

manuscript



manuscript

volume LIII
MM

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(with apologies to S. Crane)

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dispenses mirth and sarcasm.

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A Refuge for George

A tainted spot of earth stands at my feet,
held up by the four corners of a mahogany box.
This box—held in geometric perfection by nails—
now knows the scent of a broken structure,
a breath after death,
as muffled complaints issued from the bowels of its only friend.
And the earth that fills the gap between the living and the stillness of the un-still
speaks as it's awakened by my falling tears.

And he complains of his toiling,
the pressure under which he folds,
simply to thread more room for this noisy, wooden box,
which holds my crying friend in its angular, wooden belly.
Now that hungry stomach—that catalyst of his decay
stands as a home for my boy's bones
which carries his moans as they roam the four corners
of his tiny wooden box.

"Yes—and my friends,
to show my worth,
decorated my box with Southern Comfort, packed bowls a' plenty,
and all sorts of other treasures I held
from my death back to my birth."

And as I kneel
to the ground,
crumbling in hurt,
I realize that
all it amounts to— all this man's worth
lies cradled in wooden arms,
decaying in
dirt.

R. Wales



K. Protheroe

Little babe (then)

Little babe so meek and mild
God protect thee from the wild
elfish arrow's poison flight,
and hungry Ogre's fearsome might.
May the Lord thee safely keep
from Winter's cold and Ocean's deep,
wasteful wars of willful kings,
pestilence, plagues, and unseen things.
Grow you up both strong and bold
and lie you down when you are old
to sacred rest from ceaseless toil
'neath shaded shroud of somber soil.

This I faithfully pray Oh Lord
trusting in Thy Holy Word.

M. Himlin

Little babe (now)

Little babe in unlearned state
Reason keep you from mistake
wasteful words of nursery rhyme
and laughing long in nonsense time.
Logic shall protect you well
from superstitious preacher's hell,
machines will fight the world's wars
and Science find diseases' cures.
Grow you up emotionless
with drugs designed to lower stress
and if flesh fails to play its part
replace your weakened human heart.

This account I faithfully instate
trusting in The Interest Rate.

M. Himlin

Nothing but a Junkie

It's a constant craving. It's about that undying need. It is a burning desire to have your heart pounding with excitement upon its arrival. It's a relentless desire to have your vascular system wide open ferociously pumping excessive amounts of oxygen to your brain. It's not about heroin. It's about epinephrine. A substance that dictates Tara's life.

Epinephrine is the body's form of natural adrenaline. It's what is secreted into the blood to produce what is commonly known as an adrenaline rush. And it is that adrenaline rush that drives Tara everyday to do the insane things she does in order to successfully squeeze every minute, out of every hour, out of everyday.

Tara is currently a third year biology/pre-med student, with a minor in chemistry, at Wilkes University. It was, however, a complicated and troubled path that led her to where and to who she is today.

The Origin of the Addiction

This born and raised New York City girl found out at the young age of six that she was born with Mitral Valve Prolapse, a heart condition that doesn't allow the Mitral valve connected to the heart to close completely. This in turn mixes the blood, and in succession makes the heart pump twice as fast as it normally should.

"I should be dead right now," comments Tara.

According to doctors and the medical field as a whole, it's true, Tara should not have clinically lived past the age

of twenty. But here she stands, three months past her twentieth birthday, and feeling perfectly healthy. One would think that in order to have gotten this far Tara must have followed the doctor's orders and led a pretty subdued life. That, however, is not the case. Doctor's told Tara that sports were not an option, that under the condition she would place too much pressure on her heart, putting her life in danger. Tara, however, couldn't resist. She couldn't resist the practices. She couldn't deny the sick satisfaction received after running three miles only to follow by 45 minutes of sprints. She couldn't turn away after tasting her own sweat sticking to her lips, dripping down her fire red face, clouding her eyesight. She couldn't back down from the fury that builds after a fight with a coach. Tara just couldn't hide from the smile that appears after taking out her opponent and not getting called on it. Above all, Tara couldn't turn down the opportunity to feel that rush every time she stepped foot onto the court or out onto the field.

Tara has an evident uncompromising need for epinephrine, the body's natural adrenaline, to pump intensely through her veins as often as possible, at whatever costs. To Tara that life sentence, given to her at the age six, of twenty years meant not that she had twenty years to live, but that she had 7,300 days, (175,200 hours to be exact), to live.

Creating the Fix

For Tara, this addiction can not be fulfilled by merely waiting to step into a game, it's something she craves

everyday. Tara made the decision this past summer, as a result from that thirst, to take the initiative and become an Intermediate level EMT in New York City, in addition to interning in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at New York University Hospital; all in an attempt to send that epinephrine soaring through her blood on a near to daily basis. "It's something I just can't describe," Tara begins. "The rush that comes over you when those tones go off and your heart starts pounding just as fast as the beeping you hear. And then the suspense of the two minutes spent waiting to find out the call you're about to go on. It's just freaking great."

An average of six nights every week were consumed by the hospital and the ambulance because Tara just couldn't haul herself away from the constant adrenaline rush of being in a world where every second counts. She couldn't leave the rush of arriving first on the scene, the power of resuscitating someone whose family thought they were going to die. She embraced the eerie calm of just knowing what to do, without even thinking, when someone's critically injured, the knowledge that someone else is leaving their life in her hands, and anticipation of what's to come every time the tones go off and she leaves to go to another call on the streets of New York City.

The actual calls that Tara goes on range from everything from drunks to multi-car crashes, from chest pains, to a woman who lived in such filth and smelled so horrible she was thought to be dead. That was until she sat straight up and yelled across the room to an

estranged son who had just walked through the door. That, Tara claimed was, "enough to give me, and the others on the scene, a heart attack."

Beyond that though, are the people and their gratitude. Although the uncontrollable rush of epinephrine is adequately felt on every call, the true overpowering surge of adrenaline comes for Tara every time a patient turns around and simply says, "thank you," and flashes an unmistakably genuine smile.

Tara is undoubtedly on a quest for something that most of us are lucky enough to receive once a month in our busy lives. Everyday, every shift, Tara just waits for the next thrill to come along and carry her away.

"I once resuscitated a newborn quadruplet, who was just born three months premature, to a crack-head mother. How can you possibly top that?" Tara asks.

You can't. And most of us never want to try.

Living the Life

Tara's hunger for the sensation of epinephrine driving through her blood goes even beyond her unadvised sports and her medical fieldwork; it seeps into and shines through in her everyday life. Tara is not only currently attending Wilkes University striving for a degree in bio/pre-med with a minor in chemistry, hoping one day to become a doctor, but she is also paying 100% of her own way.

This past summer while two nights a week were given to her internship at the hospital, and four more nights were allotted to working the grave yard shift as

an EMT, two of Tara's days were spent life guarding, three mornings every week were occupied in EMT classes, four more evenings were spent in Physics class, and in addition to all of that, Tara waited tables four shifts each week.

"To me it's not just being busy, it's doing something with my life. It's making that adrenaline rush happen everyday, because I can. I wouldn't have had it, or have it any other way," Tara said.

Maybe Tara's heart condition made her strive harder than anyone else. Maybe her draw to sports could have ended everything. Maybe working as an EMT on the streets of New York City wasn't as risky considering her life sentence of twenty years. Maybe Tara works as diligently as she does, not to achieve something that doctors told her could never happen, but to prove everyone wrong.

Regardless of why, Tara is unmistakably an individual who exemplifies the idea of living everyday to its highest potential. It takes more than dedication and perseverance to accomplish what Tara has, and to do what Tara does. It takes heart, it takes passion, and it takes an uncompromising burning desire to feel her body's own natural epinephrine bursting through her body, supplying explosive amounts of oxygen to her brain, that will not settle for anything less. Tara is beyond doubt, a true born adrenaline junkie.

B. Rosenberg

My First Kiss

The sun shone on what seemed to be a normal summer day. On the way home from the park, Rocky and I heard some one call our names and it sounded like girls' voices. When we got to the building where the yelling came from, two classmates Tina and Jenal, were hanging out their window and yelling for us to come up the stairs. We eagerly agreed, and waited at the door, pacing back and forth anxiously until they came running to open it. Entering the room was like walking through a field of flowers with a million different smells. Obviously they went to their mothers' room to drown themselves in perfume. The smell was so intense we had to open up the window. After greeting the girls, Rocky and I scampered to raid the refrigerator. Eating and talking for a few minutes, we tried to figure out the best escape route in case their parents came back home. The last time we paid them a visit, we had to jump out the window into a tree, to make our escape. After eating, Tina and Rocky went outside leaving Jenal and I alone in the living room. Then it happened.

We continued talking, then out of the blue Jenal says "why are you way over there?" So I got up and sat on the sofa with her. She then turned to me and talked looking right into my eyes. This may seem normal, but it made me nervous. I felt so uneasy that my hands started to cry puddles of sweat. She was talking normally as she stared at me, but I felt she could see right through me. As she talked, I felt myself get closer and closer like I was a

cattfish being wheeled in by a fisherman with mouth-watering thoughts of dinner. She smiled at me and I smiled back left in a daze of mass confusion, while still feeling I was getting closer. Never having been around a girl in this way, I viewed girls as nasty. I never thought of kissing or touching a girl, but things changed as she talked, reeling me in closer and closer. In so many ways I was a virgin, never having done any of the things I saw on television. Clueless to what was happening, I didn't know what to do. My mind wandered many places as she got closer, and I became scared, nervous, and confused. Turning my eyes away, I felt a soft and slow wind with every breath she took. She continued talking to me, but I had no idea about what. Wondering if she was still looking at me, I looked back at her and she was right in my face. I could feel her eye lashes slowly brush my face as she closed her eyes. I began to ask what she was doing as her lips softly touched mine. She still had the smell of perfume on her, but now for some reason it smelled good. I could not believe what was happening. My last thought was, "I wonder if my breath smells like the food I ate." I wanted to know if I should tell her I didn't know how to kiss, or just do it and run the risk of embarrassment. With no one to answer my question, I paused for a split second and took a long breath. Then I pushed my lips onto hers to show her I wanted to kiss her too. Closing my eyes, I felt victorious. I could still hear the hazy sound of the television, and talking outside. The feeling of her mouth opening scared the sound out of my head as if something snatched my

sense of hearing away. Not knowing what to do, I slowly opened my mouth and I let her tongue enter my mouth. In the heat of the moment, I did not realize that I didn't know how to "French kiss." I was walking on new ground, enjoying every stroke of her tongue to mine, and it felt wonderful. She gently placed the palm of her hand on my face to guide me. Her soft and tender tongue felt incredible. I could taste a cherry flavor on her tongue as she lightly stroked my tongue with hers. We only kissed for about two minutes, but it felt like I had died and gone to heaven and came back as a ray of sunshine. As she backed away from my lips, I felt cool breezes go through my body, sending chills up my spine. I was on cloud nine. Suddenly, we heard some one walking up the steps, an adult voice, then keys rattling at the door. This sent my feeling of floating on cloud nine to drowning at the ocean floor faster than you can say "daddy's home!"

Quickly running for the back room, I jumped over the couch, tripped over the phone, and kept on moving toward the back window. Jenal began to distract her dad, and I became a dare devil, jumping out the window into my favorite tree.

B. Miller

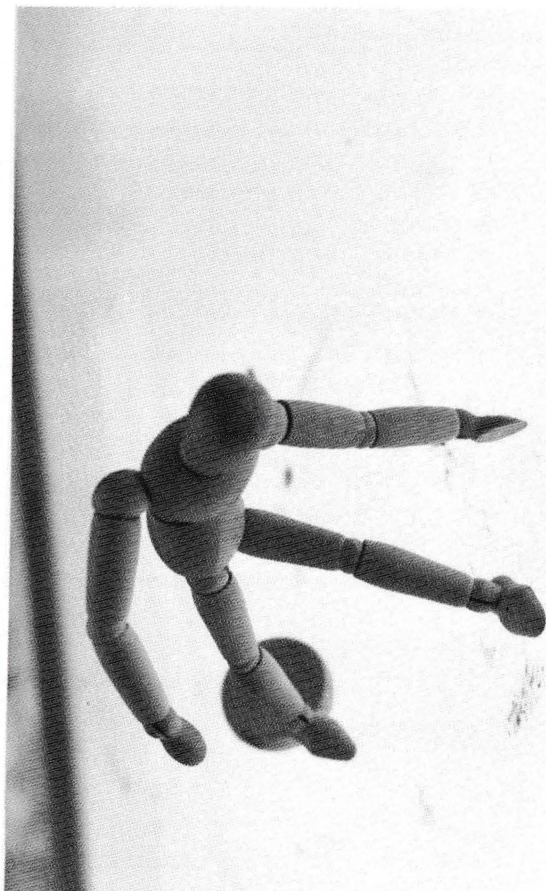
The footprints of sixteen hooves

Many lonely, sleepless nights I've lied awake
dreaming about the "nevermore,"
how me and the other three
four horsemen slept with unclosed eyes,
rooting the ground as we waited patiently
for the daily weep
that cleansed the air we drank in sleep;
to wipe our slates,
we stoked a fire and passed the cup,
oh — that hot handled hole,
that bowl that crafts the poor man's wrath
and turns each brother towards his mother
holding an empty styrofoam cup;
gratefully, we dubbed ourselves an unholy choir,
praising the ashes in our lungs
and wearing swollen eyes like badges of courage;
how happy we were to breathe fire on the tragic few
that were unfortunate enough to lie waste with us
as we struggled, fought and clawed
to hold on to the feelings we chose to hide
in sour music and falsified pride,

which stemmed from beliefs in fairy wings and hobgoblins,
all corrupted to the core,
the creatures that kept pace with the unfortunate four;
but, ironically, a fondness of memories and enforced regrets
strikes a spark in me — a rekindled awareness of my past mentor
that taught me how to rape my body, scar my lungs
and postpone my climax till judgement cum's;
now, the instrument that I know too well,
of which I warn, of which I tell,
can be my bit and bridle no more,
for this horseman shall

"nevermore" endeavor(more)

R. Wales



K. Protheroe

Shore Leave

Shore leave doesn't end in garbage bags
for bright-eyed U.S. Marines.
Engines don't stall on take-off,
ruining postcard scenes.
Joyrides offered for five dollars
don't end up costing lives.
Letters sent home to families
don't make widowed wives.
Bomb loaders don't scour beaches
for pieces of fallen crew.
Waves roll in from the ocean
a bloodless shade of blue,
and Danny Thomas will stumble along
unscathed through his teens
'cause shore leave doesn't end in garbage bags
for bright-eyed U.S. Marines.

M. Himlin

Impromptu Things

I hear this as I step cautiously into the men's room near the food court of the local mall: "Man! This...is...the BEST day of...my LIFE!"

Admittedly I'm pleased-that whiny and throaty statement was definitely the funniest thing I've ever heard come out of a stall in a men's room. Well, farts were real funny when I was younger, but this is different. I guessed the kid to be around five. "First we go...to...JOEY'S, and THEN...wecometotheMALL...and, and, and there's a MERRY-GO-ROUND! This's the best day of my life. I really think."

Now I'm really happy, I'm dumbfounded! This voice was the epitome of happiness, of simplicity, of joy. When was the last time I saw anything so clearly, or so innocently, what a gift! I could not wait to meet this little guy. It made me glow to just think about Joey's, a merry-go-round, and the best day of my life. Why can't it stay so simple? I had to see this kid! "And, and I didn't know about any of it! I, I, didn't know. I didn't know where we going, and...and this is, I LOVE this."

I was in awe; what a show! As the door opens, I turn and see my little friend, the boy who made my day by basking in his innocent and ignorant glory. He had on a bright red button-down sweater with a white collared shirt underneath that made him stand out against the pale tile of the restroom. I was not disappointed. He looked up at me smiling, one tooth short of a row on both top and bottom, and went for the sink. He was awesome. His

huge brown eyes were opened wide as if still surprised, and his freckled cheeks jiggled back and forth as he spread the soap between his hands. He was perfection. He was fat, and that made it even better. He dried his hands and met his father. "Dad," he said, as he looked three feet straight up, "I didn't even know."

I was so pleased with the timing of my bladder. I looked at the father, expecting to get a smile back, an acknowledgement of how damn cute and innocent his fat son is, how great it is that he is so happy, and that it took so little.

Just a small recognition of my inspiration! No such luck.

"I know son," began his father. "Impromptu things usually are quite fun."

The boy's smile faded slightly. His head suddenly leapt off the scruff of his upper back, to its thinking position, which was not unlike that of a confused puppy trying to figure out his master's command. His head cocked back into place.

"Huh?"

"You know son, impromptu. Spur-of-the-moment, all-of-a-sudden. Com'mon, let's go."

M. Schreiber

Y2K-A Love Saga

Oh yeah, that's right! Caress me, touch me. Push my buttons, baby. You know how to make me happy. Wrap those words around my screen, no need for you to type enter.

All day long I sit here, being violated every few minutes by the people who "need" me. People have no consideration for my feelings. No one ever stops to ask me if they are typing too hard or too fast for me to respond. They get fed up because they never learned to type properly. Of course, it's my fault for the typos. Sure, blame me... WHATEVER.

You, yes you. The ones who sneeze and then type all over me, spreading germs to the next user, or should I say victim. It's like transmitting STD's. Only there are no condoms for keyboards. **Note to self- idea, a computer condom for protection. File that somewhere in my memory.**

I could tell you so much, but no one ever asks. I remember everything that is typed on me. From research papers to ludicrous emails, to those crazy chat rooms. I see you visiting those porn sites. www.YouAreAPervert.com. The internet is a crazy place, I tell ya. I have seen it all, played all the games, solitaire and the like. Really, how come no one wants to play chess against me? It's so discouraging.

Click, click, click...it's all I hear. I wish somehow I could voice my own opinion. Sometimes when I am really mad, I make one of my keys stick. Or worse yet, I'll freeze the screen. Ha, ha, ha...

Ahh the screen... why won't she notice me? All day long, I sit right beneath her. It's like she can't even see me. That's impossible though, every thought typed on me, she knows. She sees me, right underneath her. I think I love her... My monitor. My one, my all, my reason for typing. I try to send her messages, yet she ignores me. Only sometimes, she collaborates with me to frustrate a student trying to type a term paper an hour before it's due. She'll freeze her screen, they really hate that. SHE, she may freeze the computer, but she freezes my heart too.

I think maybe she is having an affair. Maybe she's sleeping with the mouse? Or that damned tower. He has such a high and mighty "I am better than you" attitude. Just because he has the disk drives, and all the memory. Screw you, tower! I hope a disk gets stuck in your drive buddy!

AHH, to be the keyboard. Good night monitor, I love you.....

D. Brandt



J. K. J. W. E. I. I.

Crystal Dreams

Crystal tears and crystal rains
kaleidoscope dreams
prism rainbows impossible to catch
chasing the sun beams
that move hourly across the floor.
Tears and rain blend together
in a waterfall of harmony.
Sobbing stifled by a thunderous heart
beyond broken or shattered
pieces lost or washed away.
A shadow without a form
breaks the kaleidoscope dreams
shatters prism rainbows
stomps the sunbeams
and the sun sets.

Darkness envelops your world:
embrace the darkness and fear
starry night and placid moon shimmer
their light calms
but the glow is so far away.
As a distant clock
strikes an early hour.
Wishful thinking
is this reality?
Certainty is lost as the realization sets in
this is a dream from which no one wakes...

D. Brandt



K. Protheroe



K. Protheroe

The smile and its Chemical effect

Oh!

What do chemicals have to do with a smile?

A smile, the physical expression of an emotion,
is a resultant of chemical stimulation
and reaction in the body.

The process of stimulation and reaction

I need not explain nor do you need to know.

All I need to tell you is,
you have a beautiful smile.

O. Addo

Iced Tea

I came into town during a mid-afternoon iced-tea break
between friends, the heat was oppressive, and extremely
unusual for early May.

The labor pains came on quickly, and they were intense.
Her labor was long; I am told that twenty-six hours had
passed before I finally budged.

Oh, but then my legs clumsily came out, my toes showing
before any other part!

They told my mom, "She's breached, she's coming out backwards!"

Though I don't remember anything, I can listen to this story
as my mother repeats it, and wonder why my mom never took any
notice of the omens that plagued my birth.

K. Ochreiter



K. Protheroe

Latchkey Kids

There was a knock at the door only a minute after I had shut off the Nintendo. My mom wasn't home yet and I didn't know who it could be so I reluctantly opened the door. On the other side there was this huge chested man in a dark tan shirt with a shiny shield pinned to his left shirt pocket. At the top of his dark brown pants rested a holster with what seemed like a very large black pistol on one hip and on the other a very hard black club. No sooner did I have the door half opened when I looked up at the man as he boldly stated, "Sir, I am Officer Keith Fritzingler from the Fogelsville State Police Department. I am looking for Nathan Marzen. You him?"

"Um... yeah...I guess."

"I want to ask you a few question pertaining to an incident that happened earlier today. Is that okay?" I think I was scared to death and didn't know quite how to respond. I guess I just said "huh?" because he continued.

"A couple of kids said they saw you in the window through the drapes. That was you right? You know anything about what happened?"

"Um...I'm not sure...I was just zoned out in front of the Nintendo all afternoon, Officer."

"Are you sure about that son?"

"Yeah, I didn't see a thing...I don't know anything."

"Okay, well sorry to bother you son. Have a good evening."

"Yeah, you too."

besides school and home...nothin'. However, by spring I just wanted to get out into the real world and work everyday and hang in the garage with all the cars and mechanics and smell the exhaust fumes. Ya know, grow up a bit, and leave everything else behind. I still enjoy those exhaust fumes in my nose; even to this day they bring back memories.

I'll never forget that Wednesday: April 23, 1995. I was playing Nintendo as usual. The hood of my '83 dark gray Oldsmobile Cutlass Cierra was still warm when I got into my third game of Super Mario Brothers as I heard the loud roar of the activity bus' pounding diesel engine. The activity bus would bring home the kids who had stayed after to do school activities like art club, debate, karate, cheerleading, and any other sports' team practice. I wouldn't ever take the activity bus because, first off I had a car then, but more importantly you got home at 4:00 and then you didn't have time for anything else. Besides, after school stuff usually sucked anyway. It would ruin your whole day. There were only three kids I can remember that would actually take the activity bus. Beth because she did paintings and thought she was going to be a great artist. She was crazy and that probably had something to do with all the acid and pot she did for "inspirational purposes." Dave because he was on the track team and was always too tired to push in a clutch after sprinting for an hour. And then there was Eddie, because he had this fascination with the karate club they started back in '93 at the high school. He would walk over from the junior high every day to

practice and then catch the bus home. So as I heard the bus pass, its air brakes gave this annoying screech that totally ruined the stronghold Super Mario Brothers had on my blank mind. I got up from my Indian style sitting position that would always put my legs to sleep. I kinda' enjoyed the feeling of having hundreds of needles being pushed into my legs from all around. I walked my stingingly numb legs to the window to see what was up. I saw the big yellow bus about six trailers up to my left, higher on the hill around trailer 212. From the bottom of the hill the trailers looked like a giant zipper. About two trailers to the right I saw Dominic telling a bunch of 5th and 6th graders, one of which was my cousin Josh, how to divide up for a kick ball game. I only knew who Dominic was because he sat behind my cousin Josh in Pre-Algebra, but I'll never forget him. Josh was a smart kid and got to walk to the junior high to take Pre-Algebra during, in junior high time: periods 5 and 6, and in elementary time: recess. He said Dominic wasn't very bright, but overall quiet and didn't do much in the way of disrupting class or actual work for that matter. Josh said he sat there and did just about nothing but blankly take up space.

So Eddie got off the bus and headed down to his trailer, 338 Ventura Drive at the bottom of the hill, while Dave and Beth continued up the hill and on towards home. From my position, in the front window of my trailer (222), I could see and hear everything. The only thing in my way was the sheer curtains that blocked the sunlight on the TV while blowin' around a bit from the

open windows to either side. I didn't want to touch 'em though because it was almost like I was watching real life TV. So much weird shit went on in Glenncrest, and I guess that is why I both loved and hated it. I felt like Mrs. Heiney watching the neighborhood, or as our parents used to call her "the old trailer park queen who had to know and watch everybody." It was a good thing her trailer was down by the park; otherwise we don't know what she'd do all day. So I watched Eddie walk past my place with his lanky frame (at fifteen you get this tallness to you but it takes till your 21, at least, before you really fill out your frame) and continue towards the elementary kids and Dominic. Dominic didn't look much different from his other friends, maybe, if he was lucky, he had an inch or two on them, but how much difference can there be between a 12-year-old and an 11-year-old or 10-year-old for that matter. But anyway, Dominic became the center of Eddie's attention as Eddie threw down his red duffel bag and black book bag and slowly walked over to the pack of kids that Dominic was splitting up for a game of kickball.

Eddie followed the law of the land, he must of thought, "Dom can't be tellin' these kids what to do. He'll get all cocky and pretty soon be talkin' back to us and then to seniors. Then he'd be in real trouble. Anyway, this'll be fun. I love slappin' this kid around. He takes it so well."

So Eddie looked over both his shoulders to see if there were any seniors around. He woulda' never done what he did if he saw me in the window. I guarantee that. He knew his place and he knew what he could and couldn't

do. He was a good kid and as far as seniors were concerned he respected them and that was all it was really about. He walked up to Dominic, parting the crowd of midgets like Moses parting the Red Sea, but only with a lot more pushing involved and it wasn't quite as miraculous, and yelled somethin' like, "What the fuck do ya think you doin Dom?"

So Dominic says, "I'm not doin' nothin' Eddie."

"Oh yeah? Then what's with the kick ball, huh? You lying to me?"

Dominic tried to stay calm but began to shake, you could hear it in his voice, "Eddie, I'm not doin' nothin'. We're just goin' to play kick ball that's all."

Eddie mocked him with a stupid voice, "Mur Mur Mur, Just goin to play kick ball, well that's too bad!"

Just then Eddie lunged towards one of the 6th graders and ripped the red rubber kick ball he was holding loosely in his hands out, and sarcastically asked, "What chya gonna play now Dom...tag? How ya gonna play with no ball?"

"Give it back Eddie. Give me my ball, com'mon. Just let us play, we never bother you!" as Dominic said this, I could tell he was confused from the look on his face. I don't think he knew why Eddie was acting like that, or even why Eddie was being such a dick to him. Eddie just wanted to teach him a lesson and that was to not let the older kids see you having any control over younger kids.

Dominic continued to plead in confusion and frustration, "Look Eddie we just want to play, so give us the damn ball back."

Eddie, apparently wasn't satisfied with how his lesson was goin' because he said, "Are you talkin' back to me? Are you tryin' to tell me what to do? Is that it Dom! You think you're better than me, yeah I'll teach you to tell me what to do, punk kid." They got pretty loud then so I heard every word.

Eddie took the kick ball and punted it as far as he could down the hill. It was sure to have rolled the rest of the way past the park and Mrs. Heiney's place and then out of Glenncrest Trailer Park and into the pond, which was at least a mile down. Now Eddie must have gotten the reaction he wanted out of Dominic because he began to smile and laugh real mean like. Then Dominic got furious, which was always a big mistake in Glenncrest. You just can't let 'em get to ya. When faced by someone older...always bend over and take it. It's just easier that way.

Dominic ran the three feet separation towards Eddie screaming at the top of his lungs, "YOU FUCKER!" He was gonna barrel his entire 5'2" 98 pound frame into the 15-year-old with all his might and he woulda' too if Eddie didn't know so much karate. Without even thinking Eddie side stepped and clenched a fist at his waste. Then no sooner did he have his arm cocked back for a screw punch, when he let it extend and plunge into Dominic's charging belly.

Dominic doubled over and fell to his knees on the grass while Eddie stood over top of him and shouted, "You like that. There's more for ya right here, just get up Dom. Come on!"

Dominic just hunched over on his knees for a while crying and shouted, "FUCK YOU, ASSHOLE! Why do you gotta be such a dick all the time?" I remember that after the first tears began to dry he got up and stumbled to his trailer still whimpering while looking back and I think he yelled, "Go to hell Eddie." His trailer happened to be the trailer almost directly across the street from mine, which meant that I got a prime view of this real-life TV episode. He went inside and locked the door while Eddie followed shortly behind, and behind him the 5th and 6th graders followed like a pack of cubs following their new mother wolf. They had to be shocked, one of their own was talking back to a sophomore, and it was bad. They followed, still surprised, and had to be curious wondering, "How much more can Dom take?" and "what is Eddie gonna do to him next?"

Eddie hopped up onto the 10-foot porch, knocked on the door, and waited for Dominic's reply of "WHAT?" Then I remember Eddie askin', "Can Dom come out and play Mrs. Roma?" He waited a second or two and shouted, "Come out ya fuckin pussy!" Then following his game plan, which was no different than the things we used to do to Eddie when we were younger, he said calmly, "Well then, I'll just sit here and wait for ya! You have to come out sometime ya little shit." Eddie sat down in a half broken lawn chair that was the third part in a mismatched set. I guess he sat there for a while, probably humming some Nirvana tune, while the 5th and 6th graders stared at the scene from the road no less than 15 feet away.

Dominic questioned calmly, "Anybody still there?"
So then Eddie said, "Yeah I'm still here. Are you still there, Dom?"

"Go away Eddie, please go away."

"Why should I leave? You're a big man, talkin' back to me like that. Why don't you make me?" At the same exact time, when Eddie was speaking, I heard the door to Dominic's trailer open. Now the only thing separating the two was a flimsy screen door with one corner of the metal mesh half-torn out. Eddie got up from the chair and stood right in front of the door and said, "Oh, you are a big man aren't you?" Just as he glimpsed at the 20-gauge double barrel shot gun Dominic had half hidden behind his right leg. I seen the gun from my trailer because the sun glared off of the barrels. Dominic didn't say anything. I am sure he looked no different than he did when he was in math class. Eddie, with no care what so ever, continued his lesson, "Oh, what are you gonna do with that thing Dom? Gonna shoot me?" Dominic raised the gun steadily and leveled it with the center of Eddie's chest as every 5th and 6th grader just froze. I can't blame them though I was pretty mesmerized by this point too. That gun shined in the sun like I'll never forget.

Eddie wanted to play more I guess because he ducked down a little while sayin', "My head Dom, com'mon, at least if you're gonna have some balls, aim it at my head. Geez ya stupid fuckin' baby." So as Eddie began to stand upright the barreled end of Dominic's shotgun (it actually was his own shotgun for hunting too) followed Eddie's mouth upwards.

Dominic finally spoke up, calm as hell, "Eddie, leave me alone. Please just go home and leave me alone. I am tellin' ya now, I just wanna play kick ball."

Eddie didn't get the subtle hint, I guess, because he kept at it, "Still tryin to tell me what to do Dom. You never learn, you think a gun makes you tougher than me?" He said all of this as he was grabbing for the dirty lever to open the screen door. It was locked, but it was the only incentive Dominic needed.

"Sure it does."

Click.

Did you ever hear the noise dynamite makes when the farmers are trying to blow up gophers in their hole or tree stumps out of a field? This bang was much louder than that and much more frightening too. Eddie, from point blank range, was knocked 10 feet clear backwards off the rickety old porch and onto the grass. I think he flew so high and hard that the mangled screen from the door landed on the porch before Eddie's faceless 15-year-old frame hit the ground.

I remember that Eddie didn't move. He didn't get up. I sorta expected him to, I don't know why, but I did. I just couldn't accept him being dead. I remember not being able to for weeks. You know one minute he was doing what we all did to each other in Glenncrest and the next he was gone. He was nothing but a lifeless frame lying on the ground in a strange position. One leg was underneath him while his right hand looked like he was trying to grab his face and the left arm lay limp out to the side. I can't imagine the look Eddie had on his face...

I could barely remember the remnants of his face after he took the shot to his head. I could only see red everywhere there was supposed to be something like a smile, eyes, nose, or even ears. There was nothing but red and to put it horribly the little bone fragments I could see formed the white rim to a hair bottomed bowl holding Campbell's Chunky Tomato Soup...if there was such a thing. I didn't even notice Dominic anymore. I guess he went back into his trailer, trailer 225 on Millview Road. I didn't remember nothin' too clearly after that. The door was shut and that proved to be enough evidence for me. I finally did remove myself from being frozen in the window. Funny though, it was long after the 5th and 6th graders did, because they were well gone home before I knew what time it was. I musta been lookin' at nothin' through that window forever. I thought it woulda' affected them more, but I guess I was the weakest of the group. I am not sure why it got to me so much though. I left the window and resumed my games of Super Mario Brothers. I had never gotten past level 7.2, but I was told there was a warp somewhere. It somehow didn't have the same draw it once had. The flickering images of turtles and mushrooms no longer were a challenge that mattered. The Nintendo was no longer a drug that took me away and made life so joyful. I played for fifteen minutes, not even long enough to break for a quick round of Duck Hunt. And although I found that secret warp tunnel in level 7.2, and nearly beat the game, I hit the power button around level 8.3 in disgust and watched the little red light on the Nintendo fade to black.

M. Moyer

The Key

So many questions arise when I dig out these old black and white photos. I want to know where you are, who you are with, and what you are doing. I've often heard it said that a picture is worth a thousand words, but these pictures that I have of you are worth a thousand questions.

You look about five years old, in your holster and guns.
Who are you pretending to be? Buffalo Bill Cody?
I can imagine, although I will never really know, that this was a most memorable Christmas for you.
The tree is shining and its brightness is reflected in your face as you smile mischievously, gun in hand.

Now you are older, probably in eighth grade.
It's funny how eighth-graders look so much older nowadays.
You, though, had a very young face.
And even though your lips are not parted in a smile, I can tell that you are waiting for the photographer to signal that you are done, so that you could break out into your laughter.
You always looked so serious, yet those that know you, know that you were almost always smiling on the inside.

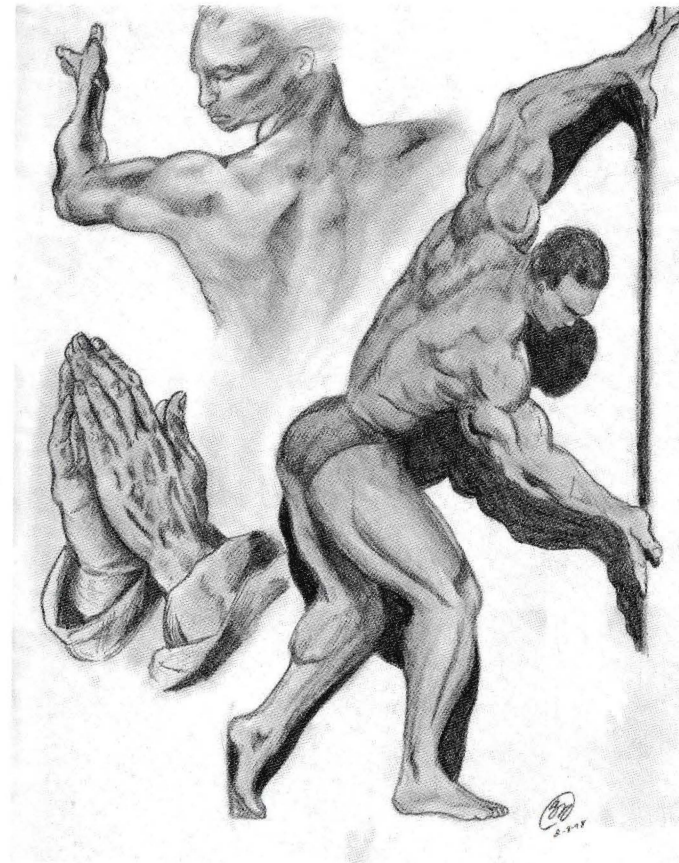
Who ironed your shirt, I wonder.
It looks so crisp and clean, definitely not an indicator of the poor circumstances in which you grew up.
Nor do you look deprived as Buffalo Bill Cody,
smiling broadly beside the shimmering Christmas tree.

Did you like to pretend a lot?
Did you play make-believe in your holster set? I can hear you say, "Aw, c'mon Bill," when your older brother wouldn't indulge your Buffalo Bill fantasy. He never had fun like you because he was too serious. He could laugh out loud, but not like you did. You, you laughed inside and out, and your laughter spread like seeds caught in a wind.

Now you are grown.
You have graduated.
Did they tell you at your graduation that you are called to be a leader, and you must help mankind in his quest for the greater good?
Did they tell you that you are the key to the future?
Did you believe them?
You should have, because you were the key to my future.
You are the key to my future.

I could say that these black and white photographs bring back memories, but they don't.
I know nothing of them, as they are your memories and you are not here to explain them.
I could tell you the truth, and that would be that these old photographs upset me, despite the happiness I see in them. I could also say that looking at these pictures makes me angry, and that would be true too. I am angry because I cannot ask you to explain them because you are gone.
There will be no more photographs.
They are all I have, and yet, they are really nothing.

K. Ochreiter



S. Morrissey

Duel sided

Yes, I understand. (No you don't, why is he such a creep?)
I didn't mean to upset you. (Who cares? What about your own sorrow?)
No, I didn't mean for you to be hurt. (Hurt? As if he has not made you suffer?)
I don't know what to say. (Yes you do, yell at him, tell him how you hate him so.)
Of course I don't hate you. (No, you despise him.)
It's just that... (I'm not a possession to be had. I don't ever want to see you again.)
No, never mind. (Crumble again in his act of heartache.)
I can't help the way I feel. (That's not what he thinks.)
I'm so confused... (No you're not.)
I don't know what I want. (Yes you do, you know you don't want him.)
I'm sorry. (For what?)
I can't help it. (You know it's not your fault.)
What do you want me to do?! (You can't do anything.)
I didn't do this! What do you want from me? (He wants your tears, your life, your soul.)
Why are you doing this to me? (Because he is a creep.)
I can't take this anymore! (Tell him how he hurts you!)
Get the hell out of my life!!! (What have you done?)

K. Startzel

Sipping on a Forty and Wishing for Something Better

Otis Redding serenades me before a secondfloor window above the dark street.
Sipping on a forty and wishing for something better.
I've been wearing sunglasses at night.
You should've seen my baby's face, her eyes would knock you out.
I am having a hard time determining what I want.
Jobs are insignificant, and work is for suckers.
I met a woman and she's so purdy.
She likes to dance and so do I.
The way my grandparents dance.
She thinks I'm quiet and brings it up.
I play coy, and just nod my head.
Sometimes I like to imagine what it would be like to take her to one of those early Appalachian dances.
The ones that were held around the harvest.
I'd imagine that the temperature would be nice enough that we wouldn't sweat, as we gallivant around the gazebo.
We would feel the heat coming from the fire on our face if we got too close.
I would definitely be smelling pies made from the fall crops.
And the whole town would be watching us because we are the youngest couple.
That would be great.
But, now my forty is empty, and the truth at the bottom is...
I am just a poor man, and the son of an Appalachian monster.
I am not built for this kind of beauty.
She could surely do better than this.

J. Kauwell



K. Protheroe

Appalachian Monster

True story. My Father was born in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in North Central Pennsylvania, and he would let me know about his youth. His area is about as rural as one of the original colonies can get. When he was born into the world, he became the youngest of 6 boys, and he was the last son his parents would have. Shortly after him came his only two sisters. By the time he started sixth grade he would have only one brother, his two sisters, and his father.

My father was born to a Mennonite Amish mother, and an Indian Half-breed father. When he was twelve, his mother died of complications from pneumonia. His oldest brother Hal, short for Harold, left shortly after that. You see he was my Dad's half-brother. He was born out of wedlock to my grandmother and another man, but taken in by my grandfather. Anyhow Hal and my grandfather never got along for more than five minutes at a clip, but then again, who could get along with my grandfather. Despite the negativity of the drunken Indian stereotype, it didn't seem to bother my grandfather. He was a ferocious alcoholic. He even drank the day he died of cirrhosis. When my Father was five, he was on a first name basis with all the bartenders in the local bars because they would have to call the neighbor's house and have my Father and one of his brothers come and pick up my grandfather. This is an image I have a hard time grasping, a five year old and a twelve year old carrying their father home, because he is too drunk to stand under his own

power. Being an Appalachian family with a drunken father was hard. Everyone says their parents had it bad when they were younger, and everyone will tell you how hard and salty they are from living the way they did in their youth. My Father was thoroughly destitute, no matter how hard my life will be, it will pale in comparison to his. My grandfather, if he had a job, would spend his entire paycheck in a matter of hours, buying drinks for him and his buddies. For several days, he hadn't even known his wife had died, because that's how long it took my Father and his brothers to find him.

As mentioned earlier, things were a new kind of hard for my Dad, food especially. They would have to steal, and they would steal anything. When my grandmother died, it was taken up a notch. They would have to go to farms and steal livestock, just to have some food. Eventually my Dad would have to become a poacher. He was barely a teenager. It got to a point where two of my Dad's brothers were given up for adoption, because my grandfather simply could not keep all the mouths fed. They haven't been heard from since, although supposedly one of them lives in the Phoenix area, but neither my Dad, nor any of his relatives seem to have any drive to track them down. Within a matter of weeks, the oldest brother my Dad had, that still lived at home, drowned in the river under mysterious circumstances. That left my Dad, one brother, two sisters, and my grandfather. At this point my Father was thirteen. Their house was destroyed in a fire that year. My grandfather's remedy for this was to get thoroughly inebriated and disappear for a couple of

weeks. In this time my Dad and his brother built a new house from logs and nails borrowed from neighbors. When my Dad's only brother that was still around turned seventeen, he ran off and joined the Navy. My Dad left the home when he was sixteen and became a jack of all trades, master of several.

His two sisters still live in the house that he and his brother built, now working on the farm that they used to steal from. His brother, whom he talks to from time to time, came back from the Navy and revealed to my Father that he was gay, he now lies dying from an illness which I am afraid to ask the name of. It took my Dad twenty years to formally tell me that his only brother is gay. My grandfather died of cirrhosis when I was four years old. He couldn't even remember where his wife was buried, due to the onset of Korsakoff's syndrome. When he died he left my Dad three hunting rifles, even though he knew my Dad hates guns and never wanted to hunt in his life in the first place. He thought my grandfather left them to him, just to be an asshole. After the funeral, he had the guns destroyed. He never even went to the funeral, he said he would be surprised if anyone did. His sisters went. To this day I have never seen my Dad at a funeral. I have a feeling that he was glad his father was dead, as though some great terror was removed from the earth. True monsters don't come from any laboratory. They come from an area and a moment, sometimes a movement, but usually a moment.

J. Kauwell

"You Look Familiar"

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manuscript



J. Kauwell



manuscript