

Minutes are walking.
The whole clock passes by.
Say hello to my family,
says the kindred of time.

And I realize, it's been minutes –
Suddenly, it's colder in here.
Though I drown in carnal wine,
there's no temperature inside.

Swimming.
But the muscles are silent, and I think I can't smile.
Oh so much for that smile.

Air... somewhere.
Only a little bit now left to go.
Almost there.

Thoughts turn to tunnels and organs
and algae.
Algae, why? I wonder, what a frivolous
Random notion. At a moment like this.

Regret, yes, regret, no but
where what why when how?
Only a little, a bit left to go now?

Thoughts turn to tunnels
and organs
and algae.

Absent logic, vacant service.

Oh, okay.

Yes, it's colder here, surely.
Shiver, shouldn't we shiver?

Breathe. What. No. Better. Regrets.

Hours. Empty. Die. Soon. Almost.
Back on track, these desultory thoughts.
There thinking had me abandoned.
Mental facilities. Every facility. Smile.
Can't. I cannot smile.

I should... smile though.
Relief, courage, wisdom. Oh there,
I'm thinking. Thinking Again.
There was no hope, no meaning.
But I'm thinking again.
And I'm on the way out.

I'm thinking.
Thinking Again.

Only a little bit now left to go.
Cause I did it.

Found it. Ate It. Bit It. Slit It.
Eyes... oh open are they?
I could have sworn I...
I... closed them months ago.

No, rather – minutes ago.
I found it. The clock.
Thoughts. Empty.
I want I wish!
Empty.

Yes, no.

Aware. Black. Cold.

Aware. Black. Cold.

But I've escaped. Wisdom. But... can't think.

Still... conscious. Voices. Hear voices.
No brain. Wrong. There is a brain.
But blood, No more blood.
No more thoughts.
Not anymore.

Tell me, what speaks?
Voices. Please Listen.
Singing. A choir? No.
Only a little bit now left to go...
Better Off. Yes.

Severed. Yes, that also.
Cry, let us now try.
Response, no response.

Contradictions.

There can't be much left.

Move. Move? Move. Move!
Dam thing won't move...
One eye is... open.
Close, it won't close.
For... how would it know?

Cold. Black. Still Conscious.
Only a Little Bit Now Left to Go.

No. Where did it go?
I think it stopped pouring.
There can't be much left.

I think we'll be leaving soon.
But we're not... not dead yet?
Oh there look now another.
Another small thought. A thought.
A few more...

But Waiting. Lying.

Help.

Could that be an organ I hear?

I just cannot tell. I... I cannot think.
Stop the requiem.

Everything now is clear.
So clear that it's black.
And here I am nothing,
Immobile. Immobile.

Wait. Dead. Almost. Almost?

No... n-no... wait...

But...

Stop the
requiem.

Still, still aware. Cannot Move. Cannot Think.
Cannot Feel. Cannot Hear. Cannot See,
Still Aware.
Dry, but still... inside.

Almost. How long?

No. Not Years. Years?
Help.

Cold... Black... Aware.

Regret, yes. Regret.
This... too cosmic a ramification.
That here,
That I...
That I am still here.

Surely, now soon.
Surely something...
will happen.

I... must... be... buried... somewhere... already?

Damn it, leave now. Oh we just shouldn't be here.
Surely, now soon.
Surely something... will happen.
Something will happen.
Only... only a little...

Cold. Black. Aware.

Years.

Better off?
No, Regret... I... do regret.
Irrevocable.

Years,
Forever.

No... n-no.

Yes.

But...

Yes.

Brian P. Kelly



Travis Keck
Roadway

MANUSCRIPT QUIZ !!!!

1) Finish this poem:

Roses are red

Violets are blue

Sugar is sweet

And SO are _____

- a) you
- b) goo**
- c) mountain dew

If you answered:

- a) You should write Poetry and Submit it to Manuscript
- b) You should write Poetry and Submit it to Manuscript
- c) You should write Poetry and Submit it to Manuscript**

2) Define sarcasim

- a) from the **latin sarca** meaning to cut
- b) it's not you, it's me
- c) No honey you don't look fat
- d) Wilkes Cafeteria Rules**

If you answered any of the above:

SUBMIT TO MANUSCRIPT!!



Katrina Protheroe
Untitled