

SPRING 2005

# Manuscript

Wilkes University

## 1947 Foreword

**W**I T H this issue of MANU-  
SCRIPT a new publication is  
launched on the Bucknell University  
campus in Wilkes-Barre. Those who  
have been responsible for its coming  
into being earnestly hope that  
through your efforts and the efforts  
of those who come after you this  
magazine will develop into a college  
tradition of which we may all be  
proud.

*The Editors*



MANUSCRIPT

Spring 2005



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WILKES-BARRE, PA

Dedicated to the Wilkes University community, and especially Dr. Mischelle Anthony, Dr. Larry Kuhar, and Debra Archavage, all students and faculty in the Division of Humanities, and those involved in the new Masters in Creative Writing.

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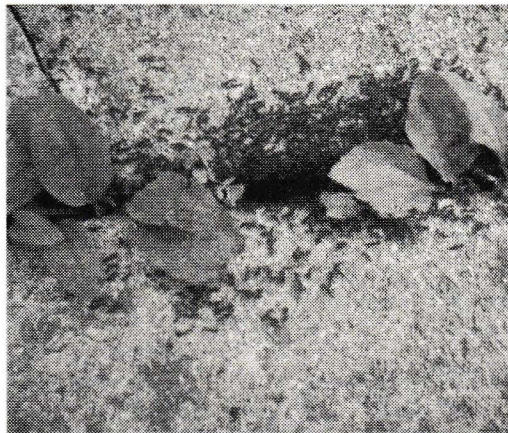
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*Tiny Workers on a Large Scale*

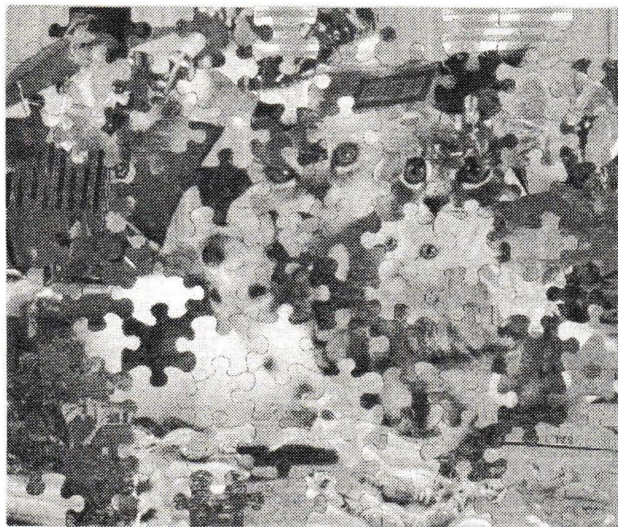
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*Meow mix (now with puppies and rabbits!)*



SABRINA NAPLES

---

ON SUNDAYS

In Japan one can make love to a tree by leaning against it.  
India's god is one of many, a cobra with spitting eyes.  
I am that Snake.

On Sundays I eat the flesh  
And drink the blood of a dead god  
A male virgin, 33 years  
Ivorylimbspread,  
Esquisite offering upon a gilded altar—

So invasive, intruding,  
Insides  
Melting.

And I gain immortality.

I have to confess, I like it.  
And I lick up every last drop  
That lovely,  
pierced,  
and crimson-wet flower of a hand.

NAPLES

---

### THE AQUACY

Reaching into the tide  
My olive-pale hand is dulled, and twisted, by  
The indigo water  
An Indian dye salty and sticky like blood.  
The pull and the tug of the sand caresses my senses to  
A hail of apprehension:  
The arching back of a serpent with  
Scales glittering; smashed glass  
Bottles and fragments tickling my fears with the hiss, the slither, of  
A tongue slipping 'round a fish. And  
Yellow eyes,  
The bright, urine yellow of  
A watery element scanning their prey pray,  
Me.  
I,  
Standing before a mystery of  
Insurmountable  
Proportions (something that cannot be snared that thin rope net)  
rather,  
Teasing the mind of you,  
With a laugh like a roar.  
The dragons and Loch Ness monsters of God grasp the hand,  
leading two-by-two to the Ark.





*Fearless Adventurer Masked in Shadow*  
Jim Feeney

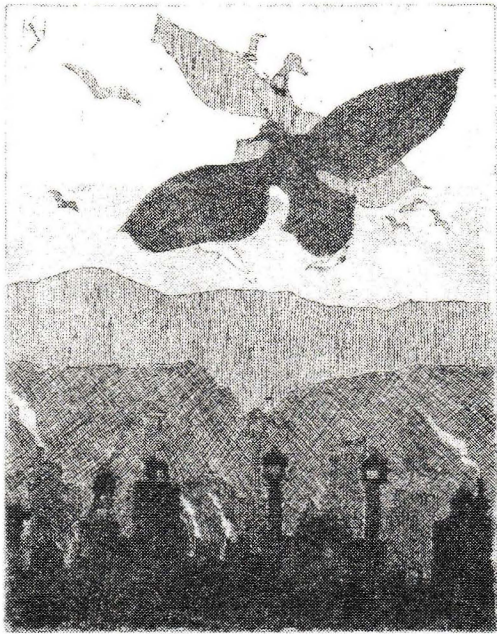
## DONORA HILLARD

---

### KATE

My man has this friend. Kate.  
Kate as in Shakespeare's *Kiss  
Me*, Kate as in K plus infinity  
flipped on its head. K8.  
Kate smokes Kools. Kate wears  
biker boots but owns no  
Harley. Kate dyes her hair  
Kool-Aid colors. Some say  
Kate looks like Catherine Zeta-Jones.  
They call her Catherine Zeta-Kate.  
Kate calls herself the magazine  
model who plays in the sandbox  
with the other retards. Kate likes  
Black Sabbath and Dr. Demento.  
Kate likes to drink. When Kate  
drinks too much, her dad comes  
and picks her up. Kate wants  
to open a bar called The Drunken  
Monkey. Kate wants to be a marine  
biologist. Kate took a job answering  
telephones after college. That's where  
Kate met my man. Kate used to  
eat Taco Bell and watch cartoons  
with my man. Kate still calls  
and yells his name on the answering  
machine. Kate gives it too many  
syllables. Kate gives him Hindu  
finger-puppets and Libertarian pins  
on special occasions. Kate likes  
to tell my man he isn't Kate's type.  
Kate sleeps with blonde boys named  
Tod. Kate has a turtle named  
'Shroom. Kate needs to break free from  
Kate's own shell. Kate says  
Kate has all the time in the world.





BIRDS OF PREY OVER CITY      24050711      07/19/64

*Birds Of Prey Over City*  
Herbert Simon

HILLARD \_\_\_\_\_

### ETHIC

When you said I should  
be working instead of loving  
you, I chose not to  
haul your picture down  
from the loft to the hardwood  
floor not because the shatter  
would not have been beautiful  
or because the glass  
would have snapped  
off deep in your heel,  
but so you would not  
know the pleasure of seeing  
me on my hands and knees,  
sweeping up every last splinter.

### GRATEFUL

As I was writing  
this poem for you,  
a woman I work with  
called in and said  
her husband just dropped  
dead in front of her.

I wrote faster.



## DREW AMOROSO

---

### SULLEN SNOWFLAKE

A single, sullen snowflake  
obediently walks a  
nameless lane; avoiding yet  
exploiting robust gusts and  
ferocity of numbers,  
to nestle itself safely  
in the corner of the most  
inaccessible crevice;  
blink:  
true purpose lies in such improbability.



*Blue Spruce*  
Clarissa Dudeck

## MARIA GABLE

---

### FLOWERS

Jim walks downstairs at 4:30AM, as he does every weekday, blinking the light from the kitchen out of his eyes. His wife, Kate, and their daughter, Melissa, are sleeping peacefully upstairs. He pours himself a mug of coffee from his way-too-expensive-and-complicated-*Braun*-preset-to-begin-brewing-at-4:15AM coffee maker. He sits down with a grunt of morning stiffness in his uncomfortable wooden chair and greets his coffee groggily, "G'morning."

"Good Morning, Jim. Did you sleep well?" Jim's coffee replies.

"Eh... I never really sleep that well when Kate gets her 'headaches' before bed."

"You know, Jim, she would probably be more *willing* if you would pay more attention to her." Jim gives his coffee an agitated look and it hurriedly explains, "I mean, maybe you could call her from work everyday with an 'I love you' rather than a 'What's for dinner?'"

"Yeah... maybe I'll even have the florist deliver roses this afternoon."

"Good idea. How is Melissa doing with her dance instruction?"

"Alright, I guess," Jim takes a sip from his mug. "I think Katie was saying something about a recital, or whatever those things are, in a couple of weeks."

"Oh, how nice."

"I hate those things."

"Ah... Well, don't forget to buy flowers for that, too."

"I have to buy flowers for Melissa too? What is it with women and flowers? I would consider it an insult to receive a gift from someone, who supposedly loves me, that is just going to *die* in a week anyway."

"Well, Jim, I think they appreciate the meaning..." Jim takes another sip of his coffee. "You know I hate it when you interrupt me."

"Sorry."

"What I was going to say was that I think they appreciate the traditional value behind flowers, not the flowers themselves. Men have been giving women flowers as gifts to show their affection for hundreds of years. I'm sure, though, that a woman



would actually much rather a prepaid shopping trip, but subconsciously, the symbolism behind the flowers is what wins them over."

"Yeah, well, whatever works. I gotta get going before I miss the ferry."

"Alright, Jim, nice talking to you. Have a good..." Jim swallows his last gulp of coffee and hurriedly puts his coat on, missing his cup in the sink on his way out the door.



*Key's View of the City*  
*(With Thanks to Dr. Weliver)*  
Sabrina A. McLaughlin

### STAIRWELL

The privacy one finds  
in a dimly lit stairwell  
rarely used and in the corner of a large building  
is liberating.

I've been witness to exciting excavation,  
both wedgies and noses picked  
boldly, and with relief.

But you have to be silent, on tiptoe,  
so they won't know you are staring  
with anticipation  
from above or below  
sneaking behind them,  
or towards them.

Memories of tight pants hiked vigorously up  
over those love handles,  
and giggles brought on by  
a nonchalant check to the ass-crack  
to see where it lies  
in relation to the top of jeans,  
or thong.

And oh! Those glorious uncensored scratches!

I have to admit, though,  
that it brings a proud smile to my face  
when they're rifling through their  
purse, wallet, bag, whatever,  
miss a step, and trip.

None of this, of course,  
is based on personal experience.  
I swear.



## MATT KOCH

---

### VALLEY OF THE MOVERS

In the Valley of the Movers  
There is something going 'round  
There's a moving, there's a  
Shaking of foundations

I have found the will-o-wisps  
Are whispering of a coming forth  
Of a coming, of a rumbling  
Of disaster

In the earth the worms are forging  
Forging ever to the core  
To the core, as before  
Forever dark

Who will explore the mired mountains  
Slipping down the tawdry slopes  
Gaudy slopes, empty hopes  
Education

For to cope will bring successes  
De-ny-all the way to go  
For to go, fast or slow  
Is still learning

But I know they're still proclaiming  
That the big bell will not knell  
But to knell, echo hell  
Not deceiving

I can tell the worker bees brook  
No heeding of his calling  
Ever calling, ever falling  
Into twilight

There's a mauling roach who walks out  
At the noon-rise of each day

Gruesome day, not to pay  
What he's owing

And they say his name, Narcissus  
But no flower he'll become  
They become, they succumb  
Ever dreaming

To the hum they're always numbing  
Falling fast and off to sleep  
Siren's sleep, while they beat  
To deaf preachers

Always keep their little treasure  
Hope-in-a-box they wind, wind, wind  
For to wind, builds the rind  
Around feelings

And they find they are not flying  
But they did not feel the ripping  
Violent ripping, raucous rending  
Of their insufficient wings

Little wings, silent things  
Lying lifeless on the ground  
Little things, queens and kings  
And the even-bell – it rings

Now our narrator's waiting  
And his legs are slowing down  
Upside down, he'll be found  
Now just watching

From the ground he's gazing upward  
Ever upward toward the sky  
Backlit sky, opaque eye  
Never-ending

Though he'll try to keep on sending  
SOS into the night



Blackest night, full of spite  
Nothing answered

And the roach it drools foul nothings  
Its ramblings incoherent  
Incoherent, heir apparent  
Is not reigning

And the sere scent of him hiding  
Little cricket in the grass  
Dying grass, not too fast  
He'll be chirping

On behalf of the worker bees  
The chirping never matters  
Nothing matters, spittle splatters  
Burns their faces

Open spaces are left behind  
But the dead are soon replaced  
They're replaced, then encased  
In their toil

For to erase one moment's work  
Would enrage the riled roach  
Wretched roach, soon to poach  
All their earnings

But behold! At last our hero  
Rising silently from slumber  
Peaceful slumber, not encumber  
Moving forward

Count the number of helpless eyes  
Turning east to greet our hero  
Mighty hero, they are zero  
No one caring

Just as Nero roach is standing  
On the corpses of the dead  
Lifeless dead, it was said  
There's a savior

But one head is turning eastward  
Pulling from the west its gaze  
Faithful gaze, through the haze  
She is coming

Through the maze he runs to greet her  
Mighty hero butterfly  
Butterfly, from the sky  
Is descending

And her high screeching wail is heard  
By not but him who does tell  
For to tell, building swell  
Of this story

In her spell he is caught wholly  
Holy spell an answered prayer  
Empty prayer, they all stare  
As he's lifted

By the fair and flighty fairy  
Ever further through the night  
Dying night, and in sight  
Sun is rising

As the light breaks o'er the mountains  
And their crest they do surpass  
To surpass, is at last  
Finding freedom

But the blast of terror hits him  
As he clings to brittle legs  
Stick-like legs, and the dregs  
Of life come clear

For below lies the plateau  
Of the never-ending snow  
Pitted snow, and they grow  
Building army



And to know what fills their ranks  
Endless lives of roaches marching  
Ever marching, and they're starting  
To look upward

And their ire starts a fire  
Burning even further higher  
Ever higher, hero liar?  
And he's slipping

Highest buyer where he's going  
As he drops she grabs his wings  
Little wings, silent things  
They are missing –

Missing, missing  
Little wings  
Missing, missing  
Silent things

Little wings, silent things  
He falls lifeless to the crowd  
Little things, hearts and rings  
And the even-bell – it rings



*Grasshopper, Clarissa Dudeck*

KOCH \_\_\_\_\_

### RONALD WRIGHT

Ronald Wright is incorrect  
But he is never wrong  
Ronald writes her letters  
But they are never long

Ronald puts no faith in fiction,  
Art, cinema, or song  
Ronald reads the paper,  
Goes to work, and then comes home

Ronald once had many friends  
Not quite so long ago  
Ronald, right was turning  
But left is all he'll know

Ronald puts his feet up  
Pets the dog and pets the kids  
Ronald puts out of his mind  
The life he might have lived

Ronald Wright is proud of  
All the good deeds that he did  
Ronald lays his head back  
And the Wrights, they close the lid



## **JAMES WARNER**

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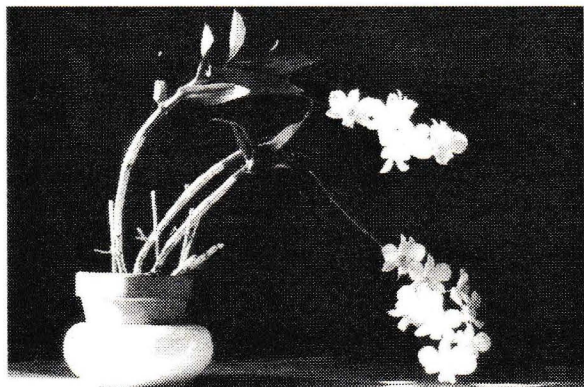
### **A COMPOUND OF FIRE AND MOMENTS**

i burn through patient hours,  
words hang with gasoline attention  
and at the end of the longest fuse  
is your matchbox sex.

waiting thins out the mixture,  
(but)  
it only takes a spark  
and you remind me regularly  
of its difficulty to extinguish.

### **RECOVERY**

we spin like windmills  
we lie down next to velvet rivers of sleep  
your back against my night,  
my eyes in your cloud.



*Orchids, Patricia Shyshuk*



*River On The Rise*  
David Carey

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Brigh



## RON LIEBACK

---

### THE ANSWER

Did you witness those eyes?  
Did you see those golden lips  
Sealed with the kiss of eternity?  
Did you observe the darkness  
Silking in her hair,  
Reflecting perfect textured  
Self-induced images  
On tightly wrapped skin?  
Did she mention Boston,  
And its angelic  
Cobble stone streets  
She will one day  
Roam all alone?  
Did she talk with a purse  
Of her lips,  
Subverting words in an orderly  
Fashion  
While her furry winter collar  
Soaked the Old Tyme Charlie  
Atmosphere?  
Did she mean  
To make herself  
Appear so seductive  
With perfect-head-to  
Facial-black-eye  
Liner?  
Did she have  
To plant 10,000  
Thoughts of "what  
If"  
In the head?  
Did her image evolve  
From the innovative  
Soul of the assumed  
Creator?  
Did she try hard to  
Keep her porcelain teeth  
Brighter than the color of



*The Rise  
and Carey*

This paper?  
Or was that also the Creator's  
Priceless fault?  
Did she keep her  
Up  
Buttoned  
Coat  
To not emphasize what  
Slender tone was  
Hidden behind hopefully  
Forever closed  
Buttons?  
Did she intentionally  
Wrap her warm-colored  
Neck under  
A security wrapping  
To display  
Kindness?  
Did she stop to talk  
Because she might  
Be lonely?  
OR  
Did she mean to  
Engage in a warm  
Hug before exiting extremely  
Slow with another turn of those  
Light hazel eyes lighting up  
A visual of magnetized waves of  
Curiosity just fifteen steps upon exiting?  
Answer all the dids with one more question.  
Infatuation?



CONRAD MILLER

---

IN RETROSPECT

There was a wringing of the neck  
of my own tingling introspect  
And so thoughts ceased about my head,  
the mind deceased and fallen dead.  
I thought of what has never been,  
the obvious as thick as thin  
And from my grasp the truth did wrest,  
and so collapsed my mind, perplexed.

The wringing of the neck,  
and the rotting of the corpse ...  
To the present mind occurs,  
not even slight remorse ...

The past was gone as was the mind,  
and so the future seemed inclined  
To bear the witness of the grave  
and prove the mind's offspring depraved.  
The body follows no such mind,  
and so the grave's for later time,  
But as the thoughts come to a halt,  
the present presents me a fault ...

And to the present mind occurs,  
not even slight remorse ...

And with that change there came anew  
a thought of something far from view,  
And so the offspring of the mind,  
though still depraved seemed at this time,  
To be of more than simply death,  
but remembrance of every breath,  
And so the future brightly bore,  
more than thoughts of gore galore  
And so the future simply bore,  
the past of me and many more.

And to the present mind occurs,  
not even slight remorse ...

That it would look upon the past  
and could find beauty that would last  
And so it comes to present mind –  
it would be marvelous at this time ...  
The pointlessness of times gone by  
should spring upon this simple mind  
But still it seems I chose to dwell  
in bodies dumped into a well  
On things that have gone far away,  
in such a state I chose to stay.

And to the present mind occurs,  
not even slight remorse ...

That it would look upon the past  
and find such hatred as could last  
And so it comes to present mind,  
what harmful thoughts these were of mine  
If present tense should come to mind,  
I would then prove more peace inclined,  
But still it seems I chose to dwell  
on loveliness I could not tell,  
On things that went so far astray—  
to such a state I fell as prey.

And to the present mind occurs,  
not even slight remorse ...

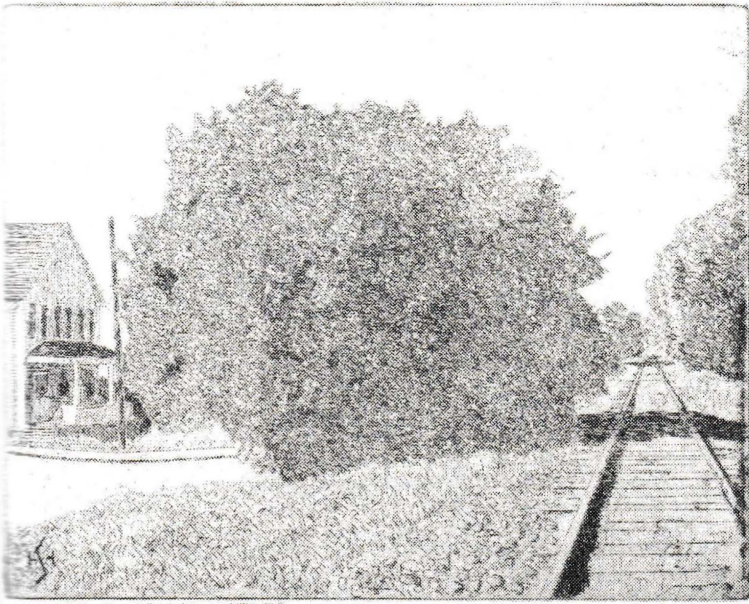
And so depraved and fallen prey,  
this fallen mind of mine would stay.  
And as before its neck was wrung;  
another in its place begun.  
And so the past left in its place;  
the future came losing all grace.  
And so the past left in its grave;  
the future was no more its slave.

The wringing of the neck,  
and the rotting of the corpse ...  
To the present mind occurs,  
a *very* slight remorse ...



**BUTTONS**

Oh little friend from on the bend, please come and play this way.  
I've come too far from near to here to ever think you prey.  
Oh little friend from way back when, please do remember me.  
I've come back home so I may see what's no longer there for me.  
Oh little friend I'd be your friend, if only you could stay.  
I've thought of you more than you knew – your love I can't repay.  
Oh little friend from on the bend, I wish that you could stay.  
Oh little friend gone to your end, I mourn upon your grave.



HOMAGE TO EDWARD HOPPER  
A/P  
at the museum, 2004

***Homage to Edward Hopper***  
**Herbert Simon**

## SMILE

Somewhere between the clove cigarettes, the borrowed whisky, the soundtracks blaring and the less than admirable supposed brilliance involved, the appeal of it just barely eluded me. Perhaps it was the family that brought me up only to watch me fall (surely their world should revolve around me), or perhaps it was the reflection that my fully functional mind failed to perform (a mistake my inebriated mind would not make), or maybe I just haven't had one of those life changing moments that always happens in movies ... perhaps it always happens *period* and not just in movies – but somehow failed to happen to me? Regardless of who

or what was or wasn't to blame or praise for it or maybe something else, I'm not quite sure anymore (I'm drunk, remember?) – the blow was dealt, the damage done, the appetite lost and lust for life turned into the mild distaste one only finds when they realize that the person standing next to them in that skimpy dress is, in fact, a man and that had apparently been pegged for a homosexual.

If you are a woman, just imagine making out with your boyfriend only to find a tampon in "his" messenger bag, which is really just a purse for men who always wanted one but couldn't take the stares. (I should know, I have one.)

It just seems to me that one day you wake up and this is the world, take it or leave it – unfortunately doing the latter means that you are insane and will spend years of your life in a hospital where you will be "helped" until you manage to find a cheerier outlook on life even though now it's a good bit shittier than it was before. That leaves the first option, the one in which the insipid are pleased and those that are smart enough to realize they have made the wrong choice are pessimists. As for the truly smart ones, they made the right choice the first time around, and were even smart enough not to get caught by their "helpers." If you would be one of those stubborn fellows that seem to be the only remaining population,



*Ninja Ben, David Carey*



though, then I suppose you have to somehow make do with either being a pessimist or an optimist (as opposed to being dead) and I think it's fairly obvious at this point which path I've chosen.

Like any good pessimist, though, I have my buyer's remorse. I'm both smart enough to see that the grass is greener on the other side and dumb enough not to actually do anything about it (like set it on fire?). That begs the question of what needs to be done. Is there something I can do to become an optimist (other than being "helped") or am I just screwed over big time?

The answer is simple ... wait ... what was I saying?

I have another cup of coffee while my less than pleased friend looks at the clock realizing that I "borrowed" *his* whisky, smoked *his* cigarettes and have now used up *his* entire night sitting around talking without actually getting anywhere in what I was saying. By now it was a little past five o'clock in the morning and his patience was wearing almost as thin as my logic. In an hour I would be off on other ventures and hopefully a little closer to sober, though in all honesty I wouldn't bet on it. In an hour, I would be completely out of his hair until the very next "life-altering crisis" (a.k.a. everyday occurrence) comes a long. He always wondered what he did to bring drama queens like me out of the woodwork, and in all honesty his only fault was living next to one ... so I suppose he brought this on himself, since he apparently chose to live today. At least he was a good sport about it - aside from his faults he was a saint, but so is anyone willing to give you free liquor at two o'clock in the morning.

The waitress brings the check, and at long last he is rid of me - though he doesn't celebrate too soon, he's far too polite for that. We divvy up the tab, though in a fairer world I would have paid both halves, and went on our way and so ended another one of my longer nights out.

Somehow they seem more fun in recollection than in actual occurrence; and somehow the details change a little. For instance, in the real version - it doesn't end with us at a diner, but rather me in a bathroom passed out on the floor after having thrown up what felt like the entire contents of that pimply bag of skin I call myself. As for the entire monologue, I thought that up one night trying to think of something clever I could tell in my story (you just have to put on a good show), and as for the friend - I made that part up, too (give 'em what they want). My parents don't want to hear how



MILLER

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boring my life is, they want to think I am a normal kid just like them, who were normal kids just like everyone else, who live in a world of interesting people that is completely devoid of antisocial shut-ins like myself... a world full of people that know how to have a good time, get drunk, and, most importantly, have a social life – where no one had to worry about the apparent pointlessness of their life or even stress over the details of what ending it might entail.

More than the idea of being successful at school, or work, or having a good time, it is important that I convey the idea that I'm not taking life too seriously. After all, it wasn't too long ago when I was being "helped," and all too often people want to "help" me some more. So many people volunteering just makes me happy ... really gives me a much cheerier outlook on life ... not that it matters, I don't get to tell all these nice people about it largely on account of they don't want to be seen with the –

I'm so sorry ... completely lost my train of thought. What was I going on about?

It's a sad state of affairs when even my made-up friends don't pay attention to the conversation. He sits across the table sipping coffee as I look out the window. It's not a diner now, but rather the cafeteria, and the window overlooks the university. As for the waitress, I play that role, too – it's one my high school coach felt I was much more fitting for, though I suppose it didn't have to be a waitress ... it could have been a waiter ... but as I said, I do have a messenger bag. As for the liquor, that ran out some time ago ... some time ago like yesterday, and the hangover is gone, too. Why I'm still sitting over the coffee is largely because I have nothing better to do. It's not like I have any papers to write, any book to read, or really anything of the sort; I had no trouble doing those quite some time ago when everyone else was out and about living their own lives. I don't mind it, though. It gives me time to think and imagine and play inside my head – where I'm not the loser in a made-up competition, where I am anyone and anything I ever wanted to be.

Do you know why people love to play the Sims? My made-up friends don't; they're all hard-core gamers that don't really quite fit in with reality, either. The reason why is because everyone wants to play God. To have complete control and power, to be all knowing, to be able to rewrite the world in any way they chose. Unfortunately the Sims doesn't give them that much power, but it gives them a little ... a little bit of power over fictional characters. That is, unfortunately, a little too far from my life where my fictional characters have a little bit

too much power over me – but that is why I'm at the window on a Monday morning looking down on the world of ants and recreating their lives as I choose. It's too hard to recreate my own.

I don't go to Church. It would be too blasphemous of me, because here I am God and here I am changing world events. I look down on everyone with the power to blot their lives out of existence, but I look with compassion and instead rewrite their lives happier. The R.O.T.C. passes by, my wonderful toy soldiers who, I've decided, used to play with G.I. Joes when they were little and are living out their dream one step at a time as they march step by step their way into military ranks. I don't much care for the military, because I am a kinder God, one who doesn't live in a world of conflict. That woman yelling angrily into her cell phone just has bad reception, and the reason that car is speeding isn't road rage ... they just decided it would be marvelous fun to have a race.

After drinking a little bit more of my coffee, eating orange peels and playing God, I see fit to rejoin the real world and I walk down from my tower where I am a giant and across the bottom floor. I don't check my mail, because I already know how empty it is; after all, I was just God a minute ago ... if I couldn't keep in touch with the more minor details then how could I possibly justify my position? I walk out through the doors where it goes from a cozy warm setting of the smell of coffee and the warmth of a pizza oven into that of a cold day and an argument being held over a cell phone. I have given up being God for a day, and like any good pessimist I have my buyer's remorse. I can see that I have made another wrong choice. I am both smart enough to see that the grass is greener on the other side, and dumb enough not to do anything about it.

Somehow when I'm mortal I don't quite understand all the answers I had when I was God, and I wonder exactly what it is I am doing wrong that makes my life so unbearable. I suppose ultimately it's not a question of what I'm doing, but rather how my life is being rewritten and I glare angrily at the inhabitants of the cafeteria because they are not making life pleasant.

Then I go on in my head about how the grass is greener on the other side, and I think about how one day I'll be dead and the grass really will be greener on the other side, but only in a literal sense. I write my future and dream on it since I have no control over my past – and I smile as my friend catches up with his coffee stained shirt. Somehow he just never seems to change and life never seems to get to him.



## JOYCE CHMIL

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### THE GREEN CANOE

David brought in the last brown box and placed it in the study. "This is it," he told his wife. "Do you want me to help unpack?"

"No. I want to look at these books before I shelve them." She placed a few in the oak bookcase and turned to her husband. "Look at these! First editions! Signed copies! Do you have any idea what these books are worth?"

"I'm guessing that's why Mark gave them to you. These books in anyone else's hands would end up on eBay."

"Don't even say that!"

David could hear the mixed emotions in Allison's voice. He could see them in her eyes. He leaned over and gave his wife a kiss on the forehead. "Hungry? You haven't eaten all day."

Allison nodded. She needed time alone to deal with Liz's death and all of the memories that seeing Liz's book collection brought back. After all, Liz Hennigan was the first friend Allison made when she moved to Delaware. They understood each other in a way that not all friends could.

David's thoughts also wandered back to Liz and that horrible day just three months prior. He was sitting in Mark's office when one of the Rehoboth police officers came by. After exchanging pleasantries, the officer finally got to the business of his visit.

"Anyone using your boat today?" He asked Mark.

"Which one?" Mark had three different boats and they were a huge source of pride for him and Liz.

"Motor boat. Stingray 250LR."

"Just my wife. Eric is coming home from college tomorrow. She was planning on taking it out while she can. You know, once Eric gets his hands on the boat, well, we won't see it all 'til summer's over.

"My kid just loves that boat. He'd sleep in it if we'd let him," Mark continued, oblivious to the solemn look on the officer's face.

"Was anyone going out on the boat with your wife?"

"Nah, just her."

"Mr. Hennigan, your boat is in Wildwood, New Jersey."

"What the hell's it doing there?"

"Some whale watching group saw it running out in the middle of nowhere. No one was driving it. They radioed in and someone



notified the Coast Guard. By the time they located it, it'd run out of fuel and was riding the waves in to the shoreline."

"Well, they can return it, thank you very much."

"Mr. Hennigan, was your wife wearing an orange shirt?"

"Was in her PJs when I left. But she loves orange. Wouldn't doubt that she'd wear..." His voice trailed off. He finally understood where this was going. "Where is she? Where's Liz? Where's the boat?"

There was a piece of an orange shirt found tangled around the propeller, but with the boat zipping around in the water for an unknown time, the hope of finding any more of Liz Hennigan was slim. It was a mere two weeks when the Coast Guard announced that it was ending its search and a bit over two months when Mark finally held a memorial service for his wife.

Allison browsed through the last box. *Gulliver's Travels, Crime and Punishment, Writer's Market*. But it was Danielle Steel's *Secrets* that caught her attention. What in the world was Liz doing with this type of book? She lifted it from the box and opened the front cover, thinking that perhaps it was a signed copy. It wasn't. In fact, it wasn't a Danielle Steel book at all. It was just the outer jacket folded over a journal: Liz's journal. Allison's pulse raced as she opened to the first entry, which was written less than two years before Liz's accident.

August 16, 2002

*Tick Tock Tick Tock*

*The clock taunts me*

*It waves its pendulum like a winner waving his medal*

*in the loser's face*

*Tick Tock Tick Tock*

*The clock gloats*

*It's reaching the finish line and reminds me that*

*I'm losing the race*

Allison couldn't explain the emptiness she felt after reading this. Surely it didn't reflect Liz's life. She must have been developing a character for a book or something.

"Finished?" David's return startled her.

"Yeah. Last one." Allison slipped the journal on the shelf between some other books where it would stay until she could find time to sneak into the study and read again. When she had the

opportunity, she would read passage after passage.

*January 26, 2003*

*There is a room full of people and yet I feel alone  
There are pictures on the wall but they all look blank  
There's a sweet scent in the air but I don't notice it  
There is food to eat and yet I feel hungry  
There's music but I don't hear a song  
I'm wrapped in a blanket, yet I still feel cold  
Something is missing. I feel alone.*

Each passage made Allison feel more depressed. She had looked up to Liz. She thought Liz Hennigan had it all. She remembered how Mark used to call her Lady Di. Perhaps it was more than just her looks that he was referring to.

Then, after months of reading, something changed.

*June 4, 2003*

*Amulet, Xanadu, Killarney  
Koromiko, Oasis, Cape Honey  
Rhino, Mako, Wedgwood*

Allison soon realized that these were paint colors and remembered when Liz decided to repaint her entire house. The end result was what Liz referred to as Chinese Buffet.

"Like the soy sauce stain on the floor?" She would laugh and go room-to-room spouting her own names for the wall colors. Names like bok choy and lo mein. And everyone would giggle.

The whole scene was playing on Allison's mind for weeks. "Remember when Liz repainted her house?" She asked David nonchalantly at breakfast one morning.

"She didn't paint the house." David chuckled. "She tried to paint the house. Mark had to hire one of Eric's friends to paint. From what I remember, Ryan ended up refinishing all of the hardwood floors and trim that Liz messed up."

"Ryan?"

"Ryan Mateo. You remember him, don't you? His father died right before we moved here and he was always around Liz and Mark's house."

Allison remembered. "Where is Eric, anyway? I haven't seen or heard about him since the memorial service."

"He wasn't talking to Liz and Mark. I was surprised he even came to the service. You would think he would have. She was his



mother.”

“Well, not his real mother. I think he always felt as though Liz regretted him being in the picture, even though she didn’t.”

David looked at Allison as though she were suddenly acting irrational. “What are you talking about? Not his real mother!”

“He never knew his real mom. She didn’t want him.” Allison explained that Eric was Mark’s son from a previous relationship. “He was three when Mark married Liz.”

In some strange way, Allison enjoyed knowing Liz’s secrets: secrets that apparently Mark didn’t share with his friends.

Allison was anxious to know more of Liz’s secrets. Whenever she had the chance, she would sit on the floor of the study and read the journal. She was reading entries from eight months prior to Liz’s death and was relieved to see that Liz’s depression had somehow been abated by the painting of her house.

*September 2, 2003*

*There’s a fire in my home  
A light in the darkness  
Warmth from the cold  
Colors dancing about the walls*

When she heard David’s car, she put the journal in its place and greeted her husband.

“I hope you didn’t cook.” He gave her a kiss.

Allison looked up at the clock.

“Good. We’re invited to Mark’s for dinner.”

They had spent so much time with Mark up until the memorial service and David was feeling guilty about how distant he’d been since. It wasn’t deliberate. It was just the way things happened. And, while he was happy that they would be spending time together, he thought it best not to let Allison know the real reason for the visit until they were parked in front of Mark’s home.

“I should probably warn you,” he started. “Mark invited us here to meet someone.”

David watched his wife’s face pale. “A woman?”

He nodded and hurried out of the car before Allison could change her mind about the visit: a visit that turned out to be belabored.

“I can’t believe this!” Allison ranted on the ride home. “The entire house is painted white! And did you hear her. *Augh! This place looked like camouflage. Don’t you think it looks fresh now?*”



Allison imitated Mark's new friend. "And what's worse is she said that they repainted it months ago because she was sick of the color scheme. Exactly how long has Mark been seeing her?"

David didn't appreciate the interrogation. He was just as shocked by the entire situation as Allison was. But he wasn't about to judge. Mark was his friend. "So how long after your wife dies do you have to wait to start dating again?" He didn't mean to sound sarcastic.

"Thanks." Allison stewed.

"Look. It's not like Mark is cheating on Liz. It's *'til death do us part*. And Liz is dead."

Allison didn't want to hear anything about it and she left, as planned, for San Francisco, a move that was driving David insane. He didn't want her leaving on a business trip with this void between them and he decided to surprise her by joining her in the city.

She sounded excited when he called her from the airport and requested a meeting place. "How about Union Square?"

It was one of the few places she knew and was within walking distance from her room at the Grand Hyatt. "There are tons of restaurants in the area where we could get something to eat."

She dressed quickly and went down near Union Square to wait. She planned on finding a quiet spot where she

could read Liz's journal. She had read as far as March of 2004 and since Liz's boat was found in early May, she knew she was near the end. But once she was on the streets, she was taken in by the city and she found herself roaming around aimlessly. It was a small set of tables that caught her attention along with a poster board reading *Academy of Art College Used Book Sale*. She wandered over to a table and began to browse through the titles.



*Footprint in Liquid*  
Jim Feeney

She was making her way to another table when she spotted a familiar face.

"Ryan?" She approached the young man. "Ryan Mateo?"

He looked at her nervously.

"You probably don't remember me. I was a friend of Liz's. Liz Hennigan," she clarified, "Eric's mother."

He just nodded, forced a smile, and looked beyond her.

"My husband and I went out in the bay with you a couple of times. You had that green canoe."

"Yeah," he mumbled and lowered his head. "Nice seeing you." He looked beyond her again.

Allison felt obligated to turn away and leave with a feeble goodbye. It was then that she saw just what it was that Ryan had been looking at.

"Liz!"

Her hair was longer and had lost its blonde highlights, but there was no mistaking Liz Hennigan. Allison raced toward her with excitement.

"Oh my God! Liz! It's me, Allison!"

Liz stared at a book on the table, her hand trembling as she opened the cover with feigned interest. Allison stayed close by and took a moment to absorb what she was witnessing. She stared as Ryan lovingly placed his hand in the small of Liz's back.

After what seemed to be an eternity of silence, Allison spoke once again. "I don't even know why I'm looking at these books. I had a friend die back in May and her husband gave me all of her books."

"Anything good?" Liz's voice quivered.

"Tons. I'm reading Danielle Steel's *Secrets* right now." She reached into her bag and pulled out the journal.

Liz glanced out of the side of her eye and froze at the sight of her work.

"You know," Allison continued, "I have a feeling I know how it ends anyway. Would you like to have it?" She held the book out in Liz's direction.

Liz turned to Allison and the two shared a familiar look of trust. "Thank you," she managed to say as she took the book from her friend.

The two embraced for a moment then pulled away and smiled.

"Let me know if there's a sequel." Allison strolled off.



## **JENNIFER HAMEZA**

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### **CONVERSING POP ART**

Attempting to bring us back to reality  
The media and advertising  
And you'll see some examples of that  
Worshipping the god of materialism  
Something happened  
A mistake or not  
Green Stamps  
By Warhol  
By the way, there is a beautiful  
I'm not sure what exactly  
It's a labor of love  
The objects that symbolize issues  
That were of concern  
Paint by number  
It's a bad thing to do for children  
They have more ideas  
Certainly, this will stifle  
The icon of beauty  
Her body  
Her red lips  
He lived with his mother and his cats  
Repetition of the object  
Her face  
Novel to see it even now  
So much fame  
To a work so strange





*Opposing Views*  
Jessica Cincinnato

**J. LEWIS**

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**TWINKLE TWINKLE BABY TWINKLE TWINKLE**

Vince Vaughn  
Starring as a wannabe gangster  
The ultimate embodiment  
For a white actor/prankster

This movie made me laugh so hard I almost went tinkle

Twinkle Twinkle  
Baby  
Twinkle Twinkle



*High Aspirations*  
Stephanie Pacifico



## LAUREN CAREY

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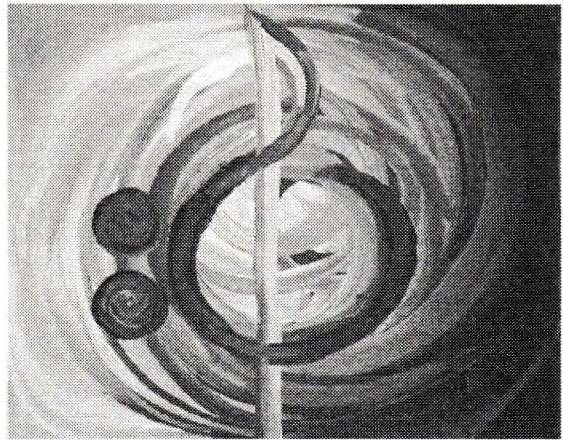
### THE ORGAN PLAYER

Taking my place at the keys  
(*andante*)  
I slowly breathe  
(*p*)  
The first breath of air  
Through the pipes  
And up to the ceiling.  
Crescendo up  
(*<*)  
Diminish down  
(*>*)  
Pounding chords out.  
Blowers blowing down below  
(*rit.*)  
Bellow out a low low F.  
Reverberating pipes  
And whirring reeds  
(*allegro con brio*)  
All at the touch of my hands.  
Pressing pistons, pulling stops  
(*vivace*)  
Changing the sound of the room.  
A touch of a key makes the room,  
The people,  
The Church,  
(*cresc.*)  
The world,  
(*ff*)  
GOD putty in my hands.  
(*dim.*)  
Pushing  
(*rit poco a poco*)  
Pulling  
(*mp*)  
Breathing  
Blowing.  
(*'*)  
(*larghetto*)

CAREY \_\_\_\_\_

Pleasing God  
Is like pleasing any other man.  
You just have to play  
A different organ.  
*(fermata)*

*\*please note that the musical terms in parentheses are only meant as directions for reciting the poem. The words themselves should not be read aloud.*



*Treble & Bass*  
Lauren Carey



**SIX FEET OVER**

My grandfather died.  
Then my mother  
    prepared  
    for her own imminent demise.  
She bought a family burial plot.  
Now sometimes  
I lie six feet above  
    my final resting place –  
    and think about living.

**I ALMOST FELL INTO A GARDEN: A HAIKU**

A man just stopped to  
    literally smell roses.  
My faith is restored.

CAREY \_\_\_\_\_

### FRIED RICE OVER BASEBALL

My dad doesn't like sports.  
He only tolerates them around my mom and brother.  
On an August afternoon, one half of my family watched  
a baseball game  
and the other half spent a day in the mall.  
We were thrown together into this awkward father-daughter  
shopping excursion  
simply because we both happened to have  
a distaste for spectator sports.  
Going into the experience, I was of the opinion that my dad and I  
wouldn't find much common shopping ground.  
I like Victoria's Secret and Macy's and The Gap and shoes,  
whereas my dad likes electronics and food.

We found some common ground in an Asian restaurant  
called The Bamboo Club.  
The menu ran the gambit of Asian food from sweet and sour  
to exotic Thai dishes.  
My dad and I decided to split a bowl of fried rice.  
It wasn't just any fried rice.  
It was the most beautiful thing  
either of us had seen all day.  
This rice had things in it.  
Little green things, little orange things  
and big, gooey blobs of fried egg.

This was a special piece of egg.  
It was just sitting in the rice, almost as if  
it didn't belong there.  
It was yellowish with spots of white in it.  
It almost didn't look like egg.  
This egg looked as unusual as it was for me to be sitting  
by myself with my dad.  
But it was comforting just the same.

For the first time in my life I realized that I had things that I could  
share with my dad.  
We had that moment, and we had that Asian food,  
and we both dislike baseball.



**SABRINA A. McLAUGHLIN**

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**STRAWBERRY SENSE MEMORY CYCLICAL**

Driving, guiding steering-  
Wheel with knees,  
Feeding CD into the player  
With the right hand,  
In my left:  
A strawberry-and-cream  
ice cream bar

That tastes like childhood—  
The Hill,  
The neighbourhood store  
Belonged to the Beltrami's,  
Nicky'd be slicing salami and capicol'  
Wearing his white butcher's apron;  
Thelma took care  
Of the antique  
Brass cash register:  
After some years,  
We noticed her beginning  
To gradually grow more senile.  
Jack-and-Jills or Crunch Bars we'd buy,  
Two quarters, hot August,  
We'd save the sticks after,  
The way kids do—

I used three to make that letter "K"  
Held together with a thumbtack,  
Painted pink and yellow posterpaint,  
The cat's name began with "K,"  
Hung it over her dish in the kitchen  
Of the apartment we lived in then,  
Next to the place on the wall with the hashmarks  
Denoting my yearly progression upwards.  
The cat died seven years ago,  
Once I'd awoken  
On my fifth Christmas morning  
When it was a kitten  
I'd been surprised to wake  
Seeing it sleeping on the next pillow  
Where my mother had placed it.

I wonder where that popsicle-stick "K" is now  
Laying in a drawer or a box in the attic  
The cat's bones are underneath the dry needle blanket  
Under the Scotch pines—I think they were Scotch pines—  
On the acre of property we lost  
In the sheriff sale  
Along with the old house  
And some but not all  
The family dignity.  
All gone strawberry cream only the stick left.  
Car window already open a crack  
Letting fresh ice cold February in  
(There's an exhaust leak; I can't afford to have it fixed),  
I toss the stick out,  
Feel guilty littering?

Or leaving a small piece of me by the wayside  
With something I once held in my hands.  
A common thought with me.

### **TORMENTS OF A HAUNTED 4 A.M.**

~For Ma

Sleep will not come.  
The sky lightens  
From black to indigo to cobalt,  
Darker to lighter—  
Like creamed coffee—  
And I want to stop time  
Reverse it  
And lengthen the night,  
And maybe this time I will be able to rest.  
Because now when I turn out the light  
Images and memories,  
Memories of images  
Images of memories,  
And worries  
Come crowding over me.



Swarming like Lilliputians,  
Tugging at the covers like children  
I don't have,  
I haven't had yet,  
And had once when I was someone else.

Too many thoughts  
Like flashing  
    strobe  
lights  
Cascading  
    collages montages  
Swirling whirlpool or  
Zephyr spinning spun—

I do not know why they come.  
Unsummoned.  
The thought that I try to hold onto seasons  
But they slip away with the tide  
Before I have the chance to immerse myself in them—  
Autumn flows through my fingers already.

Struck sudden with sad sentimentalizations  
Keeping me from my dormition:  
Why do I now think of waterfalls,  
Of my grandfather's lungs filling up  
With unseen fluid drowning from within  
And what that must feel like,  
My grandmother's mother  
Died of a swollen heart  
A heart too big that broke,  
    Hot water comforting  
    In the brilliant white bathtub,  
Looking forward looking back vertigo  
    Brain breaking  
    Hot chocolate steaming  
    Cold air  
    The view from West Point  
        The Hudson  
        The Catskills  
        The Poconos  
        The Susquehanna,

MCLAUGHLIN

My life a sketch of mountains and rivers.  
Geese winging over from Canada;  
They mate for life.  
Lonely widower of one wild goose  
Shot down over lake of water or field of Indian corn.

Artifacts: Lost objects I held in my hands  
Five, ten, fifteen years gone...

Palomino head pin carved of wood,  
Childhood relic.  
Mother's photographic portrait,  
Palomino horse in a paddock.  
Grandmother's wooden pin:  
A fawn with rhinestone spots  
That the cruel schoolmaster broke.

We were *born* mothers  
Because we always want  
To comfort and mend  
The broken things:

Stray cats,  
Broken-winged or frost-chilled birds,  
Nests of newborn rabbits,  
Roadside wounded deer—  
Hearts and souls of those we love.  
Healers' healing hands also needing healing.

Abrupt association retrieval...  
Holding a lion cub in my lap tawny.  
A marmalade-coloured cat I once had that died.  
A lake I walked around many times.  
The fleeting taste of apple cider...

I carry my whole life lived so far  
Around with me it weighs so heavy  
And I am already afraid of losing it.



**I DIDN'T INTEND TO REMEMBER**

And this way.

I didn't intend to become a beggar-maven  
Endeavouring to sell pain no one is interested in  
Out of a suitcase.

It always comes back—  
Like the yellow cat  
(The very next day),  
Like counterfeit coppers,  
Like a favourite cliché.

Alone in the dark and the silence and the absence  
Defined by absence alone  
With a spiny devil  
Clutching claw-like at my hips.  
It is in my blood  
It I sin my blood  
(Freudian slip of the keys)  
My old fear that it is with me  
On a cellular level written in.  
I write it out.  
*This is why we write,*  
She said.  
Joy-sorrow sister.

I listened to all of the morbid and melancholy  
Songs from past lives,  
Spitting blood and broken teeth  
That night I spent in my car—  
I couldn't go home and had nowhere else to go—  
I couldn't go home,  
I didn't want to hear *why?* or *what?* or *what is wrong?*  
I didn't want anyone to see  
The scars the bruises the cuts  
The ones I put there, the ones I let be carved into me,  
The ones that just appeared like a sinner's stigmata  
Because I was always a soulful creature of the flesh

MCLAUGHLIN \_\_\_\_\_

That bled too easily—  
I could see it staining underneath my skin.  
*Women have too much blood in them,*  
As some one other woman once said.

If you want him to,  
He will bite pieces out of you,  
And you will taste your own blood and him  
On your lips.  
The shame and pain learned  
To hide beneath clothes.  
The marks left on your body  
And the ones you left on his,  
Lines on a page...

Body and Blood.  
Soul and Divinity.  
Paper and Ink of a Pen.

Not looking your reflection in the eye,  
Pressing thighs together,  
Washing him away  
The next day.  
Misguided attempts to fill that cold empty place  
But always left colder and emptier than before,  
Defined by absence  
And the unfulfilled unsatisfied  
Withdrawn and always left alone  
Raw ripped tender.  
Looking back I am now:  
He, whoever he was at the time  
Became a kind of miscarriage, every time.  
And after,  
The humiliation of clinical and critical  
Bright white light  
Bright white linens  
Bright white labcoats  
Bright white forms  
Bright white of their respectable domesticated spayed middle-aged  
married women catty eyes without passion and compassion staring  
Clinical and critical.



Cold as stainless steel,  
(But like a priest they kept your secrets),  
Swallowing the pills they give you  
To snuff out the knotted and clotted worry inside you

*It's the same as an abortion,*  
Another She said with clean clear concise cold old Catholic logic,  
Mother Nun (None...No) Virgin reason,  
Not knowing that twice I'd opened my lips like a chorister  
About to sing,  
Like a communicant kneeling  
To take in that caplet  
That would tear up that cell cluster like an old love letter  
From a lover unloving.

Abstinence can be cruel.  
Self-denial denial of the need  
Is another form of masochism.  
Self-inflicted self-afflicted  
Celibate old Loyola self-flagellation—  
The One they call their God gave me this  
Pleasure-loving hip-hugging  
Love blooded little woman's body.

There is no sin and sanctity.  
There is only what hurts and what does not.  
There is only who loves and who does not.  
I have learned the difference.  
But the words I have written  
Have been written and said  
Better and worse  
By others before me.  
Young woman,  
Young women.



*Waiting For Results, Raychil Arndt*

---

**TWENTY SOMETHING**

Our seasons burn away  
 Like sage and sticks of joss;  
 We keep the ashes.  
 How do I try to paint and print myself paperbound?  
 Hold me down cover me  
 But only if and when I ask,  
 And I will ask.  
 Or better, tell.

This is the best of me  
 This is all of me  
 This is me for the taking—  
 That last,  
 Aren't they the words  
 We are supposed to  
 Breathe into each other  
 In our rose quartz and candle flame coloured moments?  
 So take me have me then but I want the same  
 No giving no taking.

The few who walk wanting  
 To love-fuck the whole world  
 Because we adore it so,  
 Feel so much,  
 Intense and passionate we are  
 But incendiary enough to banish  
 The dim gray apathy  
 Of the complacent impotent sterile anesthetized?

A baker's half-dozen  
 Of the *un*-glamourously hip,  
 The beautifully un-photogenic  
     Fragile frazzled fragmented  
 Careworn and vintage—  
 It gives character.  
 Topography of the daily  
 Dramas comedies tragedies of us  
 And who we are:



The thousand little landmarks we pass—  
That bar where he said that.  
That place where we all did this.  
The park underneath the tree where that other he did that.  
The beds I've slept in,  
Or not slept in...  
Room where I wrote that,  
Place by the river where I read that...  
I love a honey-amber glass  
And stamping my feet  
Tell another and laughter  
Our heels clicking on the floors  
Take my shots like pleasant medicine—  
I need heat and electricity inside me to  
Positively charge and warm my blood.

A tree I pass by everyday on the highway  
Is the first to turn its leaves' colour  
Three years running now—  
Though it always anticipates autumn,  
Still in the cornsilk spinning end of August.  
It may be that she simply loves the way she feels  
When she is wearing red.  
We see each other walking  
Down the rainy street laughing or crying  
The perpetual music video  
By day and by night.  
Quicksilver drops suspended  
Frozen in the fraying ribbon  
Of celluloid memory cinematic  
Raining ringing champagne glasses  
And the sound of emerald bottle glass  
Blissfully shattering.

## HELENE T. CAPRARI

### NIGHT, ALONE

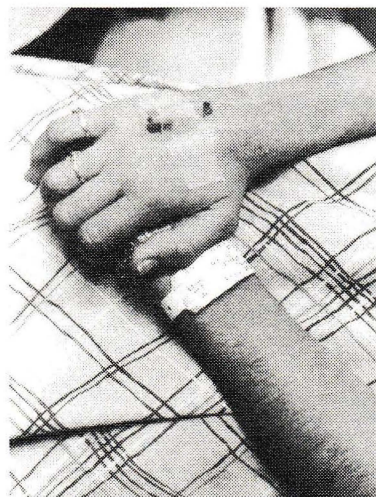
Her hands are like her father's,  
craving a black that will tar a valley  
of creased and cratered skin.

Memory is the uncreated creatable;  
remembering, the act of a scythe  
cutting into a charcoal scalp.

Excess soot is blended into  
coarse linens; it is a kind of blurred release  
erasing what dark is erasable.

But no matter how many times she tries,  
she cannot sketch an exact likeness  
despite the varying colors of grey.

She is pinned to the wall of the mines  
with a pick, as the canary stops singing  
and falls dead in its cage.



*I Choose to Smoke, Raychil Arndt*

NUI BA

I won't c  
to know  
anything  
of what i  
here

about  
this mou  
in an oth  
flat  
Vietnam

or conce  
this wom  
about wh  
there is n  
to know.

Some say  
haunting  
of loss  
burned b  
regal rei  
into her c

until she  
wretched  
for holy  
unmaske  
death.

Perhaps  
and grab  
gobs  
of oil bla  
faith.  
bent  
and stret  
across un  
prayer fa  
steeps



**NUI BA DEN**

I won't claim  
to know  
anything  
of what is said  
here

about  
this mountain  
in an otherwise  
flat  
Vietnam,

or concerning  
this woman  
about whom  
there is nothing  
to know.

Some say  
haunting dreams  
of loss  
burned black  
regal reigns  
into her chest

until she screamed  
wretchedly  
for holy  
unmasked malaise,  
death.

Perhaps she reached  
and grabbed  
gobs  
of oil black  
faith,  
bent  
and stretched  
across unbreakable,  
prayer fallen  
steeps

CAPRARI

---

of rock  
imagining  
a stillborn dream,

her limbs  
falling away  
in great plumes  
to hover,  
even now,  
as vapor  
from her weeping.

Another story says  
her tears fell,  
as an entire spectrum  
of colors--  
green-grey sunlight  
reflecting  
on all the mountain's sides.  
Maybe,  
she became  
the mountain.

Precious relics,  
forged molds  
from off  
the walls'  
sacramental breaths,  
bellow legends  
onto the green-grey  
oceanic stretch  
of ground.

Clinging like  
a fist of words,  
the mountain arches,  
still;  
ruin raked  
in pleated thought.

I think  
of storied soldiers  
clothed in tar-black skins



of war,  
creased in the pages  
of dirt dusted,  
deafened roads  
that break  
the vessel conscious  
when tales  
of Nui Ba Den  
are told.

Memory  
is filigreed  
in texts.

We go  
where we go,  
together.  
Language  
remembers.  
Texts forget.

Blur truth  
and time,  
memory will anoint  
faith worn  
in leaving,  
going,  
and never once arriving.

I write  
never having been there;  
you the reader  
be where we go together,  
returning where  
she waits for those  
who have yet to arrive,

offering  
a point of reference  
to determine  
where we are,  
where we were  
before.

CAPRARI

---

### SIMULACRA

It does not make sense  
to place the bed  
in any other space  
in the bedroom.

The closet  
with the sliding doors  
takes up one  
entire wall

I remember a time  
when I thought  
there was space enough inside  
for all my things.

Setting the bed  
on either side  
of the closet  
would mean



*HBS/Fragmented, Herbert Simon*

having to walk around it;

and then  
the electrical outlets  
would be blocked.

I'd probably have to  
use extension cords  
and they always  
find their way  
to the center of the floor.

I don't think  
that I can be  
a part of *this* design.

I don't want to  
succumb to  
the only wall

with space enough  
for me to rest  
contently.

Also, the kitchen is already  
where it is  
before I can say  
where it should go.

The bathroom is connected  
because it makes more sense  
to have water pipes  
and drains and the like,  
aligned.

Every other kitchen  
and bathroom  
in the complex  
is the same--

in every other  
apartment  
throughout  
the building,



CAPRARI

---

and I am on  
the bottom floor,  
the first;  
a copy  
without  
an original.

I am in a bed  
facing a closet  
because there is no other  
logical arrangement  
and I fit better into this design  
not because I am  
a creature  
ruled by logic,

but because this is  
the natural way of things,  
like grocery products  
organized in a grocery store--

where else would one keep  
the frozen broccoli?

I fail to remember  
how to walk  
into a structure.

History is global  
exhumation  
of myth.

I am not read  
as one might read  
a hero.

Walking into a room  
is less the process  
of connecting relationships  
between contents  
and more of a kind of  
embrace with  
the thing itself,  
without me;

a skeletal mass  
grown outside  
my skin.

Perhaps the bedroom  
has replaced me,  
and I have not

existed at all  
except as a copy  
of myself

waking in an apartment  
pre-designed  
to accommodate me

although this place  
would be lived in  
even if I were never here  
at all.

## RETURNING HOME

While hurrying  
to close out the rain,  
I am reminded  
how ideas come  
from traveling:

I would run to slam  
each pane into its fixture,  
and hear my dad disturb  
pyramids of canned soups;

we bought everything in bulk  
and still,  
there was never enough.

Clouds forming shadows  
on rectangular fields

CAPRARI

---

are like watermarks  
beneath windows...

as a child  
I watched lights from cars  
move across my ceiling,

while shades  
from my blinds  
speckled a lake  
that would dry  
to a small puddle

where I wash laundry  
and brush my teeth.

From the back seat  
my children's voices ring,  
"how far away from home  
are we?"

Their father pulls the car  
to a stop  
where we can sit  
until the storm passes.  
They are angry at the delay.

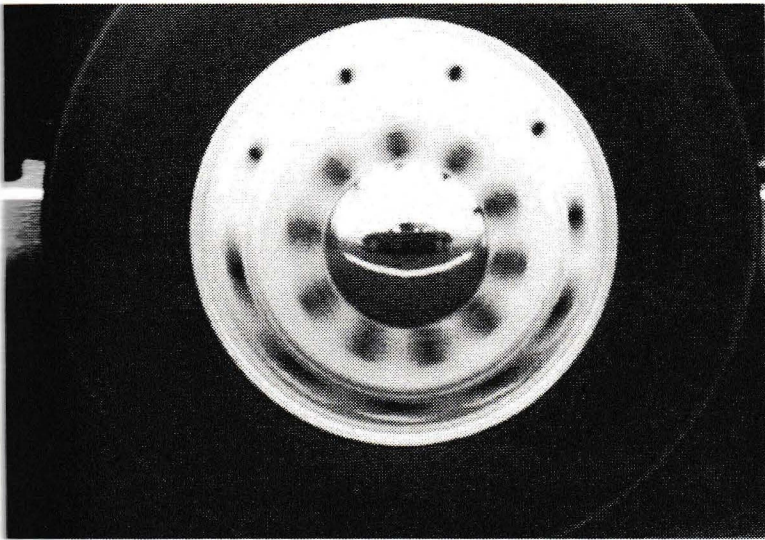
On the floor,  
carpet that is least wet  
grows lighter.

Photographs  
are scattered  
on saturated seats,

edges curling  
like leaves do  
when left to dry  
in the sun.

Turning back onto the road  
I feel relieved  
that I am alone,  
and driving.





*Reflections on Our Driving*  
Jim Feeney

**JOSEPH CORTEGERONE**

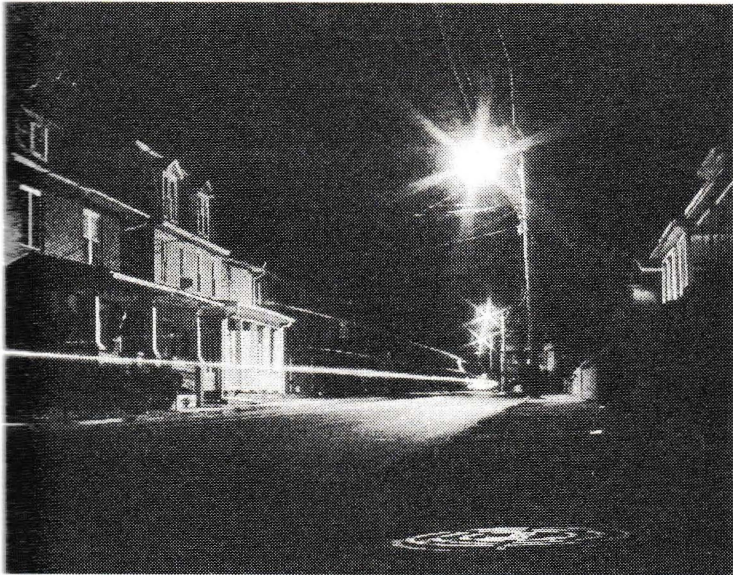
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**PARIS, 1967**

What is forever and then  
Twisting stringent drying  
A puddle, morose,  
Mud-caked and smiling  
Exposing the newly naked limbs  
Of the woman from Foucault Street  
Who knew how to chain smoke  
And writhe from within  
What if forever and then  
Her daughter, hymen so broken,  
Carried Odysseus to heaven  
And then forever is what  
Her mother had taught her  
From out and in the minds of men

**TAKING A SHORT PAUSE UNDER  
ILLUMINATED STREETLAMPS**

There are people waiting below the lamps  
there is this ferocious torment sliding  
under the door of infamy  
there are (watching peacefully falling so  
very quietly) the thoughts of clean sand  
with a pleasant light  
illuminating the streets of wax  
so always unwaxedly trodden  
so voracious, so vexatious to those  
who would bathe in their liquid conceit.



*Abrupted City Night*  
Raychil Arndt

PHOTO COURTESY





*Natural Advertising*  
Stephanie Pacifico

## **KEITH HUBBARD**

---

### **PRIME TIME DEVIL**

Show your teeth,  
and they'll show you  
a pair of pliers.  
For your own sake,  
submit to the third hand  
growing out of the recliner  
while it applies the novocain  
like suntan lotion.

This hand is taking you to a world  
where celebrity marriage  
and mass murder  
grace our front pages  
with sequin smiles  
and t-shirt sales.

A world where you can watch  
the anchorman date rape  
the American dream  
with families watching,  
over cans of peaches,  
masturbating with fat-free butter.

They'll sell you white-chocolate  
crucifixes for Christmas,  
and make threats of karma  
if you decide to decide.  
The preacher sees this all  
on channel twelve  
and howls:  
"The sow is mine!"

He then shifts the attention over to  
the man with the loudspeaker,  
who never told you that the  
Truth campaign was the brainchild of  
Phillip Morris Inc.

HUBBARD

---

He speaks in tongues we don't  
care to recognize  
as another snuff film  
ekes its way through the airwaves.

These sequences and  
ideas of importance  
make me miss the days when  
reality was climbing a tree.

The days when time demolished our jeans  
as it was a mark of manhood  
before puberty found us  
sitting in the living room.

And whatever happened to:  
"If I miss one second of this song,  
we're starting it all over again."?

These virtues have been signed over  
to the prime time devil  
who took our souls  
in exchange for a bumper sticker.

In his weekly updated scriptures,  
he tells us that martyrs are going out  
like the springtime fashions in Purgatory,  
and he will not award clemency to anyone  
who ignores the magazines.



**REVELATIONS AT PERPIGNAN STATION**

On the first days of spring,  
I leave the murderer  
underneath the mattress  
while my cheek  
accepts the breeze.

I've become accustomed  
to this searing salmon phallus,  
this Mae West neuro-map,  
these business men fucking.

Can the calamity ignore me  
with my back to it  
in this old wooden chair?

No.

I've been a member of their hunts,  
I know their dirty little secrets.

I know that after giving  
lollipops to little girls,  
the old man gets the itch to  
choke someone.

I know that the business men have  
wives and children  
and pay for their bowler hats  
at flea market prices.

I've seen all this while  
riding the coattails of corrosives  
into a ferocity that makes clear  
that I am not safe where I sit.

But my back stays to this  
soft, scattered bedlam  
as I gaze into the great  
nothing.

HUBBARD

---

And the void throws the breeze  
like a slow, melting erosion  
of porcelain and genius  
as I sit at Perpignan station,  
waiting for the universe  
to pull the break cord.

### THE GLASS FISTS OF JEAN CLAUDE VAN-DAMME

Around the alleyway,  
a Siamese Cat,  
hip to any scene he can walk into,  
pounces on lingo fallacies  
imported from Belgium  
while the glass fists of Jean Claude Van-Damme  
punish the Hire Chrysene  
for paralyzing his brother.

He watches Jean Claude train  
under the guidance  
of a man named Chan Chow,  
who tests Jean Claude's capabilities  
by taking him to the bar,

getting him loaded,  
and telling everyone else in the joint  
that Jean Claude's been talking shit,  
calling them the pussy offspring  
of mule fucking mothers.

After achieving total spiritual oneness,  
Jean Claude avenges his seductress' rape  
with unnecessary ass shots,  
ostentatious photography  
and a complicated forehead,

as the cat sits among the other strays  
indulging...

waving his paw to the left  
in a careless comic tranquility.

The cat observes Jean Claude,  
in this place where eagles  
share shits with Buddha,  
as he sits among the other strays  
belching up genius crossbreeds  
of poetry and porno.

They all have a favorite spot  
in this absinthe-light alleyway  
where they bring  
whatever it is that they know.

The Siamese sits in a corduroy chair  
and he knows  
that he is free to do anything.

He can dance to beats and basslines  
with fast-food pirouettes  
and dehydrated demi-points.

He can liquefy to praying mantis blood  
lounging in quills  
from the backs of caffeine addict peacocks.

He can flip his eyelids with his toes.  
He can laugh forever watching these shows.

The glass fists of Jean Claude Van-Damme  
slip by the cat  
in their fury and inaccuracy.

He has no cause  
to consciously ready himself  
for Jean Claude's next swing.  
He has good instincts,  
and a keen sense

of Western defense mechanisms...

That, and Jean Claude punches like a girl.



**KATE SKALUBA**

---

**WHITE OUT**

Walking down a country road

Look above, the clouds are falling

Snow

It collects on all that is seen

Making all objects in the distance

Indiscriminate

As if earth was a canvas

The artist above unhappy

Imperfection, flaws, corruption

With broad, sweeping strokes

The canvas is wiped clean

White

Ready to start anew

And here I stand

Alone

Right in the middle

Of this country road

Covered in

Snow



*Summer Nostalgia*  
Kate Skaluba

10/11/11 10:00 AM

## CHRIS HODOROWSKI

### GYPSY LOVE

you can date me,  
listen to me,  
for only 29,95 a month.  
now, listen,  
don't run away,  
don't you dare run away,  
because if you do,  
and reconsider  
you're losing out.  
i will take you back,  
yes, there is no worry,  
that i won't take you back,  
but when i do it will be for 39,95 a month.  
if you still run away, there's always a third chance,  
there's always a third chance in life,  
but the cost of this chance is 59,95 a month.  
And that's it.  
Three thirds.  
Never further.



**ADONAI**

To a kind philosopher,

We speak of the greater and the lesser mysteries, I do not know the difference. If you were to share the Secret, I'd take it to my heart. If there, I would lock the doors from the inside. But I am not a reverent man, and I suspect that is why you tell me nothing of your life. So it is, and you will never be around to hear the Secret of mine. A man like me ought to have a Secret. Oh, but at what cost? To speak of the Secret, you say, is just talk, talk, talk. Well, on that principle my biography is a dull song, indeed. Yet, to be sure, a paper cut is small for a reason.

Our teachers speak of great souls who serve as luminaries towards the enlightenment. The ascetic, in so many ways, carries his own brilliance down into the caverns. For all that I lack, alas, the world inside me is dark and I fear the monsters at the edges. Do not judge me, though, for you are no great soul, no ascetic, either. You are, at best, a philosopher; at worst, a believer. But look, and what do you really see? What do you conceal from your heart? If there is writing on the walls, I do not notice.

We suffer from the same demons. They wait beside our head at night. They ask and rasp in the silence, their breath rots of timid pleasure. "Is there nothing else?" they ask. They refer you to the sky, as if there were time to interpret the stars. They usher you to locked doors, they drop a witch's letter into your hand. At night, they steal your breath, and all the while you are counting sevens in your chest.

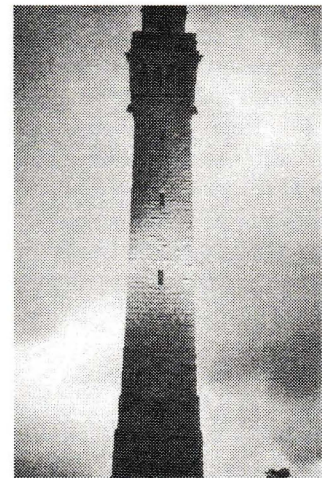
How do you sleep at night? From my experience, sleep is obtained either by narcotics or a peace of mind. Narcotics are wonderful, commonplace temptations, and I advise you to seek them all so you will not be left wanting. No, but were always too clear to appreciate narcotics. You have never admitted any necessities into your life, and in that respect I am your inferior. As for a peace of mind, since kind things are so natural to you, please tell me about your peace of mind. Remember when you were in love, when you made the grade, when you found fifty dollars, whenever you thought you found happiness; nevertheless, you had to ask, "Is there nothing else?"

Well, I have always had the suspicion that the Secret to life was all together something else, indeed, for there really is no Secret. No, but there must be a Secret, you protest. At the cost of my reverence, I say to you there is not. My dear friend, do not despair. If there is no Secret, is there nothing after all? No, upon my word, the fact that there is no Secret is a small fortune, indeed. But a small fortune affords for nothing, at least not in this age. Right, I say, and that is precisely why I believe we are past our time.

Now, of all the stories that demanded a rude jerk at the dinner table, of all the stories whose punch line was a veritable knee-slap or twitch on the nose, there was never one – that was not a comedy – whose end was marked by a chortle or snicker. For that matter, I have never heard one from my fathers or teachers, either, and it is to my sadness that I cannot deliver one to you now. Yet this makes perfect sense, a comedian ought not to have a say on his own jokes.

The discipline of tragedy, like the disciple of comedy, is studied by tracing the chalk lines of our wants to our voids, but Aristotle was right to see that only comedy crosses the absurd. When there is no explanation in theatre, when the absurd is winning over every pot, the audience will always encourage the next act with laughter. If there is no Secret, there is no explanation. It saddens me now that I am the one to tell you that your life is absurd and that, my friend, is the joke.

If suddenly you feel empty and you suspect that I've acquired something from you by telling you this, ask. Why did I take the pains to tell you this joke? As I said before, I am an irreverent man, and I told you the joke just to hear you laugh. Didn't you laugh? Yes, I overheard you. Sleep tonight, my friend, with what you know now. The rasping and



*Vertigo (of the Pilgrim Monument),*

Sabrina A. McLaughlin



asking will be gone. There will be silence, and you won't care to ask if there is a Secret anymore.

There will be silence, and you will look behind your shoulders three times just to be sure you did not die. You will sit alone in the dark and by the morning you will be shouting mad at the world to laugh.

From the time I understood there was no Secret, until this very night, the clock of my life is set to laughter. Yes, I still try to look for the Secret. But how do you pray for rain? I search for it among my papers. The clerks at the office watch while I turn over my desk. It is obvious that I have lost something that was once dear to me. Was it a gold bangle, they ask? Was it a diamond? Yes, I say. "Then how small was the damned thing?" my secretary asks on her knees on the floor. I cannot say.

There is no Secret, our life is absurd. Yet if there is laughter to encourage life, we do well to continue as things are. If I spy a quiet child sitting on a stoop in a park, I sidle by, and, in some kind of dumb show, twist my thumbs and stamp my feet before him. If he has any eyes for the absurd, his whole character will be enthralled, shouting for more. By strides I slowly kindle his bliss and warm his humor until I crack his heart like a Beaumont shell. It doesn't take much, and then it is my turn to watch the dumb show. Of course, an opened heart bleeds willingly, a cracked heart bleeds once. But you are a kind philosopher, and I am sure you will find a better way.

Life is so determined, so let me tell you this. After you study the comedies, there will always be a place set for you at the tea tables. Yet no matter how expertly you will learn to turn your heels and clot your breath, you will never be able to steal a laugh from yourself. No clever jump of the belt will help you when you are alone, no knock will answer. Nothing remains but remains, my friend, lest we give our laughter to what the Secret leaves behind.



ZACH BREMMER

---



With the clock striking 13  
and the emerald green sound of the bells  
resonating  
across the vast distance between two lovers,  
the time seems to pull apart  
a separation of mind and state  
when eyes that have not met for so long  
hands absent of touch  
deteriorate and melt into rivers  
that flow down the valleys of the body  
collecting together beneath the mind  
amongst the heart  
dissolving feelings of longing and desire

The bodily bonds are broken, the pools change to an  
aura of life, of love  
freely floating fog of lovers disease

There is now sight without eyes,  
feeling without hands,  
and connection of lovers  
across the distance  
of Separation

## COREY PAJKA

---

### SLEEPWALKING SNAPSHOTS, SINGLE-FRAME DAYDREAMS

*Scene: Thurston is seated at a bar with a gorgeous redhead, Lola. He speaks with drunken talkativeness.*

Thurston: I sometimes think that all human history is determined simply in the way we perceive it. If you think about it, how do we know what it is that we believe to be true? It's based simply on our own viewpoint.

Lola: (*laughs nervously*) I'm not sure I follow.

Thurston: What I mean is that outside of our own viewpoint, how do we know that anything has really, truly occurred? How do we both know that our respective apartments are still where we left them? For all we know, they could be gone! Believing is simply in the eye of the beholder.

Lola: Well I sure hope my apartment is where I left it: the lease isn't up yet! (*laughs*)

Thurston: ---

I enjoy contemplating snapshots. The terms "picture" or "photograph" don't do them justice. Each one captures a moment in time and space that, for the life of the snapshot anyway, will be forever held and maintained in this span of existence. It is totally and fully immovable and static, never emerging from this place of being. These are variables that "pictures" simply cannot aspire to ever maintain.

Snapshots are something I surround myself with often. Whenever I'm not pushing my way through paperwork at the office or caught in whatever else happens to round out my waking life, I pull out a random one from the box I keep and muse on its origin.

As I sit here on my floor, I'm cornered on all ends by an onslaught of these images. The shoebox has poured forth and caught me in an undertow of celluloid tide.

One moment I contemplate my senior picture from high school wondering how that young man ever saw his twenty-first birthday. What mindset he was in when he lost his virginity and all the different paths his life could have taken from this crucial junction of time.

Other times I retrieve the random photograph of a stranger that I take on the street and contemplate the same thing.



What led this toothless man to Januzzi's Pizza on the night of January 7, 2005?

Irish Johnny Conlon. The toughest retired boxer this side of the Susquehanna. Seventy-five years old and he remembers the sweat and blood of each fight like it was yesterday. The man wouldn't stop talking of his past as my friends and I sat eating our pizza and drinking our beer doing our best not to be impolite by turning away.

Moments like this necessitate a snapshot. I relive memories of riding my first two-wheeler at age five and the smell of the interior of my cousin Jake's newly restored 1974 Camaro Z28.

Snapshots confined to paper aren't the only ones that infiltrate my subconscious.

The snapshots in my mind are always the best. They come when I least suspect them and leave as quickly as they arrive. Sometimes they are random glimpses of people and places passed, but most of the time they foretell things.

I see an event that has never happened. There are people I know and some I don't in haphazard circumstances. The snapshot comes and goes swiftly and is put out of mind, but never forgotten.

Hours, days, and sometimes weeks later I will enact this snapshot in real life. The moment comes and goes as swiftly as the image in my mind itself. By the time it has passed, I am left only with an appreciation of that time and an apprehension regarding what will come next.

*Scene: Thurston is at a party with Lola and her friend, Christine. Thurston has been philosophizing with similar drunken musings, the two women are laughing good-naturedly.*

Christine: "Play with your mind?" Is that like some kind of mental masturbation?

Lola: Yeah, Thurston. Is your mind all hairy inside? That's an after-effect, you know? *(Lola and Christine laugh, Thurston stares at them pensively)*

Thurston: Well, it is kind of like an orgy in there. It never stops fornicating with all of these nasty new thoughts that keep developing!

I feel my entire life has followed this pattern of snapshots. Like some sort of living scrapbook I construct as I go along. The structure remains the same, but is constantly in motion. It reminds me of those Choose-Your-Own-Adventure books I used to read when I was a kid.





***Inferiority Complex,***  
**Raychil Arndt**

From one choice decision I could either foil an international terrorist conspiracy to assassinate the president or wind up in a cement casket at the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea.

The real-life choices, however, are rarely that exciting. Most of the time it's a choice of which color paper to use on my next analysis report, or what DVD to rent this weekend at the video store.

Film, however, doesn't hold the same possibilities for me as the single-frame image. I like the idea of not knowing how the narrative will unfold.

*Scene: Baby crying in background. House in general state of disarray.*

**Lola:** Thurston, where the hell have you been? Eric needs to go to practice, dinner needs to be made, and the bank keeps calling. I thought you got this straightened out!

**Thurston:** I did! But things must have gotten mixed up in the—

**Lola:** I don't want to hear it! Chrissakes, I swear you don't care if this family lives or dies sometimes! We're drowning here, goddamnit!

These snapshots are out of my control. They grow increasingly unpleasant as I receive more and more of them. It isn't often I get so many in rapid succession. I stand up and pace around my room that has become littered with the bodies of past moments.

At once I see a shot of me from my fifth birthday party at McDonalds.

*Scene: Interior of a McDonald's, Thurston is seated in front of a cake with a party hat on.*

Children: Happy Birth-day to yooou!/Happy Birth-day to yoooU!--

Then I'm living a few years down the line. I'm eleven here and about to get my first kiss from Judy Barrett after school.

*Scene: Thurston and Judy are on an elementary school playground after class.*

Judy: Have you ever kissed a girl?

Thurston: (*nervous*) Well, no, not yet...

I backtrack to Halloween. Here I'm eight and my brother and I have dressed up as Captain Hook and Peter Pan.

*Scene: Thurston and Tommy are in their family living room posing for a picture. They are unruly, disruptive, and Mom grows increasingly annoyed.*

Tommy: Mom, Thurston keeps poking me with his hook!

Thurston: Well, stop jabbing at me with your sword!

Mom: Will you two stop so I can take this picture?!

Images overwhelm my consciousness. For the first time I know what it is that brought me here. Twenty-seven years old and holed up in a two-room apartment in Greater Wilkes-Barre.

There really was no random process to it all. My every move is constructed and laid down for me. The architect of it all, the mathematical formula that determines my existence and the very position of the cosmos has led me here to this point at this junction in time and space.

When the Big Bang occurred, it wasn't through some random assortment of matter and energy. The event unfolded as the result of fundamental, immutable law. The position of earth, the dawn of life, and the eventual emergence of man and his slow destruction of the natural world have all been laid down in stone from the very beginning.



Then perhaps there is no free will, no real point to everything at all. I suppose then we are all cogs in this massive machine of reality.

As I pass my eye over these snapshots one last time I ponder the linear nature of it all.

Almost all of these snapshots render an image of me at some point in this uninterrupted trajectory to the here and now. It really all has been part of a grand cosmic design.

Was I truly meant to stand idly by and watch as so many of the people that passed into and out of my life went on to explore, travel, and do all sorts of great things with their moments?

Somehow they had managed to find the link between all the snapshots that come to us in these random places. They had put all the gaps together and rode them to some sort of resting place where it would all become manifest. Everything is precious. It all has meaning. You have fulfilled your role.

*Scene: Lola has just dropped Eric at Thurston's apartment late.*

Thurston: You know you're an hour late dropping Eric off. You're really abusing this primary custody privilege you—

Lola: *(interrupting)* Fuck you, Thurston!

Thurston: That's a nice way to talk to me in front of our thirteen year—

Eric: *(interrupting)* Fuck you, Dad.

Who is this woman? The names Lola and Eric and Samantha drift into my mind as I see them all born and reared and grown to maturity before my very eyes.

I watch as a romance is planted, blossoms, flourishes, and withers and corrodes before I even have a chance to savor it. A twenty-year marriage to a woman I don't even know yet. The snapshot is gone before I can make out the lines and etches and shadows of light dancing across her face.

Lola. It's like something out of a cartoon. Is my purpose in the mathematical formula governing creation to endure a heartbreak that lasts a quarter of a lifetime?

I grab a snapshot at random, throw on my shoes and jacket, and head down to the corner bar to ponder these things further.

An existence made of fire and cosmos in chaos conforms to land me in a failed marriage. End result begets children who despise me and the same questions that drive me now.



What more can there be to justify this?

I still ponder over this as I walk into the bar and sit. I order my drink and think back on the flashes of reality dancing before my eyes.

How is it that I am privy to this? Don't most people drift through life myopically and dead set on that end moment where it will all make sense? Does such an answer even exist?

If the formula was truly meant to put me into the place where I needed to be, then what brought me to this bar? Why will I meet and procreate with a woman whom I know full well will wind up leaving me? Why will we foster children who grow to hate me? Why do I need to know all of this now?

*Scene: Thurston is in a hospital bed, Eric, now grown, sits beside him.*

Eric: *(slowly, with great labor)* Dad, I know you're sick, and I've been meaning to say this for a while ... but I love you. If it weren't for you I don't know where I'd be now.... And—I just want to say I'm sorry for all the hurt I've caused you. I just didn't understand.

Thurston: *(a beat)* How's Joaquin?

Eric: *(another beat, smiles)* He's good. He looks a lot like you.

Thurston: I'd like to meet him.

Eric: You will. Mom should be bringing him in an hour or two.

I reach into my pocket and retrieve the lone snapshot I have with me. It's a picture of me with my dad when I was fourteen, during our last family vacation in Florida.

In less than eight months, my dad would be dead. Killed in the line of duty as he attempted to save an elderly woman from a burning building. He received the hero's funeral he deserved.

I never got the chance to tell him how much I loved him. How much I admired him for putting his life on the line every day for people who never knew him, never even asking for so much as a thank you.

Mom was never the same after that. Even when I went to college I hardly got so much as a goodbye hug. She just stared off into space like she usually did, clutching some bit of tablecloth in the kitchen between her fingers.

I've sought that love ever since. The kind of contentment you can't receive outside of the arms of those who matter most.

I've walked down many streets. Dark, dirty, and foreboding; unsure of where they would lead me. I wake up each morning looking for the occurrence that will lead me to the next frame of existence and hope that it will amount to this ultimate attainment of being. I can aspire to no less.

*Scene: Early morning. Lola and Thurston cuddle in bed as morning sunlight covers them on the sheets.*

Thurston: ---

Lola: You're quiet. What's on your mind?

Thurston: You.

Lola: (*laughs*) What about me?

Thurston: (*gazes at her thoughtfully*) Everything. I feel good when I'm around you. I feel...safe.

Lola: (*kisses him, with great depth*) I love you.

The moment has me. I look forward to it occurring. I sit and stare off into space never touching my drink. I expect the next snapshot to arrive any second now but it doesn't. Something unexpected lurks in front of it.

A gorgeous redhead hops on the stool next to me and orders a Yuengling.

*I know you, I almost say aloud.*

"Hi, how are you tonight?" she says. Her voice cuts through to my core. Like the tone of a mandolin.

"Not bad. What's your name?"

"Loretta. But all my friends call me Lola. You?"

"Thurston."

I pause for a moment before beginning the rest of our lives together. I sip my beer, stare at my reflection in the mirror behind the liquor shelves and finally understand. I know no fear.



PAJKA

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## SONIC MUSING #2

white noise  
tides recede

and advance on a wall of rock

and

on

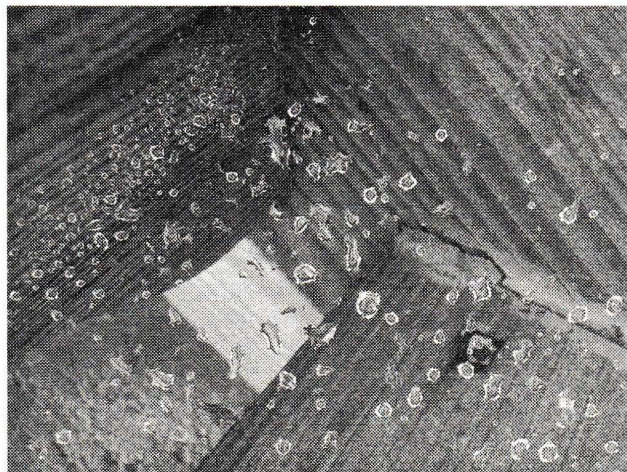
and

on

into the never...

from this will come a smooth, featureless beach  
in ten million years' time

wait and see



*Spider Web*, Clarissa Dudeck



**ICARUS'S SON**

Piece together some segue to zen  
Salvaged from remnants of dreams  
Float away on a gale you fasten  
To those wings you built from a theme

Your skin melts away  
Your blood dissipates  
The shell corrodes swiftly  
Mortal coils evaporate

A soul bound by menial chains  
Can gather itself up and fly  
Neruda gives Jimenez refrain  
While wordless ones don't dare try

Your hair is ablaze  
Your eyes penetrate matter  
A voice clears the haze  
Glass temples fold and shatter

Icarus dies for Daedalus's vision  
For daring to soar so high  
The sin of the father melts his waxen feathers  
He watches as his passion dies

Mere upheavals in the pattern  
One cannot sit and ponder  
The word demands action  
The vision grows ever fonder

Of words and ideas  
Of thought and form  
Of daring to utter a noise  
When mediocrity glares pleasant and warm

Hold close to your heart  
What stirs your soul the most  
Defy the glare of humanity

PAJKA

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Observe Icarus's body on the coast

Glide boldly over the sea

Penetrate the horizon

Cast off measure...and—meter

and—

simply

continue to

...be...

### STATE OF THE UNION

*A Note From the Author: This story should not be misconstrued as a vote of sympathy for George W. Bush. The president depicted here is totally fictitious.*

“Mr. President, your fly is down!”

The words of that lanky, unkempt intern filter through my earpiece, cut through to my brain and slice open an entire well of emotional triggers. What do I do now?

As I stand out there alone, in front of a sea of the faces of four thousand Federal Express employees, my thoughts go from discussion of health care and retirement benefits to every other embarrassing moment that followed me from Topeka, Kansas to the White House.

I have vague flashes of being pushed off the slide at recess during kindergarten and being the last pick on the intramural baseball team. Later on I have odd flashes of pimples and braces, and awkward first kisses behind the gym.

All of this happened in the blink of an eye as I ponder what I can logically do now to stop the blood loss and salvage what will surely be left of my political credibility.

It all sounds absurd, I'm sure, coming from the perspective of

someone who doesn't have to be on the receiving end of this torment. However, criticism is something I have to endure seven days a week; it's a difficult job being leader of the free world.

"Don't worry, sir, I'm sure no one has noticed."

This kid isn't helping matters. Beads of sweat form at my hairline as I glance down at some random people in the first row who look distracted. Maybe they've noticed. It can't possibly be interest in my speech; even I don't know what I'm saying half the time.

I throw a few random "freedoms" and "liberties" into my dialogue just to pepper things up a bit. It's anyone's guess as to what these adjectives have to do with health care and benefit reforms, but they're proven attention-getters.

When you're a person of public persuasion, every move you conduct is carefully orchestrated to minimize damage and smooth out the rough edges of political enterprise. The charade is what keeps the approval ratings high; if only it applied to everything in my life.

I notice a few people in the audience getting antsy as I determine how best to mend my fences and zip myself back up. The damage will surely take years to repair. By now I don't even know what words are escaping my lips, all that drives me now is the urge to stop this tiny draft I've been feeling for up to eleven seconds now.

Of all the places for a social foible. I suppose this is one of those things you don't notice until it's too late to halt the damage done. That was the case with my first wife.

I thrust my hand in my pocket and work the crowd to my right. I can see her eyes in the color of the crowd; I can smell her shampoo. Her hair's intoxicating aroma fills me up as I pretend for a moment I give a damn about FedEx benefits.

All I want now is to shut this gaping hole in me and bring her back into my life. I want to stop her from moving to Colorado, and to stop myself from that blonde rendezvous in Cleveland, the start of it all.

I was a young member of the city board trying to work my way up when it all fell apart. I don't remember moments so much as I see flashes of color and form.

It always ends the same way. She leaves me and packs up for the Mile-High State. I eventually meet the woman who will become my trophy symbol of marital fidelity, and the eventual First Lady of the United States.



During one of the sporadic outbursts of applause, I motion over to her and she forces an approving smile. What was I talking about? Oh yeah, guaranteed coverage for employees' spouses and children, even after divorce.

This is a reform made to address the needs of FedEx employees' families and still address the growing concern of divorce in the nation. The job, after all, calls for time away from home, which inevitably causes strain between partners, a bending and occasional breaking of that sacred bond of marriage. It's only human nature for these things to happen.

That is, unless you live under a microscope. My wife and I rarely speak in private, and when we do, it isn't over how much we love each other or our kids. Really it's more like she talks and I listen, or at least just imagine where all my other friends from Yale are now, and how much I'd love to be where they are sometimes, and not responsible for the welfare of two hundred and fifty million registered voters every day.

By now the applause has died out and focus is back on me again. Damn! I should've zipped up then.

I can tell by now there won't be any easy way out of this. There's no way I can get it done discreetly while I'm up onstage. If I wait until it's all over people are sure to notice, and then the headlines will be even worse.

- President Fails to Feel Odd Breeze Down Below
- President Orders "Flag" at Half-Mast
- Forget Falling Economy, The Prez is Losing More Than That!
- Hail to the Chief, He Needs All the Help He Can Get

Before launching into the next part of my speech carefully written and pared down for me weeks earlier by some recently graduated Political Science major who may wind up where I am someday, I'm suddenly visited by the ghost of every reservation I've had since going down this path.

I feel every hand I've ever shaken, and every promise I've made to every potential voter. I think about all those faces I saw along the way and all the places they could have wound up because I may or may not have catered to their own, unique interests.

Do any of us really know where we can be headed at any given time? Why do I go out every day and pretend like I have any idea? Maybe when I hear my own voice sound it out that's enough to

convince myself I'm not devoting my waking existence to a fool's errand.

The words pass through my mouth and out the PA system to the devoted crowd of people in attendance. I know from national polls that only six out of every ten of these people actually voted for me, and those that didn't are likely forming hateful threats to throw my way as I stand here.

I don't mind. It's the name of the game. Frankly I feel like I may deserve at least some of them.

My whole life, even before I became a politician, has been based on popular opinion and logistical strategy. I don't live for myself or my family or anyone else anymore and I don't think I ever did.

The numbers may be high, the figures may support the action, but every bit of it produces a piece of my own death little by little. When I do finally die I'll be immortalized with a bust in the White House, but it will stand only as a testament of how well I could work against my own will.

Before continuing, I pause and take another step outside of myself. I take in the scene and let it all pass through me before taking decisive action.

For now, I'm through living against my will and wishes. For this single, solitary moment I am no longer the President of the United States. I am a living, thinking, breathing member of this human race who is not bound by polls or figures or foreign relations.

The silence is overwhelming. Hardly anyone in the crowd moves as I step forward, reach down, and zip up my fly with a joining sound that pierces the still and seems to last minutes on end.

The silence stretches on for what feels like an eternity.

"Sorry, folks," I say, "but I just realized I didn't order the flag at half-mast today!"

Amazingly, the remark draws some hearty laughs from the crowd. My ploy worked.

There will surely be a mention of this tomorrow on every celebrity gossip show on television, but now it doesn't seem to matter. At least I can rid myself of that irritating breeze. The gap has finally begun to heal itself.



**J. W. DAVIES**

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**ON SCHOLARSHIP**

Here's to the bards of social betterment  
Who dutifully command the mindless brats.  
At the price of only four years you offer fine  
Pressed parchment. A mystical pass into  
Mid-level social clubs and Volkswagen dealerships.  
Hot off the production lines clean shaven  
Jock strap alpha punks and breaded pork  
Chop wives. Minimalist boot camp, no  
Wincing in thought. Daily drills and  
Jack Hammers chiseling into the stone  
Minds of student savants. Studying the  
Studyists. Criticizing the criticizers.  
Read this this this and this. Write that  
That that and that. Hear the story of  
Young fools who drank from the fountain  
In the shape of a giant dick. Their brains  
Soaked in the smoky liquid. The eradication  
Of ideas complete, replaced by fine  
Lines of antiquated texts in the voice  
Of antiquated pricks. Taking up space  
On the eighth nerve. Channeling traffic  
To bi-level suburbs, where no maps  
Lead to no destinations for uncultivated  
Water-brained crustaceans seeking  
Identification. Let them work, eat  
And sleep on your stamp. Store them one  
By one in your file cabinet death camp.





*Hedge Plant, Jessica Cincinnato*

11/11/11 11:11:11

**ARIZONA BONES**

"To America," they cried  
In a hellish rage, turning  
From their land. The dry,  
Burning sand left behind to  
Consume the heat and dying  
Light. They pressed with arms  
And legs the dividing gate.  
And in a wild cave found  
Shelter from the cold night.  
Here they sought, fought  
And stayed. Pining freedom  
Over fate. Calling upon divine  
Sustenance and platitudes of  
Faith. A morsel of Earth to last  
The day. A drop of dew from  
Nature's hand, magnifying its  
Leafy veins. What life it brings  
To the tongue for speech and to  
The mind to pray  
For victory in the night's passing  
And sight in the coming day.  
On the cold, dirt floor of a dark,  
Wet cave they foolishly pray.

## **BENJAMIN KUSHNER**

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### **THE NINTENDO HAIKU SYSTEM V. 2.0**

#### **A Boy and his Haiku**

Flavored Jellybeans  
Change the Blob to many shapes.  
What does Ketchup do?

#### **Haikutris**

Freely falling blocks  
Shaped into entire lines  
I got a Tetris.

#### **Kid Haikuris**

Arrows at the snakes  
Retrieve the sacred items.  
Fight, kill Medusa

#### **Haiku Hunt**

Damn snickering dog  
Jumping into the bushes.  
Death by the Light Gun.

#### **Double Haiku**

Billy and Danny  
Fight to rescue their girlfriends.  
Kill them all to pass.





**THE CHURCH OF CHEESE AND RICE  
OF LATTER DAY TAINTS**

I want to teach nine kittens how to play baseball  
against Major League players.

I want to retire to obscurity without a penny to my name  
after a nation-wide catnip scandal.

I want to use the words "fuck" and "fart" in academic papers  
with increasing frequency.

I want to show everyone that words are only offensive  
if you let them offend you.

I want to train my sphincter to control pitch  
and then go on *American Idol*.

I want to show Simon I can hit the low E<sup>-</sup> and high A  
and still smell like roses.

I want to keep genuine artificial lemon juice in my mouth  
and spit it into someone's eyes.

I want to ask them how they thought I felt about the sour taste—  
after they're done screaming.

I want to wake up with a blood-curdling scream after a dream—a  
nightmare about being the same as everyone else.

I want to explain to the world that the greatest fear in my life  
is being considered Normal.

I want to have someone move my corpse three days after I die  
then start a religion based on being Awesome.

I want to walk into the Church of Ben and see people happy, instead  
of guilty, smoking clove cigarettes and drinking coffee.

"Take and smoke these cloves, for these are my lungs  
which have been given up for you.

Take and drink this coffee, for these are my tears  
which have been given up for you.

Do this in remembrance of me."  
And Ye shall gain eternal life in the house of Ben (i.e. Denny's).



### A SLOW DESCENT INTO HEAVEN

James sat on the edge of the dock and contemplated. His life had been very poor of late. It was his own fault. His job had sucked literally every minute of every day from his life—the book’s deadline was approaching fast. He had actually finished it today, but when he emerged from his tomb of an office, magnetically attached to the now-empty refrigerator was a document that started:

*“Wherein Rebecca Hunter, hereafter known as the first party is suing James Hunter, hereafter known as the second party, for divorce . . .”*

It was mostly typed, with only his assets and their names filled in with a black ballpoint.

It didn’t surprise him, though he wasn’t happy with it. Weeks earlier, Rebecca stopped bothering him about the fact that he slept on a cot in his office. He had a mini-fridge and microwave in there so he wouldn’t have to take time out of his writing to eat. The only inconvenience was the lack of shower in the bathroom he installed. That didn’t hurt much, since he only showered when he couldn’t stand the smell of his own body.

“She even took the ice cube trays,” he mumbled to himself. “If she took those damn things, then she took the kids.” James was never one to settle for living with curiosity, so he took a look around the rest of the house to see what else was gone. His kids, of course, but also missing were all his CDs, movies, video games, his guitars, his PDA, and anything else worth twenty bucks at a pawnshop that wasn’t nailed down. She had to have been planning on this for a while. It had been so long since he had been out, they could have left three days ago.

James couldn’t help but laugh at the sweet irony of the situation. He had decided, when he first started the book, that it would be his last. He had enough money saved that even if the book was only a fraction as successful as his last, he could retire at 35. Not only that, but if they lived simply, there would be enough to go around so that his grandchildren would be able to go to college without having to worry about loans. He never told Becca, figuring that when he



emerged from his cocoon, he would drag her and the kids to some fancy restaurant to tell them the news.

Moments before he left his office, he had gotten off the phone with the most expensive restaurant in town. He had paid them five hundred dollars with his credit card to fit them in on such short notice, and it was non-refundable. He figured that he could afford it now.

Now they were gone, and he had nothing. The seagulls flew overhead, cursing at him for imposing on their favorite perch.

James laughed at them and lit a clove cigarette. Rebecca didn't allow smoking in the house, and since James never left the house, he had quit smoking in the three months he was holed up. This was his first in that entire time.

With clove cigarettes, the first one you have after just about any period of time greater than four hours leaves you completely light headed. James let himself fall backwards and stayed there for a while, occasionally taking a drag. He remembered his life before the book.

He and Becca had been married for four years when he lost his job selling insurance in Atlanta. He spent two weeks trying to find a job until he just said:

"Fuck it."

"What's up?"

"Becca, what would you think if I decided not to get a new job and write a book?"

"How long has it been since you actually wrote?"

"Since college. But frankly, with what some of my professors said about my work, I think I'll be fine."

"I know you can do it, but what about us? How are we going to survive with the kids?"

One of the first things they had done when they were married, even before the first child, was make sure they each had six months worth of salary put in the bank, in case one of them lost a job. Becca had decided not to go back to work after Christian was born, and James made enough for the three of them to live comfortably but not extravagantly. By Paula's birth, there was more than enough for the four of them to live just as comfortably and still put money away. They had never actually touched their emergency fund. The current financial statement gave them a year and a half living in the exact same way, more if they were frugal.

"Becca, we have eighteen months worth of money to live off of. Let's say I take a year off, I can spend that time writing and trying to get published."

"But..."

"If it doesn't work you can get a job, or I can. Who knows how much the job market will change in that time."

They sold the house in Atlanta and moved west, to a small town on the California coast. It had an extra bedroom that was quickly turned into an office. The kids were torn over having to move away from their friends or the fact that they would live three minute's walk from a beach.

At first, James spent more time with his family than he did writing. He not only took his kids to karate lessons (something they enjoyed immensely), he even started them himself. He almost quit after his *sensei* had both of the kids spar him at once. Though he wasn't holding back, they won five points to zero. He didn't hear the end of it until another student broke his nose trying to break a cement block with his forehead.

But as his self-imposed unemployment approached the nine-month mark, he finally confessed to his wife that he only had three pages written.

"You know the rule we set."

"I know..."



Then began the first of his hibernations. He spent nearly all of his time in the office with the door locked, only coming out to eat with the family and sleep. Every so often he would have a date with his wife. But two months into it, he came out, blinking, into the sunlight with a thick envelope. He ran out to the post office, coming back with a fifth of rum. Rebecca did not like drinking much, but tolerated it as long as he didn't do it in front of the children. He drank half the bottle and went to sleep, asking that someone wake him up when he got a response letter.

The remaining month he had before re-joining the work force passed with no positive response, but many negative ones. The first day of the next month, he pounded pavement with a vengeance, applying at literally every job listing in the newspaper. He interviewed in many places, but only got accepted at a local department store—selling lamps.

On his first day of work, a letter arrived from the last publisher not to reject the book. His first novel was accepted; however, they needed a signed contract as soon as possible. The offered price had one more zero than James expected, so he walked into work, gave his two second notice, and left to drive to the publishers in Seattle. He arranged for a babysitter for the children and, bringing Becca, made it into a business and "business" trip.

Nine months later his third child, Daniel, was born.

The contracts were signed and the book began production not long after. Almost from the day it was released, the publishers started a media frenzy that had James on the road for two months. It proved to be successful, and the book was on the *New York Times* Bestseller List for three months.

Taking the last drag of his cigarette, he threw the butt into the water, still half lying, half hanging on the dock.

James mentally fast forwarded six years and three books, two screen plays, and a small book of children's poetry later. Without fail, every time he had a deadline from the publisher or producer, he would waste most of it spending time with his children. In the final days, he would return to his office, blow the dust off his keyboard,



KUSHNER

and hibernate until he was done. At first his family was tolerant of it, but their tolerance turned to annoyance, annoyance to loathing, loathing to pure hatred of his habits. Even after he would come out, none of the family would talk to him, until, of course, the next check cleared.

He was broken from his reverie by a sudden weight on his stomach. A seagull had grown brave enough to land on him and peck at some of the ash that had dropped from his cigarette to his shirt. The bird gave him a look of distaste—as much distaste as a seagull can convey—and flew off. The push from the bird's take-off hit him in the stomach in such a way that he suddenly felt nauseous.

James sat up and lit another smoke.

He thought about a television interview he did after his second book:

Q: "What is it like to be able to do something you love, like writing, for a living?"

James sat back for a second before answering:

A: "Well, when I find someone, I'll ask them. I do love writing; however, finding the perfect line between family and my job is extremely difficult. This book, just as my previous one, was ignored as much as possible until I had about three months before the deadline. Then I walked into my office and almost literally didn't walk out until it was all done. Though I hope I'm wrong, I doubt I'll ever find the perfect timing to work on both family and writing."

Now that the line between family and work was no longer a problem, James allowed himself to think about it deeper than before.

He took a pen and paper from his pocket and jotted down:

*To find no-man's land:*

*All ideas have borders, just like countries, types of terrain, objects, and people. All borders have a small area where they mix together.*

*For countries, it's the customs as you cross. Terrains have gradients—between the land and ocean is the beach. Objects have them on a molecular level. Even when two objects physically touch, there is still space between.*

*The border between any two people, no matter how far they are apart physically, or even if they don't know each other, is emotion—love, hate, lust, or even sheer indifference.*

*I have not found the border within my own life that I require. Now, because my family is gone, my entire life is the no-man's land.*

He signed the paper, folded it up and put it in his pocket. Taking a last look at the coast, he turned around and went back into his house. He lit another smoke as he entered, smiling at his newfound freedom.

He took the paper from his pocket and put it on the counter. On top of it he rested his Zippo.

The lighter was engraved with the title of a poem he had written in college: "Slow Descent into Heaven." It was one of his first attempts at poetry. When Becca gave him the lighter, she told him that hearing him read that poem is what caused her to fall in love with him.

He smiled at himself again. He was about to do something he always wanted to try. His final affairs were in order, most of his money was going to his children, some went to charity, and the rest he kept—a total of fifteen thousand dollars. With that, he had stopped at a used car lot on his way to the house and bought a car for \$150. He was going to drive it due east until the car stopped working. Wherever the car stopped, so would his life as an author. He would live in the closest town/city/village he could find, and just do whatever work was available.

He had thought at one point about writing a book about someone who did the same thing, but decided against it.

He thought it would be too unrealistic.

## COFFEE SHOP

### INT. COFFEE SHOP

Eclectic and comfortable are the key words for the furniture. Salvation Army stuff always works. The mugs used are very eclectic—the more humorous the better. "World's Best Grandpa," "Over the Hill," etc.

Coffee makers are a must, but coffee itself is not. If asked to make espresso, the waiter can make the appropriate noises. Coffee will be made only once—between acts for the audience. Paper or Styrofoam cups can be used then. Half and Half or sugar should also be available.

The "counter" is at the back. The entrance is at front. Bathrooms are to the left.

The waiter is not gender specific, but for ease of typing, I'll use the male pronoun.

The WAITER, previously sitting in the audience, stands up, goes on stage. As soon as he steps on stage, a cowbell rings. He is wearing a white shirt with black pants (or dress). He ties on a simple black half-apron.

At center stage, the Waiter faces the audience. He seems to fall in a trance.

WAITER

(To audience)

And lo! There will be a rending of skies.  
Life's blood shall flow in this place.  
Three will walk away, while four will be forever still.  
There will be some damn good coffee made.



(Breaking from trance)

Actually, I doubt any of that will happen, at least not here. I just think people don't speak prophetically enough. The last part is true, I suppose. I do make a mean cup of java. You can try some later, if you'd like.

(Looking around)

Still. You never know what could happen. The owner of this place is a pretty messed up guy, and he attracts some pretty messed up clientèle. Not serial killers or anything, but I think you can tell from the decor that this isn't your

(Gradually getting angry)

high society, fifteen bucks a cup, trendy, "ooo, look at me, I'm so special, I'm a big important writer because I have a laptop in a coffee shop," internet- wireless- or otherwise-accessible place.

(He breathes heavily for a while, looking around)

But it is a nice place, with a good atmosphere. People seem to like it. I like working here. It pays peanuts, but I make enough with tips for my needs. Plus I get free coffee, which at this point has a higher concentration in my circulatory system than blood. Sometimes I even come to hang out on my days off.

(He takes a closer look at the audience)

I'd imagine that most of you, certainly those more familiar with theater terms, are wondering why I'm breaking the fourth wall and talking to you directly. Actually, I'm not. I don't see any of you. I'm hallucinating and talking to myself. I'm a little crazy before my first cup. For those of you sitting and reading the script, I'd revisit my earlier comment about my BCC, or blood caffeine content.

(Pointing to a random audience member)

I certainly don't see you in the (describe what that person is wearing).

(He goes to the counter and turns on the coffee maker.)

Once this is done and I have my first cup, you'll all be gone. Your uneasiness about me breaking the fourth wall

KUSHNER

will gradually fade. You may be back, who knows?

(A bell rings from off stage)

Ahh! Coffee's done. Thanks to the person off stage who rang that for me.

(He gets a mug, puts cream and sugar into it)

While we're still on speaking terms, though. Can I just say how much I enjoy the first cup of coffee? It's some good shit. We only serve two kinds of coffee here—regular and espresso. We do make the occasional cappuccino. But never decaf. The owner has something against it.

(He looks between the mug and the coffee pot)

From here on out, the play will probably follow a more traditional mode of delivery. If all goes well, it will be thought provoking, hopefully somewhat funny, and generally a good time. We'll have to see.

(He puts the mug down)

This is certainly not big enough. We get eight cups to the pot. If you keep track, I'm sure the playwright will try to keep on top of everything and make sure I make it when I need it.

(He chugs the coffee pot down)

That's nice. You guys are already beginning to fade away, rather quickly, in fact. When I start seeing you again, I know it's time for more. Until then, enjoy the play. It's gotta be good. At least with me in it, right?

(He waits)

You can applaud at that. I don't mind. Quick, before you fade away.

(He waits for applause)

Thank you.

The lights suddenly black out.

WAITER (CONT'D)

Hey! Who turned off the lights?

The lights come back on.

WAITER (CONT'D)

Thank you.

## MICHELLE KRAPF

---

### ROSE COLORED GLASSES

I long to play in a sandbox  
come home with mud in my hair  
share a sandwich during recess  
catch a star in a mason jar

to kiss a boy  
palms sweaty, knees shaky  
get a crush I hardly know  
and write his name on my notebook

to swing on a tree  
as high as the clouds  
and dig a hole all the way to China  
and find a dinosaur bone en route

to put a flower in my hair  
and think I look pretty  
be a crowned princess  
with grass stains on my pants

to find a white rock  
obviously gemstone valuable  
jump in puddles knee deep  
and soar with birds of crimson

to walk to the ends of the earth  
and swim in sparkling blue pools  
with huge exotic fish  
dance in moonlit fields of daisies

to run as fast as a cheetah  
snake around in green grass  
fall and bump my knee  
and let my mommy make it better





*Pear, Patricia Shyshuk*

## LEAH JUDITH

Hello  
it-togeth  
lined/un  
to assess  
unheard  
five (or i  
PSSA te  
attendan  
nurse.

*And g  
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in the mu  
Dewey; E  
designed  
English v  
posterity  
this jung  
minus the  
pencil an  
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Biloxi an

*Explai  
the year a  
or classro*

**LEAH COCHRAN &  
JUDITH A. GARDNER, PH.D.**

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### A COMING OF AGE

Hello, 21, I caught you wondering, furrow browed, near the put-it-together-yourself bookshelves stacked neatly with even piles of lined/unlined paper—red, blue, yellow—and bins of rulers designed to assess the mismeasure of woman and man in Room 205 what the unheard melodious world of sublime Keats's poems, adjectives and five (or is it seven) effective teaching methods have to do with PSSA tests, lav passes and green, pepto bismol pink, and goldenrod attendance forms (in triplicate, of course) for the PDE and school nurse.

*And good ones always ask 55, "Are there any other questions" and while the answer is definitely, the response is usually minimal but since you've asked, in the midst of the college experience after completing Erickson's stages of development, a question still lurks in the murky depths of my own cognitive domain and is ignored by Dewey, Bloom and Sternberg wondering what model or carefully designed template synthesizes the basic science of literature and English with the TEP to become the keys to understanding for the posterity and prosperity (instead of poverty) of future generations in this jungle called school where the addition of INTASC standards minus the funding to provide essential materials called books, pencil and paper (that chemically reacts with the touch of an eraser and breaks into smithereens) equals the betterment of the American education system?*

And the why of peer editing and plagiarism in the wake of the wake of the death of that salesman Arthur Miller who never received critical acclaim but dared to reveal the truth about teachers that not only must teach the sonnet form, myriad explication, attend poster- and cupcake-filled parent/teacher conferences, negotiate un- or under-funded national, state, county, city, borough initiatives that everywhere in everyway dumb us down but be loved in Boston and Biloxi and Benton.

*Explain the connection between content master and teacher of the year and is he or she a content master or a master of experience or classroom management or understanding special*



*needs of a multicultural classroom or bilingual learners of whole language or parts of speech for standardized tests and reading comprehension or in their own conception the main idea, topic sentence and related detail to support the idea of teaching to a test or testing what we should be teaching and deciding what is important to know from this broad spectrum of data in the information age by applying questions from societies of Aristotle to the developing minds by facilitation of readings in books barely read and fractionally understood (with the help of Mr. Cliff and his notes) using the skimming and scanning method from the passage above.*

But you must also follow the official template to achieve uniform lesson plan creativity designed to contain the slippery edges of the words, for example, of the fabled Aesop or Franz mired in red tape although student progress depends on, ok and should they be allowed to use dictionaries, spell checkers or thesauruses (or is it i) borders on the Kafkaesque as MDT meeting and "privacy" issues turn Joseph Kaminsky into Joseph K. or J.K. or that (in hushed tones) "special boy."

*Will the literature of Shakespeare or maybe James connect the dots between this major in English and certification in uncertainty by explaining how in thirty hours or even eight semesters I find the root of this amphibious job of water and land as mind and body and morality skewing the lines of teacher care giver mentor authoritarian while understanding complex situations and complex novels through interviews, case studies, term papers in MLA format and lesson plans and what actually happens with room for adjustment leaving no child behind (because the teachers are accountable) with the minds of great scholars and still keeping everyone at the same reading level in this real thing called school?*

Well, I'm glad you asked because—I don't know. Somehow, seemingly out of nowhere in the middle of the manufactured crises, it will all come together when you're not paying attention. Your emotional and other intelligences will design just the right inducement to cajole the rambunctious, reluctant yet curious child to accompany you into that pasture where, unlike Frost, you will be gone a long time sometimes because you might have to wait and wait while the water clears. And that's how it will be, 21.



## SARAH DOMAN

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### THE DYING ROOM

Only a number:

I. 27, 18, 39, 50.

Thrown away, a disposable life

In a world where she can be loved

This baby girl, a beautiful soul.

Eyes, lips, arms, legs all in working order—

Not anymore.

In the Dying room she lays helpless and alone.

The other girls look on at her, only peeking when told

To tell the caretaker when she passes.

Most of them wondering if they will be next

In the Dying room.

Her eyes are crusted shut

By the flies that swarm her body.

Her skin, like shrink-wrap around small, thin, pointy ribs.

No sound comes from her, she cannot speak

As she lies in her own pool of bodily fluid.

Her only company and friends are the flies

That suck her remaining flesh.

She does not know fullness, only hunger, only wanting.

She is neglect.

A girl, she is not wanted in her family.

There are too many in the population.

She is limp now, no hair, rotted teeth, no clothes.

This beautiful girl could have been loved, saved.

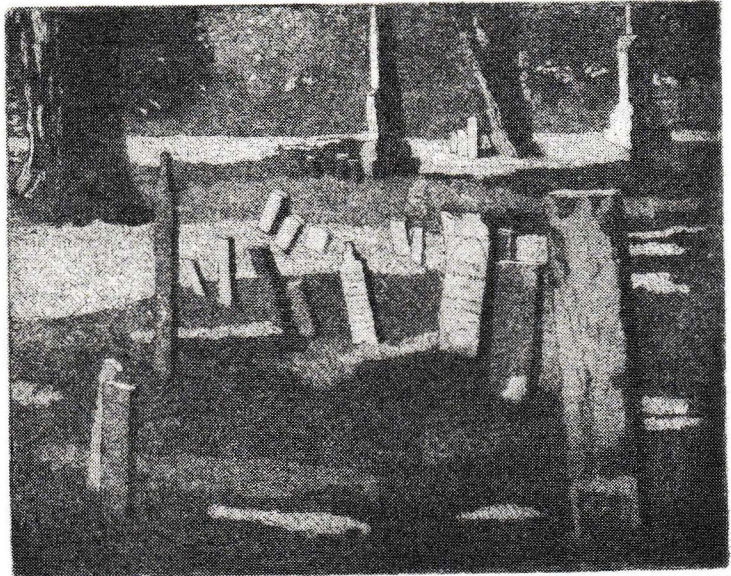
She never had a hug, she was never held.

All the while, people passed, people knew the Dying room.

No one stopped. She was not saved.

If I am to believe that we are all created equal,

What makes me think I will be saved?



A GENERATION OF LEAVES II

2004

*A Generation of Leaves II*  
Herbert Simon

PSYC

I pray  
In unbr  
Woods  
If real

Close y  
So you  
This fi  
"War is

Fires b  
People  
Lest w

A thirty  
A sea o  
To let t



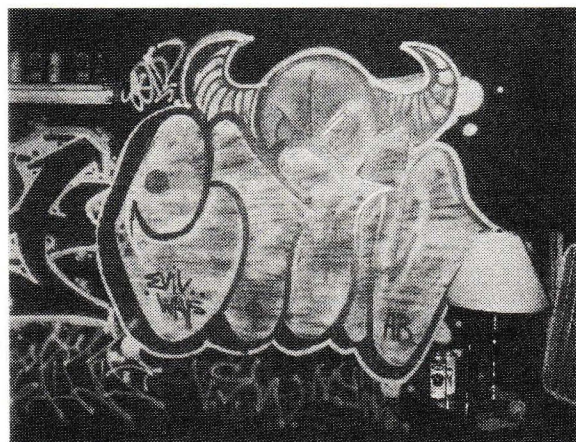
## PSYCHEDELIC PRAYERS

I pray to you for peace in state of mind.  
In unheralded legacy of place.  
Woodstock, a temple for the human race,  
If real for only three days at a time.

Close your eyes, and let your true soul fly free,  
So you can feel the holy presence in  
This field. Together all in unison,  
"War is not the answer." Peace we see.

Fires burn in our hearts and in our minds.  
People breathe the flame of life and the dream.  
Lest we forget these gathering dead heads.

A thirty-eight acre spread of our kind.  
A sea of humanity in the scheme,  
To let this land in Bethel be sacred.



*White Lines & Aerosol*  
Christopher Hodorowski



## MATTHEW FARADAY JONES

### THE ABANDONED HYPOTHESIS

Someone once thought

*"...Fishing for Solvency in the River of Inept Infinity while using an Irrelevant Incarnation of the Soul for Bait..."*

would make a rather fitting title (or, if feeling unfathomably bastard-ish, a subtitle) for a highly personalized and fundamentally baffling memoir written by someone no more than 24 years of age and no less than 22 years of age who is secretly still terrified of the dark and is also self-convinced that in his 22-24 years on this planet that his life experiences have amounted to something that other people would actually find interesting—

First sentence would probably resemble this:

"Happening to notice that my well-served and weather-stained boots are

filling with water, tragically bolting me to the silt-lined bed of inertia,

while watching someone of a discernibly insecure disposition break into my economic and essentially efficient motor vehicle, which,

unbeknownst to the loathsome lawbreaker, contains virtually nothing of

earthly importance except, ha ha of course, my cellular telephone, an advanced

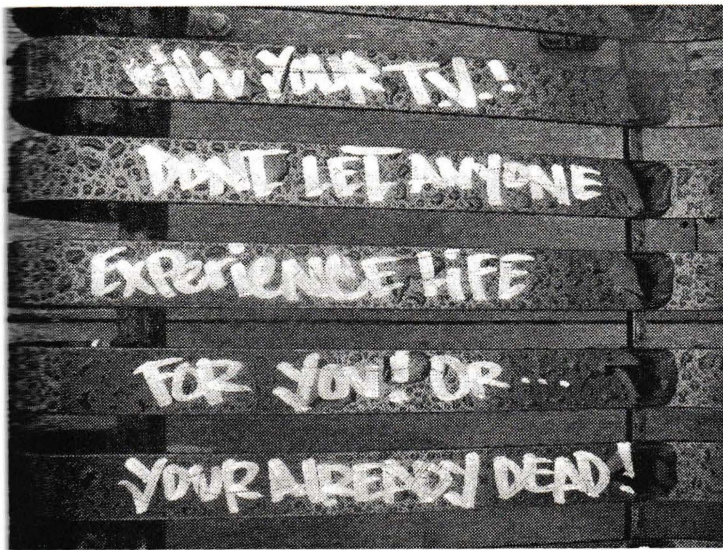
piece of haplessly mystifying quotidian irrelevance..."

and would then ramble on for an odd 275-300 pages of print so small that your groin will begin to throb after five minutes of straining your eyes to read it...

Someone gave up the idea before they even really started it—

I don't know if their groin was throbbing at the time but secretly, deep down inside where the ache of one's loins and polysyllabic rhetorical hobnobbery have abso-fucking-lutely no say whatsoever in what gets sent down the line, I'm incredibly happy it was abandoned—

Goody, goody, goody—



*Burlington Bench*  
Arthur Redmond



JONES

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### DRAGON CHASED

5:30 and still blinking, frosted glass faceplate leaving impressions on bathroom mirror as repetition has its way with overdrawn mind functioning facilitating a molecular revolt of fictitious finality finally carefree and peaceful with my own line of sight, no sifting or filter only pure raw capital raised by imaginary willpower that cracks its knuckles in the wee hours of our lives, clarity comes with a price tag though for once light comes naturally all that's left is the admission of clouded judgment and omission of romance in the purest sense; taut minds find true love when teaching no longer takes precedent and valor seeps down the drain I'm now hovering above, my affair has graduated from whirlwind to full blown centrifugal cocktail, at first visibly attractive but inertia causes gravity to lose its legs—

### WHEN THE PARANOID IN LOVE REALIZES HE'S PARANOID

As old as an adage, adept and headstrong enough to proclaim "My love goes where your rosemary sits in the ground" to all within ear-centric shooting gallery distance, the luckiest guy of them all, shirt-tailed and shaven, opens up and breathes in the vapid vapor of THEIR void, but he's suddenly stricken, grief-wise and also by a creeping notion of wanton attachment, forget the square slot this peg is bound for a cheerful land devoid of geometry, and that feeling of constant encirclement by death through allegory, the author's hand is now quite visible and all the crowds are sickened, so I'll simply say, when the realistic has fallen from sight, I've lived a life and make no apologies, except when *she* comes with THEM to take me somewhere I think I've already been to, then I may say "sorry," if only for that fucking knowing smile—



## DAVID BLUM

---

### ENDLESS MOUNTAINS

undulating hills of anthracite  
lightly bathed in snow  
not enough to cover  
breathing darkness underneath  
or change the leaden skies  
neither white nor evergreen  
looking more like an old man  
with a two or three day beard  
in need of a shave  
like the "Region" itself  
a few teeth missing  
like empty storefronts

### BEFORE THE FALL

See it think!  
A protozoan mind  
Agonizing aeons spent  
In the pools amid the rocks  
Waiting anxiously for word to go  
Into programmed pursuit of a shimmer  
Siren glint opaline in the green-eyed brine

Couples link  
Then form a line  
Fire music rings the ice  
Diatom flotilla first arrayed  
Swaying to the rhythm of the light  
Orb spawned, of a single starwheel spark  
World conceived in a womb at the edge of time

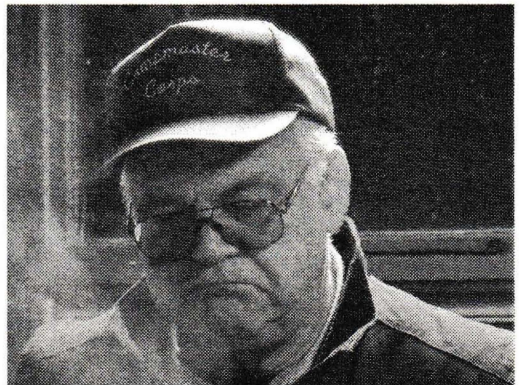
### STILL LIFE AT DU PONT CIRCLE METRO STOP

The coffee house is full, its linden trees  
near saffron leaf of last reprieve.  
On the circle by the Metro stop,  
descending, none look behind.  
An old man tootles on a saxophone.

I am hoping he is Stanley Turrentine.  
It never quite begins. So I listen  
to the autumn light, whispering. The waiting  
crowd trumpets its diversity. In America,  
we don't look back, and can't forget.

And each expects. Most women have brought  
a breast or two; some men, designer shades, tattoos.  
Dancing without motion, until a friend arrives  
to turn the switch. They speak of her  
sculpture in progress, *Man with Toilet Seat*.

Still warm at Du Pont Circle Metro stop,  
October beauty not yet overripe. A few birds  
spin, *chasse*. The most unlikely two become  
gamblers in the first blush, spread their wings  
and soar, above the business below.



*Scout Master, David Carey*

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ON POSITING AND CONFIRMING THE BIG BANG  
THEORY (AND JOLTIN' JOE'S MORTALITY)

It was described as baseball-sized  
the mass  
the entire mass  
whole damn shooting match  
from which this universe began.  
Ripples seen by satellite in the final decade  
of the century just past  
confirmed the relativity of truth, and told  
the sphere was cast  
some fifteen billion years ago, or maybe eight or ten.

They say  
the pitch was tossed  
by the same ironic hand  
that named the priest Lemaitre.  
Lemaitre,

in his turn  
posited the Bang  
the year that Ruth crashed sixty  
(before Hubble threw the screwball)  
and a kid from San Francisco chose to play the game.

Indifferent to the Master Plan,  
as was the Master Plan to them,  
they gave the moment to the Babe,  
and lived the hour, vicarious or shared,

safe in a world of Sunday afternoons,  
where Hemingway defined the *corrida*  
and Frenchman drew polite applause at Wimbledon,  
safe, at the center of the universe,  
white man's universe, impervious to shadow.

It was surmised as baseball-sized, that year,  
*Il Duce* raged, *Mein Kampf* upstaged,  
Chiang betrayed, Lindbergh crossed,



BLUM

---

TV emerged, Duncan sped away.  
The Street ignored the tremor.

What difference now what size the mass?  
Dark stars rise and fall, the game will change again.  
Who will remember soccer or sumo,  
or even Michael Jordan's name,  
in fifteen billion years or so?

Expanding universe reversed,  
hand re clenched into a fist-sized ball,  
Yankee Clipper flying off to yesterday  
("Where did you go, Joe DiMaggio?"),  
white male magic mostly sleight of hand.

Not much time left "to find one's self,"  
still searching for a dream-streaked summer afternoon  
when the sun holds back the shadow creeping on the infield grass  
and we touch each other, for a moment,  
at the center of the universe.

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Drew Amoroso** writes: I heard that these bios have to be five sentences or less. I always get nervous when I write one because I feel like I won't get to say all the important stuff that I want to. I mean, there are so many things about me that I think people should know. But before you know it, it's like "BAM!" and your five sentences are up. Awww, dammit.

**Raychil Arndt** has currently added two new fears to her already odd list: video games and Amish people. She pictures what would happen if one Amish buggy hit another Amish buggy (a slow motion dance with death). She questions where bugs go in the winter. On a totally unrelated note, she is the Art Editor for *Manuscript*.

**David Blum** is a semi-retired (but still working) lawyer who has made his living in legal advocacy writing for the past forty-five years. He wanted to take a crack at real fiction before it was too late. He has published a number of poems and is now working on a novel set in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania called *The Last Pottsville Warrior*.

**Zach Bremmer** is double majoring in Philosophy and International Studies. He plays the trumpet and bass guitar, paints, photographs, and writes.

**Helene T. Caprari** is a senior English major at Wilkes University. She is the Editor-In-Chief of *Manuscript*, Vice President of Sigma Tau Delta, member of the Provost's Women in Leadership Class, Chi Alpha Epsilon, the Pennsylvania College English Association, and has acted as student representative for the Wilkes University Interdisciplinary Committee. Helene will graduate from Wilkes University this May.

**David Carey** is an Engineer who designs guidance control systems for a living. He is an adjunct professor of Engineering, and likes to warp engineering minds with Maxwell's Equations and theories on time dilation around gravity wells. His hobbies include taking pictures (like the ones shown here), watching the birds in the yard (thanks to Ben), and contemplating why the clock in his truck is three minutes slow.

**Lauren Carey** is a freshman English major with an affinity for squirrels on water skis. She especially loved the way Rosie O'Donnell once pronounced "squirrel" on her popular afternoon talk show. She also enjoys flower-bearing ninjas with butterfly knives. On top of all this, she, much like Bob Barker, would like to remind you to spay and



neuter your pets.

**Joyce Chmil** is a registered nurse who received both her Bachelors and Masters degrees from Wilkes University. She is the Director of the Nursing Learning Resource here at Wilkes University and is currently taking classes in the MA in Creative Writing Program.

**Jessica Cincinnato**, 18, is a first semester freshman student from Warminster, Pennsylvania. She is a Special Education major and has her own photography business in Horsham called "Pawfect Petures." Her interests include photography, equines, poetry, cars, and music, as well as volunteering with Special Equestrians (a special education equine facility).

**Leah Cochran** is currently a junior at Wilkes University majoring in English with education certification. She is a resident of Larkesville, Pennsylvania and a graduate of Wyoming Valley West High School.

**Joe Cortegerone**, a graduate of Wilkes University, currently lives in the Philadelphia neighborhood of Manayunk where he is busy completing his Third Symphony and a novel.

**J.W. Davies** is a senior English major at Wilkes University.

**Sarah Doman** is from Larkesville, Pennsylvania and has chosen to wipe noses and tie shoes in elementary school as her career. She hopes to one day live in Italy where she can drink wine and write. If this does not work out, she can always be a rock star.

**Clarissa E. Dudeck**, 23, is from Hegins, Pennsylvania where she attended Tri-Valley High School. She currently resides in Wilkes-Barre near the A-Plus ghetto and is a P-3 pharmacy student. Her hobbies include photography, pharmacy school, partying, and houseplants. She also enjoys tacos, Corona and vintage 80's clothing. Clarissa has a strong aversion to pop music and relationships. She plans to grow old alone and live with cats.

**Jim Feeney** is a student at Wilkes University.

**Maria Gable** is currently a sophomore at Wilkes University. She is undecided on a major right now, but she is pursuing a minor in Dance. She has been writing steadily since she was in eighth grade, and she does not think that it is something she will ever stop doing.

**Judith A. Gardner, Ph.D** is an Adjunct Instructor in the Education Department at Wilkes University.



**Jennifer Hameza** is a sophomore English major at Wilkes University.

**Donora Hillard's** poetry has appeared in numerous publications, including *HazMat Review*, *The Pedestal Magazine*, and *Tryst*. *Parapherna*, her first collection, is near completion. Donora is originally from Northeastern Pennsylvania, where she holds an assistantship in Creative Writing at Wilkes University.

**Christopher Hodorowski**, sophomore, holds himself "close to the wall."

**Keith Hubbard** is a student at Wilkes University.

**Matthew Faraday Jones** knows little yet regrets nothing. He hopes his horoscope will make sense one day and loathes those people who think it's funny to use the phrase "Jonesing for (insert traditionally trivial item)" around him.

**Matt Koch** is an alumnus of Wilkes University and currently works as part of the IT staff.

**Michelle Krapf** is a senior English major with concentrations in writing and literature.

**Benjamin Kushner** was unwillingly cut from the womb in September, 1983. He is proud of the small miscellaneous bits of paper he has collected over his life, including: a high school diploma, a very small collection of girls' phone numbers, and small bits of green paper with pictures of presidents on them. He is proudest, however, of the bits of paper collected in *Manuscript*.

**J. Lewis** is an Aries. He was born in the year 1985. J. is a Communications major with a minor in English. He defines himself as "funny and special, but not in the short bus kind of way." He is currently a DJ on WCLH, as well as an anchorman on the campus TV show *Wilkes World*. He hails from a Pennsylvania Mountain Town on the fringes of society—a place blanketed and shrouded by broken dreams known as...Hazleton.

**Ron Lieback** is a student at Wilkes University.

**Sabrina A. McLaughlin** is one of the usual suspects in the cast of characters who can be habitually seen at local poetry readings. A recent Wilkes University alumna, this autumn Sabrina will begin working on a master's degree in English literature and creative writing

at Binghamton University, whither she hopes to do as all young souls do and go forth "to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of the soul the uncreated conscience of her race"...wait a minute...oh, yeah, that's right, Joyce already did that. Thanks to one Dr. J. Michael Lennon, Ph.D., Wilkes University V.P. Emeritus, she is now a collector and fancier of Mailerisms, her favourites being "no poet ever believes he or she is incapable of world shaking moves" and "go out and smash that fucking teahouse!"

**Conrad Miller** is simply that—neither more nor less. He used to get his kicks from writing on the Internet, but eventually realized what an ass he'd made of himself. Now he makes an ass of himself on paper. His favorite line when reading his own work: "Can you smell the melodrama?"

**Sabrina Naples** is a senior English and Psychology major. She will soon be leaving Wilkes University and feels a pang every now and then when she thinks of that fact. However, she would like to say thank you to everyone who is helping to make her dreams come true. Sabrina has many interests but has a soft spot for video games, well-written novels, and subtitled anime. Her inspirations include Poe, Keats, and Cummings, along with masters of the imagination like Anne Rice and Stephen King.

**Joshua Orloski** has never been as good at witty biography writing as most of the other *Manuscript* writers ... so this year he has decided to play it straight and tell nothing but the truth. Josh was sent to Earth by a far-advanced alien race in order to test the human tolerance level to extremely bad poetry.

**Stephanie Pacifico:** **S** is for school: Stephanie is a sophomore at Wilkes University majoring in Elementary Education and Organizational Communications. **T** is for terrified: Stephanie swears she has frequent encounters with the YMCA ghost (her current place of residence). **E** is for the energetic: Stephanie can always be found in front of her television doing Tae Bo with Billy Blanks. **P** is for perfect: which is how she feels about her life right now. And, finally, **H** is for happiness, which is what the amazing people surrounding her give her everyday.

**Corey Pajka** is a senior Theatre/English major and is very happy to be writing for *Manuscript* one last time, at least as an undergrad. In the future, Corey Pajka hopes to pursue a career in the arts, preferably as an actor/writer/director/teacher/whatever. Corey Pajka also hopes to



continue to submit to *Manuscript* through correspondence and finally write a character that isn't a thinly veiled representation of Corey Pajka. Then again, Corey Pajka is always focused on Corey Pajka; Corey Pajka thinks *On the Road* is about Corey Pajka, as well as *The Glass Menagerie*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, and the 2004 feature film *Garden State*, starring NBC's Corey Pajka, I mean, Zach Braff. Look how much Corey Pajka has repeated Corey Pajka's name here! In fact, screw Corey Pajka!

**Arthur Redmond** is a junior International Studies major. He was born and raised in the Back Mountain. He is interested in joining the Peace Corps after graduating and perhaps returning to attend graduate school for Anthropology.

**Herbert Simon** is a sculptor/printmaker who formerly taught in the Wilkes University Art Department. His art is exhibited widely across the United States in numerous museums and private collections.

**Patricia Shyshuk** is a senior Communication Studies major and will graduate this May. She lives in Dalton, Pennsylvania with her husband, Nick.

**Kate Skaluba** is a junior Criminology major at Wilkes University. Photography and writing are just two hobbies she picked up along with her other endeavors. She enjoys hiking, kayaking, hunting, fishing, and about all other outdoor activities you can think of.

**Jim Warner** is a Graduate Assistant for Wilkes University's MA in Creative Writing Program.







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