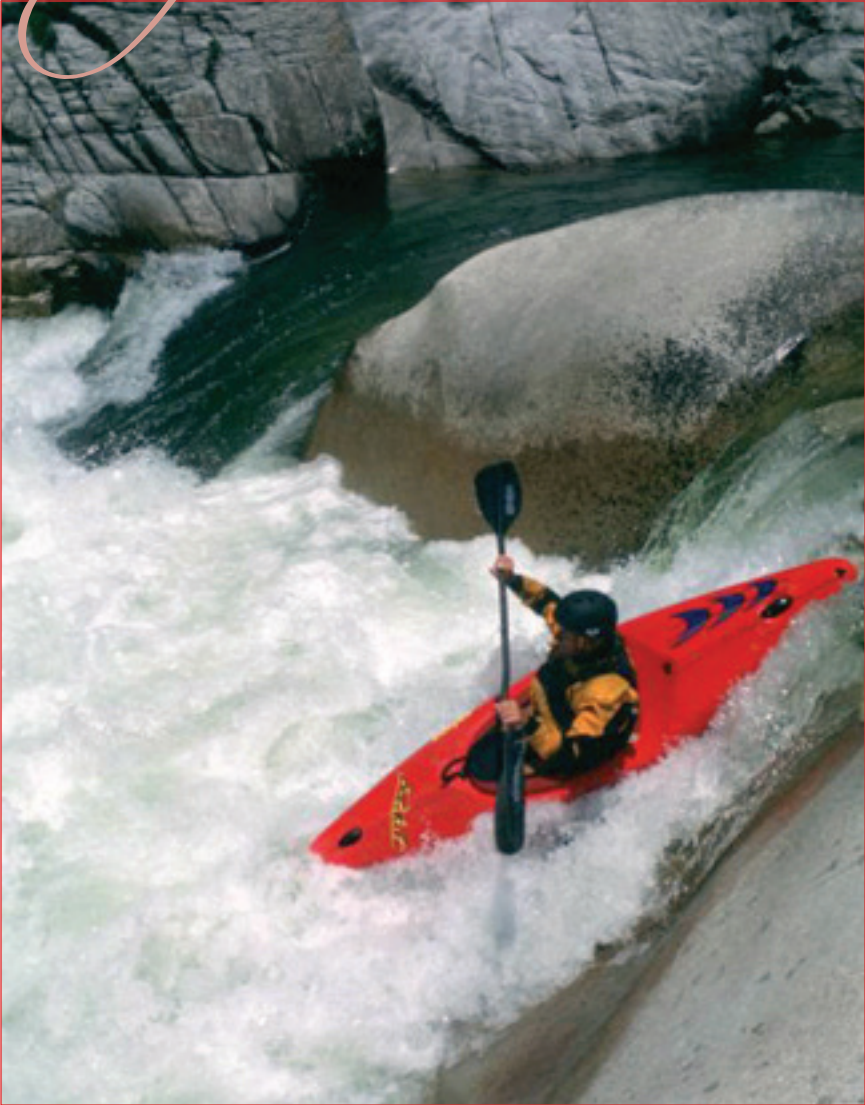


fine lines



Edited by David Martin

Volume 23 Issue 2
SUMMER 2014

five lines

Edited by
David Martin

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Composition is hard work. We celebrate its rewards in each issue. Share this publication with others who love creativity. We encourage authors and artists of all ages. Our national mailing list reaches every state. Increased literacy and effective, creative communication is critical for all.

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*“Nothing goes by luck in composition.
It allows no tricks. The best you can write
will be the best you are.”*

-Henry David Thoreau

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Mexican Politics During the Juarez Regime: 1855-1872

(Author: Walter V. Scholes)

A Review by David Martin



Benito Pablo Juarez, “the Mexican George Washington,” was extremely important to the development of the Mexican nation. He was born in San Pueblo, Guetlatao, Oaxaca, on March 21, 1806, and died of heart disease at the age of sixty-six in 1872. He was born of Indian parents, orphaned at the age of four, raised by relatives,

and educated by a village priest who taught him the elements of Spanish grammar and reading. Later, he went to the city schools where he did very well and obtained a law degree in 1834. He was involved in politics before receiving this degree; however, after being elected to the city council, he was elected to the state legislature, and from then on, his life seemed totally directed to the political arena. Because of his efforts in a life-long crusade for justice and democracy, the Mexican people have every right to hold his name high in praise and admiration.

After serving as governor of his home state for six years, he was exiled from the country by Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. When he returned two years later, he joined Juan Alvarez and the revolutionists who made him the minister of justice. Under Ignacio Comonfort, who became provisional president in 1855, he was appointed constitutional governor then secretary of the interior, then chief justice. Under the Mexican constitution, this office was equivalent to the position of vice-president. When Comonfort was driven from office, Juarez was made provisional president in 1857 at the age of fifty-one. Certainly, this rise from obscurity, from an orphan to president, from poverty to power, caught the imagination and support of the lower and

middle class citizens, who thronged to support the humble Indian lawyer, who wanted to bring decency to the government and justice to the people. Juarez was the center of much activity that affected many other countries of the world beyond Mexico.

When Juarez took the reins of the presidency, he had the backing of Mexico and the United States, but a civil war was started by the conservatives who thought he was going to be too much of a liberal. This war of reform lasted from 1856-1861. When he marched into Mexico City, a victorious military leader, he took over a bankrupt government and suspended payment on all foreign debts in order to save the national economy, but Great Britain, Spain, and France took exception to this move and formed an alliance to initiate an intervention. When Juarez promised to protect foreign interests, England and Spain withdrew their troops, leaving only France in Mexico.

France forced Juarez to withdraw to the northern border, placed Maximillian in power in 1864, and added Mexico to its empire. When the American Civil War ended, the Americans served notice to the French that its presence in Mexico would not be tolerated any longer. Because of the American interference and problems in Europe that were bothering Napoleon, he withdrew the French troops in 1867. In the same year, Maximillian was executed, and Juarez was reinstated as president. In 1871, he was re-elected, only to suffer heart problems a short while later and die.

The life of Juarez is more than the story, "poor Indian boy makes good." Juarez's life symbolizes the nation's struggle for improved relations with the United States, an increase of capitalism in the country, establishing a strong foothold for science, and a reduction in power of the Catholic Church.

The new liberalism that Juarez led centered on equality before the law, republican institutions, and laissez-faire economics. These three concepts signaled what was in fact a Mexican middle class revolution that hopefully would bring freedom of the press and speech, more educational faculties, more private land ownership, and the desire to work harder and increase thriftiness in the people.

The liberals also wanted to encourage immigration from non-Catholic countries to reduce the power of the Catholic Church. By recruiting non-Catholic foreigners to settle in Mexico, the government felt this would give more impetus to breaking up the large land holdings of the church. The plan was to give the new and old citizens small, individual plots of land to farm. This plan would disenfranchise the clergy and the parochial system would be abolished. The republican institutions would rule the country. Freedom

of speech, the press, and religion would be paramount.

Juarez was affected by the Enlightenment period in Mexico and affected it in return. The liberal theory of government denounced the doctrine of original sin and stressed the perfectibility of man. "He felt that the federal form of government based on liberty and freedom of the individual, on natural rights, and on popular sovereignty, offered the optimum conditions for achieving this perfection." For the liberals, progress and federalism were closely linked together. The constitution that was debated after Santa Anna was overthrown emphasized the rights of man. In Article I of the new constitution, twenty-nine articles were listed to define the human rights. The articles revolved around these main points:

1. No man could be enslaved or imprisoned for debt.
2. Education was to be free.
3. Everyone could choose a profession, industry, and work.
4. Personal service required just payment.
5. Freedom of press, speech, and association would prevail.
6. Anyone could carry arms if he wished.
7. Titles of nobility were prohibited.
8. All had the right to enter or leave Mexico as he wished.
9. No tribunals could start, and no retroactive laws were allowed.
10. The death penalty was abolished for political crimes.
11. Some monopolies were prohibited.
12. The rights of petition and assembly were guaranteed.
13. Judicial costs were abolished.
14. Property was sacred, except in the case of public domain.

It seems interesting that with all the talk taking place during the establishment of their constitution that trial by jury was voted down by 42-40, because the citizens felt the Mexican people were not ready for this innovation, and the theory was contrary to Roman law, which was the basis for Mexican jurisprudence.

Many people feel that the main reason the French intervened in Mexican affairs was because Mexicans felt Americans were going to annex all of Mexico, eventually. As early as 1853, Foreign Minister Aláman sounded out the French Minister in Mexico to see if his country would offer Mexico a guarantee against an American invasion. Mexicans had every right to feel threatened then, because throughout the nineteenth century, responsible men in the U. S. Government publicly discussed the total annexation of Mexico. The Texas question, the Mexican War, a post-war movement for total annexation, and the Gadsden Purchase – all of them

scared Mexican citizens.

President Buchanan in 1858 recommended to Congress the partial occupation of Mexican territory, Sonora and Chihuahua. Scholes thinks that had it not been for the issue of slavery in the United States, northern Mexico and Lower California, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Sinaloa might well have been annexed. The U. S. Senate actually was trying to work out the details to such an arrangement. A part of Mexican history that many Americans know nothing about is also covered well in this book. The Lower (Baja) California was offered for sale to the United States by Juarez for only \$15,000,000, when his government needed money badly to remain solvent. Because of political squabbles both in Mexico and the United States, the contract was never actualized.

After the French intervention, which ended in 1867, Juarez was eager to reorganize public education on the principles of science and man's ability to obtain the truth. The most interesting person on the committee appointed to accomplish this task was Gavino Farreda, who followed the teachings of Auguste Comte, a philosopher of science, a sociologist, and the author of the volumes *Cours de philosophie positive*, which were written between 1830 and 1842. Comte is regarded as the first philosopher of science in the modern sense, and he believed the physical sciences came first before researchers could investigate the "queen science" of human society. The new, Mexican educational system was to follow "the empirical goals of sociology," and Barreda was interested in giving students a new set of values through science.

He accepted Comte's view that the human mind has passed through three successive stages: religious, metaphysical, and positive. In Mexico, the church, viewed as a negative force, was the religious stage; the revolution was the metaphysical, and the emerging liberal forces were the positive stage. The country was approaching freedom from such obstacles as the church and the army. He put together the banner that was to come from this arrangement: LIBERTY, ORDER, PROGRESS. The liberty was the means; order was the base, and progress the end. During this process, the liberal substituted positively for religion and the church.

The positivists felt that the educational system of the church bore no relation to the real world and society. They felt the function of education was to prepare the children to cope with a world in which they lived. A direct relationship existed between the education of the children and the economy. An ethical and material advancement complimented each other. The result of their interaction would be progress and the welfare of the whole country. This is why they endorsed the laissez-faire economic

doctrine.

Scholes' text was refreshing, because this book about Mexican history was not devoted to revolution, riots, killing, and the macho Latin male personality. Ideas for the advancement of others instead of self-aggrandizement were Juarez's life-long commitment. The author's approach in this book was to study the national political scene during the Juarez years, and he effectively did that. The Reform leaders were successful in bringing many aspects of capitalism to Mexico, and they reduced the economic and political power of the church. It is difficult to imagine that for so many years, almost since the time of the Conquest, free speech and free press were not allowed. The country of Mexico was not able to rid itself of personalism in politics; however, many of the ideals of Juarez failed to take root permanently, i. e., equality before the law, complete capitalism, free elections, and many of the other basic ideas of the Reform Program.

Today, we know Oaxaca, one of 31 states in the nation, as the most biologically diverse region of Mexico. In the southwestern corner of the country, it has a large area adjacent to the Pacific Ocean, but its mountains and valleys protected local customs during much of the Spanish and French invasions. Best known for its 16 indigenous peoples and cultures, the most well-known are the Zapotecs and Mixtecs. Officially recognized for its archeological sites, like Monte Alban, there is much history here. Scientists have found evidence of human habitation that dates back 11,000 years BC in a cave near the town of Mitla. The UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2010 recognized the "earliest known evidence of domesticated plants in the continent. Corn cob fragments from this cave are the earliest documented evidence of maize agriculture.

Benito Juarez, a full-blooded Zapotec, was born among the poorest of the poor, and this would-be Indian priest and lawyer used his many political skills to bring democracy to Mexico. After gaining independence from Spain, the people kept electing him to higher offices, hoping he could improve their lives. Eventually becoming president during his country's most troubled times, his continuous fight to do what was best for his country, not the upper class rulers from Europe, created a dynamic political Reform platform of independence. His many accomplishments, like the constitutional Separation of Church and State and all people have the right to become educated, still exist in the life of Mexican citizens.

Political Suicide

Cassidy Adolf

I look out the window to see a replica of the day before. It's been 14 days since it happened. Each of them has passed slowly and agonizingly. Not a moment has gone by that I haven't thought about her. *My little girl.*

"Emilia, are you ready?" my mother's voice washes the thought away from my mind.

"Um, yeah, Mom, one second."

Today will be my first day back since "going to boarding school" for a year, and I have to make my official homecoming appearance for the press at the annual Egg Roll on the White House lawn. Most kids get a hug and a home cooked meal after a long time away. I guess those are the perks of being the President's one and only daughter. Yay.

I take one final look in the mirror, placing my perfectly curled brown locks strategically, so the American flag pin shows on my cream silk blouse. With one final deep breath, I open the door to my Secret Service security men, aka the stalkers, and walk down the cool hallway.

Once I approach my mother, she immediately snaps, "Fix your skirt; we don't want the whole nation knowing you're a hussy." Rolling my eyes, I pull my red and black detailed skirt down just above my knees and wait for the seal of approval from my, oh, so loving mother.

"All right, now, your father will be down any moment, and we'll be on our way!" she says. Her mood has already done a 360. She loves things like this. "Things like this," are the opportunities to show off in front of people, well, the whole world. My mom is beautiful; she's basically a replica of Victoria Beckham but more uptight with her dress. She has it all, hence her love of the cameras. So, obviously, something like a teen pregnancy scandal doesn't fall under the category of things she'd like to broadcast to the world.

My thoughts shift again, back to that little face. That beautiful, little face that I would never see again. Not unless it is by extreme coincidence, but even then, I couldn't say anything. My heart tore into two, and tears were stinging at my eyes until my father's voice pulled me from the torture of my thoughts.

"Emmie!" his voice rang through the halls like a bell.

“Daddy!” I ran to him, and he scooped my 17-year-old body up into his arms, just as if I were five again.

“I’ve missed you so much, honey,” he said, hugging me tighter than ever.

“Oh, Dad, you have no idea. How are things goi—.”

“Tick, tock, they won’t wait forever!” my mother interrupts, cheerfully. My father puts me down and straightens his tie and his posture, as he walks toward my mom, linking his arm in mine.

“Good morning, Violet,” he says kissing her on the cheek.

“Christopher, sweetie, we’ve got to get going!”

“Yes, yes,” he agrees. “All right people, let’s get this show on the road,” he addresses his mob of staff, and slowly but surely, we make our way to the front door.

I hear the voice of the announcer introducing us and look through the glass door ahead of me. As I scan the crowd, my eyes lock with the one person whose eyes I missed for a whole year, whose eyes I should never look into again. Suddenly, all of the images rush back to me: the night at the State Dinner, the champagne, the secret garden, the eyes of my, of our, baby girl.

“ . . . and Vice President Lawrence Grant,” the announcer’s voice breaks the lock of our eyes, as the man I love stands up to regard the American people.

*“Only connect the prose and the passion,
and both will be exalted, and human love
will be seen at its height.”*

*-E. M. Forster, 1879-1970, *Howards End**

It Can't Be that Hard: A Short Story about a Long Saga

Lee Bachand



My second, soon to be acclaimed, best-selling novel winged its way through the ether of the Internet to the editor. The cleansing, flushing, polishing process would begin. In a few weeks, I would accept or reject all those fussy, but needed, modifications.

I reviewed the formatting requirements for the e-book version. Piece of cake. Done it before, and it looked great. Doing a print version couldn't be much more difficult. CreateSpace, yeah, that's the Print-on-Demand company owned by Amazon.com. They rule the world, don't they?

I read the instructions, "How to format your book for CreateSpace." Easy, that's how this would be. They gave two ways to format the book to fit the various sizes. One required pasting chapters in one by one. I have a million chapters. Patterson copies my style, I notice. I'd be pasting until the end of time. At least, the time I have left.

I'll take door number two. What was that game-show host's name? The second door lets you plug your book into a template all at once. I began to learn more than I signed up for: gutters, headers, footers, inside-outside margins. Once I finished that mumbo-jumbo, I needed to save it as a PDF file. Huh? A quick visit to Wiki something and I know all there is to know about PDF. Save that puppy as a PDF and make sure I embed the fonts. Huh? Five searches later, I found the box to tell MS Word 2010 to embed the fonts. I embedded the little buggers up to their tiny serifs.

Load that baby. The PDF looks good. Up into the nether world of CreateSpace. The analyzer chews on it for a few minutes. "There are problems. Review your file in the viewer." It doesn't fit. It's the right size; the gutters, footers, blah, blah and blah are okay. I pondered, why does every book need a gutter?

I watched YouTube videos. I did it right. It had to fit. I looked at the original file. Oops! Some idiot left the comments in and didn't uncheck the show markup box hidden under six layers of drop-downs, well maybe four or five.

Nothing to it. B.P. 150/85. A day gone. The dog, who didn't get his walk, sulked, but I knew how to load a file and preview the book. Would I be able to do it again for real after the edits?

Then, I jumped into the deep end, "How to format your book so it looks professional in print." Book title on the right-hand page as you read, author's name on the left, or is it the other way around? Grabbed a book to check. Right the first time. Chapters start on the right page, an odd page, but no page number or title. Huh?

Back to YouTube, manuals, articles. Two days passed. The dog stopped speaking. The wife threatened to flip the breaker switch supplying power to the computer. I tried method after method, running YouTube videos, pausing them, and doing the prescribed action. "Remember the page on the left is the page on the right. MS Word 2010 puts in phantom pages for blank pages, but rest assured they will appear on the PDF." It didn't work. *God I love MS Word 2010.*

I stumbled across a YouTube video with India Drummond. Her British accent and distinct speech soothed me. She told me how to view two pages, click the odd and even button, unlink something from something, execute the maneuver to have a different first page, and use a section break (there are four kinds) rather than a page break.

Soon, I walked the right path. I didn't have the title and author name on the front matter—now that I know what front matter is—no numbers or titles on the first page of a chapter—a right-hand page, of course. I meticulously wrote down the eighteen simple steps to execute with the precision of a moon landing.

Clean out the headers, footers, and page numbers. View two pages. Open the header, check the box for odd and even, remember to unlink, different first page, use section breaks, odd page, format to start numbering at one, later tell it to continue numbering from the previous section. Logical, all logical. *God I love MS Word 2010.* Nothing to it.

I made a dozen copies of the key to the mint, hid six around the house; put six in the safe-deposit box at the bank. It was good to leave the house after five days. I bought flowers and a dog bone on the way home.

I stood before my wife with the flowers. "What was that all about?" she asked.

"I formatted a sample book the right way." I explained how a book

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should be formatted, how the numbers should run, etc. “People would notice how professional my formatting was,” I told her.

“I never pay any attention to things like that.” She reads over a hundred books a year. Then she laid eight books from her read pile in front of me. Not one of them did it the right way. They all used different conventions. “It’s the story, you idiot.”

Did I tell you? *I love CreateSpace, Amazon.com, and MS Word 2010?*



Utah Rock Painting :: Bradley Martin

A Fortress of Fauna

William Caleb Ball



“Beauty” can be defined in many ways, but to me, it is something that catches the eye, something that makes me stop for a moment and think, and causes inspiration to strike. It is something that makes me *feel*. It is peaceful and calming, and it brings a smile to my face. Things that are *truly* beautiful make me want to create something beautiful myself.

Throughout my entire life, I have seen many beautiful things, but none more so than the beauty and tranquility of the woods behind my house when I lived in Ohio. Whenever things got hard or I was lacking in inspiration, I would flee from the real world into the peaceful serenity of nature. Surrounded by the green blanket of my oasis, I would walk along the Scioto River with a notebook and a single pen, following the trail deeper and deeper into nature, until I came across my fallen tree. I would sit upon the dying trunk and not move for a moment, simply taking in the peaceful calmness and colors that surrounded me. The only sound was the river flowing over the rocks running along my stepfather’s favorite fishing spot.

My home, even though it was merely a few hundred feet away from this paradise, was extremely loud and frazzling. My little seven-year-old sister was always running around, my brother was constantly playing really loud video games involving a lot of shooting, and my mother never seemed to run out of air to supply her never-ending stream of wailing and screaming. There was absolutely no peace or calmness in the household. When it all became too much, and it often did, I was blessed to be able to zip up my jacket, walk to the backyard, and hide among the trees. The quiet was monumental and foreign, but it was much appreciated.

I knew that there were animals out there. In the night, I would often hear coyotes howl from my room, and I was aware that somewhere out there more than one deer existed. Even so, I never spotted one. I would

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often imagine them among the trees, just out of sight, watching me with unblinking eyes. They were probably wondering just who this human thought he was, coming onto their territory.

I created many amazing, and some not-so-amazing, works of writing while in my solitude of fauna. I would write down anything that came to my mind, really. This included poetry, short stories, ideas for potential prose, and the occasional “throwing-my-random-and-scrambled-thoughts-on-the-paper” session. I especially enjoyed taking a lot of photographs of the plants and the river and anything else eye-catching; imagining that one of these pictures could someday grace the cover of a future book. I was truly happy in my tranquility.

In the winter, my sanctuary became even more dazzling, although much less comfortable. Sparkling white snow would lie upon the ground and icicles hung desperately from the trees, which had been stripped of their leaves. The place seemed almost raw and untouched by human life, which held much appeal to me. Although I loathed the cold, I still enjoyed spending quite a bit of time in the frozen garden. It was simply awe-inspiring.

After having a terrifically bad experience with my not-quite-girlfriend Lily, my head was spinning from the amount of emotions I was experiencing. Once I arrived home, I did not even go inside the house. I grabbed the journal in my car and walked into the woods. I was hoping the peacefulness of the area would calm me, but it actually did not have too much of an effect. Instead of sitting amongst the beauty, as I often did, I threw my notebook down into the mud and proceeded to rage and punch and kick the cold, hard bark of multiple trees. After I was spent, I collapsed on the ground, breathing heavily. I observed what I had done; how my outburst had done little to nothing on the formidable guardians, but my knuckles were bleeding and in quite a bit of pain. I sighed deeply and proceeded to take my notebook and write a thrashing poem.

From that experience, I was able to obtain a firsthand look at how, even though I was in a dark place, I was not able to negatively affect my haven whatsoever. Beauty is not something that can be negatively manipulated. It can only be added onto positively, as it should be. Eventually, the peaceful nature of the fortress was able to take me over, and I was able to calm down and take a long, slow look around. I then proceeded to do some deep thinking and decide on the most rational course to take to end my bad situation on the highest note possible.

In my opinion, that is also something that beauty is amazing at accomplishing. If I let it, it can assist me in thinking clearly and rationally.

There are so many positive things that it can bring into my life. In fact, I would say that beauty is *essential* for life. Without beauty and creativity, I think it would be safe to say that at least half of us would not even be alive.

The woods behind my home were a blessing, and I was truly grateful to have them in my life. It was a sanctuary when things became too hard; it was a catalyst for more creation, and it was a peaceful calmness to escape the loud, white noise that life presents. Without that amazing oasis, I would not be as happy and calm as I am today, nor would I have some of the poems and stories that I do today. All in all, I am happy that I was able to have that important fortress in my life. It was a seemingly small thing that helped to create a large chunk of the man I am today.

“Every English poet should master the rules of grammar before he attempts to bend or break them.”

-George Bernard Shaw, 1856-1950, Pygmalion

A Repertoire for Motivation: What One May Not Know about Keeping Inspired

Leah Bifano



In life, every person's objective is to pursue goals and achieve fulfillment; this gives life a sense of purpose and meaning. However, there is always a bump along the road when the path starts to become tiring and unclear. This can test whether one may find the way again, which all depends upon the drive and the ability to keep going. How does one find this drive, if one does not know where to look? The

concept of motivation is not merely will-power, but it is derived from one's own being. Though this can be delicately conditioned by past influences, it is also derived from one's present mentality and can be the key predictor in one's own future; motivation can, however, be manipulated for one's own success.

Motivation originates from needs that do not stem from the present. From the grand scheme down to the most basic level, motivation is conditioned by past influences. This includes the most basic concept of how to achieve it, which is desire. The more one wants a desired goal, typically, determines how hard one will work to achieve this goal. Motivation can essentially be best explained by scientific, or notably psychological, theories. David Lieberman in the text book *Advanced General Psychology* breaks this concept down into more science-based, yet simple examples; he begins by stating that motivation begins with what is called a *reinforcer*. The response to the reinforcer is learned based on the reward to the response, but this response also depends on whether the desire for the reinforcer is present; this is the motivation. Lieberman uses the basic concrete example of obtaining coffee from a vending machine. If one were to insert a coin into the vending machine in order to get the coffee, one would first have to learn that it is the coin that is used to operate the machine, which then provides the coffee. This whole procedure

is nonexistent, if there is no initial desire to obtain that cup of coffee (Lieberman 198). Lieberman also mentions that motivation depends partly on how long an individual has been deprived of that reinforcer, as well as the attractiveness of that said reinforcer.

Abraham Maslow, famous for his triangular model of the Hierarchy of Needs, believed that people are motivated to achieve unconscious needs and desires. They start from the most basic level, and when one need is fulfilled, the next obstacle is fulfilling the higher need that follows. Saul McLeod in *Simply Psychology* further expands on this diagram, by illustrating that the diagram is divided into five stages (see Figure 1), starting with the basic, or deficiency, needs. These are the needs that have to be fulfilled before all others. The longer that one is deprived of these needs, the stronger the motivation to fulfill them, and therefore, the more drastic the actions that result. For example, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can be used to demonstrate that when an individual is deprived of food, the response to hunger will be significantly higher. McLeod adds that according to Maslow, one must first satisfy the lower level needs before progressing on to the higher level needs, generally known as the growth needs (McLeod 1). If motivation were to be mapped on this diagram, it would be somewhere among the growth needs where many would find themselves lingering.



Fig. 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Triangular Diagram. Source: Saul McLeod, *Simply Psychology*. 2007

On a deeper level, a child or even an adolescent's motivation to achieve love and belonging in a peer setting may be higher if that child had not received the most care and attention from the caregivers throughout his or her childhood. There are various theories as to where this motivation could be derived, however. Dr. Christopher Heffner from *AllPsych* illustrates these theories, one such known as the Instinct Theory. It is essentially the inner-most biological and animalistic drive; it is the motivation of a baby to cry, of a mother to protect her young. It is the motivation to survive, and is programmed in every living individual at birth. The next theory, which is rather similar to the former, is known as Drive Reduction Theory. This theory essentially states that is the instinct of a human to maintain an internal balance, which is promoted by our primary instincts, such as hunger and thirst, for instance, in order to survive. Humans also need a certain level of arousal in order to feel secure, as according to the Arousal Theory. Every individual needs a certain amount of emotional, intellectual, and physical activity. This is why there are passionate artists, athletes, and students. Outside of the basic need to survive, there is a need to enjoy the aesthetics of life. The Humanistic Theory is most closely related to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs; it illustrates the drive to achieve one's maximum potential. Humans have the ultimate desire to achieve growth and to achieve purpose; and according to this theory, they continue to have the motivation to do so no matter what obstacles may come. Moreover, this theory would most clearly explain the child's longing for love and affection, because acceptance at its core is really an indication of survival. Finally, Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory says that every action or thought, whether consciously or subconsciously, is for a person's own survival.

Psychoanalytic theory therefore argues that we go to school because it will help assure our survival in terms of improved finances, more money for healthcare, or even an improved ability to find a spouse. We move to better school districts to improve our children's ability to survive and continue our family tree. We demand safety in our cars, toys, and in our homes. We want criminals locked away, and we want to be protected against poisons, terrorists, and anything else that could lead to our destruction. (Heffner)

All of these theories explain the origins of motivation and where it can be reached. Motivation is also very much determined by present conditions, such as one's maturity and mentality in a certain phase in life.

A major issue that surrounds the ability to stay motivated is to understand one's own being and therefore, understand one's own true wants and desires. According to Andre Larocque in his article, "How to Get Motivated," happiness is the number one component of this. "A great deal

of motivation comes from understanding one's state of happiness," he says. "However, happiness, like most other oh-so important concepts in life, is a slippery concept. How would one go about changing how happy they are? Very simply put, happiness and control are causal, meaning that when you take away somebody's control, they are less happy" (Larocque 1). The key component in motivation is control. An individual has the control to decide to put a coin into the vending machine to obtain a cup of coffee. A student has the control to decide whether or not to go to college, do the work, and get a degree in order to get a desired job. The reinforcer on all accounts is success, and one's own success cannot be achieved without the control to respond to the reinforcer.

However, like the child who is pursuing his football career, happiness is also determined by support. Larocque adds that having the needed support is the foundation of any individual's personality and values. It can be broken into two different types: internal and external. Internal support includes "the small realizations that nourish your potential" (2). It is essentially a way of thinking; it comes from not necessarily acknowledging what might be logically true but believing in what is healthy and positive. Positive self-talk is the key to getting through any lack of motivation. Another internal support is sublimation, or using one's flaws for a positive outlet, such as turning a trait like aggression into ambition. External supports include having good friends and family. Take a look again at the child reared to play football at a very young age by a persistent parent: the influence of that parent for the child to play football is the primary source of motivation for the child, because the child's desire to play football is determined by the parent's positive response. Although keeping good company is a choice, family is not within one's realm of control. However, it is within the realm of control that if the fortune of having a good family is lacking, then one is capable to search for another support system. The point here is that whatever factor is hindering motivation can be manipulated into a positive force.

There is still hope even if a person's being and, therefore, motivation were not necessarily fostered by a nurturing environment. Dr. James Taylor in his article "Personal Growth: Motivation: The Drive to Change" from *Psychology Today* states that "finding the motivation means maintaining your goals consistently even when it's easy to give up. It involves doing everything possible to achieve your goals" (2). Taylor adds that the motivation to change begins with what he calls "The Three D's": Direction, Decision, and Dedication. The first D, Direction, allows the individual to think about the many paths to go down and at what pace to take them.

The variety of options can be observed, as well as the decision as to how drastic or subtle the beginning of change. This, then, lends itself to the second D, Decision: making the choice. After all of the options have been contemplated, a decision has to be made, and change has to begin. This step is the required prerequisite to the third D, which is Dedication. Once the journey down the chosen path has finally begun, it is necessary to keep going down that path and do whatever is possible to not divert from the desired goal. According to Taylor, this last step determines how these changes are realized (3). In order to keep a good mentality to stay motivated, one has to begin with a healthy lifestyle.

It is a well-known fact that keeping a healthy lifestyle improves a person's overall well-being, and this is especially true in regard to keeping up motivation. Good physical health is essential to keeping one's mental health in balance so that the pursuit of goals can be achieved. According to Larocque, keeping up a steady energy level is fundamental in staying in good physical and mental health. Diet, especially, plays a crucial role in one's daily supply of energy. He suggests drinking plenty of water, particularly a glass or two, when a headache occurs before taking any pills. Replace caffeine with vitamins B6 and B12; caffeine does not actually help gain energy but rather, lessens the effect of feeling fatigued. Vitamin B is a much healthier and more natural alternative to feeling energetic and taking on the day. Sleep, of course, is also important for maintaining energy. Larocque illustrates a few ways, which are not well-known to many, when considering how to get a high-quality amount of sleep; this starts with keeping the bedroom completely dark at night. Night lights are not permitted, and it is important that there are no sounds present, within one's own means, that will interrupt sleep. The bedroom should also be cold, ideally sixty-five degrees Fahrenheit, as according to Larocque. Rather than getting eight hours of sleep, it is actually more biologically sound to get nine hours of sleep each night. Overall, if energy is lacking, it is important to seek it out as much as possible, because this is a major component in staying motivated. Energy also plays a role in efficiency – the confidence in one's own abilities. Efficiency can be obtained by practicing a skill consistently and improving upon it. Without energy one will feel immobile, and without efficiency, motivation will be non-existent.

Motivation is the response to the desire of success; therefore, it is the key to achievement+. Motivation can produce the ambition to succeed. Lack thereof, however, can be disparaging in this pursuit. This concept is preprogrammed within every living creature; it is the will to not only survive, but to flourish, and if this will to flourish is stagnant, there are

ways to tap into the origins of one's motivation. Whether this component to a meaningful life is well nurtured by a good environment or belittled by disappointments, studies have shown that there is skill behind changing the course. Even in undesirable present circumstances, motivation can be changed for the better in the future, and living a fulfilled life, rather than merely surviving. Most often, the key to keeping this mentality is just being fulfilled with present accomplishments, which are more often observed than what has not yet been accomplished. This will prevent one from becoming stagnant and feeling a sense of hopelessness. Look at the mark that has already been left, and keep creating those footprints along the same path.

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The Eleventh Mile

Barbara Mayes Boustead



After six half-marathons, it should be easy by now. Habit. But it's never routine, never the same. At about 65 degrees and with the humidity above 70% in Kansas City, the morning is more spring-like than I've had the pleasure of feeling so far in our cold and dry Nebraska spring. Mid-April races lead to mid-winter training, a cross between treadmills and outside runs on the warmer days.

Humidity has been rare this spring, and the smell of moisture makes me smile from my nose to my lungs. I am not even wearing a warm-up sweatshirt as we leave the cocoon of my husband's car to wander to the starting area. A few clouds in the sky will keep the sun from shining too strongly, and the south breeze will only increase through the morning.

It's more humid than any of my training runs.

Training runs span months leading up to a race. This cycle started strong. After a slight break around the holidays, I picked up with the best speeds of any set of training runs so far. Speed intervals, pace runs, tempos all fell into place. I dropped a minute per mile off my short distances and 30 seconds per mile from the long runs. Thirty seconds per mile doesn't sound like much until three miles turns into six, then nine, then twelve. I was running faster than ever before, and what a rush! My legs begged to run faster and faster paces.

Of course, the other shoe dropped, as it always does. First, the nagging left hip pain came back. Two years ago, a series of X-rays, MRIs, and examinations confirmed my least favorite diagnosis: nothing. The hip always hurts in a training cycle. If I catch it early and back off the training, it'll stay in the range of nagging and annoying aching. If I let it go, my whole gait takes on a wobble, and I can hardly walk after a run. I caught it early this time and took a week off running to settle it down, but it never really went away, and now I know it won't until I rest after the race. But I also know that since nothing is visibly injured, it isn't causing any damage.

It's just pain.

Then, calf pain crept in. At first, it was a twinge, a pinch, starting at no specific time but certainly evident at about six weeks to go in training. Each run – long runs in particular – elevated the level of discomfort from a pinch to a punch to a dagger. The dagger has been in my calf for the last four weeks, stabbing straight from the upper back calf through to the lower inside shin. For the last two weeks, it has hurt constantly, not just during and after runs. I replaced my shoes three weeks before the race, risking blisters to save my shins. I wore my calf compression sleeves on every run, not just the long ones, and even wore them for whole days when it felt like they were helping. Maybe I tweaked a calf muscle, maybe it's a shin splint. Either way, it's just pain.

The last thing to go was the right knee. During training for my first race, it flared up badly enough that I had to cut runs short and take cortisone through the skin – iontophoresis – in addition to ice and rest. It also flared up for the third race, though not nearly as badly. It started flaring up just in the last few weeks with a fluid feeling that was not quite swelling but not quite normal. I am arthritic, and my inflammatory arthritis strikes my joints at will, but it is under control. It's just pain.

It takes a team to keep me running – my chiropractor and the physical therapists in her clinic, my massage therapist, and my husband. My last three weeks have involved e-stim, ultrasound therapy, adjustments, ice packs, heating pads, deep tissue massage, and double doses of Celebrex.

This has been my best training cycle yet. I am ready.

Race day started at 5 AM with an early alarm, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and a little tea to wake and warm me. This race is three hours from home, which means that we were hotel recluses, eating an early pasta dinner and tucking in by 9 PM. We opened the curtains in the morning to watch the sun rise, turned on some music to get us moving, and checked the weather. After the PB&J had settled, we started to stir into action. Our running outfits were laid out the night before, with bibs attached to shirts and timing chips attached to shoes. Paranoid that the timing chip will fall off my shoe, I checked the laces again. I like pulling on my compression sleeves and shorts first, to shove any morning swelling back where it belongs. The last thing I put on is my sports bra, because until I'm a mile or two into a run, it's so tight that it confines my breathing. I used extra Body Glide around the strap area, because it was a little humid out and I might sweat more than usual. Then my hair went up in a ponytail, and my iPod got tucked under my shirt and hooked to my hip. I was ready.

I've never run a race that my husband didn't also run. We challenge

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each other, even if I can't challenge his finish times. He is my training companion, my voice of reason, and my coach. He has never had pain or injury issues until this cycle, and he has low expectations for himself today. I hate seeing him hurt. I hate that my Biofreeze and ice packs haven't helped his knee. He's limping before we even start the race.

I could beat him.

The pre-race atmosphere is electric with nerves and energy and loud music and liquid and solid sugar. The port-a-potty lines never go away, but they are shorter than usual; we stand in them three times to empty our bladders, because we're nervous and because we have extra time. The 6,000 runners stand elbow to bib, spilling slowly between the gates as 7:30 AM approaches. The crowd is tight between the 2:05 and 2:10 pacers, where we've settled ourselves. We're surrounded by faint electric beeps as thousands of runners, including us, start their GPS watches. The starting line band is so loud that they don't hear a female voice starting "The Star Spangled Banner," but they cease playing by the twilight's last gleaming. The singer has a lovely voice but can't settle on a key, and I can't find a flag to salute with my eyes. We clap anyway.

We hardly notice when the first wave starts. They are the true runners who can compete for finish medals, ones who can finish the race in almost half our time. We will never be that fast, even in a sprint. We shift forward slightly, and the second wave starts, the ones who expect to finish under 2 hours. We're not quite there, though my husband is close when he's healthy and on a favorable course. The pack takes a noticeable shift forward, and now it's serious. I shimmy my legs to get my hip to pop one last time and shake out my calves to loosen them just a little more. I cue my iPod, check my GPS watch, and wait for the call. The announcer gives a countdown: 10-9-8

Nervous energy, go to my legs.

7-6-5

Breathe deeply one last time.

4-3-2-1

It takes a few seconds for the wave to get moving, like cars getting started when a red light turns green. A shuffle forward morphs to a brisk walk, then a light jog before I cross the start line. I start my GPS watch precisely at the starting line, then the iPod running meter as a back-up. My shin isn't warmed up enough, and the daggers start with the very first steps of jogging. Damn. I know adrenaline will take over and I won't feel it after a while, but I wonder how long it will take for that to happen.

My husband and I are elbow to elbow for about the first mile as we

circle around the starting area and move down the Parkway. I intend to be at a pace a bit over 10 minutes per mile for the first few miles, and I am right on my mark. The course map indicates a broad uphill course through around the first three miles, then leveling off until the course loops back and presents a supportive downhill boost for the last three miles of the race. The pacer table at the Expo had warned us about an uphill in the eighth mile as the run loops around a park. Near the end of the first mile, I can see the uphill battle approaching.

Got this.

My husband pulls away as the uphill starts. I knew he would; he is always faster on uphill runs than I am. I send him off with a “Go get it!” cheer, feeling bad that I didn’t see he was pulling ahead of me in time to send him with a pat on the rump. Tracking his gray shirt and bobbing white cap, I like to watch him run ahead of me. A lot of runners are passing me, but I am still hitting my pacing marks. I knew I would be on the slow side of my starting wave. I want to leave something in the tank for the middle and end of the race. It’s OK. I’m OK.

Go ahead. Pass me. I’ll pass you later.

In my training runs, my calf pain actually was a little better on the small uphills. It isn’t happening today. I still feel a dagger with each step. The first hill levels out at around the 2 mile mark, with a slight downhill to let me breathe a little more deeply again. Already, I can see the first water station. It seems early, but it’s humid and I’m already sweating, so I drink. I’m happy that they use paper cups in this race, because it’s easier to pinch the cup to leave just a small opening. I slurp about half the water in the cup through the pinched top, with a fair amount landing on my left arm. Some people walk through drink stops, but my mind does not like to stop and start, especially when I am having pain, so I always jog through. Taking water disrupts my breathing, so I always feel just a little out of breath after a stop, even though I’ve slowed down. The drink stop is at the base of the next incline, which takes more of my breath. I pace down a bit until my breathing finds its rhythm again. And it does. I realize that I’ve lost sight of my husband. He must have really pulled ahead of me.

The uphill stretch in mile 2 to 3 is longer, but my pace is still on track. After the 3-mile mark, the course levels and descends, and I think this must be where the course levels for the rest of the race. I look over my left shoulder at the hill as I descend, noting that this will be a fairly steep uphill climb after the 10-mile mark. I have to save something for it. Another hill faces me, and sure it must be the last. So the course won’t exactly go from level to a three-mile drop to end the race. Shortly after the 4-mile mark, I

see police motorcycles coming in the opposite direction along the Parkway, where the return will bring runners back to the finish. I figure they are sweeping the street one last time, but they are actually leading the front-runner. As he runs, a wave of cheers erupts among the runners in our more pedestrian pace group. I clap for him as he goes by.

Fastest loop-back I have ever seen.

I skip the drink station somewhere around the 3.5 mile mark, but I do drink at mile 5, and I take my Honey Stinger ginseng gel there. The cloying honey goo goes down in small gulps straight to the back of my throat, and I try not to leave it in my mouth too long so that it doesn't leave a sticky film. The drink stop slows my pace in the fifth mile to just about 10:00 even, but the other miles are coming in under 10:00, and it makes me smile. I give a thumbs-up to a group of spectators who are tallying their count of beers drunk during the race, and I smile at the ones with the "Smile if you're not wearing underwear" poster. The course is coming to me. The houses along the Parkway are beautiful – Tudor-style, well-kept, with lovely landscaped yards. If it wasn't for the traffic along the Parkway when there isn't a race, it would be a nice place to live.

We round the circle around a big fountain in the road, the one that's on the medal and the tech T-shirt. The loudest spectators have gathered there, and their energy gives me more of a boost than the honey. I take water again before the course takes a sharp right turn at around mile 7.

Hills again?

Got this.

The neighborhood loop is hillier than I expected – not as steep of a climb as miles 2 and 3, but certainly not level. With a number of sharp turns, my sense of direction is distorted, and I'm not sure which direction I'm facing. The hills and turns disrupt my even and smooth pace, and for the first time, I start to count down the miles to go, especially after I hit the 6.6-mile halfway point. The course passes a historical marker, and I desperately try to read as much of it as possible before I pass it. Something about a Westboro battle during the Civil War. Marker 1 of 8. We emerge from the neighborhood to streets surrounding a lovely park with more markers that are too far away to read, and we take a fairly steep descent.

What goes down must come back up.

The pacer warned us about mile 8, and now I get it. After the drop into the park area, we must climb back out again. And sure enough, as I turn a corner, I see the hill around a bend ahead. I see the first casualty, a female runner covered in dirt being tended by paramedics. So many runners are walking up the hill that is causing a visible human traffic jam. I feel smart

for knowing this was coming, vindicated for saving energy in the tank for this hill.

Attack.

On a training run, gasping for air, I had asked my husband how he kept his pace uphill. He said that he just attacked it. The word rang in my mind for almost every hill since then. Attack it. Sure, my pace slows a little up the hill, but I am passing all of the walkers and a good number of runners. I realize that somewhere in the neighborhood, I had stopped feeling my shin pain. A band plays near the crest of the hill, and the fuzzy-bearded lead singer is giving high-fives to passing runners. I go up for five and it practically knocks me backward.

Dude, softer high-fives! We are trying to move forward!

We start to loop back around toward the fountain again, and I finally have my bearings. It isn't quite the home stretch, but in the ninth mile, we are at least on the return. It's mostly downhill from here. We turn into the wind, and I know that we will be facing a south wind for the rest of the race. The first few breaths of wind are refreshing, drying some of the sweat dripping down my elbows and neck, but then some of the gusts challenge me. The familiar burn of chafing under the front of my bra strap irritates me. I applied extra Body Glide to prevent this! I continue to pass runners who gave too much in the first few miles, including another one on the ground. I wish the runners who drop to an occasional walk would be polite enough to pull to the side of the path instead of dropping pace right in the middle of the road in front of the rest of us. I start to look harder for my husband again, but I never catch a glimpse of his bobbing white hat. I want to catch him, but if I caught him, it means he is in a lot of pain, so I don't want to catch him. I know if I see him, the pull to him will make me run faster, so I want to see him. While taking my cup of water at the mile 9 drink station, I realize that I've forgotten to cue up my last sugar hit, a pack of cherry Sport Beans spiked with caffeine.

Is it too late?

The mental math begins. Fuel only works about 15 to 20 minutes after you take it. I should have taken my extra fuel at mile 9, but at mile 10, it will still give a kick before the end of the race. It's late, but it will still help. The course comes back to the hillier starting section, though it didn't seem as hilly on the way out as it now does coming back. My breath is still under control. My iPod sings, "*Clap along if you feel like that's what you want to do.*" I sometimes hear my own music and sometimes tune it out with the ambient noise of race spectators and bands, but my own music becomes more important near the end of a long run when I need to push my legs

forward. The steep downhill after the 3-mile mark is now visible as a steep uphill just past the 10-mile mark. I see the next water station at the bottom of the hill and the rush of getting my sugar takes over. I panic and shove seven cherry-flavored caffeinated sport beans in my mouth, when I usually take two or three at a time.

Chew.

I take water, but it is gone before I can get the beans chewed enough to swallow. Runners are slowing to a walk in front of me and interrupting my pace, I'm nearly choking on the wad of half-chewed beans, my water is gone, and the ascent has begun. I am out of breath before I even start.

Attack.

This is it. The last real climb. "*I guess we are who we are.*" My legs struggle to keep pace, and I feel myself slowing to something only slightly faster than a brisk walk, but I am still making jogging motions. My arms are pumping and my legs are leaving the ground. My relaxed hands clench into fists so that I can dig my fingernails into my palms.

Get it.

I wish I had taken some sugar earlier so that it was in my system for this hill. I knew it was here. I saw it on the way out. Runners are dropping to walks all around me. Didn't they remember it was here? Didn't they save a little boost for this? I am halfway up and shoveling coal to keep steam in the engine.

Attack.

Attacking works in a short burst. Over a long and steep hill, it loses its punch. How long can a person attack? When does it just become running again? The climb becomes a little less steep, and I can see the crest. I did it. I made it.

Got it.

The last 5K of a half marathon really is the home stretch. I can time a 5K. I can always run a 5K. Now, that the hill is behind me, I know I am near the finish. "*You show the lights that stop me turn to stone.*" I take just a moment to try to make my breath settle back into rhythm. It doesn't cooperate quite as nicely as it did in mile 3, but I feel less like I am gasping and more like I am running again. Then I know it is time to push. For the first time in the race, I intentionally push a little past my comfort zone. Then I coax my legs to churn just a little bit faster. I see another racer down, and an ambulance with someone else already loaded. The temperature is climbing. The breeze that had felt refreshing in mile 9 now feels like a hand pushing against my chest. I am pushing hard enough to feel fatigue in my legs, my gut, and my lungs. I have looked at my GPS watch dozens of times

during the race, but for the first time, I really read the time. With 2.6 miles to go, I am at an even 1 hour, 45 minutes. My heart sinks, as I realize it will be very difficult to get my time below 2:10 now, and even a personal record below 2:11 will take a hefty push.

No shame. Hillier than I thought.

If I'm not running for sub-2:10 anymore, I can at least push for the PR. Ahead, near the mark of 2 miles to go, I see the last drink station. Despite the drinking debacle at the 10-mile mark, I feel surprisingly hydrated. Drinking makes me lose my breath and makes me slow down to dodge walkers. The finish line beckons. My feet hug the center line, and I skip the last drink stop of the race.

Never done that before. Hope it works.

Beyond the drink stop is one last incline. I recognize it as the approach to a shopping center that had extra parking for the very late arrivals. I have told myself more than once in this run that I'm on the last hill, but I know, for real, that this is truly the last one. After this incline, the rest of the run literally is downhill.

Attack.

My legs are strong, and I am passing more runners than not. The sugar must have hit my system. When I crest the hill, I imagine that I can actually see the finish line, even though it is just out of sight.

Push.

The downhill begins, and I force my legs to go even harder. "*No more stormy nights, no more cloudy days.*" I want to check my watch again, but it takes energy to lift my arm and time to read the watch, energy and time that I can't spare in the last push. Forget it; I'll read the lap times for the last mile or two when I download it at home.

Just run.

I am gasping now for air, lungs on fire, with a half mile still ahead of me. The Parkway takes a slight left bend, and now I really can see the finish line. The crowd along the path thickens. I see runners who have already finished, their bright silver medals around their necks on turquoise ribbons, banana in one hand and water bottle in the other. I keep pushing my legs to run just a little faster. I want that PR.

Get it.

Breathing becomes more of a challenge, with audible gasps, and I worry that I started my sprint too early. The downhill course becomes level in the last quarter mile. I spot runners ahead and push myself to pass them, one at a time, picking them off and overtaking them like a tiger on a herd of gazelles.

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Finish this!

The finish line beckons. I glance quickly along the sides, wondering if I will see one of the other two runners I know in the race, wondering if I will see my husband there. I never caught him. I never even spotted him. He must have run a good race. Proud of him.

Go! Go!

Other runners slow to a jog or even a walk as they cross the finish line, but I remember my brief track days and sprint through the finish marker before I slow my pace, finger on the GPS watch to stop it precisely on the finish line.

2:09:47

I won't know my official finish time until I look it up online, but unofficially, I have hit my marks. The last mile had to be under 9 minutes to make that happen. I gasp, grab my iPod to stop it, gasp, and almost run right into my beaming, cheering, sweaty husband. He fist-bumps me, and as we walk together, I see he is limping fiercely. But he finished 2 minutes ahead of me. We turn in our timing chips, take our medals and water, and seek clean grass, chocolate milk, and bananas.

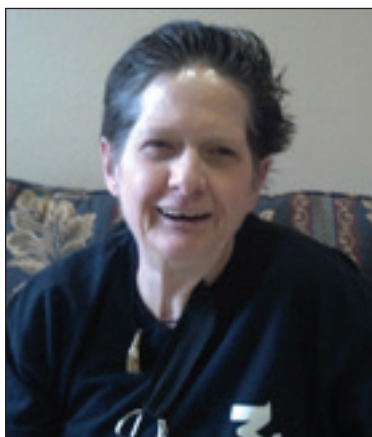
I win.

“One of the things a writer is for is to say the unsayable, speak the unspeakable, and ask difficult questions.”

-Salman Rushdie, b. 1947, Independent on Sunday

Writing Changed My Life

Terri Lynn Brewer



I began writing as a challenge. I live with a mental illness officially diagnosed in 1978. At the time, I was attending the Community Alliance Mental Health Rehabilitation Center in Omaha, NE. I was in the day rehab program, which holds the classes to help me see beyond the doctors' diagnoses. One day, I attended a crafts class, hoping to just sit alone and do nothing, but this did not happen. The "staff" said to try something new, and I would have to leave, unless I did something. I wrote a poem and found

my voice, my beauty, and my truth. Poetry is my worth, unique to me, my worldview. Writing changed my life and increased my self-esteem.

The words became an outlet for a life I did not choose, but we do not choose many things in our lives. Through poetry, I started to find my own life, the one that is me, and I am beautiful.

Recently, I had surgery on my right shoulder, and typing is painful. I have only taken one formal creative writing class at Metro Community College, which was taught by Jules DeSalvo, and he helped me overcome my pain through writing how I feel.

My words were simple but real, and the words have gotten me to this beautiful place within. When I saw my printed poem in the *Fine-Lines* journal, the gears began to turn again. Even at my age, 58, my voice is strong and leads others to hear how beautiful our lives are. My voice reflects my life's journey, through the mountains and valleys and around the bends.

Thank you for hearing my voice,

An Address by Bright Eyes

Wilson, Bright Eyes, pp. 70-78

(Bright Eyes was the daughter of Joseph La Flesche, and this speech was given at the Boston Literary Club in 1905.)

An Indian tribe is divided into bands. A band is composed of families; and the genealogies are kept so exactly, that in some bands there are only a few families, and in others there are a great many, according as they diminish or increase during the years. Each band is represented by a chief, and these chiefs represent the men of their bands in council. The council governs the conduct of the tribe in its relations with other tribes or nations, decides questions in dispute, and pronounces sentences of punishment for crimes. The penalty for murder is usually banishment. If the crime was not an aggravated one, the banishment was usually only three or four years. The punishment for stealing was a fine, the thief being compelled to restore twice the value of what he stole to the one he stole from. The stealing of horses from other tribes was a tribal affair, was a part of war, and was done only to those with whom a tribe was at war.

The executive power was vested in the Soldier's Lodge, which was a powerful organization. It executed all the orders of the council. Rules were made with regard to hunting and the war-path, and to resist the officers in the enforcement of these rules was often death to the one who disobeyed or resisted. There were two men in our tribe who broke the hunting-laws. They were flogged so severely, that one of them died, and the other became half-paralyzed and lost his mind. He died only a few years ago. They had discovered a herd of buffalo; and instead of going back to tell the proper authorities, so that all the men of the tribe might join in the chase, they scared the whole herd away just to get a few. A tribe might be starving, and their very existence might depend on getting a herd of buffalo. One of my earliest memories is that of seeing my father making arrows when it was time for the tribe to start on the hunt.

When we were on the hunt, the tribe camped in a great circle in the order of bands and families, and each member of a family had his or her own regular place in the tent. When a calamity occurs in a family, the members of the band make up to them what they have lost. One of the

families on our reserve was burned out by a prairie fire in the night. A house and barn were lost, and the value of them was made up by the band. Another family, camped in a valley, was struck by a waterspout, and the tent was swept away, and the grandmother drowned; the band gave the head of the family seven horses, where he had none before. It is thus evident that the Indian tribes had an effective government, adapted to the life they lived, before the white people interfered with them; and on the whole, it was a happy sort of life we lived. I have only happy memories of it.

There came a time when my tribe had to submit to the Government. It had never been at war with the Government, but the Government wanted the Omaha's land. The Omahas consented to sell the land on which Omaha City now stands to the Government and made a treaty with it, and then the Government assumed control of the Omaha tribe. The Omahas moved to their reserve, which was in the north-eastern part of Nebraska, on the Missouri River, eight miles north of Omaha City. The reserve was thirty miles long and fifteen miles wide. Then the Government gave us an agent, clerks, trader, carpenter, blacksmith, and miller. These made a little society of their own, and they never dreamed of entering into the lives of the people, and were ignorant, even when they had lived on the reserve for years, that the Indians had a society of their own, into which they would not have been received. All these employees looked down on the Indian as inferior. They were paid their salaries from the money for which the Omahas had sold their land. The Omahas had nothing to say about it or as to who should be employed. Would it not seem queer to you if you sold something valuable, and the one you had sold it to should spend the money he owed you as he saw fit, and you had nothing to say or do about it, and not even be allowed to know how it was spent? As ignorant as the Indians were, and by their ignorance I mean their ignorance of reading, writing, and speaking the English language, they knew that these people were hired with their money; and when these white people made fun of their ignorance and helplessness, and they spoke of them as they would of dogs, and their remarks were repeated by someone who knew both languages, how do you think they felt? Self-respect and the emotions of the heart do not depend on education or civilization; and I think are often all the stronger in man's primitive condition, even to the love of the parent for a child.

I do not remember when the Omahas first moved to the reserve; I was too young; but I remember when we went on the buffalo-hunts every winter and summer. The tribe lived in two villages on the reserve when they were not on the hunt. My father was the head chief and took an active part in all the affairs of the tribe. By and by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign

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Missions started a mission-school on our reserve, and my father sent me there to school; but I still went with the rest on the hunts in the summer.

We had all sorts of men for our agents: smart men, stupid men, bad men, and men who may have been good, but we did not have any chance to find out, because they did not come into any personal contact with the Indians. And then, too, the average length of an agent's term was two years. Sometimes, they stayed through an administration, four years. Sometimes, we had two or three agents in a year. It was all a political arrangement, and, if it happened that a good man was an agent, he did not have much of a chance to do anything, if he wanted to. You know how much likelihood there would be of good in anything managed by politicians. There were infidels, who made fun of the missionaries connected with the little mission-school, and this had its effect on those of the Indians who were conservative and did not want to have anything to do with the missionaries or to give up on their old customs. There were agents who spent nearly the whole time hunting and only did the financial part of the business with the Government; there were men who interfered in all domestic affairs of the tribe and whose interference only produced evil. If they wanted the Omaha chiefs to sign away any part of their land or to sign vouchers for things they had not received, and they would not, they deposed them from the office and put others in their place who would. If an Indian wrote to the Department of some wrong done by an employee, or by the agent, the Department sent the letters back to the agent or employee, and the agent could make his displeasure felt by the Indian who sent it. So, you see, there was no redress for any outrage that might be committed. If an Indian rebelled at any indignity put upon him, he was liable to be reported to Government as a bad Indian, likely to make trouble; and, as often as not, he was put in the block-house.

An Indian is as ambitious as any other man. You have men among you who are ambitious to be a mayor, a governor, congressman, or President. Sometimes, you spend large sums of money in order to obtain places or positions. Indians have the same ambitions. One of the things the Government did in our tribe, and in others also, was to take the "Soldiers' Lodge" under its control. The soldiers were given uniforms and five dollars a month. A white man was appointed captain. They were to help the Government control the tribe. The men gradually came to see that their positions and offices depended on the agent and not on anything that they themselves could do; there was no need for them to work for the good of the tribe and thus earn an honorable position, when they could easily have all they wanted by fawning on the agent.

Do you see the degradation commencing?

When a young, energetic, ambitious man saw a man who had lived a good and honorable life deposed because he refused to do as the agent wished and a cringing, worthless fellow, whom everyone despised, put in his place, what do you think would be the effect on him and on his character?

The young people began to put the authority of the chiefs at naught. The bad ones began to boldly do things that were wrong, when they knew their own tribal government could not punish them, as it had formerly; and they knew it was nothing to the agent, whether they did wrong or not, even if he ever came to know of it.

When I was a little child, some of the Omahas got into the habit of drinking; and it got to be so bad, that the tribe determined to put a stop to it and made a law that anyone who got drunk should be flogged. The first one who broke the law was taken and hung by both wrists on a cross-bar and flogged. That was the last case of public drunkenness in the tribe. (Loud applause.) A brutal punishment you may think, but it saved a great deal of misery in a great many families, and its effect was such that although I have lived all my life on the reserve, with the exception of two years that I spent at Miss Read's school in New Jersey after I was eighteen and the two winters I spent here about eight years ago, I never saw an Omaha drunk in my life. (Applause.) The first drunk man I ever saw was a white man, after I came East.

In 1871, while I was going to school in Elizabeth, New Jersey, the villages were broken up, and the Omahas took up farming and lived on land in severalty, as it was called. My father was the one who had brought this about. He advocated citizenship as far back as I can remember. For the last fifteen years, the Omahas have been living on lands in severalty, earning the money for the clothes they wore and the food they ate. It has been a hard struggle for them to live. Many of them had only small ponies to break land, and some of them have none. They have few implements to work with, and all this time Congress has been appropriating twenty thousand dollars a year to support the Omahas. They have received no rations or clothing. They have been self-supporting during all those years, and yet the Government says the Indian cannot take care of himself.

The Omahas are in a half-starved condition and have been for years, but that has not been their fault. They have had no chance to do or be anything better. They have had no chance to see any better homes than their own or any higher life than their own. What little they know of farming they have learned in the face of great obstacles of great disadvantages and in

spite of the political system that controls them.

As to the educational part of this system, to give one or two illustrations, a superintendent of the Government boarding-school on our reserve, which was started a few years ago, told an Indian woman who had children at the school that "a white man required a big salary to teach dogs and niggers." He used such vile language that the Indian men were ashamed to tell what he said, as being too bad to repeat to me, a woman. When the fathers of the children wrote again and again to the department of the sort of man in whose care they were compelled to place their children, do you think it had any effect? Not a bit. He was a politician from a county in our State, who rendered some political services that had to be paid with an office. I have heard of schools on other reserves that are worse than any we ever had on our reserve, but what is the use of multiplying illustrations? Is it not enough to say that the physical, moral, and spiritual welfare of human beings is placed under the control of politicians?

I suppose many of you thought it was for the good of the Indian that he was shut up on a reserve and given agents, clerks, doctors, carpenters, superintendents, farmers, millers, and that all this costly machinery for governing him was set in motion. Did you suppose that these politicians and employees were showing forth to the Indians, in the lives they lived, how to be industrious, honest, brave, generous, truthful, and pure? We had a carpenter who is remembered principally for swearing at the Indians when they brought him broken farm implements to repair, which was what he received his salary for.

I suppose you have wondered why the Indians have not been civilized. What civilization was there for them to see and copy? All the good there has been for them to see has been what the few missionaries have had to show them, and many tribes have had no missionaries at all. Then, there are opposing elements where there are missionaries. The Government doctor on our reserve took the pains once to try to prove to some of the Indians that men do not have souls.

I suppose some of you think that the law keeping all white people off a reserve was a good one. It is against the law for any white man to go on an Indian reserve. If he goes there, the agent can have him arrested and put him off, and if he goes the second time, he can be sent to the penitentiary. Perhaps, the law was made originally to protect the Indian. How does it work? The effect of it has been that the lowest class of white men, such as tramps, can go on a reserve without any interference and even live there. They are ignorant and not likely to make any trouble for the agent; and the agent does not pay any attention, even if he knows they are on a reserve, but

if an intelligent man comes there, who might report what he sees; then it is considered necessary to enforce the law. Even the laws made for the good of the Indians have done mischief, when the administration of these laws has been placed in the hands of politicians. I think the law itself is a bad one, because it has denied to the Indian the great teacher of life, experience. What harm can it do an Indian to let a hard-working, industrious white farmer live side by side with him? It would be a valuable object-lesson for the Indian in economy and thrift, and easier and quicker ways of doing their work than they have now. As it is, the Indian has no chance to know of anything better than the life he lives now.

Of late years, boys and girls have been sent from our tribe to Hampton and Carlisle. They stay three or four years and then come back to the reserve. Their experience has been more pitiful than anything else that I have seen on our reserve during the last five years. Some of them have come back with high hopes and courage, and every desire that has been roused in them to realize their hopes. There is no society on the reserve for them to go into. Some of them have learned trades. How are they going to work at their trades? There are no places where they can hire out and earn money? Their fathers and mothers are poor, and with the work they do on their farms can barely get enough to eat. There is nothing for them to do but live just as they did before they went to school. When they wear out the decent clothes they bring from Hampton or Carlisle, they have to put up with what they can get, and sometimes, barely have enough to cover them. I have believed that no good done to any human being is ever lost; but it is hard for me to see, in this case, how they are going to make use of what they have received.

There has been one great good in this education of the Indians at Hampton and Carlisle; and that is, that it has taught the white people that the Indians can be educated and that they have the capacity for living as high and noble a life as any white people. But it has seemed strange to me that it had to be proved that a human being is a human being before it was believed. (Applause.) Why has it taken such a long time for your people to act upon that belief? You will have to act upon that belief before your Government can be brought to act upon it. Do you not see that it is really in the hands of you people whether the evils I have been speaking of shall exist any longer?

We want to abolish the Indian Bureau. I have seen people smile when I have said that. I suppose it does seem ridiculous that such helplessness should talk of abolishing a powerful organization handling millions of dollars a year for the benefit of the Indians and backed by a great government and by that class of well-meaning persons who say that an

Indian should be fed and clothed by the Government. One of the worst injuries you can do to a human being is to feed and clothe him for nothing when he is capable of earning his own food and clothes. (Loud applause.) But does the Government feed and clothe them? Just look at my own tribe. We are all poor on our reserve. Some of us have barely enough to eat; and yet we have some of the finest land in Nebraska. Each head of a family has one hundred and sixty acres; minors, eighty acres; and children, forty. But some families have no house, some have no implements. There are widows who have no husbands to work their land for them. Here is one case of a woman, a widow, with eight or nine children. She has seven hundred acres of land. She was so poor when her husband died, that the missionaries had to pay for her husband's coffin, and since his death, she has lived from house to house on charity. The woman can talk English, and she has all her children to educate. If she could take her land and rent it, she could have a home of her own, she could educate her children and live comfortably from year to year until she died, but the Government says that an Indian cannot rent a foot of his land. Just compare the life she is living with the life she might live, if she could have what is her right!

As I told you, we are poor, and some of us do not get enough to eat, but we are also rich. The Omahas number twelve hundred. They are worth seventeen hundred dollars per capita in property and annuities due us from the Government. Think of it! Each man, woman, and child on our reserve is worth that, and we do not get a dollar of it, and a good many of us are in a half-starved condition most of the time. This is only one illustration of the way the Government, or the politicians, have handled our money for us, handled it so that we get nothing. We want to do away with all that. We want to fix it so that each individual shall have what belongs to him and have all the chances of making the most of his life that all other human beings have. We cannot do that without abolishing the whole Indian system. It is a formidable work, to try to destroy a monstrous evil, but it must go. God would not be God, if an evil like this could not be destroyed. It is an evil, because it is destroying and degrading human souls. It is degrading a people who have the capacity for the highest that life can bring and who have had only a chance for the lowest. It is a question of the very existence of my people. Some of the men of the tribe say that the Omahas are worse than they used to be and getting worse all the time. When I left our reserve, there was not even a form of government there. The missionaries kept saying, "Something must be done." Yes, something must be done, and you, the people, are the only ones that can do anything in this crisis. It ought to be a privilege to help even one human being to live a better life. (Applause.)

National Anthem

Jessica Franke Carr

September 11, 2001

Another day killing yeast, I think with a sigh as I tumble wearily down the rickety concrete stairs to my car, a 1997 red Pontiac Grand Am that had made the journey from my parents' Kansas house to my first Atlanta apartment just a few weeks ago. After two years confined to dorm life at Emory University, I am enjoying the freedom of living off-campus and commuting on my own set of wheels. Never mind that my apartment is a hovel or that I am so directionally challenged that I only know how to drive to two places: school and the grocery store, and to get from school to the grocery store, I have to drive back to my apartment first, because I only know the route one way. Obscuring trees and curvy roads (all named Peachtree) do not create a safe driving experience for a girl who thinks "North" is whichever way she's currently facing.

Today, I know my route - to my second home, the yeast genetics lab where I am doing research for my Honor's thesis. Mere days ago I shocked myself by winning the Poster Contest at the summer research session. There I'd been at the awards banquet, sculpting cubes out of the cream cheese frosting from my carrot cake and stacking them into a pyramid, when the announcer started reading off a poster title that sounded similar to my own. It is a testament to my low self-esteem that the first thing I thought was, *I didn't know someone else was doing research on yeast. Of course they would win.* But it was my name that followed the title, and I might as well have won an Oscar, I was beaming so much. It was a sign that would point me down the right path in my career. *Yes*, that \$200 reward said, *Science is the way.*

So, my steps aren't entirely heavy as I trudge across the cracked parking lot, the morning sun already warm, as it wiggles through the trees to my shoulders. I fire up my crimson two-door coupe, which makes me feel like a racecar driver even though it's just a Grand Am, and begin wading my way through the sea of traffic that this city forces through narrow two-lane tributaries, all weaving through neighborhoods so heavily forested that

the houses are invisible from the street. Sometimes, I wonder if the city planners do this on purpose, so that one never really knows how bad traffic is up ahead. With only two or three cars visible at any given time, Atlanta driving is like being trapped in a slow-moving void of uncertainty. You must constantly be on guard, lest the car in front of you stops suddenly. It is a miracle that every day, every route is not littered with accidents, that the sheer volume of traffic streaming through these curly streets doesn't burst through the banks and flood the peaceful, hidden homes with honking reality.

My only company on these drives is the radio. Not vintage enough to be truly cool, my dinosaur of a Grand Am is only outfitted with a cassette tape deck, and 2001 is solidly a CD-playing era. I am severely anti-talk-show, because listening to other people's conversations is too distracting, so I generally have to navigate these twisty trails with one hand on the wheel and the other always steadfastly flipping channels in the vain search for a song I like that isn't almost over, already.

This morning, however, all I can find is talk. My calloused scanning finger pushes and pushes buttons, but every station is yapping. Talk talk talk. After I get all the way through the station numbers without hearing a single bar of music, I start to wonder what everyone is talking about. I go to my favorite station, the one most likely to play some Three Doors Down or Staind, and try to listen to their unfolding story.

At first, I think my radio station must be interviewing an author and is letting the writer read a snippet of his latest work on the air. I don't know why my alternative rock station would suddenly be feeling artsy, but that can be the only explanation for what I'm hearing. A plane crashing into the World Trade Center? People leaping from the upper floors to their deaths, because they found it preferable to burning alive? What a downer. Why in the world are they reading this? Where's Nickelback when you need them?

When the announcer reports a second plane hitting the second tower (at 9:03 a.m.), I know this is not Tom Clancy's latest novel: this is a rapidly unfolding fact, which makes it much more terrifying. I hear a second female announcer softly crying, as she tries to cover her mike, leaving the first male announcer to stammer, as he is forced, for the edification of his blind listeners, to transcribe the awful scene unfolding on his television into words.

I want to get to a television of my own as quickly as possible, but traffic is barely moving, and I can't see anything but the red tail lights on the gold car in front of me and a veil of trees. Damn trees. At least at home on the prairie, you could high tail it through the grasses in a true emergency.

Here you are trapped in a coffin of wood, concrete, and metal.

After what seems like hours, but is obviously only minutes because no other action has occurred on the radio, I arrive at the parking garage, pull in to an empty stall at a crazy angle, and half-run, half-stumble on wobbly legs to the lab.

No one is there, but I can hear a radio announcer talking.

I drop my bag in the entryway and holler, “Where are you guys?”

“Over here!”

My lab mates are simply one aisle over, hidden behind stacks of petri dishes and shelves of sparkly chemical bottles. They huddle around the radio, gathered in a tight group even though the radio is loud enough to hear from the hall. Some of them are sitting on chairs, some standing behind. All of them have their hands touching their faces. Brenda’s hand is over her mouth; both of Reagan’s hands are nestled in her spiky blonde hair; sitting Amy has her chin propped on her hand; Caroline’s hands are comically one on each cheek, her mouth an O of disbelief. Even Sue is there, hiding her eyes behind her fingers, daring herself to peek.

The lab radio, which, like my car radio, usually blasted chipper tunes, is all talk. I can’t tell if it is the same channel I’d been listening to in the car, but it doesn’t matter. At this moment, musical preferences are irrelevant. Americans are united in shared horror, and whether we love rap, country, classical, rock, alternative, or pop, we all want to listen to the same track this time.

After about 20 minutes of relative inactivity, I send my boyfriend Jeremy an email. He is meeting with his swim coach, so I don’t know if he even knows what’s happening. My email informs him to get over to the lab ASAP. I shakily head back to my desk, but I have a difficult time remembering just what it is I am supposed to do with my yeast today. PCR? Freeze cultures? Pour plates?

The radio is still on in the background, still loud, with announcers still yammering. Suddenly, they are screaming again, as another plane crashes into the Pentagon at 9:37 am.

Ok, I’m done, I’m not doing anything with yeast today, I think.

“I’m finding a TV,” I proclaim, and the rest of the lab follows me into the hall like I am the Pied Piper.

My advisor, Gregg, is half-jogging down the hall. “They set up a TV in the conference room.”

The room is packed with scientists. My friends, my lab mates, my professors – the janitor – are all crammed in to watch a crummy feed on a network channel because there is no cable in this room. We all watch the

feed for a few moments, soaking in the camaraderie, before some diehard researchers decide their yeast or fruit flies or cell cultures cannot wait and leave. I stay. My yeast can be replaced.

Gregg stays, too, along with a couple other people I know by sight but not by name. While we are watching the footage of smoke and fire streaming out of the plane-sized holes in the towers, my boyfriend arrives. My lab mates had pointed him in my direction, and he gives me a big, silent hug, as I continue to stare at the fuzzy screen. Jeremy takes it upon himself to improve the quality of the video, and his tinkering has just brought the scene into clear focus as the South Tower collapses at 9:58 a.m.

I join in the nation's collective gasp, as we watch the tower go down and the debris go up, exploding into the sky like a mini mushroom cloud.

Shortly thereafter, Brenda pokes her head in the door and informs us that they are evacuating the CDC.

This is extremely bad news. Unlike its typical movie portrayal, the Center for Disease Control is located in a squat, non-descript red-brick building on the fringe of Emory's campus. Most of the building is underground, for security reasons, not above it. The research building in which I am currently standing is a dozen stories high, made of gleaming metal and shiny glass, a testament to Emory's generous endowment and dedication to showmanship, ostentation, and modern innovation. The tenants of this building have always been proud to call the CDC our immediate neighbor, as if the physical proximity of legend will transfer via laudatory osmosis. Now, the fact that I can look out the window and watch terrified CDC workers flooding out of the building makes me feel nervous, queasy, and panicked. If an uninformed terrorist bomber is planning to run a plane into the CDC, he'll likely mistake our glorious monolith for the real deal and head right for us. I could be moments away from being rammed by a 747 going 500 mph.

The conference room is no longer a silent funeral service. We buzz and flap our arms and flutter around in the tiny room like a vial of fruit flies who realize they are about to be caught. The danger has leapt from the TV and invaded our lives. *How likely is it that the CDC would be a target?* Well, it is one of only two places in the world where a vial of live smallpox virus is kept, making it pretty tantalizing if the terrorists are interested in bio-warfare. We decide that it is more likely the terrorists will try to infiltrate the CDC, nab the vial, and spread smallpox through the largely unvaccinated population than it is that they would run a plane into us.

Somehow, the thought of being 100 ft. from Ground Zero of the upcoming smallpox epidemic doesn't make me feel much better.

Jeremy and I flee back to my apartment, where my roommate is glued to the television. We sit in the dark with the blinds drawn but don't know why that makes us feel safer. No one is peeping in at us. We are peeping out. We spend the rest of the day flitting back and forth from the TV to the window, where we pull the blinds apart to watch for approaching plane silhouettes and mushroom clouds on the horizon.

Gripped by paranoia, I call my parents to make sure they are safe. While Kansas is not likely to be a prime target, possessing neither huge cities nor stockpiles of tantalizing deadly illnesses, it is well-known that the prairie is dotted with this country's arsenal of nuclear weapons, all ready to pop out of corn fields like horrible jack-in-the-boxes bent on sparking World War III. The rest of my family is living in Omaha, Nebraska, home of the STRATCOM bunker, from which President Bush convenes the National Security Council teleconference immediately after the attacks. My niece watches Air Force One fly overhead, a grand plane now the only man-made object marring the unbroken prairie sky.

Like most Americans who are not directly in the line of fire, I feel besieged and unsafe anyway. We have no idea what will happen next, no clue as to how organized this terrorist group is. Are suicide bombers currently hiding in every city, strapped to nukes timed to explode any moment? Will we contract smallpox and join millions of other people in the epidemic that will bring about Armageddon? Are smallpox vaccines even made anymore? If all flights are grounded, how soon will I be able to see my family again? I keep picking up the phone, just to reassure myself that the dial tone is still humming. We fill all available glasses and pitchers with water, just in case.

Gradually, we are forced to accept the fact that danger is not imminent and venture out into the blinding light of a new world to sift through the rubble of our former lives. I attend classes, I return to the lab and kill more doomed yeast, and I go on dates and remember how to smile. For some time after the attacks, Americans continue to be united even though our radio stations have returned to their regularly scheduled programming. Our American pride is palpable, a communal swelling of goodwill that affects all of us, Republican and Democrat, conservative and liberal, religious and atheist. When Jeremy and I attend a Lifehouse concert that Halloween, the guy dressed as "Dead bin Laden" wins the Costume Contest, hands-down. However, this intense patriotism eventually deepens the political divide, as we disagree about how to best safeguard the nation's standing in the world. Sometimes, I wish we could all tune into that same frequency again, when we all sang the same song of fear, hope, and determination.

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Faster than I imagine, life returns to normal, mostly. The subsequent anthrax attacks keep the CDC, and therefore, Emory, on very high alert for years afterward. The CDC surrounds itself with giant cement barricades and tightens security clearance. Before, I often walked by the CDC without noticing it; now, I have to tiptoe along the remaining sliver of sidewalk to get to the lab, and I avert my eyes from the building lest the security guards think I'm showing *too much* interest and shoot me. Instead, I keep my eyes on the road, worrying that any minute an armed terrorist unit will barrel through the cement barricades with me sandwiched in the middle. I hold my breath and walk quickly, like a child superstitiously crossing a graveyard, until I pass safely back into the world of the living.



Coffee or Prose :: David Martin

Theodore Garrison, Song-Catcher

Paul Cioe



“If you live, your time will come.” Jazz pianist and singer Mose Allison wrote the line, and Theodore Roosevelt Garrison’s life embodied it. Garrison embarked upon a largely forgotten folksong and ballad hunt in 1940, after being discharged from the Navy. His University of Arkansas master’s thesis, *45 Songs from Searcy County, Arkansas*, was completed in 1942. Sixty years later, an editor at

the journal *Mid-America Folklore* came across it in the university archives, realized that it predated the completion and publication of Vance Randolph’s ground-breaking Ozark folksong collections, and located Dr. Garrison, a retired English professor living in Macomb, Illinois. Subsequently, the entire fall 2002 issue of *Mid-America Folklore* consisted of Garrison’s collection, with a new preface by the author/collector, and new notes on the songs and ballads by editor W.K. McNeil.

Garrison was born in Searcy County on January 14, 1913, and died in 2006. His high school classmate, James Morris, became widely known during the folk revival as Jimmy Driftwood, after a song he wrote in order to make American history come alive for his students became a top 40 hit for Johnny Horton. The song, of course, was “The Battle of New Orleans,” which Morris/Driftwood set to the traditional fiddle tune that commemorated the event, “The Eighth of January.” Collector and musicologist Alan Lomax recorded Morris’s father and brothers during his 1959 Southern journey.

When I read Dr. Garrison’s lone hardbound copy of his 1942 thesis in 1979, I was excited to find not only Child Ballads (so named in reference to the collection of English ballads completed by Francis James Child in the late nineteenth century) and other traditional songs, but also regional variants of American folk songs that were then being covered by contemporary pop and country singers like Hoyt Axton, Linda Ronstadt,

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and Emmylou Harris. At the time, Ted was nearing the end of his career at the same university, while mine was just beginning. Because of my own growing interest in folklore and folk music, I sought him out, in spite of the warnings of several of his colleagues and former students, one of whom told the story of a precocious guitar-strumming undergraduate who boasted in class of having written a new “folk song.” Weary, perhaps, of the rampant misuse of the term during the 1960s, Dr. Garrison informed him that, “Writing folksongs is a lot like manufacturing antique furniture.”

When I introduced myself and mentioned my interest in learning more about folklore and folk music, Ted (he was still “Dr. Garrison” to me then, and would be for some time) said, “If you’re serious about it, come around.” It wasn’t the warmest invitation, but I accepted it, and soon an unlikely friendship emerged from parallel journeys down very different paths. My Chicago Italian-American roots and Ted’s upbringing in rural Arkansas were as different as grits and spaghetti, but we had one thing in common: We were both driven by the need to preserve the honest and unpretentious ways that enriched our early lives while somehow learning to survive in the often duplicitous world of academia. He showed as much interest in my accounts of boyhood wine-making experiences in my immigrant grandfather’s basement as I did in his tales of collecting songs on summer evenings from Searcy County grandmothers. Perhaps, each of us saw reflections of his own discoveries in the other’s experiences.

In the 1980s, I left the university town where Dr. Garrison and I met to pursue a community college teaching career, and our visits became less frequent. I hadn’t seen Ted in several years when he wrote to me in 2003 with the remarkable story of the publication of his song collection. *If you live*, I thought, *your time will come*. I got out my Mose Allison CD, a late-career work filled with lyrical reflections on aging and listened in celebration.

Later that summer, I paid Ted a visit. Twenty-five years of retirement had mellowed him, but his wit and clear mindedness were undiminished. At 91, he continued to busy himself with matters of church and family and with his many interests and hobbies. We talked for the better part of a July afternoon about songs, stories, and the song collecting project he undertook sixty years earlier with the help of his late wife, LaVesta. With his permission, I “caught” many of his words on a portable recorder.

Near the end of our visit, he reached far back into his past and gave me a glimpse of his father Sam Garrison’s sense of humor and perspective on progress:

Just before the first World War, some of the progressive people of

Searcy County decided that we needed an automobile road. There were a few automobiles but no automobile roads, just the old wagon roads that had been there since the early settlers. Well, the County officials set up a highway board to promote Searcy County Highway Number One, which followed out as far as my home community. It later came to be known as old Arkansas 27, a very crooked road, following the wagon trails into town. And they were grading that up, preparing it for automobile traffic, and they had a German immigrant by the name of Harry Pelts, who was the operator of the tractor that the county had bought to pull the grader. They got the thing out as far as my home community, the foot of my grandfather's road, and there the thing gave way on them. And Harry Pelts, of course, lost his job. Well my father did a parody on "Casey Jones":

Harry Pelts, standing in the cabin,
 Harry Pelts, that's what I said,
 Harry Pelts, standing in the cabin,
 If I can't run this engine boys, the road'll go dead.

Here, Dr. Garrison paused to tell of an oil rig operator named Nunnally saving the day, and the road, with the help of a few local hands. Then he sang his father's parting shot at Harry Pelts and the limits of progress: "He—couldn't—run—the engine—but—the road—ain't—dead."

Back home that night after our visit, I opened my copy of *Mid-America Folklore* and revisited Dr. Garrison's collection of Searcy County variants of timeless songs and ballads like "The Brown Girl," "A Roving I'll Go," "The Lilly of the West," and "Sweet Betsy From Pike," along with many lesser known lyrics that would have been lost, if he had not captured them for posterity from his Ozark neighbors. Among these, "Plant Sweet Flowers on My Grave," sung by Mrs. Matilda Amos of Marshall, Arkansas, is especially poignant:

Darling, I will soon be sleeping
 In the church yard over there.
 Where the grass and flowers come creeping
 And the birds sing everywhere.

Plant sweet flowers on my grave,
 Plant sweet flowers on my grave
 Promise me that if you love me
 Plant sweet flowers on my grave

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When the golden thread is broken,
And you lay me down to sleep;
This may be the only token
Of your love I'd wish to keep.

Ted's note following the song is intriguing:

The fact that this song does not appear in other folk song collections and that it still retains a regular rhyme scheme and scansion may denote that it is a popular song of comparatively recent origin. However, it has been handed down by oral tradition for a long time in Searcy County. Mrs. Amos learned it from her mother, who first heard it at a country singing school around 1890.

Several years after his death, listening to my recording of Theodore Garrison at 91 singing his father's "Casey Jones" parody from the days of the first paved road in Searcy County, Arkansas, I'm struck by the rather obvious fact that he had slipped into his father's voice and felt quite at home in it. It also occurs to me that, no matter how serious the business of life and career can be, our personal folklore and even the silliness of childhood don't have to fade as the years pile up. As we keep them alive, they sustain us.

*"The first discipline is the realization
that there is a discipline; all art begins
and ends with discipline; any art is first
and foremost a craft."*

-Archibald MacLeish

The Misery of Annabelle Leigh Hinkle

Nicole Dillin



I stand at the barbed wire fence, waiting for Papa to come home. He's been gone for three-and-a-half months, driving cattle to Oklahoma. It's hot out here. It doesn't help that we live in Texas. I grasp the fence. I feel the barbs digging into my skin. I welcome the sensation that takes my mind off the emptiness inside. I just want Papa back. He's only here for two or three months a year, but the past few years have been hard on our family. The crops have been bad. There is a giant dust storm nearly every day, and that makes it longer until Papa is back. Momma knows I come out here every day and look for some sign of Papa coming down the trail. She knows I'm out here for several hours a day after I've done my chores. I just want my Papa to take me into his arms. I've always been Papa's little princess. When he's there, he won't let me lift a finger, but when Papa's gone, I have to do some of Joe's work, since he takes over Papa's responsibilities around the farm, too. I hear Momma call, "Annabelle, it's getting late. You need to come back to the house and set the table for supper!"

"Just a minute, Momma!" I call. I look up the trail one last time before I turn around and head in, but this time, when I look, I see something. It looks like, "PAPA! Momma! Joe! Billy! Sarah! Papa's home!" I yell at the top of my lungs and go flying up the trail. I hear my siblings running out of the house to follow me. I finally get up to Papa, just to realize there's someone else with him. "Papa, who's that man?" I ask after I get pulled into a bone-crushing hug.

"I'll tell you when we get into the house. Okay, my sixteen-year-old sweetheart?" he asks, knowing he missed my birthday. I nod as my brothers and sister come running up, Momma walking along behind with Spotty, our golden retriever. They all get their hugs and look at the other man in confusion. Papa doesn't say anything. He hugs Momma last, for a very long time. When they break apart he says, "Mary Ann, I love you." She smiles.

"I love you too, Josiah. Now, let's get you into the house and fed."

As we sit around the table that night, after the food has been dished out, eaten, and we are all pretty full, Papa speaks up. "You are all probably wondering who this is." We all nod. "This is my younger brother, Jebidiah. He'd like to stay with us for a while. He knew I was going up and met me along the way. He told me Pappy passed away while I was home with you guys. Mammy wants us to come and live with her, since she's alone in the big house. What do you guys think?" I looked at him in confusion.

Billy, only four years old, speaks up. "Papa, how far away does Mammy live?"

"That's a good question, Billy." Billy beams. "She lives in Tulsa in northern Oklahoma. It's about two weeks by horse, but they just built a new railroad that will take us from Austin to Tulsa in six days."

"Six days?" Momma asks, concerned. "How?"

"I'm not sure, Mary Ann. That's just what they told us on our way down."

"How long will we be at Mammy's?" I ask.

"Well, Annabelle, Mammy wants us to live there permanently."

"Like forever?" Sarah asks.

"At least until she follows Pappy to Heaven."

"But what if we don't want to?" Joe asks.

"Well, we have to just make Mammy happy. If we don't want to live there after she follows Pappy, we can come back."

"What if someone comes and takes our house and land and cattle while we're at her house?" I ask, trying to find a way to not have to go.

"Jebidiah will stay here and look over our property for us. That includes our animals and our house, Annabelle." I nod and look down at my wringing hands.

"What's wrong, Anna?" Momma asks.

"Nothing, Momma. It's just..."

"Just what?"

"I think I like the neighbor boy," I mutter under my breath.

"What was that?" Papa asks.

"I think I like the neighbor boy," I say more clearly, "and I think he likes me back." Papa's eyes grew big.

"How did you find out about this?"

"He goes to the same school I do. All the other seats on the bus were taken, except beside the one next to me, so he sat next to me. We started talking. I remember the day like it was yesterday."

I am the first one to be picked up, just like always. I sit in the same spot,

halfway down behind the bus driver, near the window. I open my book and settle in for the upcoming hour of start and stop riding.

Forty-five minutes later, the bus is full, except the seat next to me. "Last stop!" calls the bus driver. I look up confused. I've never had a seat partner before. The bus slows to a stop. I look up to see a tall, handsome boy getting on. "Any empty seats?" the driver calls. I raise my hand. The driver nods his head towards me. "There you go, boy. What did you say your name was?"

"Wilt, sir.

"Nice to meet you Wilt. Go sit down please." Wilt nods and moves towards me. He sits down, not meeting my eyes.

"I'm Annabelle Hinkle." I say, glancing at him. His jet-black hair is a bit longer than I thought I'd like on a boy, shoulder-length, but on him it looks good. I notice his eyes are a deep, chocolate brown.

"Wilt Foster. We has a 'Merican name now. Mama and I be staying with my aunt and uncle while my pappy fix up our cabin up in 'Homa." He says. I nod. "We just come from Greece. When we was there, I was Wilt Drakos. We came 'cause my aunt and uncle moved here about ten years 'fore us. So they's all settled, and they wanted to help us get settled in like they is."

"How long have you been in Texas?"

"Is that what this state be called?" I nod. "'Bout a week. You want ta come ova sometime? Maybe next week?" I swallow and nod, my mouth dry, butterflies fluttering in my stomach. "Okay. I'll ask Mama tonight and let you know what she says on Monday. Sound good?"

"Yeah." I say, nodding. The bus lurches to a stop.

"Here we are! Have a good Friday!" The bus driver calls.

"Well, we're going to Mammy's, so this boy needs to get off your mind. Got it Annabelle Leigh?" Papa said, interrupting my reverie.

"Yes Papa."

"Good. Now, let's all get ready for bed."

"Good night!" calls Momma.

"Good night!" hollers Billy.

"Good night!" yells Sarah.

"Good night!" whispers Joe, already half asleep.

"Good night!" calls Jebidiah.

"Good night!" calls Papa.

"Good night," I say under my breath, as I slide underneath the covers, hoping Papa will change his mind.

I wake up bright and early the next morning, earlier than anyone else. I

look at the clock in the dining room. Two-and-a-half hours until anyone else should be up. I scribble out a quick note to Momma, sayin', "I just went to town for a bit before doing my chores." But I don't go to town. I grabbed my bag and started walking. At the beginning of last week, Wilt gave me directions to his house. He told me it should only be about a 45-minute walk from my house, if I walk medium-fast and don't stop.

I reached Wilt's house 40 minutes later. I would have taken Wilbur, Papa's horse, but Wilt's aunt and uncle don't have a stable. I walk around back, like Wilt told me to. I climb the steps to gently rap on the back door three times. I run around the corner of the wrap-around porch and wait. Wilt opens the door 30 seconds later. I peek around the corner and run towards him. He wraps me in a tight hug. I whisper into his ear, "I missed you."

"I missed you, too, 'Belle."

"I have something to tell you, Wilt."

"What?"

"Papa wants us to move up to 'Homa. Tulsa, actually."

"Why? You've lived here for your whole sixteen years."

"I know, Wilt. I've been here all my life, but Papa doesn't see it that way. Pappy passed away the last time Papa was down here, and now Mammy wants us to go live with her for awhile."

"You can stay here with me though," he said, gazing deeply into my eyes.

"You know, if we were to marry, even pretend to, they can't separate us," I say, thinking about how he makes me feel whole inside.

"How much does it cost?"

"Ten dollars," I say, warily.

"I has that much save-ed up. I thinks."

"Shall we go to town then?" He nods and offers me his arm. He calls out over his shoulder, as we walk out the door.

"I'm goin' to town with 'Belle, Mama. I'll be back in awhile."

"Okay! Don't get into any trouble or you won't be able to sit for a week."

"Yes, Mama!" We close the door. "You want to take the car?" I stare at him, confused. "Our family has a car, and since I'm seventeen, Papa lets me drive it." I nod. He leads me to their car, a red 1933 Chevy, the car of my dreams. He walks me to the passenger side and opens my door.

"A true gentleman," I call him. I slide in, and he shuts the door. He goes to the box attached to the side of the house and grabs a set of keys. "Won't your Momma hear?" I inquire. He shakes his head.

She's goin' to do laundry down in the creek. My aunt and uncle gone

away for a vay-cay-shun. So, right now, it's just be me and Mama. Are you ready?" I nod.

Soon, Wilt and I are standing in front of a judge at the courthouse. "Wilt Harriman Foster," the judge says, "do you take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife, to love, to cherish, to hold, until death do you part?"

"I do," he tells the judge with conviction, his eyes never leaving mine.

"Annabelle Leigh Hinkle, do you take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband, to love, to cherish, to hold, until death do you part?"

"I do," I said, gazing into Wilt's eyes.

"Then, by the power vested in me by this great state of Texas, I pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride, if you so desire. Sign on the dotted line. Pay at the window. NEXT!" We kiss, sign our names (mine now being Annabelle Leigh Foster) and move to the window. Wilt hands the ten dollars to the lady inside the glass. She hands him a receipt, our marriage license, and tells us we are free to go do what married couples do, whatever that is.

"I know I did this out a' order, but you think your Papa will give us his blessing?" My eyes widen. I had completely forgotten about Papa and how he wanted to meet Wilt before anything else happened. Maybe, if Wilt asks Papa for my hand in marriage without revealing what we did, Papa will say, "Yes."

"If you ask him for my hand and don't mention what we did this morning, he should." Wilt nods.

"Are you ashamed of me?" he inquires of me.

"No. I could never be ashamed of the love of my life." We ride in silence. Then we reach my house. I could see the lights on inside. I take a deep breath. He pulls off the road and turns the car off. He gets out and comes around to open my door. All I see is Papa standing in the doorway, cleaning his shotgun. "Good morning Papa." I call. He acknowledges me, not taking his eyes off Wilt.

"Who's he?" Papa asks, talking about Wilt. Wilt walks up to Papa and extends his hand.

"Wilt Foster, sir. I met your daughter at school a couple of months ago."

"Wilt, is it?" We both nod.

"This is the boy I was telling you about last night at supper."

"Oh. THAT boy."

I nod.

"Can I ask you a question, sir?"

Papa nods.

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“May I have your daughter’s hand in marriage? I love her with all my life. I may have just met her a few months back, but I can already tell she will be the love of my life. Please, sir? I don’t know if I could spend my life without her.”

“Annabelle, what do you think?”

“I really like him, Papa. Really, really like him.” I said, looking at him with pleading puppy dog eyes.

“Who am I to say no to my little princess?”

“Thank you, Daddy. I love you so much!” I run to him, and he picks me up to swing me in circles.

“I love you, too, Princess. Shall we go and tell your mother?”

“Yes, Papa. Can I ask you a silly question?”

“Of course, Pumpkin.”

“What would you do if Wilt and I married without your blessing?”

“I’d get my gun and go buy a shovel. Why?”

“No reason. I was just curious.”

Five years later:

“‘Belle?’” Wilt called.

“Yes, Wilt?”

“Have you seen my tie?”

“Which one?”

“The plaid one.”

“Look underneath the checkered one!”

“Found it. Thank you!” Wilt hollered, coming to the door.

“Have a good day,” I told him, planting a kiss on his cheek. “I have big news.” I whispered. He looked at me, wondering. “I’m pregnant. At least, I think I am. I’m supposed to go to the doctor tomorrow to find out for sure.”

“That’s great, ‘Belle! We’re going to be parents!” I nod, tearing up. “I hate to leave you after you’ve just given me such joyous news, but I’ll be late otherwise. So, I’ll see you tonight, and we’ll go out and celebrate. Sound good?”

I nod.

“Love you, ‘Belle!” He calls, as he walks out the door.

“Love you too.” I call back. And I really mean it. He shuts the door behind him.

I move over to the sink where our breakfast dishes had been soaking for a few minutes. I pick one up and start to scrub it, when all of a sudden, I hear SCREECH! CRASH! BANG! SNAP! I drop the plate, which shatters into hundreds of pieces and run outside, barefoot. I see the ’39 Chevy we

got from our parents for our anniversary mangled with a green car that looks like it. I run back inside to call 911. About fifteen minutes later, the paramedics arrive. The driver of the green car already managed to climb out of his car, unscathed. But Wilt, my poor Wilt, died on impact. I ride with the paramedics to the county hospital/morgue. The first order of business was to get the glass plate pieces from out of my bleeding feet and to stitch them up. The next thing I had to do was go down and identify that it was truly Wilt. I would know that bloodied, mangled face anywhere. I would never hear my name on those sweet lips again. That's my Wilt, the love of my life, the father of my unborn child.

One week later:

We had the funeral this morning. It was just a small one. His papa came down from Oklahoma. My parents and brothers and sister were there to comfort me, as well as, to offer comfort to Wilt's parents.

I moved my doctor's appointment to this afternoon. I am still unsure if I want to go, but I must. For Wilt's sake, I must.

That evening, I cry myself to sleep. I miscarried at the doctor's office. He said it was due to the stress of Wilt's death. He also told me that I would probably never be able to have a child, because this miscarriage did unreparable damage to my reproductive tract. I cry over my lost unborn child. I cry over my lost husband. I cry because I am angry at the world. It wasn't enough to take my husband. The universe had to take the last connection I had to Wilt. I grab his pillow, breath in his woodsy scent and start to drift off. An idea hits me as I ease into an unrestful sleep. What if I open a home for wayward boys? That was Wilt's dream. He was saving up for it.

Five years later:

After Wilt's death, the remodeling is finally done. I had to takeout some loans from the bank, but it got done. Foster's Home for Troubled Boys was ready to take in its first resident, nine-year-old Billy Jackson from Louisiana.

That was five years ago. Boys came from all around. Whether sent by parents, or on their own. Whether their parents were still alive or passed away from the famine. Everyone knew about Foster's Home for Troubled Boys. When they started to print the newspaper, I was in every issue. Either I saved a boy from starvation, or I reached maximum capacity and was looking for donations for expansion. Even though the economy was in a depression, there was never a shortage of money coming in from donors.

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When I started out, I had 8 boys from age 2 to 16. All sorts of weird things happened. Sometimes, beds got thrown out the window. Sometimes, children would vanish. Once in awhile, you'd see what you might think to be a boy floating tied down with a rope. Every boy had a background story. Every story ended the same. "Troubled" boys with dead or estranged parents ended up at Foster's. It was a shame. I did my best, but even the best Mom wouldn't be able to care for that many boys in her lifetime without going slightly insane. By the time I was on my deathbed, I had over 1,000 boys who called me "Mom" or "Anna" or "Mama." I know that I managed to make Wilt proud. These boys may not be biologically mine, but they are mine in my heart. They almost make up for the gaping hole left by my husband. To these boys, I was mother and father, brother and sister. To some, I was the only "family" they had ever known. Little did I know, when I died, there would be over 1,600 boys in attendance, all crying over their common "Mom." In that instance, all the boys I helped in all my years at Foster's came together in grief. They supported each other. Not all of them knew each other, but each boy supported another through shared grief. Great friendships would develop out of this shared bond. No one knew it yet, and that, my fellow students, is how Foster's Home for Troubled Boys originated."

"Thank you, Beau. Next time, try not to be so fictitious."

"But Miss Honey, I'm not. My grandpa told me that story and told me his father was the original boy at Foster's."

"I think your grandpa was just pulling your leg, Beau. We live in England, and your grandfather has been here since before he was born. Do I need to call your parents, Beau?"

"No, Miss Honey. Sorry, Miss Honey." Beau sits down. "*She'll never believe me again,*" he thought to himself.

But I Loved Her

Trinity Eden

Reading was always hard for me as a growing child. My birth mom was deaf and mute, so she never read to me. I couldn't concentrate or even try to focus on one subject. My thoughts were consumed of my birth mother, my sisters, and if we were going home after school. Now, that I think of it, I was always tired. In first grade, during nap time, I would always fall asleep fast and be the last to wake up. I was used to not being noticed by my classmates. They didn't talk to me, and I didn't talk to them. The school counselor and my teacher would always be nice and ask me, "How are you doing?" I assume that I would be the first out of my sister and me to breakdown, start crying, and telling them how my mom hit me.

My mom would hit me all the time. I think she hated me the most. She was always rough with me, especially when she would brush my hair. I was Northern and Southern Indian, I had thick hair. I specifically remember she was trying to comb my hair before we went to the zoo. I kept crying because it hurt, and she was yelling at me. My little body was tense while waiting for her to hit me. Finally, she did. It was quick, and it hurt. I saw black then red. My nose was bleeding. She hit my head so hard it crashed into the edge of the bathroom counter. My mom kept yelling at me, and I was terrified because blood was coming out of my nose, but I didn't know what to do! I certainly did not want my mom to touch me. As soon as she would come near me, I would subconsciously freak out, making it worse.

After that, I can't remember what happened. I don't remember if she was sorry or if she even hugged me. But I loved her. I needed her; she was the only mom I knew. Even after being taken away so many times, I always wanted my mom. I never hated her either. I still don't. She had it rough as a child and is only human. I have always forgiven, but it is so hard to forget.

When I finally did learn how to read and really enjoy it, the process became an escape. The words became pictures with bright lights guiding me through every sentence and paragraph with ease. My first chapter book was *Chasing Red Bird* by Sharon Creech. Throughout her book, my ability to escape from my past life became effortless. Books had the same effect on me during my juvenile delinquent years. While being locked up, I read

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multiple books varying from Harry Potter to *Random Family* by Adrian Nicole LeBlanc (non-fiction). Though images of Harry and his wizardry were enlightening, *Random Family* was my favorite. It was real, blunt, and relatable. Books that revolve around love, passion, hate, and corruption intrigue me; that is what my twenty-two years of life have been. I pray for thanks, because my life today is filled with more love than anything I have experienced.



Myself as an Individual :: Ibiyinka Aloo

A Window of Hope

Alda Ferreira



“There aren’t any other languages besides Portuguese.” That’s what I used to live on, until I was thirteen years old.

I grew up in a very small town in the countryside of Minas Gerais State in Brazil. There I lived with my four siblings and my parents. We lived a very simple life, having enough love to fill in our days. I didn’t have to think of global issues, because my family and I were too busy dealing with school, church, and domestic matters.

As my mom hadn’t attended school when she was little, due to her hard life on the range of dry lands in the northeast region of Brazil, she insisted that my siblings and I should get an education “in order to be someone in life.” This was common jargon at that time, because only a few people had the chance to attend school, finish it, and go to college in Brazil. So, going to school was something magic to me. I enjoyed learning new things and getting good marks. That way I could call people’s attention to me, especially my mother’s. Sometimes, I had the impression that I was invisible. I used to be a quiet and shy kid. However, I really wanted to be someone in life.

Year after year, the only thing that could motivate my existence was going to the “magic place,” where I was sure I was going to be noticed, somehow. Apart from that, nothing seemed to get better; it was exactly the opposite. The poor got poorer, and the rich got richer in that town. Life was so hard. I used to watch that cruel reality as a life-time movie in which my expectations of having a better life were smashed by the chance of getting jobs as a maid and a babysitter. Annoyingly enough, they didn’t mean I would become someone in life. It was a sad, black and white film being shot slowly.

In February of 1991, however, when I was thirteen years old, a new

school year was about to start, and with it my whole life would change. The excitement among kids was high, and everybody wanted to know their classrooms, classmates, and teachers, but I was prepared to be with the same group of friends and teachers from the previous year, because there was only that school in our town. If we were to have two different groups of seventh grade, I would be in the group of the poor ones as usual. To be honest, I don't remember if that happened or if the kids of the wealthy people had to share the same space with us. I don't remember that because something splendid took place in my life that year.

There was a new subject to be taught, ENGLISH. When Dona Selminha, the teacher, entered the room to introduce herself, she opened a huge window right in front of my eyes on a sunny day when she taught us two simple sentences in English, "What's your name?/My name is ____." That powerful light, which was blinding me, ignited my heart. I never thought about other languages before. Within my soul, I wondered how that could be true to express myself using another language meaning the same in Portuguese. Certainly, the people who spoke that language didn't know I existed, but that didn't really matter. I knew now that they were there somewhere on the globe. That day I left school blissfully happy and different. I wanted to learn how to speak English as beautifully as teacher Selma did. I dare to say now that I do.

Life was still hard after that day, but from that time on, I left that window open, and that light guided me to reach my goals and fly higher. Through English classes, not only have I learned grammar and vocabulary, but I have also learned history, geography, science, and the most important lesson of all, that there's always something new to be learned in front of our eyes. Sometimes, we will need somebody else to open up a window for us, so the light which might come through it may blind us for a moment, only to make us see what's out there, and sometimes, we can be the ones to open such windows and help others to explore the unknown. Ten years after that first English class, I was the first person from my whole family, including uncles, aunts, and cousins to graduate from college. I became an English teacher, and twelve years after my graduation, in 2013, I visited an English-speaking country, the United States of America, in Omaha, Nebraska, when I attended a summer institute at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Now, I can prove to whom it may concern, that there are lots of other languages being spoken right now around the world besides Portuguese, but only a very special one helped me to trespass the frontier of social differences and ignorance, English.

Chez Hazelle

Marcia Calhoun Forecki



The oak floor boards groaned, as Franklin stomped the late February snow from his boots and stopped to inhale the familiar aromas of yeast and hot grease in the town's one and only café. El Dorado Springs had gotten by with one grocery store, one feed store, one dime store, one moving picture theatre, and one café since the Civil War. Franklin decided one of everything was just not enough and, until the fire, was well on his way to making it happen.

When Franklin set his mind to accomplishing something, however rarely, he was difficult to contain. In 1948, he drew up rules and radio ads for a fishing tournament at an old rock quarry. He pressed his only white shirt and plastered his hair with Vitalis for his presentation to the three-member town council, one of whom was in his mother's Sunday school class. As he began to lay out the revenue stream from entry fees, food vendor rents, and special event fishing licenses, Mr. Caruthers raised his hand for a question.

"How come we don't see you more often in church, son? It would please your mother so."

That one question was enough to extinguish Franklin's enthusiasm for the fishing tournament. A whole winter of planning went out the open window of the council room in the community hall. Suddenly, every member of the council wore the same face, the disappointed countenance of Franklin's mother. He dropped his tablet full of figures and slogans, walked home, and slipped wordlessly into bed, where he remained barring bodily necessities for two months. By the time he moved from the bed to a cane rocker on his mother's porch for a further month's ease, the blue gill were no longer biting, and the bass more elusive than any summer in recent memory.

That's how it was with Franklin. Hazel Nettles' boy swung from wildly motivated to barely metabolizing in an instant. She accepted this was who he was and endured both the highs and the lows with patience and excuse-making on a Shakespearian level.

"He's just intensely sensitive. His energy fluctuates. I guess he got his daddy's melancholy and my cheerfulness in equal but warring parts. He just wears himself out trying to be great for me."

In early June, Hazel invited Franklin to eat dinner out for her birthday. They drove to Nevada and ate in a restaurant with waitresses who knew the meaning of the word service. Franklin had a ten-ounce Kansas City sirloin, and Hazel had the chicken fried steak.

"This red eye gravy goes down like silk," Franklin observed. "Happy birthday, Mother." He gave her an Austrian crystal pendant that he picked up at a pawn shop in Springfield. The man said, "Since the war, anything Austrian moves slower than a company of tanks, so you're getting one hell of a deal."

"Franklin, I don't think cursing belongs in a restaurant where the men are wearing ties."

"Sorry. Hope you like it."

"It's lovely. Now, I have to ask you, what are your plans, son? You know I'd love to see you settled before I go home to Jesus."

It was Hazel's annual birthday speech. Each year, as she inched closer to the grave, she hoped her plea to Franklin to settle down would hit the mark. Each birthday, Hazel forgave Franklin for all of the previous year's outbursts, assaults on her savings, and retreats into sloth. She looked ahead to the normalcy of Franklin moving out of her house, getting a job, and paying for her next birthday dinner himself.

"This place is nice," Franklin said over coffee and pie a la mode.

"It certainly is."

"What would you say to the idea of a nice restaurant in El Dorado Springs? That little ole' diner has been spooning up the same chow from the same pots for as long as I can remember," he said.

"Longer. Your father took me there when we were courting. We drank root beer floats."

"The town needs a restaurant, and I'm just the guy to run it. You make the best fried chicken in the county. We could feature it on Sundays. What do you think?"

"I'm too old to cook in a restaurant. You know, I'm way past standing on these feet for hours on end."

"Then, you'll train the cook I hire. We'll use all your recipes. Maybe,

you could make pies for us or something fancier like French éclairs.”

“I don’t know how to make them,” Hazel said.

“Doesn’t matter. Someone in the county must know how. It’s simply a matter of finding her.”

That last statement set Hazel’s mind running. Perhaps, in Franklin’s search for an éclair baker, he would happen on a wife. She felt good about this restaurant idea. Coming to him on her birthday seemed just the fortuitous spark needed to make this idea not just an obsession but a success.

Always one to place his cart before his horse, Franklin went straight to Claib’s Market and loaded a box with cans of vegetables. He cleaned out lima beans and corn, completely causing a succotash shortage in some town households. Stewed tomatoes disappeared from the shelves, as well. Franklin was well along toward depriving the eastern half of the county of oatmeal when Claib Thompson stopped him.

“Hold it there, son. Are you opening a market of your own down on Sumter Street?”

“Not a bit of it. A restaurant is what I’m after. A real nice place in the hotel, maybe.”

“Used to be a café in there years ago.”

“Not a café, a restaurant for patrons with ties and hats.”

“Who are you going to find around here for a place like that?”

“They’ll come. If it’s the best of everything, they’ll save up for it. Birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, even funeral receptions. Steaks and chops, all the best cuts. I got a guy in Filley lined up for a couple of hogs a year.”

“Do you? Well, no one is going to such a swank joint for oatmeal, so put some of those boxes back. How many ten-pound bags of sugar have you got there?”

“All of them. On the account.”

The next week, after talking to the hotel owner who said he was definitely not interested in a restaurant, Franklin was back buying out Claib’s Market.

“Your mother authorize all this credit?”

“Of course. I’m naming the restaurant after her. Chez Hazelle. I’m giving it the French spelling.”

“Learn a lot of French in the war?”

“I learned some,” Franklin said.

“Then you should talk to Lucien Campbell over in Neosho. His wife is French. He met her after D-Day and brought her home with him.”

“Does she bake éclairs?”

“Can’t say one way or the other. Ask her yourself, in French.”

Franklin drove to Neosho that afternoon. He knew Lucien Campbell to say hello to but had never been to his home. It was a nice place on the highway into town. He had a sign by the driveway, “Eggs by the Dozen.”

“Good to know,” thought Franklin. “A fancy restaurant goes through a lot of eggs.”

Lucien was working, but Anne-Marie was home. Soft auburn curls crowned her head. A couple of ringlets stuck to her perspiration, as she walked out of the garden to greet Franklin.

“Mrs. Campbell, you are the answer to a prayer.”

Over lemonade, Franklin explained his plans for the restaurant and the central place éclairs played in them.

“I would be honored to present my guests with your éclairs.”

“I have no éclairs.”

“You would make them for me, and I would pay. ‘Authentic French Éclairs.’ That would go right at the top of the desserts on the menu.”

“I don’t know. I must ask my husband.”

Franklin heard in her reply a definite “yes,” and in her eyes, he saw a plea to be liberated from her husband. Franklin saw the classic story in her wide-set brown eyes. A woman left alone and bereft by war latched onto the first G.I. offering a ticket to a safe, secure life stateside. She was grateful and obliging, but she didn’t love him. She truly believed love waited for her in America.

That’s where I come in, Franklin thought. *I can offer her success and acclaim in the restaurant and my life-long devotion outside of it.* Franklin was convinced he saw in Anne-Marie’s eyes the love that Mr. Campbell would never see.

The following Sunday afternoon, Lucien and Anne-Marie parked their Desoto in front of Hazel’s house. Anne-Marie carried a plate covered in tin foil. Franklin stepped around his mother and sprang from the front door like a dog on a short leash.

“My friends, welcome. What is this?”

“My wife says you asked her to bake éclairs. Here’s a dozen. That’s \$5.00 to you, and don’t ask her again. All transactions go through me,” Lucien said. “We want the plate back, too. Now is good.” Lucien slid his hands around his waist from his belt buckle and rested a fist on each hip.

“But, Mrs. Campbell has misunderstood. I wanted her to bake for my restaurant,” Franklin said.

“I asked around. You ain’t got a restaurant.”

“We’re still getting equipment together, negotiating for space. The éclairs look delicious. Thank you, Mrs. Campbell.

“That’s five dollars to you.”

“Mother, have we got five in the restaurant account?” Franklin called to Hazel still standing inside. She reached for her pocket book hanging on a coat rack by the door. There were four one-dollar bills inside. Without a blink of doubt, Hazel handed the bills over to her son.

“You’re short. Hell of a way to start a business. We’ll need cash up front from now on.”

“Enjoy the éclairs,” Anne-Marie said, as Hazel transferred them to one of her own plates.

“We will, honey,” Hazel said.

“Hell of a way to start a business,” Lucien said. As he opened her car door, Anne-Marie gave her husband a quick kiss on the cheek. That simple marital gesture was all it took to end the dream of Chez Hazelle and a life of love with Anne-Marie.

That night, Hazel awoke to the sound of gun fire, right outside her window. “Oh my God,” she screamed and dove under her quilt. The pop-pop-pop of rapid fire continued. Her room was flooded with light and the smell of smoke. Another smell rose, too; the odor of burnt corn rushed through the window. Peering over the bed frame, Hazel saw her smoke house in flames. The popping sounds were the cans of vegetables exploding. A stream of caramel flowed under the door as dozens of bags of sugar melted.

The restaurant inventory was destroyed. Hazel rushed to Franklin’s bedroom. He lay on top of his quilt, reeking of kerosene, and facing the wall. He remained there until the first snow of winter.

The Little Beetle that Could

Adriana Gradea



How exciting! I was going to a foreign country on scholarship! These are happy yet challenging times in the life of any student, and so they were for me in the fall of 1993, when I was in my twenties, a young teacher of English in my native Romania. I had received news that a full scholarship for graduate studies at an American

university in Bologna, Italy, was waiting for me. I waited and hoped for this opportunity for two years. When it arrived, it came with full tuition and a living stipend. In beautiful Italy. This was a couple of years after the Romanian Revolution of 1989 that officially overturned the communist regime. At that time, a “transition” period was replacing the ordeal of the 1980s communist totalitarian years. Fortunately, after 1989, among other things, the Romanians gained the liberty to travel abroad. With the help of some Western European students, I was lucky enough to briefly visit a few beautiful countries like Norway, Austria, Hungary, Belgium, and Holland.

However, when I learned that a place became available for me and the scholarship was mine, I packed my things and left. Actually, it wasn't so easy. Not before I had to go from my native city of Cluj-Napoca to Bucharest, Romania's capital, eight hours by train, where I had to obtain the Italian visa from the Italian Consulate. Once in Bucharest, I had to wait standing in line in front of the Italian Consulate every day, three days in a row, hoping to get in and obtain the visa, but to no avail. That's a different story, however. What I did obtain was the promise of a visa on the fourth day, and the actual one a week later. Well, it was not a one-year visa, but one for a month, garnished with the condition that I extend it in Bologna. Still, everything was wonderful, wasn't it?

So, I bought a plane ticket from Bucharest to Milan. The usual, more economic route by train was impossible because of the ongoing war in Bosnia. The other route, through Austria, would have required another

transit visa, hence, more time spent at embassies in Bucharest, with no guarantee of obtaining the necessary transit visa. The plan was that in Milan I would find my way from the airport to the railway station and hop on a train bound for Bologna, where a friend was waiting for me ready to show me to my new apartment.

My impending adventure was exciting, not only for me, but for my entire family, who once again, were putting their hopes in me. I felt imaginary pairs of eyes following me to see how I was going to do: Would I fail miserably? Would I be able to prove myself at the world-class Johns Hopkins University? Or would I give up before even trying? After all, the hope of all my family, friends, neighbors, well, with no exaggeration, of my whole country was in poor little me! The pressure was crushing me, and I felt like a bug under a heavy pile of books.

Still. I was excited. Worried. Anxious. But also very ready for the adventure of my life so far.

When my plane landed in Milan's Malpensa Airport, I couldn't help but notice the sky, which was troubled with a terrifying storm. Seriously dark clouds and cold rain were setting a dramatic stage. I felt lost already, not speaking Italian, at the time, and not knowing how I would find the railway station, which way to go, or what would happen. In reality, my problems hadn't even started, yet.

My mother's coworker's daughter (why did I think it was going to work?) was married to an Italian and lived in Milan. I didn't know these people at all, and neither did my mom. However, they promised to wait for me at the airport and take me to the railway station. It sounded like a good plan, and I wanted to believe it. I even had a paper with my name on it to flutter around once I landed at the airport. It should have come as no surprise that no one waited for me.

No problem, I thought. I was determined to manage and improvise, somehow.

I waited in line for my passport to be stamped, and when my turn came, the clerk saw my Romanian passport and said, "Step aside. Wait over there." At that time, Romania was not part of the European Union, hence the different treatment and visa problems. I was waiting out of line together with another Romanian girl, clearly treated as a different class of citizens. Minutes later, during which we felt so indubitably different, we were invited to follow another clerk to an office down a cold, dark corridor. The office was a dusty, poorly-lit room, where three uniformed men were speaking in Italian to each other. I still had no idea what was going on, but I was slowly starting to feel like a petty criminal. I sat down on a cold chair that gave me

shivers.

Shortly after we entered the office, the other girl was allowed to leave. Then, my turn came. Speaking English, I tried to explain that I had a scholarship and a letter from the university to prove it. From the tone of discussions in Italian, which I still couldn't speak at the time, I sensed that there were a few problems. First, why did I have only a one-way ticket?

"Well, I wasn't sure if for the winter break I was going home by train or even going home at all; I didn't have much money. I thought it was too early to buy the return ticket for the summer, especially since I didn't know exactly when school ended."

Well, that was not good enough. A one-way ticket was not a good sign. Second, why was my visa for one month? That was a good question, but the consulate clerk would not have it any other way. He explained something about waiting for a month for a longer visa, and my academic year had already started as it was already October. I couldn't wait for a month to get the one-year visa.

By now, I was scared and embarrassed. They didn't like my answers. I felt like I was under a microscope. I was a little beetle surrounded by people speaking among themselves in a foreign language, as if I wasn't even there, about me, yes, poor little me. I was a mere lifeless thing, lying on a cold glass lab slide. I could see the scene as if filmed by the lens of an omniscient, cold, film camera. Everything was in slow motion, and the sounds were muffled. While they were debating, I couldn't help thinking that, although I had the greatest scholarship I could dream of at a famous American university, I was going to fail. I would not fail because I was a bad student, but because I could not show up at the university. I was to go back home and tell my grandchildren one day that grandma had once earned a scholarship at an American university, but border bureaucracy prevented her from proving herself and changing the world!

"Is anyone supposed to wait for you?" asked one of the men, bringing me back to Earth. Yes, someone had promised to come to the airport for me and take me to the railway station.

Next, the man called an armed *carabiniere* and said I should go back outside to wait for my party. The *carabiniere* was a young, idle guy, shorter than me, with a larger-than-life rifle on his shoulder, and who seemed to have all the time in the world. You see, he had to accompany me, lest I would run away into the unknown, I presume. He spoke no word of English, but his expressive blue eyes were trying to talk instead. His calmness and slow walk, by contrast, made me tremble with even more impatience.

The PA announced: "The party waiting for Adriana Cordali, please

come to gate number 8.” They repeated it a few times, and all this time, my armed-to-the-teeth friend gave me curious and suspicious looks that were clearly translating: “I knew it. So you’re also a liar.”

“What can I say? They said they were going to be here.”

I was in trouble.

After a while, he took me back to the office. The airport seemed emptier, and honestly, it looked like closing time. I told them again to call the university and see if I was lying about the scholarship and to call the Italian Consulate and inquire about my “wrong” visa. I knew it was a late Friday afternoon, but still. From their faces and whispers, I could guess they were saying something similar to: “Should we believe her? Should we not? Should we let her go? Is she trustworthy? What are really her plans?”

Frankly, I was already resigned, when one of the men turned to me and in broken English said, approximately: “We’ll let you go this time; but you have one week to go to the police in Bologna and extend your visa, or you’re in big trouble!”

I stood there and stared in disbelief. Had the sun come out? Suddenly, there was more sunlight in the room. It even smelled like spring, and I could swear I heard birds chirping. Life itself had a meaning, so I didn’t wait for one more minute: I grabbed my papers, my things, and found my way out, still dizzy with excitement, out into the new adventure that was, after all, truly going to happen.

*“A book should be as an axe,
to break the frozen sea within us.”*

-Franz Kafka, 1883-1924

Bugs Are Us

Barb Greer



“Mom,” I yelled, “Kennie just ate a roly-poly bug.”

My brother had actually eaten a bug, but he was only 3, so I guess it was OK. I never see one of those roly-polies that I don’t think about that time. Bugs were a big part of my childhood. The noisy locust, a cicada, I’ve learned is the better name for them. They would shed their shells and leave the big old

maple tree decorated with them.

Ants were always a kick to watch, the way they went up to each other and whispered their little ant secrets and then went on to the next one with the gossip of the day. Then, there would be a tiny ant carrying the huge offering that defied gravity, but it seemed to be able to carry the load without strain.

The south, where I lived, was full of flies and mosquitoes. Where did they come from, and why did they always show up for fun occasions? They tried to ruin our fun, but it did keep the ladies busy shooing them from the potato salad and watermelon at family reunions.

Now, lest I forget, there were the chiggers, which managed to invade the most personal parts of our bodies with bites that caused intense itching that only nail polish could stop. I don’t expect youngsters to remember these little pests, but if you ever got into them you would remember.

My favorite bug of choice would have to be a lightning bug. This was a wonderful time of year when we could catch them and watch them light. Mom used to pinch their tails off as they lit, and we would put them on our fingers to make them look like big rings. We were not rich, so we had to make our own toys and entertainment.

“Bugs were us.” The “June” bugs, a great iridescent green beetle that lived around blackberry briars, were really fun to play with. Mom would tie a string around one of their wiggly legs, and we would fly them on the string, very similar to the gas powered airplanes that kids have today. It was

really fun.

One year, we had so many caterpillars in our trees we couldn't walk under them without the caterpillars falling on us. I still am repelled by caterpillars, even if they do become butterflies.

I was and still am fascinated with the praying mantis and walking sticks. They look so prehistoric. The bane of my existence and one insect I have not been able to build a tolerance for is the Miller moth. I have to admit how I hate Millers, and I feel guilty about this but can't seem to conquer the feeling. They have as much right to life as I do, but I wish they would stay out of my space. They are too spasmodic for my nerves.

Oh, well, I really didn't realize I had such a relationship with bugs. Now, spiders would be a whole new subject about which I couldn't find anything good to say.

Thanks for letting me bug you.



A Horse's Best Friend :: Stan Maliszewski

The Best Success Is Failure

Luke Henson



“What is your passion?”

I have been asked this question many times through my short life. It is a hard question to answer, because I have so many different passions. This question started popping up a lot during my senior year of high school. The college and career search had begun, and it got me thinking, what is my passion? There were a few ideas that came to mind when I asked myself

this question. Maybe, it was rodeos; maybe, it was track, or maybe, it was powerlifting. I did not know for sure, but I soon figured it out.

I am a power-lifter at heart. In the beginning, I used powerlifting as a positive way to funnel all my built up anger, but then it ended up becoming a love and a passion of mine. Growing up, I had a lot of problems at home with my family; there was a lot of arguing and fighting, and I always felt lost. I never had an outlet or something to turn to in my younger years, so I grew up resenting a lot of people who were in my life. During the summer leading up to my freshman year of high school, I entered my first powerlifting meet. I did not have very much training time, but I had been around the sport because of my brother, so I knew how things worked. I ended up squatting 225 pounds, benching 145 pounds, and dead lifting 235 pounds at thirteen years old and weighing 148 pounds. I did not do as well as I hoped I would, but that set off a mental drive that I knew I could expand on.

My freshman year at the state powerlifting tournament, I had high expectations for myself due to the whole year of training that I had under my belt. Things did not go as planned; however, I only got one good lift

on my squat and went downhill from there. I successfully lifted all of my deadlifts but only two of my bench presses. My competition was slowly walking away with the medals I was competing to win. At the end of the day, I got sixth and missed the podium by five pounds.

As my sophomore year rolled around, I could feel it; this would be the year I redeemed myself and proved what I was made of. However, I only got one good lift on my squat and considered quitting the sport, because at that point, I lost sight of why I was doing it. I did rebound during the bench press of that meet, and my confidence went back up. I got a personal record on the bench and the dead lift. I received a third place medal that year, and the fire had been lit underneath my feet. I decided to quit football after my sophomore year and pursue powerlifting and track. This helped me a ton, because it gave me more time to focus on my weaknesses, which clearly was my squat.

My deadlift exploded my junior year. I was on track to win state for my weight class, but another bump in the road appeared on my way to a state title. A senior from Bellevue East came out of nowhere and out squatted me by 70 pounds. At that point, I had one way to achieve victory, to set the state record for the deadlift. The current record was 525 pounds; I would break this with my third attempt and finally leave my mark.

When it was my turn, I got the current record and was ecstatic, but another rain cloud rolled over my state powerlifting experience. A senior decided to break “my record” by 5 pounds, and my heart was crushed. Everything I wanted and work for kept escaping my grasp.

I did not want to let anything stop me from claiming the state title my senior year. As my training progressed, my coach and I realized I could win best heavyweight lifter of the meet, if I continued to progress how I was doing now.

Wouldn't you know, something else tried to step in my way? I made a few bad decisions and got suspended from school and along with it powerlifting and other athletic competitions. I knew I had to appeal this decision to lift at state my senior year. On the following Monday, I met with the principal of Creighton Prep and had a discussion with him about what happened and where things would go from there. Waiting was the worst thing to do when my senior year hung in the balance: everything I worked for, everything I put myself through.

I was in the weight room at 3 o'clock with my team, and the phone rang. It was my mom. I answered the call expecting the worst, just waiting to lose everything I had gone through and worked for. She started speaking, and all I waited for were the words “You can lift.” The phone call went on

and on, but finally, she told me the verdict of my meeting with the principal. I could lift. I knew I had to put together the best meet of my life.

On meet day, I never was so focused and determined. This was it; this was the day I fall apart under the pressure, or I leave my mark on Class A powerlifting. Squatting, my worst enemy, was the first competition. The first two lifts were good, and I felt great, so I decided to go for a personal record of 450 pounds in this event. I felt the weight on my back, and I lifted my head up and thought to myself, “You are going to stand up with this, no matter what.” I became emotional and rose up with all the force my body could produce. Yes, I stood up with the weight. Three green lights showed from the judges, and I was successful.

Next up was the bench press. This event dramatically improved for me over the past year. My friend, Taylor, and I benched around the same weight and had been best friends since eighth grade, so this was the perfect opportunity to push each other to our full potentials. Midway through the season, I started getting some tendonitis in my elbows from how much weight I was starting to use, but there was no way I was going to let this stop me. My opening weight on the bench was 295 pounds; I easily pressed this for a successful lift. On my third and final lift of the bench, I attempted 320 pounds, which would be a personal best. I went through my pre-lift “ritual” as I mentally prepared myself for this feat. I ended up making it look easy and got three green lights on that attempt as well.

Last but not least, the deadlift was where I really showed my best effort. I realized my sophomore year how strong of a deadlift I truly have. I saw the deadlift as the “man lift.” This is where a person will either “man-up” and get the lift or will “sissy-out” and put it down. Coming from a blue-collar family where hard work is all I know, I never wanted to put the weight down. I opened my deadlift at 500 pounds. This was 55 pounds heavier than anyone in my weight class. I stood up with this weight like there was nothing in my hands. My next try was 550 pounds, and this put a little struggle on my body, but I easily lifted it. After this attempt, my coach came up to me and asked if I wanted 565 pounds or 570 pounds. There was no hesitation in my mind when I told him 570 pounds. This would be a personal best by 20 pounds, but I did not think of that. All I knew was that I had to pick the weight up.

Some people often ask me what goes through my head before I lift or what I think about to get me pumped. A lot of it is the “moment” that gets me going. I have to listen to music when I lift. It fuels the fire that gets me to lift heavy weights. Some people like calming music that lets them relax and focus, but I am the complete opposite. I like loud, rambunctious music

that makes my brain think, “What in the hell is going on right now?” It distracts me from overthinking the weight, and I just get myself to do it.

George Leeman, an outstanding lifter and an especially good dead-lifter, once spoke about his thoughts on powerlifting. He started lifting because he was brutally bullied as a child. He spoke about how there has to be a certain anger within a person to do this activity. “It takes an unhappy, unusually motivated individual; it takes someone who is willing to literally do whatever it takes to reach the goal, for whatever reason.” I love this speech and this quote especially. People think powerlifting is just about a bunch of “meatheads” who have nothing better to do. For some people, lifting is an escape, an escape from reality or an escape from a bad neighborhood. There are some successful lifters and bodybuilders who started lifting to avoid getting beaten up in their neighborhood, and some started in prison to avoid getting killed or raped.

In my final attempt at the Class “A” State Powerlifting Tournament, the rotation went from the lightest weight to the heaviest weight. I was last. I saw my competitors attempt their last lifts one by one. Some succeeded, while some failed. I knew I would be one of the successful ones. They called my name, and I was “in the hole.” There were two more people to go until my attempt, then one more, and then it was my turn. I stood up and got ready. At this moment, I was feeling pure adrenaline. It was like a drug that I was high on, and I had to fight to control it. At a certain point, I felt tears come in to my eyes, and I was not sure why. It might have been the realization that now was my time. This was my final attempt in this setting ever, or maybe it was because I did not know how to feel properly.

I could read the head judge’s lips as he said, “The bar is loaded.” I took two deep breaths, chalked my hands, and ripped my headphones off. Everyone was yelling, as I approached the bar rapidly. As I bent down and got set up, it went dead silent in Omaha South High School’s gym. Then, when I started pulling, my teammates and many others in the gymnasium started yelling words of encouragement, and some just yelled to make noise for my motivation. By the time I realized what happened, the lift was done. I paused while I turned towards the judge’s lights and waited for what seemed like days to see the judgment, three green lights. I had successfully gotten all 9 of my 9 attempts that day. I gave my coach a hug and thanked him for everything he had done for me and put up with the past four years.

I now help coach with powerlifting at Prep and still train for powerlifting meets. I started training for a meet on July 19 in Lincoln, Nebraska, where I will compete to qualify for the National-State games. This is a meet where individuals from different states compete at one meet.

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Powerlifting has helped keep me on track in life, when I started to stray away. I am not one of those guys who lift weights to attract the girls. I lift for myself. This is just a small part of my life, but when I am asked, “What is your passion?” I know how to respond.



Discarded Actor in Alley :: Diane Degan

Reading and Writing

Mila Herszbaum-Harding

Every day, I see confusing things: guys laughing at the stupidest things, scientists uncovering secrets, the people on *Ancient Aliens* still trying to make up ridiculous ways to incorporate aliens into our past, present, and future. There are times in my life when I see girls acting like girls, and I just don't understand why they do that. Every one of those scenarios, and many, many more, make me hungry for knowledge and understanding. They make me want to know why people do what they do and act the way they act.

Some people find me confusing. Whether it is my spontaneous attitude, the way I dress, or what it is about reading and writing that captivates me in such a deep way, one way or another, I confuse people. Well, let them be confused, because confusion is a way of learning, of making mistakes. What do I do with mistakes? I admit them, learn from them, forget about them, and move on.

So what? When I'm confused about something, I don't sulk in my room thinking about how dumb I must be for not knowing; I go out and find the answer! I try to learn from everything, because one person's mistake might help me learn not to do that same thing myself. I pay attention to the world around me, because I know I'll benefit from it.

My attitude and endurance aren't always golden, but I know that as long as I have a good attitude and endurance, I'll make it as far as I need to. Attitude and endurance really are pathways. They lead me to the places I want to go, and they get me there without too many problems, not too many pot-holes, only a couple of bumps in the road, and a few times when there is stormy weather.

A good friend of mine once said, "Maps have boundaries; writing has none." I thought about that for a while. Writing has no boundaries, because it lets me create my own little world to escape to, and its sister, reading, is a way for me to have a ready way to become someone else. Reading comes from writing, and most writing comes from reading, which is probably why one has become my oasis, and the other is my safe haven.

Standing Up in the Eye of the Storm

Ethan Hession

I can feel the brace making my neck itch, as I look around and see my surroundings. I can tell I am in the back of an ambulance because of all the medical equipment and the EMT talking to me. He keeps telling me not to fall asleep, which is hard because of the rumbling engine and the rocking motion of the ambulance. I look over to see another person strapped down, and this puzzles me; I did not know it was possible to fit two people into an ambulance. The person next to me is talking nonstop for what seems like forever, until we pull into the hospital emergency lane.

That is when the EMT started to ask me questions: “What is your name? Do you know what day it is? Do you know what just happened?”

I have to think back now, because, if I am honest, I am not really sure what happened, but I have a rough idea. I was at a Boy Scout summer camp for a week to learn wilderness leadership. It was for Star Scouts and involved four hours of classroom learning followed by hiking, constructing, and team building activities every day. When we first arrived, we were separated into eight person patrols of complete strangers. We did activities as a patrol, anything from two-hour lectures on how to teach to eight-mile hikes. At first, we could not figure out how to work as a team with people we had never met, and we all had our own ideas on how things should run. Everything was a challenge, even setting up camp, because each person wanted to be in charge and lead the group. We did not start to really work well together, until we were given a challenge of building a medieval catapult out of poles and twine. Three boys wanted to follow the book instructions given to us; three other boys and I wanted to try a different design, and one boy wanted to sleep. After all the other groups completed their machines, we finished ours, and together, we put it with the others in a storage shed. We saw that everyone else had done theirs, perfectly. Ours was sure to fail.

As a team, we learned that we could accomplish so much more than we could by ourselves. We decided that we needed a flag pole, but not just any flag pole. Our flag pole had to be bigger than the staff flag pole that was over 25 feet tall. We set out into the woods during a break with a bow saw

and a plan. We just had to find a big enough tree, stick it in a hole, and call it a flag pole. After an hour of searching, we discovered the perfect subject. It was a recently dead spruce tree that stood at least 40 feet high. We started to cut it with excitement, because we were going to outdo the staff at their own game. This excitement may have sustained us for a while, but after half-an-hour of constant sawing, we were so tired we collapsed where we stood. We were little more than halfway through this big tree, and we had to come up with a new plan. Careful deliberation and five games of rock, paper, scissors later, we decided the best thing to do would be to lean on the tree until it fell over. None of us realized just how bad an idea this was until we all piled against the tree and started to push. The tree fell over in a glorious fashion and took us with it. As we made sure we were all okay, two staff members came sprinting through the woods. They rounded us up and sent us back to camp, but not before chastising us for being so stupid to push a 40 foot tree over. We went back to camp defeated and without a flag pole, but we still had a great story to tell.

Before I knew it, the week was halfway done, and it was Thursday. That day began like any other day of the week with copious amounts of rain. After an undersized breakfast, we started our day underfed and tired with a three hour teaching activity on how to deal with first aid and triage in an emergency situation. We collected first aid supplies and used them to demonstrate medical techniques for what seemed like forever. Finally, we finished, put everything away, and moved on to GPS navigation. This meant four hours of walking through the forest with a handheld GPS, skipping all the regular paths to walk straight up hills and down gorges. When we were done, we headed back to camp to work on our projects and wait for dinner.

The rain started up again, and we were told to stop working on our projects and double check our tents. Once we were done, we waited in the camp for the rain to pass. The storm worsened, and as a group, we decided to return to the shelter and avoid getting soaked. The leaders let us go into the shelter, as the rain turned into a torrential downpour. Once we got inside, the lights went out.

Someone yelled, "Get under the tables," and I jumped under the closest one. I could hear the wind and rain getting louder, as the sound level went from a dull roar to a jet engine crossed with a wood chipper. Bits of earth and branches smacked against the windows. When I heard the windows break, I closed my eyes and felt glass shards cut my hands and arms. My ears popped as the pressure wave hit me, and I heard how loud the storm really was outside. I opened my eyes and saw branches, bricks, rocks, and chairs flying around, almost hidden in a thick cloud of dirt. I felt

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myself pulled out from under the table, and I was hit with a brick and lost consciousness.

From then on, everything was a little fuzzy, but the next thing I remembered was somebody trying to wake me up, telling me that I needed to stand up. At that moment, every part of me screamed, “Stay put, do not move.” I just wanted to keep still and pretend this was a bad dream, but I did not. Very slowly, I got up, feeling dizzy and unsteady on my feet, and looked around. I saw rubble where a building used to be and an empty field where a forest used to be.

As I started to regain my senses, the world around me came into focus. I could see a cairn of rubble made of concrete, rocks, and wood with people trapped under it screaming to get out. The rescue efforts started slowly, with only a few people removing the rubble. As more scouts were uncovered, more people got their bearings and began to help. This was a double-edged sword, because the more people we uncovered, the more injuries we found. One scout split his head open, so someone had to hold him down while I applied pressure with my shirt. Others had broken bones, so I had to splint limbs and treat them for shock. This went on for an hour, while we waited for search and rescue.

All of a sudden, we heard a loud noise above us and felt a massive whirlwind, and I felt my heart drop. I looked up and saw a white helicopter fly over us and land in the valley. Slowly, the propeller gradually came to a halt, and everyone looked in awe. The crew jumped out of the helicopter and loaded up two scouts for medevac; the propellers surged forward into a fury, and it returned to the sky.

We continued on with the rescue efforts; soon, we saw the road to the shelter cleared of trees. Ambulances poured in, and rescue teams moved in to take over. It was painful for us, as the first responders pulled us away from the half-destroyed cairn, because there were still people at the bottom of it. We did not want to leave and stood by until everyone was out. They loaded us into ambulances, as they brought out the body bags. We did not need to see what happened next. The first responders loaded me up, too, and the next thing I remember I was being shaken awake in the ambulance.

I was released from the hospital to my family at about 1:00 a.m. and had gotten only two hours of sleep before we got a call asking us to be on the *NBC Today Show*. I thought about it and decided I should do it with my parents. That was the moment when I took it all in, when I realized what happened. The tornado affected me in ways I cannot comprehend, nor wish to, but I will forever know that whatever the world throws at me, I will always stand up.

Taking the High Road

Abigail Hills



Bella sat down at a wrought-iron table outside a little café on Sunset Boulevard. She crossed her perfectly tanned legs, and the expensive sunglasses nestled in her curly red hair. She sipped a Frappuccino as she waited for her two friends to arrive. After high school, Michael, Ava, and she decided they wouldn't go to their trivial class reunions, and the three of them, every five years, just got together to catch up. They had been inseparable back in the day, and Michael and Ava even ended up getting married. This was the twentieth year since they graduated.

She spotted them walking down the street toward her, beaming. She hugged the always slim and model-perfect Ava first, then Michael. They sat down across from her, and a waitress came to take their order. As soon as she was gone, Bella started right in.

"How *are* you two?" she asked excitedly.

Michael's green eyes met Ava's blue ones before she spoke. "Well, as a matter of fact, we've just spent the morning hanging out with Leonardo DiCaprio!"

Bella raised her eyebrows. "You did?"

"Yes, we were just filling up the gas tank, and he drove his sleek blue hybrid right into the station next to us! We got to chatting with him, and he invited us to a party at his house tomorrow night," Michael added. A pleased look tripped across his features.

"He said that both Camilla Belle and Rachel McAdams would be there, if we were interested." Ava rushed to inform her.

"Which, of course, we were."

Bella couldn't stand being outdone and quickly spoke up. "That sounds astonishingly fun. Just a few weeks ago, I attended a party thrown by Rupert Grint, while he was in town for a few days, and I got to meet Jim Parsons, too." She said it, casually, as if this type of thing happened to her

all the time, while she lived in Hollywood.

Ava smiled, “Isn’t Rupert Grint a little young to be inviting you to his party?” Her eyes narrowed slightly.

Bella was ready to counter, “I was invited by his hair stylist, whom I’d met a few days earlier. It was a gorgeous party, in a very fashionable restaurant.”

Michael squinted, as if looking into the sun, but it was behind him. “Isn’t Rupert Grint working on a movie in Liverpool right now?”

“He’s in town for a few days visiting friends, in-between filming. I believe he said they were moving to do some scenes in Shropshire, so he had a couple of days to kill.” That sounded legit, right?

Their coffees were brought, and they both took sips right away, as if taking their time to think of more ways to stab holes in her story.

“And anyway, neither of you met Leonardo DiCaprio, today, nor were you invited to his house tonight, so let’s just cut the crap,” Bella finally snapped.

They had always been like this, trying to one-up each other. Bella reverted to her old high school self, somewhere during this conversation, but she was a better person than that, now, and didn’t need to put on airs even if Ava and Michael were still doing it. She decided right then and there that she would not mention the fact that she actually *had* met Johnny Depp a month ago, and he said she had a pretty smile.

“We really did meet him!” Ava insisted, but Bella knew she was lying.

The dishonesty boiled her skin worse than the searing July sun. Apparently, the moral high road was too steep for her. “Well, I met Johnny Depp, and he said I was pretty!”

He Really Is Gone

Zoey Jacoby

Standing in the cold rain, surrounded by fog, everything gray and ugly, I wipe at the tears marching from my eyes. I watch as cars pass me by, as I stand waiting for my bus to school, listening to “Angel” by Sarah McLachlan echo through my ears. I debate whether it is worth it or not to go to school. The events of the day before and the news I received just four hours ago are the main reasons for my debate. My final decision comes, just a moment too late.

My bus approaches, and it brakes loudly. I pull my earphones out of my ears, as the bus driver opens the doors. For a moment, I hesitate, trying to hold back tears. I climb into the bus and scoot into my seat, the first one by the door, next to the window. I put in my earphones, the same Sarah McLachlan song is still playing. I try not to cry, but the floodgates open wide. I peer out the window, and the bus begins to move.

I cry the whole ride to school. As we pull to a stop behind the building to get off the bus, I wipe at my tears, again. The bus doors open, and everyone scrambles off. Once I am on the ground, I rush past everyone to get inside. I go to my corner and wait for the bell to ring.

People can see I am crying, but no one dares ask me why. It is a good thing they don't, because if I told them, they would laugh. They won't understand my pain, no matter how much I hurt.

The bell rings to go to class. I hurry up the stairs. Biology is my first class. I walk with my two closest friends, Valencia and Laquisha. They know something is wrong, but they don't ask. Knowing me, I will cry it all out. They would not be able to decipher the words through my sobs.

I walk into my biology class, the first person there. I find my seat and listen to the loudness of students in the hallway. I sit, staring into space. My mind drifts away. I think about what happened, and I begin to cry.

Suddenly, the bell rings, the warning bell. Sixty seconds later, the next bell, the late bell, rings. My teacher begins her lessons. I wipe at my tears and sniffle; I can't cry in front of everyone. That's just embarrassing. I reach for my pencil and start taking notes. The class drags on, forever. The day is only starting. Finally, the bell rings for class to end. I gather my things and

stuff them into my book bag. Off to band class I go.

I walk through the crowded hallway, everyone towering over me. I make it to my band class. I'm seventh chair clarinet in the Sumter High School Symphonic Band. I put my clarinet together and warm up by playing my scales. Once my band teacher gets to the podium, it is time to play. Everyone's mouths go to their instruments, and we begin to play our music. Emotions hit me in every direction, and I begin to cry.

We break, so our teacher can take a call in his office. I use the time to text my grandmother to pick me up, even though I should be practicing my music. My grandmother replies; she's sending my grandfather to pick me up. I text back "okay," and then I shove my phone back into my pocket. My band teacher comes back, and we resume our song.

Just as we begin the next song, a beep comes over the intercom. "Mr. Jehl?!" says the front office.

"Yes?" replies Mr. Jehl, my band teacher.

"Do you have Zoey in your class?" asks the front office.

"Yes," replies Mr. Jehl.

"Can you please send her up to the front office? She is going home early," replies the front office. A smile crosses my face for a slight moment. I pack up my clarinet and put it away before I head up to the front office.

As I walk up the incline to the front office, I can't help but pray my grandfather didn't bring the yellow car. When I reach the front office, I see my grandfather and the pain in his face over what happened. I know how he feels; it is clear in my face as well. I sign out of school, and my grandfather and I walk outside. As I walk down the steps of the school, I look for the car. I don't see the yellow car, but I do see the brown F-150 truck my grandparents own. I walk over and hesitate to open the door. Memories of him flood back to my mind. I open the front passenger door and climb in. We drive off; we drive home.

All the way home, it's a quiet ride. The only thing there is to talk about brings too much pain. We pull into the driveway, and I run into the house. I can't stand to be outside. It is different walking into the house this time. He's not there to jump up on me, not there for me to pick up and hold tight. *He is really not gone, just hiding*, I think to myself.

I go into my room. All I want to do is sleep. I change into my pajamas and lie down. When I close my eyes, all I see is him. I begin to cry. Now, I can let it all out. I cry myself to sleep.

When I finally wake up, I see it has only been 1 ½ hours. I walk out to the kitchen and see my grandmother heading to her room. She hugs me. I walk over to the kitchen window by the door. I look out the window and

see the yellow car. I'm curious now. I want to see how it looks. I slip on my shoes and walk out.

When I look inside the car I can see it is unlocked. I open the passenger door. A bucket of soapy water and a scrub brush lie on the floor. My grandfather has been trying to clean up the blood? There are still blood spots left. I stare at it. I can picture the series of events in my mind.

I can see my grandfather walking down the street with him. All they were doing was walking. As they approach the house around the corner, I can see the two neighbor dogs staring. I can see the first dog approach them, somewhat friendly. Then, I see the second dog running over to them, and the attack starts.

I can see my grandfather try his best to get them off. I can see him trying to jump up into my grandfather's arms. I can see my grandfather fighting the attacking dogs off, then running home, his arms wrapped tightly to protect him. My grandfather goes straight to the yellow car, heading to the vet 30 minutes away.

All the vet can do is bandage him. My grandfather is met by my aunt, and they both decide to go to the emergency vet in Columbia, SC, even further away. I can hear his cries of pain. I can see his eyes.

They make it to the emergency vet, and they do their best to stabilize him, and they succeed. They have to keep him overnight, because he needs surgery in the morning. My aunt and grandfather leave. We are all going up there in the morning for his surgery.

I wake at 3 a.m. I have to get ready to go to Columbia, where I will get to see him. I get to hold him when we take him to get the surgery done. Suddenly, my grandparents walk into the room. Something is wrong; I can feel it. They don't need to say anything. We all stand in a circle in the middle of my room and hug and cry.

At 3 in the morning on May 4, 2011, my dog, Rudy, died due to the injuries he received in an attack by two other dogs the day before. Rudy was a black, toy poodle with a little white patch on his chest. The dogs that attacked him were yellow labs; Rudy was smaller. The dogs tore an artery in Rudy and bit pieces off him in multiple areas. There was blood all over him. If Rudy had lived, he would only have three legs, and he would not be the same.

After Rudy died, my grandfather would walk down to the spot of the attack and stand there, looking at Rudy's blood. I did once, too. I walked down there and stood for a long time. Before I left, I turned towards the house where the attacking dogs lived. Hate filled me.

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To this day when my family talks about it, we give our two cents on why Rudy died. I believe he died of a broken heart. He was fine when my aunt and grandfather left. I think that because no one was with him that he got really sad, and his heart could not take it. My family had Rudy for four years before he died. We loved him so much and still do. Sometimes, I can feel his spirit lingering, when I'm at any of my relatives' homes. I know I can't bring Rudy back, but I know he is watching down over me every single day. Rest in peace, Rudy.



**“La Vita Nuova”
(Learning to Live a New Life)**

Lindsay Knuter

*La letizia si convertia
In amarissimo pianto
Io sono in pace
Cor meum
Io sono in pace
Vide cor meum
La Vita Nuova, Dante Alighieri*

When we were young, our parents and teachers asked us what we wanted to be when we grew up, almost as much as they asked what we wanted for breakfast. Most little boys would say something along the lines of “a firefighter!” A few more would yell “astronaut!” More would say that they wished to be “just like Daddy.” Little girls would answer “ballerina,” or “nurse,” and some would even answer “teacher!” with an emphatic smile. This day came for me in kindergarten in Mrs. Thies’s morning class. When it was time for my turn, I looked straight ahead and mumbled quietly that I wanted to sing. She seemed a little surprised that my answer was so different, but she smiled and ruled it to be a good answer, then moved on to the girl next to me, who promptly answered “a mommy!” I had known from an early age what my passion was, and I knew I needed to follow it, or my soul would be lost in the banal mediocrity that seemed to plague the majority of mankind. *I would be different*, I promised myself. I had to be.

Throughout my young years, I engaged in every single singing activity I could find. Anything that even hinted at the possibility of vocal music inevitably had me included in it, somewhere. Music was my life, and I adored it as much as it seemed to adore me. Family gatherings and get-togethers with friends began to include some performance or another, and even though I was an awkward child, everyone could at least agree that I was doing this right. My time was spent studying the greats of my time: Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, and even, once in a blue moon, Mandy Moore. These girls enjoyed success and praise for their vocal talents, and the fourth grade version of me wanted nothing more than to be exactly like

them.

It was not until my eighth grade year, after moving across state and starting a new school and a new choir that I realized there was more to music than pop and the slightly annoying, campy country music to which my mother listened. An entirely new world was opened up before my very eyes in that choir room. It was a world in which classical music reigned, and the lovely notes of composers of old trilled from throats of students with any musical inclination. Opera. It was as if a slightly skewed puzzle piece had been rotated and then finally fit correctly. I was whole for what seemed like the first time. This epiphany came with the name of “*Sebben Crudele*,” and the first time I sang the final note on stage with my fellow choir nerds, I was reborn. I was in love. It was a thrilling, passionate love that ad seemed destined the entire time. I chided myself for not realizing sooner just what was waiting for me beyond the realm of conventional, mainstream music.

Solos abounded for me. I found my voice; the true voice I had been meant to have from the beginning. I planned on using it. Pop music began to sound like nasal nonsense to my carefully cultivated classical ear, and as I held “*Il Mio Bel Foco*” to my heart in breathless exhilaration, I wondered how I could have come to have such poor taste to begin with. How could I have missed the beautiful legato of a symphony or the powerful forte in a Scarlatti aria?

As with many great stories, I did not simply ride away into the sunset, clutching my growing collection of sheet music. My entire identity was wrapped up in my voice, however. Any self-esteem I possessed was because I was the best. I prided myself on the steps I took to achieve it, and I wanted to do anything in my power to keep it like that. I was a *prima donna*, but like all good divas, I knew it was hard earned. No one sang more than I. No one spent their spare time looking up all the best Italian arias and memorizing them by heart, simply because something yearned in their soul. Some grand desire commanded these things of me, and as Music’s humble servant, who was I to refuse?

Perhaps, there is something to be said of pride. Perhaps, I knew deep down that, as with the greatest operas, so too would my tale end in utter and complete heart-wrenching pain. I was good, but I still had so much to learn, and unfortunately, my lesson came far too late to be of any use. Many nights I have lain awake, contemplating the events surrounding my demise. In my grief, I sought answers, lashed out, and blamed others for what was my own fault. With time comes wisdom and the benefit of reflection. I can see now that my downfall was due to my own arrogance and pride.

The nodes developed slowly over time, so slowly that I almost could

not tell that they were there, but for a few wavering notes now and then or a sore throat in the late and early hours. I was stubborn and stupid. My range, which balanced on a delicate line between soprano and coloratura, was decimated as surely as if a bomb had gone off in the middle of a city. The twisted rebar and crumbling cement was my voice, while the barren and scorched skeletons of skyscrapers were the remnants of my dreams. Gone, as if they had never even existed. I did not have the tools to even begin to rebuild. The expensive surgery to remove the nodes with lasers was far out of my price range, and it was not even a guaranteed fix. Could I handle paying all that money and getting my hopes up, only to experience the same plummeting feeling of despair?

It has been a handful of years now, since the grief settled into a manageable level in my soul. Even still, not a single day goes by that I am not reminded of my fall from grace. Each memory is just as painful as the first, shocking revelation that this part of my life was now closed to me. I am not entirely sure exactly who I am anymore, and I wish I could say that my tale has an uplifting ending. It does not. At least, not yet. I struggle with tears to this day, and it sometimes strikes me as funny that it is not the praise that I miss. My heart does not yearn for the scholarships I passed up. Certainly, those things I miss, and there are many regrets attached to them. My own personal hell is that sinking feeling when I falter; when I open up my mouth and sing, in the car, in the shower, wherever my heart decides music is needed, and a note that was easily within my capabilities only a short time ago comes out mangled and screeching. Or worse, it does not come out at all. Those hoarse breaths of nothingness feel as if a ball of thorns has been twisted inside of my heart, and for a second, I cannot breathe. Did I really make that atrocious noise? Music must be approached cautiously, carefully. If I want it too much, it will somehow always elude me, and instead of that pure, beautiful tone, I will create a note so terrible that it could rival the shrill shriek of La Carlotta herself.

*Joy is converted
To bitterest tears
I am in peace
My heart
I am in peace
See my heart*

Dante's love for Beatrice was great. She, too, was taken from him at an early age. I only hope to one day bear the same grace when carrying

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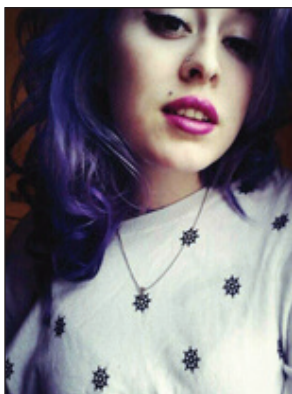
around the broken pieces of my heart. Perhaps, someday, I can learn to look past the devastation and see not wreckage, but opportunity. Perhaps, the battleground will yet bear fruit, and the pain will melt into possibility. It is an uphill battle, but one that I cannot afford to quit. Perhaps, my dragon is not the loss of my voice, but the strength in realizing that I have gained a new one that can be just as strong.



Little Girl :: Abby Sparks Keeley

Triumph through Forgiveness

Stevie Ray Kruger



There comes a point in our lives when we must be brave and conquer our dragons, metaphorically speaking. I could have released the sword from the stone and still not have felt equipped to overcome the dragon standing in my way. For several years, my beast stalked me, causing me to run and hide. Finally, I decided that the time had come to rise up and be a champion. I possessed something far more powerful than Excalibur to slay my dragon, my forgiveness. Developing this trait was no easy battle. This is how I survived my dragon and found the courage to pardon my father.

As I dig deeply within myself to recall memories of my early childhood, I picture life as a more innocent time. At the spirited age of four, it is natural to be blind to the evils of the world. Although my parents did not live together and I only saw my father on weekends, I was a daddy's girl nonetheless. Like most little girls, I idolized my father. In my eyes, he held the world. That is until one day a light was shown on my father's true character. Even though I was too young to understand the maturity of the situation, I still cannot find the words to describe the void that opened in my heart the day that my world collapsed.

Like every other weekend I visited with my father, this one started the same. My mother packed overnight bags for my older sister, Harley, and me, and then she helped us into our father's car. She gave us kisses on the forehead before returning to the sidewalk, where my dad seemed to be waiting to talk to her. Some moments later, our father hurried to the driver's seat and rushed to get the vehicle in motion. My sister and I were bewildered when my mother opened the passenger door, panic covering her face, and tried to remove us from the car. It was in that moment, with my mother's hands tied up in my sister's seatbelt, my father pressed on the gas pedal. She fell to the ground, and her body began to drag along with

us as we started down the street. A moment later, there was a giant bump. I looked out the back window and saw my mother lying on the cold ground. Everything in that moment appeared too complicated and unreal for my four-year-old mind to comprehend. I didn't even realize Harley and I were screaming, until my father scolded us to be quiet. He told us that everything was going to be okay. We rode the rest of the way in silence.

After making a brief stop at a stranger's house, my father drove us to the Old Country Buffett. We just placed our plates on the table when a police officer made his way to where we were sitting, whispered in my father's ear, and then he was gone. The remainder of our meal is a blur to me. When we exited the restaurant, my father was put in handcuffs and sat in the back of one squad car; my sister and I were put into another. What seemed to be hours later, our father was taken away, and our Nana and Grandpa showed up at the scene to take us back to their home. As my Nana talked on the phone, I was allowed a little insight into what happened. My mother would be okay; she only suffered severe bruising down the length of her body and had nerve damage to her left leg. My father, on the other hand, was arrested for possession of three illegal substances and possible assault.

I was nine years old by the time I was allowed to see my father, again. When I got the news of this, I was in a state of confusion and shock. In those five years that he was gone, I repressed his memory to a point where it didn't even occur to me that I had a father. At any rate, we were granted short visits at the Salvation Army to see our father, because he received the help he needed to be clean of drugs. After another year or so, he was permitted to have weekend visits again. One would think having a father figure back in my life would be something to cherish, but I was furious. I had a lot of built up rage and unanswered questions boiling up inside me. My mother explained the extent of his drug addiction. He had been a user of almost every illegal substance there was, dating back to when he was seventeen years old. She was under the impression that he quit and got his life on track when they met. It wasn't until after I was born that she knew he never stopped. His drug abuse was the reason they were not living together, but she allowed him to remain a part of our lives, because she didn't want her children to grow up without a father.

When I learned what kind of person he was, I was even more infuriated. I was unable to cope with the fact that the man I idolized would choose drugs over his own daughters. I resented the idea of having such a foul man as my father. Week by week, I became angrier with every attempt of his to see me because he never once apologized for altering my life. I tried to keep my distance from him, but the void in my heart grew deeper. The dark

space had not been growing because I missed him; it grew because I needed closure. Finally, at the age of sixteen, I knew that I could not keep living with all of the disgust and malice I kept in my heart for him. I was able to convince myself that I would not be at peace with the situation until I forgave him. Though, it seemed like an easy concept, it was one I struggled with. My head told me that he was not deserving of my forgiveness, but my heart knew that was not the truth. I realized that the man he was when he was arrested was a shell of a man hollowed out from substance abuse, and he was a different person now, a clean person.

After years of having hatred consume my heart, I survived my dragon by finding the courage to forgive my father. Though we do not have that father-daughter relationship most girls dream of, I see him on my terms, and we get along for the most part. Coming to that point of accepting what he did and knowing I had to excuse it was not an easy battle, but it was time to be a champion. Learning to forgive has become an easier process now that I was able to pardon what I saw as the unpardonable. In the future, I may come across other obstacles and fiercer beasts. As far as I am concerned, if they are anything like this one, I will not need Excalibur to conquer them.

"I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven-eighths of it under water for every part that shows."

-Ernest Hemingway, 1899-1961,
interview in *Paris Review*, Spring 1958

The Rarity of Red

Jennifer Lawless

The summer was one to be remembered by Everly, an apparent fragile soul. She was just 16, but some say that there is no defined age when love is to be felt. Everly was the girl who everyone looked at with saddened eyes. They gazed at her with a sense of sympathy. As people passed her in the hallways, pictures of her dad constantly appeared in her mind. Pictures and memories were the only things she had left to remember him by. Her dad was killed in a tragic accident, just two months before her senior year in high school was over. His arrow was green; the light in the opposite direction was red. Some people choose to be selfish; they put their plans at a higher importance than the safety of surrounding vehicles. Unfortunately, Everly's dad was the victim of such a situation.

Ayden stared in admiration as Everly began unpacking each item from the basket, putting each item in a specific place on the blanket. The blanket was a black and red checkerboard pattern, Everly's two favorite colors. Ayden remembered every little detail of her, understanding that it is the little things that define a person's soul, that hold important meaning. Black and red were complete opposites of one another, one meant passion and the other concealed it. The colors resembled Everly, for she only had two distinct parts of her personality. She either revealed her whole soul to another person, having no wall surrounding her, or she hid every part that defined her, building a wall so high that she seemed nonexistent. Ayden loved the challenge of being the rare person who colored her soul a vibrant red.

Everly's curly hair swirled in the wind in unison with the leaves. A slight crunch was heard as the wind grew quiet and the leaves hit the fresh cut grass. Hints of auburn shined against the light, intertwined between pieces of champagne-colored hair. She looked up, and her sapphire eyes burned within Ayden. His stomach tied in knots. His heart pounded through his chest, almost convinced that others had noticed the outline of the most essential organ. She flashed her endearing, frosted smile. His heart stopped pumping; the blood froze in his veins. At that moment, he experienced a feeling completely new to him.

“I love you,” he said hoping there would be no hesitant reply.

Everly looked down, biting her lip. She brought her hands together, fidgeting. She looked back up, her cheeks were rosy, and she, too, experienced a feeling for the first time. She replied, “I love you, too.” Ayden realized he conquered the challenge. He was the rare one who was capable of destroying Everly’s walls. She let the red shine through.

The world around them stood still. They felt perfectly alone, together. Their happiness echoed through the air. Their love story was just beginning, but it would be one without an end. Love never dies, only the physical body that is the soul’s keeper.



Original Drawing :: Audrey Burt

Arrested Heart

Larry Leeds



A cop with anger management issues handles a burglar with verisimilitude issues.

A uniformed police officer steps out of an apartment into a murky hallway and stops. Behind him, in the open doorway, stands a man in fading black robes with a white collar around his vulture-like neck, his long bony fingers are clasped in prayerful supplication. Behind the holy man, a neon cross enlightens a room.

The cop, Officer William Bonnet Ridgett, puts on his hat, adjusts his gun belt and looks straight ahead. "Thank you, Reverend, I feel better."

The Reverend, beaming with ecumenical joy, nods, "May you find peace with your piece, my son." He stifles a chuckle and returns to his inner sanctum.

Ridgett rolls his eyes at the tiresome joke tacked to the end of each month's session. "Right," he says to the sound of the door closing. "How about getting the super to fix this hall light?"

Officer Ridgett is a large, no-neck man who played football in college and might have gone pro if he hadn't flunked out. Despite two commendations, his life on the force the past eleven years has been a seesaw of unfortunate events, as were his two marriages. He was once asked by a reporter why he liked being on the police force, to which he replied, "I like working where the customer is always wrong." The Reverend was his Captain's idea. Anger management.

He stands there for another minute or two, inhaling deep breaths, and shaking out his fingertips. *Actually, I do feel better. A little spirituality – a little gun control.*

His thoughts are interrupted by an opening door across the hall. He automatically comes to his police senses and watches someone dressed

completely in black painstakingly back out. A perp?

The would-be perp, his back to Ridgett, glances left and right, cautiously drags a duffle bag into the hallway, and then, ever so carefully, closes the door.

Little guy's wearing gloves and a hood, too, observes Ridgett as he takes a soft step forward, unsnaps his holster, and lays a beefy hand on the butt of his Glock.

"Doing your laundry kinda late, aren't ya?"

The would-be perp jumps like he sat on a toilet with the seat up and then spins around to face his inquisitor. The two stare at each other a moment, one clutching his chest, the other in a linebacker's stance.

The would-be perp breathlessly says – in a female voice – "What do you think you're doing, scaring me half out of my wits like that?"

Ridgett hesitates an extra second at hearing a woman speak, then, amused, says, "I suppose you're the cleaning lady doing a little moonlighting?"

Collecting herself, she retorts, "What are you talking about?" She follows his stare to the bag beside her. "Oh, this? Oh, I get it. You think ... you think I'm, like, stealing this?"

"Well, I suppose you could be sneaking off to join the Marines, but I'm guessing it's a little more complicated than that." Ridgett snaps his holster strap shut. "Then again, I'm guessing you're about to tell me why you're backing out of an apartment," checks his watch, "at 10:34 p.m., dressed in black with a hood over your head, and dragging a duffle bag that weighs as much as you. Hmmm?"

Ridgett watches as this creature-in-black, all of 5' 3", *approximately 110 pounds, white female*, removes her hood exposing a head of sumptuous, fiery red hair. Later, he'll tell his buddies, *When she pulled off that hood, her red hair came flowing out just like one of those shampoo commercials. You know, where she's worth it.* Then his eyes will orbit upwards in search of that special moment. In the meantime:

"First off, my name is Laura. Laura Masterson. I live here. And you are?"

"Ridgett"

"I'll bet you are."

"Want to explain the costume? Halloween's not for another two months."

"Oh. Yes. Well. You see. I'm supposed to meet my date at a party. It's one of those mystery murder parties. Are you married?"

"Excuse," Ridgett clears his throat, "excuse me?"

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"I mean if you're married, you know how demanding a significant other can be. Anyway, I'm supposed to be dressed up," she giggles, "like a burglar. Isn't that a riot?"

"And all that tiptoeing?"

"That –oh – yes, I'm babysitting my sister's kids, and I didn't want to wake them. Do you have kids? I mean, if you do, you know how hard it is to get them to sleep again, right?"

Ridgett relaxes a bit. "So you're not burglarizing this apartment?"

"What? No. Of course not. I told you – I'm going to a costume party."

"But you *are* leaving minor children unattended?"

Laura stands there blinking. She sighs and leans back against the wall. "Okay, okay. I'm not going to a costume party. This is really embarrassing. Did you say you're married?"

"No."

"No, you didn't say, or no you're not married?"

"No, I'm not married – twice. So what's that got to do with anything?"

Ridgett steps closer and breathes deep her perfume. *Please say something I can believe. Please, oh please, say something I can believe.*

"Twice. Wow. Then you must know how it feels to want to get away from somebody, right? I mean, twice – you gotta know. Am I right? Well, see, that's what's really going on here. This guy I'm - like, this is so embarrassing - this guy I'm living with, well, he's really a brute. You know, the small kind who thinks he's big 'cause he can beat up a woman. You should see the bruises. I was warned," she says, warming up to her story, "but do I listen? That's my problem, you know. Never listen to anybody. That's why I'm sneaking out – with *my* stuff, mind you – sneaking out so he won't hear me. I'll probably have to leave town and . . ."

Ridgett shifts his weight and crosses his arms, "Let's see them."

"Sorry?"

"The bruises. Let me see the bruises."

"Uh . . . It's kinda dark in here. I'm not sure."

"I have a flashlight." Ridgett taps metal hanging from his belt.

Laura investigates a loose thread on a glove, takes a deep breath, and exhales through puffed cheeks. "How humiliating. It's all so degrading." She dabs an eye and chokes on her words. "I shouldn't have to tell anyone this."

Ridgett mentally slaps himself for what he's thinking, *No one who smells as good as you should ever have to pretend to cry.* He says, however, "Well, you can tell me here or tell me downtown – your choice."

"It's my father - in Texas. He's very ill, and I've . . . sniff . . . been

sending him money every week. But I don't have any more to send him, and – I know this looks bad – but, but, I just couldn't pay the rent anymore, and”

“And the landlady's going to kick you out and keep all your stuff if you don't come up with some bucks by morning. And, of course, your stylish black outfit – matching gloves, accessorized hood – is so if she sees you, you're just the shadow of your former self? That about it?”

“Don't be such a brute,” she bleats. “It's true. I've got just enough money for a bus ticket to Texas. I'll find *something* so I can take care of Daddy.” She buries her face into her palms.

Ridgett stretches a hand to the wall just above her head and leans in. *She's so small, so full of . . .* He catches another whiff of what has just become his favorite perfume. *What's that mantra the Reverend keeps harping? Oh yeah.* He works up his best sincere look (which comes off like there's a nail in his shoe), “Well, you know what they say. Life entails obstacles - or ruts - or something like that.”

Laura raises her head a little.

“What I mean is, the path to Nirvana is not at the end of a forked tongue.”

Her eyes dart from side to side as if looking for subtitles.

He straightens up. “Okay, how about this - stop conning me, or I'll toss ya just because I can.”

Laura's eyes flash, and with all her might, she pushes Ridgett back - or tries to. “Okay, okay. You win. Yeah, that's what I'm doing – burglarizing the joint, okay? Satisfied? Wouldn't you know, my *first* time and I get busted.” She kicks the duffle bag. “I don't even know if anything in here's worth a nickel. First time, and here *you* are.” Dramatically, she sweeps the hair out of her face, throws her shoulders back, and squares off. “What now, OFFICER? Jail, I suppose.”

Ridgett, hard-pressed to curb a smile, scratches an ear, “Would you like to get a cup of coffee?”

“. . . or the old Hen House - the Greystone Hotel - the slammer - the huh?”

“My shift doesn't start for another hour - unless I have an unexpected report to make. How about having a cup of coffee with me? Or do I have an unexpected report to make?”

Laura looks into Ridgett's face and sees a pair of soft brown eyes in complete harmony with a sideways smile. Her voice goes soft and uncertain. “I – the thing is – you mean . . . Okay.”

Ridgett looks at the duffle bag and nods toward the apartment door.

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Laura, managing to grin and grimace at the same time, unlocks the door with the proficiency of a locksmith and slides the duffle bag inside. They turn and walk down the stairs.

Ridgett swings open a door into the warm night air.

“First time, huh?”

“Absolutely. No, really - I mean it.”

“And you are?”

“Are? Oh yeah - sure. It’s, uh, Kelly. Kelly Maguire.



Editors at Work :: David Martin

That Boy's Finest Hour

Bob Miller



There had been rumors that summer of 1956 about the possible formation of a band at Craig Public Schools. People were saying that Ed Hanna, the State Farm Insurance agent from Oakland, had offered to teach band starting in the fall. Everyone was excited about the possibility.

During the first day of sixth grade classes, it was announced that this was indeed true. In a couple of days, there was to be an ‘instrument night’ when the students could make their selections. Most of the discussion among students was about which instrument they would choose.

Instrument night arrived, and the gym was full of high school and grade school students and their parents. Ed Patton Music of Omaha had tables stocked with various instruments for the students to try and then to select. It was an evening of honking saxophones, squeaking clarinets, blatty trombones, blaring trumpets, bellowing basses, and the ratta-tat-tat of drums.

Even before the evening arrived, I had made up my mind, so I went straight to the brass table. I picked up a trumpet, and I immediately liked the feel of it. I was already dreaming of the time when I could participate in band practice and play brilliant trumpet solos.

As the evening began to wind down, selections were made, checkbooks came out, and students started leaving with cases of instruments in tow. No such luck for me. My parents wanted to think it over. I immediately knew what was happening. Like most of my past requests, this was being relegated to that black hole known as, “We’ll have to think about it.” In other words, the answer was no. I left empty handed. I was crushed.

I cried all the way home, and that night I cried myself to sleep. I was still sobbing the next morning, as I sat at the kitchen table choking down

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some pancakes. My mother finally said, “Roy, that boy REALLY wants a trumpet.”

I’m not sure what transpired, but a trumpet was sent by bus from Omaha arriving the next week. They didn’t purchase a new Conn student model costing \$139; instead, it was a used trumpet costing \$65. I didn’t care. I had a trumpet, and I was launched.

I loved the trumpet, and I loved to practice. My parents believed, “Idle hands were the devil’s workshop,” but evidently my hands holding a trumpet were not considered idle, so they left me alone. I worked hard, and I got results almost immediately.

In the fall of my seventh grade year, the Craig band had its first concert. After it was over, my parents were talking with Mr. Hanna, when I overheard him tell my father, “Roy, that boy needs to be playing on a better instrument.” Well, my father was his own man who neither sought nor took advice from anyone, but this was Ed Hanna speaking, so the next weekend we traveled to Omaha. From among the vast array of trumpets on display at the music store, I selected a Conn trumpet with a copper bell. Out came the checkbook, and my father wrote the check for \$195.

Later that year, it was announced an honor band was to be formed, and to get into honor band there would be tryouts. Weeks went by, and not one high school student volunteered, so one day at lessons, I announced I wanted to give it a go. My tryout was to occur at the next band practice.

I was small for my age, a bespectacled, self-conscious runt of a boy, but when my name was called, I bravely and confidently marched to the front of the band. I was asked to play three different scales, to sight-read a piece of music, and to perform a memorized selection of my own choosing. When I finished, Mr. Hanna came up behind me, put his hands on my shoulders and said, “Ladies and gentleman. I’d like to introduce to you the Craig Public School’s honor band,” and the students applauded.

To this day I still believe it was “that boy’s” finest hour.

Chapter 2 from *Planet Zevakk*

Jeff Murnane



(The following is a chapter from the author's unpublished novel.)

Alex came downstairs later than usual; the smell of bacon cooking was always good at waking him out of the deepest sleep. As he opened the front door, he quickly moved his hand to shield his eyes from the bright Sunday morning light. There was a buzz in the air from the neighborhood lawnmowers, which further reminded him of the time he had already wasted this morning sleeping in. His nightmares were interrupting his sleep and were also happening more frequently, causing Alex to be perpetually tired. Yet, for reasons he couldn't explain, Alex felt strongly that his dreams were important, and they contained messages and clues that he was meant to understand. This was out of character for Alex, as he had always been very logical by nature, almost slightly close-minded. These dreams were different, however. They felt so real, as well as, relevant, and he was determined to decipher their meanings.

The air this morning was cool, especially in the shadow of his front porch, but as soon as Alex stepped off his porch, the chill dispersed immediately with the warmth of the sun. His body warmed, as he made his way to the end of his driveway to retrieve his newspaper. He had always been old-fashioned, but that's not why he continued to have the paper delivered.

Alex was a reporter and still loved the look and feel of a newspaper. He wasn't against technology; his primary information source was the Internet like everyone else, but his morning ritual of walking out to the end of his driveway every day to retrieve that day's paper was something he refused to change. He could still recall the first time he had a story printed in the paper and how it felt to pick up his copy that day and see his words. He

remembered looking down the street at all of the newspapers in all of the driveways and filling up with pride, knowing that everyone would soon see his name above his article and read what he wrote. That memory still brought a smile to his face, and to this day, this morning ritual still held a bit of a thrill when Alex opened the paper to see what was inside.

Alex paused after picking up his newspaper and turned his head to view the house next door, taking notice of the newspaper in Ben's driveway. His morning ritual had been interrupted like this for weeks. He would wake up each morning with a seemingly clear head and a smile on his face and go about his daily routines, until he was reminded of the neighborhood mystery.

Alex stood for a few minutes staring at Ben's house. He moved his eyes around the house and yard, as if looking for something out of place or a new clue that he missed the other mornings he studied the house. He moved across his yard and into Ben's driveway, stopping to bend over and gather his neighbor's newspaper and pausing to look again at Ben's house, this time up close. Carefully studying the house, Alex wondered if the flowerpot was on the left side of the door yesterday or on the right, where it was today. He was sure that the big rock in the landscaping was overturned, or was his mind trying to convince him of these things to somehow give him clues to the many questions he had?

The helpless feeling Alex had about his missing friend made him wonder if his mind was just trying to give a direction for his thoughts to move. Sometimes, he would stare for four or five minutes, but today, a few seconds was sufficient. Alex turned to walk back home with the papers in hand. He shut his front door behind him and dropped Ben's newspaper into a basket that was nearly full of other unread newspapers and assorted mail. Alex then made his way into the sun-filled kitchen, passing the refrigerator which was covered with Annie's graded homework, report cards, and letters from school, all of which were marked with things like A+, 100% and "Perfect!"

"Nice of you to join us," Kate teased. Alex was usually the first one up in the morning, even on Sundays. Alex muttered a "good morning," as he kissed his wife.

Across the room, Annie had her nose buried in a book, which was the typical pose she struck since she was old enough to read, which in her case was around age four. Alex tipped the book up to see the cover of what was keeping Annie so engrossed, "*Ulysses*? She's reading James Joyce? What happened to reading *Harry Potter* like other 13-year-olds?"

Annie bobbed up from her pages, "*Harry Potter* Dad? Really? I'm

trying to expand my vocabulary.”

“That’s what I’m worried about,” Alex shot back in an almost serious tone. Alex was sure that his daughter already knew any words she would find in *Ulysses*, but he still liked to feel as if he were parenting from time to time.

Both of Annie’s parents were finding fewer things to actually parent Annie about. She was an honor student, had many friends, made good decisions, got exercise, did chores, rarely watched TV, and was generally pleasant to be around, unlike any other teenagers they had met. Alex didn’t like feeling unneeded as a parent and would try to create things to parent Annie on, while Kate embraced her daughter’s maturity and would side with Annie often.

Today, Kate, again, entered the discussion on Annie’s side. “What’s wrong with James Joyce? I remember you reading Joyce when we met.”

Alex paused for a moment as a sarcastic grin appeared on his face. “Yes, I was reading Joyce, because I was taking a class called, ‘James Joyce, the most ridiculous and hard to read author of the 20th century.’ And I wasn’t 13! I got college credits for taking that stupid class.”

Kate’s subtle smile revealed her motive of ribbing her husband, and Alex took the bait as he always did. “They give college credits for ‘D’s?’”

Her parent’s playful banter caused Annie to again peer over the top of her novel, and her eyes revealed a slight smile still hidden behind the pages. She enjoyed not just the lighthearted mood of her parents, which she missed, but maybe her mother was actually having fun teasing her husband.

Alex felt compelled to defend himself, even though he knew exactly where this conversation was leading. “I got a ‘C,’ thank you, and I stand firmly behind my original assessment of that course.”

Kate moved in for the kill. “Oh, I’m sorry, a ‘C’ is way better, even from someone who writes words professionally.”

Alex surrendered. He smiled, pulled Kate close and kissed her forehead. “Maybe, I was too distracted by a pretty girl to fully concentrate.”

Alex then released Kate and moved to the cupboard, where he grabbed his favorite coffee mug, poured a cup of coffee, walked to his satchel on the kitchen chair and started rifling through the papers and folders within.

Annie dropped her head back into her book. Her muscles started to tense up, anticipating the events that she knew would come next.

Kate’s playfulness was gone, and she took a slightly more serious tone. She opened her mouth to speak, then froze, but only for a second; she then clumsily fumbled out a routine question hoping to hear today, something different than what she expected. She always mixed up the questions, as if

she was trying to find the right sequence of words or the right phrasing that would help her husband answer correctly.

“Um, Alex, honey, if you’re not busy right now, would you like some eggs for breakfast?”

Alex snapped right back. “I can’t Katie. I have a lot of work and a tight deadline today, but I promise I’ll be done in time for dinner.” Alex pulled some file folders out of his satchel and shoved them under his arm, grabbed a few pieces of bacon and his coffee, and made his way down the hall to his office. As Alex disappeared down the hallway, Kate’s smile disappeared. It was as if fatigue had finally set in from her efforts of trying to appear happy, and when she could maintain her positivity no longer, her real emotions came through. Kate’s eyes revealed true sadness, as tears began to well up, her shoulders slumped, and her head tilted towards the floor.

Annie peered over her book at her mother, studying her before setting it down to comfort her.

“Mom, I think Dad’s getting better.”

Tears were now rolling down Kate’s face.

“No, he’s not Annie; he’s not better. He thinks that he still has his job at the paper. He doesn’t even know what day it is. He thinks it’s a weekday, and he still has a job. Listen Annie, I know that you want Dad to be better; we both do, but you need to understand that people don’t get better from this. I had to watch his mom, the grandma you never met, go through the same thing before you were born. Dementia is hereditary, and it breaks my heart to pieces to see him like this.”

Kate felt that Annie was very mature for her age, and Kate was very open and honest with her about everything. Although Kate usually put on a brave face regarding Alex, today, her emotions got the best of her.

Annie stood and hugged her mom. “He’s going to get better Mom. I promise.” She said this with a knowing confidence, as she tried to ease her mother’s pain.

Kate smiled again and looked at her daughter, “I really want to believe that sweetie.”

Standing in his office, with his back to the door, concern and worry entered into his thoughts as Alex listened to the muffled conversation coming from the kitchen. He couldn’t make out the words Kate and Annie were using, but he knew what they were talking about. He had an anxious feeling in his gut that the things he was privately worried about had become so obvious to his family. Yet, he was still unconvinced that he was losing his mind and wished he could continue to fight this battle in private. Unfortunately, this was no longer the case, and it was obvious to him that

his wife had already decided that his grasp on reality was fading, if not gone altogether.

Losing his job at the paper was devastating to Alex. For three weeks after being fired, he rarely got out of bed. It embarrassed him that he lost the job that he loved and worked so hard to get, for something as silly as missing deadlines and forgetting assignments. He had given up and conceded that his life was ending the same way his mother's life had, with her in a hospital bed surrounded by friends and family that she only saw as strangers. Then something happened that snapped Alex out of his funk and gave him purpose. His good friend and next-door neighbor disappeared, and it was real. Everyone knew that he was missing, and this gave Alex an anchor to reality along with something to do. He was determined to figure out what happened to Ben, but at the same time, he was unsure of his ability to do so. He didn't know if he could trust his mind but decided to try anyway for Ben's sake, who had no other family or friends to take up the challenge.

Alex was consumed by this mystery, and he knew that his level of dedication and effort spent doing research into Ben's disappearance would seem strange to his family. After all, the police knew that he was gone, but they didn't seem too concerned about it. There was no sign of foul play, and no one stepped forward claiming anything out of the ordinary, other than Alex and a small handful of neighbors. Even then, when pressed, most neighbors conceded that they didn't know Ben well enough to rule out him taking a long vacation or visiting long-lost relatives. Alex felt that it was better he appeared to be holding onto his daily writing routines rather than reveal the truth about his obsession of finding Ben and frighten his family further.

Alex put his coffee down, dropped the files onto his desk, and made his way to a shelf on the wall. He smiled as he got a look at what he was retrieving from the shelf, a children's memory game. He always smiled because the game reminded him of when he used to play it with Annie when she was young. His pleasant demeanor only lasted a few seconds, as his attitude again turned to worry as his memory of the game always takes the same path. First, it was the good times he had playing this and other games with his daughter when she was growing up, but then he also recalled that as Annie grew, Alex stopped winning the memory game against his very young daughter. This ultimately led Alex to stop playing it around five years ago, as he knew his memory was failing him.

Opening the game, Alex spread the cards out on his desk, which was a mess, so cards were stacked on top of papers and tablets as he began to play

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against himself. He started a timer on his phone and immediately began flipping cards. He moved fast, starting with pizza and duck, then back over. Crayons followed by ladybug, back over, then goldfish and crayons, and back over. Alex paused, flipped crayons, he grabbed the cards and moved them aside and continued his furious pace. Alex continued to hit and miss and slowly cleared the board. As the last pair was gathered, he grabbed his phone and stopped his timer. He looked at the time of 3:23, and then he pulled a sheet of paper out from the top drawer in his desk. The paper was full of dates and times. Alex wrote today's date down followed by the time of 3:23. He looked at the other entries trying to find a time that slow, but he couldn't find one. He was slower than his last time two weeks ago of 3:18, which was slower than a time a month prior to that of 3:11.

His hands trembled slightly, as he carefully slid the paper back into his desk and started stacking the cards into their tray. Playing this game always brought a wave of anxiety when he was finished. Alex felt anxious about what his future was going to be like, especially of what would become of his family, as they watched him deteriorate

*“Finally, one just has to shut up,
sit down, and write.”*

-Natalie Goldberg, Writing Down the Bones

He

Angela Ritchey

His smile was ugly, the small, yellowing Chiclet-like teeth taking up far less space than his deep pink gums, the less-than-perfect rows often making an appearance with his nervous, twitchy addict's laugh. His addiction and the lengths to which he will go to feed it have destroyed our family. The relationships that I hadn't realized were so tenuous have been stretched and pulled to ruin, like an old sweater frayed and misshapen beyond repair.

The most recent address I have for him is at the Nebraska state penitentiary. He will be up for parole in three months, just in time to steal my grandpa's newest car.

Three-and-half-years ago after Thanksgiving dinner at Grandpa's house, as we sat in recliners in the living room in semi-darkness contemplating a turkey-induced coma, our bellies full, feeling fat and happy, my cousin confessed that his brother was using drugs. I wasn't surprised at the drug use; it wasn't the first time. Addictions have a way of snaking back into user's lives, creeping silently along until it has them by the throat. Except the addict isn't the only one who gets choked.

Over the next nine months, I watched as my grandpa's possessions started disappearing: golf cart, car, power tools, truck, and air compressor, but then, his bank account dwindled. I listened to my mother cry and then grow angry as she recounted a phone call from my grandpa who asked that she pick him up at midnight from in front of a grocery store ten miles from home because, as he said, "He asked me to drive him here. Then he borrowed the car and isn't answering his cell phone." Or "He's just using it as collateral and then bringing it back." Or "Don't answer the phone. Those damn collection companies keep calling."

I offered to help, whatever, that means. I offered to babysit his three young sons and the fourth, the youngest, who wasn't his, but who was family anyway. I offered to drive him around on my days off so he could drop off job applications. I offered to be an ear should he want to talk, and then, I stopped offering. I stopped coming around at all. An addict has to want help, and he didn't. Denial is a powerful thing.

I am not confrontational by nature. It makes me squirm. I would rather

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bow out, wash my hands, and let the thing run its course. But I had to tell my grandpa he wasn't welcome at my house if my cousin was with him. The bite of that one-sided conversation nearly two years ago still stings. My grandpa recently turned eighty-six, and he isn't getting any younger. He tells the same story over and over about me laying in my grandma's lap as an infant, her reading to me for hours on end, him telling her she was crazy, and I can't help but wonder if she did that for my cousin, too. Did no one read to him?

I keep waiting for it to be over, this relationship of addict and enabler that exists between my cousin and my grandpa. Even if he is denied parole, his sentence carries a maximum of six years. Is that enough time? Will it ever be enough?



Mila at Work Writing Her Novel :: David Martin

William Roland, a Beautiful Person

Kara Roland



In 1947, the country of India made new leaps toward independence from Britain. While the nation struggled to break free of their oppressors, half-way around the world, a young man was preparing for the adventure of his lifetime. William Roland was just finishing his training to become a pastor. He was preparing to travel to the exotic, foreign land of India, where his future was uncertain. Despite innumerable challenges coming

his way, William stayed firmly planted in his trust in the Lord and moved forward with full-force.

William Henry Roland was born on December 24, 1923, in Versailles, IL. His parents, Charles and Laura Roland, named him after Charles' favorite minister, William Henry Booth. Charles was the minister at the Christian church in Versailles, Illinois. They had four children altogether; Sam was the oldest, followed by Clyde, William, and their baby sister Enid. When William was a couple of years old, the family relocated to Payson, Illinois, which was about forty-five minutes up the road. They lived here until 1937, when they again relocated to Pike County; William was thirteen. This time, however, life would change more drastically for the family.

The Roland family moved onto a farm in Pike County. They worked very hard when they plowed; they had six horses, two mules, and a small hand plow. It would usually take many days to get a field completely plowed. After a couple of years, they invested in a Farmall H Tractor. It made all the difference in the world! William continued to work hard on the farm, and in school. When he graduated from high school, he and his parents decided he would go to college to become a pastor. His plan was to attend college four years, and then come back and preach at a church near where his father was the minister. However, God had different things in store for his life.

William packed a trunk and a suitcase, and his parents put him on

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the train bound for Cincinnati, Ohio. He was to begin his schooling at the Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary. His father named him after a preacher; thus, it was only fitting that he, also, became a preacher. When he arrived on campus, he quickly became integrated into college life. William found friends who shared his same interests and fire for the Lord. There was even a pretty little lady, Jean Rothermel, in a few of his classes who caught his eye.

When the annual Thanksgiving party rolled around, William and Jean went together. After that, they began to grow closer. They decided to get married and tied the knot on July 12, 1943; William was nineteen, and Jean was twenty-three. Jean had come from a far different background than William. Her mother was a medical missionary, a doctor, in India, where Jean grew up. She came to the United States to get her higher education, but she was determined to get back to her mother. After she and William got married, naturally they decided they would go back to India together. Raul Carter, another classmate of William and Jean's, was also excited about mission work in India. The two men decided they would learn Hindi together, with Jean as their personal tutor.

In 1947, William and Jean made their first trek to India. William spent most of the first two years learning the language. One night, a young man visited their house. He had recently left everything: his family, friends and religion, to follow Jesus. He was seeking to know more about the Lord, and to understand enough to share the good news with others. William and Jean decided to start a Bible college. They knew that missionaries from the outside did not have much time left in India, so they realized the importance of training native men and women to spread the gospel.

As William and Jean began their lives in India, their family was continually growing. On January 21, 1945, before they left the U.S. for their first trip to India, they welcomed their first baby, a little girl whom they named Mary Esther. After their first year in India, a bouncing baby boy joined the family. He was named Charles, but everybody called him Charlie. When Charlie was two, and Mary Esther was five, they got a new baby brother named David. In 1952, it was time for the family to go back to the U.S. for furlough, which is a vacation that missionaries go on every several years. They give the missionaries a break, a time to recoup and visit friends, family, and their supporting churches. While they were back in the States, Jean gave birth to their fourth child, a little boy named Paul. William taught missions classes at the Bible college in Lincoln, Illinois, while Jean stayed home with the children.

William and Jean made their second trip to India in 1952, with all four

children in tow. This time they went to teach at a different school; Indian nationals were running the one they started before. They decided to send the children to boarding school because Jean did not feel adequate to home school them, and their only other option was the local Indian school. The boarding school was where Jean had gone to when she was growing up. While the children were getting their education at the boarding school, William and Jean began teaching at a school for missionaries' children. Every winter, they would take their four children to a house Jean's mother owned, and they would all spend three months together. In the summers, William and Jean would go to the town where the boarding school was located, and the children would come live with them for a month, while still attending classes at the school. The children did not mind boarding school too much, since it was all they knew. They had plenty of friends who rode the train back and forth with them each year. In 1964, just before David began high school, the family traveled back to the States again.

When they got back to the U.S., William and Jean bought a house in Hayes, Kansas. The children were enrolled in the local high school, and William also went back to school. He attended Fort Hayes State University, where he got his industrial arts degree. With gained knowledge, he planned to go back to India and teach the missionary children. In the meantime, William began teaching at the high school where his children attended. Here he met Harry Horyna, who was the principal at the school. William and Jean became good friends with Harry and his wife, Viola. Harry and Viola had three daughters and lived on a farm a few miles from the Roland family. After Paul, the Roland's youngest son, graduated from high school, they were ready to go back to India.

Although they planned and prepared to go back to the same school where they taught before coming on furlough, the plans changed. Instead of going back to the missionary school, they went to a camp in South India. Here they had the opportunity to work with people who were infected with leprosy. While they had been in the States the last time, Jean had gotten her nursing degree. She now had the opportunity to put it to use, as she cared for the medical needs of the lepers. William also got to practice his new skills. He taught the people how to work with building supplies, even though their hands were deformed from their disease. Contrary to popular belief, leprosy is not very contagious. It spreads through repeated contact with the nose and mouth of somebody with untreated leprosy; children are more likely to contract the disease than adults are. William and Jean worked here for many years. Twenty-four years passed before they went on their third and final furlough.

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They returned to the U.S. in 1998, and moved back to Hayes, Kansas. Soon after their return, Jean became ill. She had kidney failure and needed dialysis. She fought hard for another four years. In 2002, Jean was promoted to Heaven. However, William was heartbroken. He and Jean were married for fifty-five years and served alongside each other every day. Near the same time that Jean passed, Harry Horyna passed, also. Harry and Viola had come and visited William and Jean, when Jean was in the hospital. William decided to reconnect with Viola. They began to spend more time together. In December 2002, William and Viola got married. William moved onto Viola's farm, and they lived there, happily married. In 2013, Viola also got promoted to Heaven. William was now a widower for the second time, but he did not despair. Viola's daughters took over the farm, and William moved to the town where David lived, Lincoln, Illinois.

In December 2013, we celebrated William's 90th birthday. He still travels all over the country in his big white van, visiting friends and family, with the help of just his atlas. He even came to our house and celebrated my 16th birthday and Thanksgiving with us this past year. William told us a story about when he was growing up, "One day in Payson, IL, I was looking at some trinkets at the grocery store. I put two or three in my pocket and left. Later, my dad saw them and asked where I had gotten them. Luckily, I did not lie, but I told him what I had done. He sat down and gave me a firm lesson on stealing and honesty. Then, he ordered me to return the items to the storekeeper and apologize. It was difficult, but helpful in keeping me straight ever since." He warns us against stealing, and reminds us of the importance of integrity. He also encourages us to know God's Word and live by it. William Roland, my great-grandfather, is an inspiration to me as I pursue serving the Lord every day.

My Corvette

Kristen Steele

A collage of images is linked with turning sixteen, most of which involve receiving a license and more freedom. For me, it doesn't quite work that way. Being visually impaired definitely puts a few more stumbling blocks in one's path as a teenager, especially when it comes to independence.

Sure, I had received ongoing training on cane skills since before I can remember, but still, a missing piece held me apart from sighted friends. Among the enigma of chaos created from life's transitions, pinpointing it was difficult at first. For one thing, I desperately longed for freedom from my mom guiding me through unfamiliar places or the awkward moment of having to ask a friend to do so and hoping not to be left behind. I'm a perfectionist and fear looking out of place. I think it hit me around the time I met a girl a year older than I, who was losing her vision and appeared sighted.

A cane cannot direct me, showing me where others are going to follow and how to find the door when a class is dismissed or the counter at a store. It can only let me know what is directly in front of me, but her guide dog could. I envied the carefree power he gave her. As she said, he is her "furry set of eyes, leading the way."

After she underwent training and received her companion, I knew I had to apply to a program — it was the key to unlocking a world of vision ahead of me. Near the middle of my sophomore year, I submitted an application to the Kansas Specialty Dog School (KSDS.) Excitement tormented me, as if I were awaiting a special, unexpected surprise. During a follow-up interview, I was asked: "Why would you like a dog at this point in your life?" I replied, "I wanted the self-sufficiency everyone else my age receives with driving." (Although I have driven with my family frantically sitting in the passenger seat, threatening to shove me out of the way and hit the brake if needed, it's just not the same.)

After being accepted two months prior, I met my best friend and "son" on July 5, 2013. (A tornado had just hit the KSDS buildings, requiring the trainers to work with us in my area.) "What do you see?" I asked my mom,

as a van pulled into our drive. After a pause, her response was, “A ton of hair! You got your Golden.” Moments later, I held the paw of Corvette, a Golden Retriever from the fast-car-themed litter. Thinking back on it, my driver’s license comment had paid off with some correlation to the placement.

People often ask me to describe our first day together, and the only thing I can think to say is that we fell in love with each other at first sight. Corvette knows more commands than I can remember to practice with him and leads me around obstacles that I’m not even aware exist at the time. Doing the simplest of tasks, alone but still together, are so rewarding, such as going on walks, navigating a crowded school, and finding an open chair.

At times, I feel as though I’m some sort of a public celebrity. I’m not able to let others pet Corvette, as he would become overly distracted and disorientate me. However, I try to be positive and am open to answering as many questions as possible. In my eyes, it’s impossible to change what you’re born with; you can only be a better person because of it for yourself and those around you. The fact that I may never be able to drive is irrelevant when I received my own Corvette at age sixteen and have the pleasure of meeting so many exceptional people, some of whom are complete strangers but have a special story of their beloved pets to share; some are other guide dog users or those who need help crossing the bridge from a cane to a dog guide. It’s hearing about complete strangers’ smiles as we pass or the person who stops me to say, “He’s beautiful!” or “Aww!” That is, sometimes, just the reassurance I need. In any case, meeting new friends never grows old. Answering their questions is only helping one more person to understand what I’ve learned. Every day is a new adventure, but having each other makes everything worthwhile.

The confidence I have now is amazing, always knowing he is on my side. “Give me five,” I say at the end of a long day, and instantly, his paw reaches up to touch my hand. “We made it!” Perfect teams are nonexistent; we are perfect for each other, though, with a myriad of unique similarities. To me, that’s all that matters. Often, it is the things we never had before that we cannot imagine a life without.

The Great Glass Eye

Cooper Ward



Many are curious about how I came to acquire my glass eye. Well, the story is one of the greatest highlights of my life. One of the strangest adventures of my life, as well. In the end, I witnessed the most beautiful thing I had ever seen, and in turn, acquired a glass eye. Allow me to share my story with you

It all began in my cottage. I was balancing pearls on my favorite stick, when I heard a strange noise coming from inside the house. Cautiously, I followed the noise to its origin. I found myself at the bathroom door. I placed my ear on the door. It was definitely where the sound was coming from. It sounded like glass being grinded down. What could it be? Vermin? I grabbed my baseball bat, just in case.

I opened the door quickly, revealing an Italian-looking man sitting on the bathroom counter. He was rubbing two expensive looking dinner plates together. Before I could digest what was going on, he smashed the plates on the ground and flicked my nose. Instantly, I was in a strange forest. I had no idea where this forest could be, but it was definitely no ordinary forest. The trees were colossal, the fungi were at least ten times their normal size, and the sound of bells was faintly heard.

A strange bird with the body of a peacock and the head of a man revealed itself from behind a nearby bush. It approached me without hesitation. I hoped it had the intellect of a man, but all hope sank when its eyes rolled back, and it began to scream at me. It was no ordinary scream. It seemed partially human, but intertwined with bestial intent. Before I knew it, a large collection of these man-peacocks emerged from the arbor. All of them seemed quite upset.

I had to escape. I did not know how dangerous these creatures were, but I knew I couldn't take any chances. I was on the move. I heard the pitter

patter of man-peacock legs behind me, but soon I had escaped their sight. Looking for a place to hide, I retreated to a nearby cave. The screaming of the man-peacocks became more and more distant. I escaped them, for now. Suddenly, I heard the sound of a match being struck behind me.

I spun around and was eye-to-eye with a bearded elderly man lighting up a large wooden tobacco pipe. The red lighting from the ignited tobacco barely made his face visible.

“Who are you?” I asked. No response. The tobacco smoke reached my nostrils. It smelled of something sweet, but the tobacco itself was quite pungent. Any attempt of communication was met with the same blank stare. As the tobacco burned, the light became progressively dimmer. Before the cave returned to complete blackness, I could make out a devious looking smile on his face, barely visible through the tobacco light. Silence.

My eyes were blinded by a sudden ray of light from inside the cave. It seemed distant. I could hear the faint sound of bells, the same bells I heard in the forest. The light became more and more powerful in its appearance, and the bells became louder and louder. A loud horn pierced my ears. I covered my ears and brought my vision to the floor. I was now standing on railroad tracks. It finally clicked. A train was approaching.

I ran out of the cave as fast as I could. I jumped out of the way as nimbly as I could, barely dodging it.

The train halted in an impressive stop without first slowing down. The captain of the train emerged. A chrome man. He had no hair, no expression on his face, and no clothing. He approached me quickly. I raised my fists to defend myself. The chrome man opened his mouth, projecting eight blue ribbons that wrapped around me. I’m not sure what they were made of, but they rendered me powerless. I was unable to move. I screamed for help, but a ribbon silenced me.

As I struggled to free myself, the chrome man brought his nose to mine, staring deeply into my eyes. I stared back, paralyzed in fear, sweat dripping down my face. He opened his mouth, and a chrome, yet serpent-like, tongue rolled outward. Sitting neatly upon his tongue was a jewel. The jewel radiated a majestic blue light, yet the perfectly cut gem itself was brightly multicolored. Yellow, orange, and red colors could all be seen swirling within. All was silent as I gazed upon its beauty. This gem was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen.

My hands were bound, but I was determined to take this gem. Suddenly, it came to me. I violently threw my bound body face-first into the gem, driving it into my eye socket. I finally had it in my possession. The chrome man let out an ungodly moan and blew away in the wind as silver

dust. His source of power was now mine, and I wasn't about to give it up. I felt a strange energy now coursing through my body.

I felt my bound-body levitate off the ground. I had been given the power of flight! I quickly mastered by new power, and flew out of the forest to the nearest sign of human civilization. It turned out the forest was near Cortland, Nebraska. I was able to quickly fly home without an issue. The ribbons loosened and fell from my body by the time I reached my house. I opened the door and promptly sat in my comforter chair. I lit up a cigar and basked in my new found prize, my beautiful eye.

To this day, everyone knows me for my wonderful eye. All the attention and flirting I receive comes as no surprise. I am downright beautiful with my new eye. My eye has also helped me in the market. My new taxi service, *Flyu*, is a one-seat cheap way to travel far distances quickly. Just hold on tight to my back. I can't promise safety for the passenger, but I can promise speed. I do not recommend buying my taxi service on rainy days or particularly cold ones. It will not end well.

My mind, sometimes, drifts back to the mysterious forest. Are there other gems like mine to be found? Perhaps, even greater treasures are buried under the fantastic woods. Any thoughts I usually have about going back are halted the moment I remember the peacock-men, though. I don't want to deal with them. Who knows what other nasty creatures lay dormant within the forest? I'm quite content with what I have acquired in my short visit to that strange place.

Beauty can mean many things to different people within unique walks of life. For some men, it's beautiful simplicity. It's the loving touch of a beautiful woman. It's the wonder of the world. The sound of fantastic orchestral compositions. For me, it's my wonderful glass eye. I do not need any prize from this Earth, for I have claimed the most precious thing it has to offer. Go on, it's okay to stare into my beautiful eye.

Not Just Coffee

Carolyn Weisbecker



The shop was full, but Ralph didn't mind. In fact, that's why he came there, day after day, week after week, not just for the coffee, but for the company, and oh, what company there was. Nettie's Not Just Coffee Shop was located across from a high school, next to a busy book store, and best yet, just one block from the senior apartment complex that Ralph called home for the last three years.

"Ralph, Ralph, over here, I save you a spot," roared Anton in his thick, strong accent.

Ralph waved then shuffled toward the end of the long line.

"Ralph, stay right there. I'll bring you your usual," a woman called out.

"You're gonna spoil me, Meg," Ralph said with his usual protest, as he tried to shove a handful of quarters into the woman's hand. He already knew what was coming next.

"No, you don't, Ralph. I told you that the coffee is on me for as long as I'm here," Meg said, suddenly avoiding his eyes.

"Is something wrong, Meg?" he asked in a gentle voice.

"Everything's fine," she murmured, smoothing down her apron. "Tell you what, Ralph. I've just removed a pan of apple muffins from the oven. Can I bring you one?"

Ralph smiled and shook his head.

"No, thank you, dear. I'm fine with just coffee."

Ralph carefully inched his way through the crowd of teenagers, careful not to set his cane down on anyone's shoes. It wasn't easy walking through the room, with his cane in one hand and his drink in the other, but he passed easily enough. The regulars knew to get out of his way lest they end up with coffee on their expensive sports shoes.

Anton watched Ralph through narrow dark eyes. He knew the old man

wouldn't be happy with his news, but he had to tell him.

"Meg is like an angel," Ralph said, setting his coffee down. He turned to Anton. "Yes, indeed, that girl is like a daughter to me."

"Quit flirting with the young lady, Ralph, and sit down," Anton said a bit impatiently.

Ralph fixed his gaze on his friend. "So, tell me, dear Anton, how are you today?"

Anton's face fell.

"I could be better," he said, gesturing at the papers scattered across the table. "These papers I grade, they are terrible. Simply terrible. Do my students not listen to anything I say?"

"I thought you enjoyed teaching young people," Ralph replied, peering over the rim of his cup.

Anton gathered the papers toward the center of the table before pulling one out.

"Will you look at this?" he cried. "I ask students to describe one Russian holiday or celebration." Anton glanced down at the paper. "And you know what my students say?"

Ralph glanced sideways at a teenage boy who was bumping his chair with his book bag.

"Do you mind, young man? I feel like I'm on a ship, and it's sinking. And by the way, you are jostling my coffee," Ralph grumbled.

"It's cool, man, it's cool," the boy replied with a laugh, stepping away. "I sure wouldn't want to jostle yer coffee."

Ralph raised one of his thick gray eyebrows.

"I should say not," Ralph replied, gruffly. He squinted at his watch. "Shouldn't you be getting to school, young man?"

The boy's glance shifted, and his face broke into a smile.

"What? Ask my teacher here. Yo, Baron man, what's up?"

"My friend here is right. You should be in school studying, Michael, not wasting time in a coffee shop, and by the way, you refer to me as Mr. Barinov. Understand?" Anton snapped.

"Whoa, take it easy, Mr. Baron. Man's gotta have his brain juice, right?"

"Did you say brain?" Anton shuffled through the papers and drew one out. "Michael, the question was to describe one, just one Russian holiday or celebration." He glared at the boy. "And you know what you wrote?"

Michael shuffled his feet.

"I don't remember," he mumbled.

"You wrote, 'One Russian celebration is the bear festival where

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Russians dance with bears while drinking vodka because anyone who dances with bears should get drunk first.” Anton sighed and shook his head. “Do you not listen to anything I say in class?”

Michael’s chin shot up.

“Well, you talked about festivals and how Russians used to dress up like bears and stuff,” Michael replied, “and everyone knows how much Russians like vodka.”

Ralph pounded his fist into the table. “He’s got you there, Anton.”

“Ah, ah, ah,” Anton shook his head and sighed. “Michael, you are an idiot.”

“Whoa there, Mr. B.,” Michael stuttered, taking a quick look around. “I think there’s some law or somthin’ that teachers aren’t supposed to call their students names.”

“That’s it. You fail. And that is why you are an idiot,” Anton said.

“Now, go,” he said with a wave of his hand, “and leave me and my friend in peace.”

“I fail? I fail?” Michael cried. “But the school year’s just started.”

Ralph watched the boy’s face grow redder and redder and Anton’s face grow grimmer and grimmer, and he smiled. This was one of the reasons why he came here. It was for the drama. To watch the interactions between young and old people alike.

“Come on, Anton. Give the boy another chance,” he urged. “It’s not his fault he’s an idiot.”

“Fine,” Anton grunted. “I give you one more chance. Now, go to school. I will see you in class.”

Ralph watched the boy scurry out the door and run across the street.

“You don’t seem to be in the best of moods, Anton.” Ralph studied him more carefully. “Problems at school?”

Anton averted Ralph’s eyes, as he busily gathered his papers and stuffed them into his briefcase. Finally, he looked up.

“How long have you been coming here, Ralph?”

“Ever since my children forced me to move down the street to that old folk’s home. About three years, I’d say.” Ralph smiled wryly. “This place has been a godsend. Gives me a purpose, a place to go and meet new friends. Like you, Anton.”

“I’ve never heard you mention children,” Anton said. “Where do they live?”

Ralph rubbed the stubble on his chin and wondered whether he should break his rule and ask for a second cup of coffee. If he avoided Meg, he could then pay for it as he didn’t believe in milking a good situation.

"I ask about your children, Ralph," Anton repeated.

"My children? Well, let's see. Son Henry lives on the west coast, does something with the movies, I think. Other son Frank lives down south, maybe Florida? I haven't seen him for a while. Hope one them alligators haven't gotten him. Oh, and my daughter, Lucy, now she's a good girl," Ralph stopped and gave Anton a stern look. "She'd make a mighty good wife, Anton, if you need one, that is. She's never married, but if she found the right man." He grinned and shrugged his shoulders.

Anton, who rarely smiled, gave his friend a small one.

"Thank you, my friend, but I am in a happy relationship."

Ralph shrugged again.

"Well, Lucy is a decent-looking girl. Not beautiful, mind you, but decent. She travels a lot, got some big advertising job. Does call me every few weeks, though, to see if I need anything. None of my boys do that." Ralph glanced around the room. "Lucy's my favorite," he whispered.

"Hey, Ralph, how about breaking your one-cup rule?" Meg hovered over him, a freshly-brewed pot in hand.

"My dear! You must've been reading my mind," Ralph boomed

The two men waited until Meg refilled their cups, then watched as she moved around the room, picking up abandoned newspapers and clearing off tables.

Anton cleared his throat.

"I have a friend who is a contractor. We had dinner last night, and he told me something that you should know," Anton said, pausing to gulp his coffee.

"Really?" Ralph said, surprised. "What might that be?"

"My friend said that his company has been hired to redevelop this property."

"What are you talking about? Look how busy this place is," Ralph stammered.

"Yes," Anton agreed. "This is a busy area. Probably the owner of the building got a good price."

Ralph was silent, as the news sank in. Finally, he spoke.

"Do you know what this will be redeveloped as? Maybe, another coffee shop?"

Anton avoided Ralph's eyes.

"No, no coffee shop. My friend said a community health clinic."

Ralph drained his cup.

"When?" he said, softly.

"As early as next month, I'm told," Anton replied.

Ralph clenched his lips then gave a big sigh.

"Figures," he grumbled. "Just when the coffee got better."

Anton pulled his jacket on.

"I'm sorry, Ralph. I know how much this place means to you."

Ralph nodded and reached for his cane.

"What will you do, Anton?" Ralph asked, worriedly. "I know how much you enjoy having coffee before school."

"I am flexible. I'll go someplace else," he replied. "Probably to the bookstore next to the school."

"The bookstore? They serve coffee there?" Ralph asked, incredulous.

Anton nodded. "Yes, they have one of those big coffee shops. You think this is crowded? That place is standing room only. Students everywhere, hogging tables. It's not like this friendly little mom 'n pop shop where they give you free coffee."

"Well, that settles it, then." Ralph reached for his cane and stood up. "I'll meet you there tomorrow. You might have to use your influence to get those kids to give up their table."

"But, but," Anton stuttered. "I thought this place was a godsend to you. That Meg was like your daughter. Won't you miss her?"

Anton shrugged.

"Of course. But it's not like I don't already have a daughter. Remember Lucy?"

The bookstore's coffee shop was full, but Ralph didn't mind. In fact, that's why he came there, day after day, week after week, not just for the coffee, but for the company. And oh, what company there was. The bookstore coffee shop was located across from the high school, next to a busy health clinic, and best yet, just a block and a half from the senior apartment complex that Ralph called home for the last three years.

"Hey, Ralph, over here, I save you a spot," roared Anton in his strong, thick accent.

Ralph waved then headed toward the end of the long line.

"Ralph, stay right there, I'll bring you your usual," a woman called out.

"You're gonna spoil me, Ashley," Ralph said with his usual protest as he tried to shove a handful of quarters into the woman's hand. He already knew what was coming next.

"No you don't, Ralph. It's my treat," Ashley said.

Ralph hung his cane from the edge of the table and turned to Anton.

"Ashley is like an angel," he said, setting his coffee down. "Yes, indeed, that girl is like a daughter to me."

Cheers to the Survivors

Sarah Wentzler



During the spring break of my sophomore year, my brother and I traveled to Wake Forest Hospital in North Carolina. My dad had been diagnosed with stage 2-throat cancer. There had been surgical complication, when the doctors went to remove the remaining ten percent of the tumor. They cut an artery causing my dad to bleed out, which led to performing an emergency tracheotomy procedure. When the artery was severed, he almost passed away. I was in Nebraska, at the time, so I didn't know what was going

on, and since the tumor was in his throat, he couldn't talk to me. He was supposed to be able to talk to me at 10 a.m., and he didn't have contact with me until 8 p.m. later that night. I got the call from my stepmom saying that there were complications, and she didn't know what happened, but my dad was in the Intensive Care Unit. I just had to go to North Carolina, and I did.

When I got there, I could smell the old blood and fermenting mucus. The room had blue walls and white floors with little speckles on them. My dad was crippled in his bed from the pain of the trachea tube; it irritated his throat causing everything in his lungs to come up and out. His whole body cringed every time he hacked, blood shooting out from his mouth and his trachea tube. The tube was a little maroon rubber piece with a cap on the end; there was a band around his neck, which held the cotton swab. It was the worst thing to see and to hear him say, "Every time I eat or drink, I choke myself and have to call the nurse to help." I hated sitting in the chair watching my dad cry, not being able to sit up, eat, or do anything by himself, a picture that will never leave my mind. My dad's favorite thing to do is cook, and the doctors cut an artery connected to his tongue so he can't taste now. It was difficult to sit and listen to him cry, saying he can't talk

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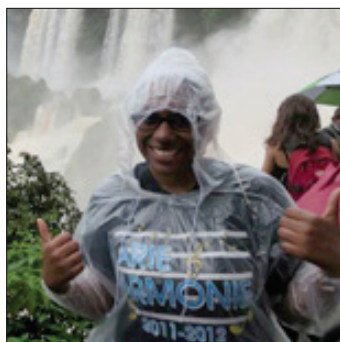
right or eat food. If he takes a breath too fast, he gets winded, and drinking certain alcohol causes his throat to swell up.

No one really understands what it's like to have someone so close to you hurt and suffer and all you can do is sit there and say, "I love you." I couldn't do anything for him, in the hospital. I slept on the horrible hospital couch my whole spring break. My heart broke every time he would cough. When I walked into the hospital that first time and saw him lying in the hospital bed with the color drained from his face, his body bruised and swollen, he smiled. This warmed my heart, because with all the pain he was in, he still put a smile on his face. My dad and I have a little tradition, when we first wake up or the first time we see someone we smile, and that's what he did. Every time he told me, "It's okay, Sarah. I'm going to beat this," he made those two large cuts on the side of his neck disappear. Nothing could hide the scars they started from the trachea tube and continued all the way up to his ear on both sides of his neck. The scars are permanently there forever to remember this heart wrenching time.

Dwelling on all the negative things was never what we did though; we looked at all the positive aspects. We knew God didn't want him to go when the doctors cut the artery, when his throat closed up, or every time he chokes on his food. It was just a bump in the road, and my dad was fighting for his life, fighting to stay alive. My dad is my hero because in the mix of everything going on, he still put his family first. So much was going on in my life at that time, and after I came back from spring break, I wasn't going to let cancer distract me from my school work. That's not what my dad wanted. At the end of my sophomore year, I finished with a 3.0 GPA, which was the highest GPA I ever achieved. He taught me to be strong and fight for what I believe in, and what's a better example than my dad's ability to beat cancer. My dad was two years cancer free April 17, 2014, and this is the best feeling in the world.

Writing: The Unexpected Healer

Leah Whitney



For some, beauty is the ability to escape from one's surroundings. Writing is a magic carpet ride, having the power to take one's mind away from reality without any strings of limitation. The act of expressing oneself on paper is portrayed as a pastime or hobby, but it has been the means for both physical and mental healing. Peter Roget, creator of *Roget's Thesaurus* used writing as a way to cope in life and to fend off a history of medical

illness. William Earnest Henley, writer of the inspirational poem "Invictus," used writing as the vehicle to reach beyond his physical handicap. Writing should be used as a therapeutic measure for those who are suffering from mental and physical ailments.

Peter Mark Roget was born January 18, 1778, in London, England. Roget grew up in an unstable household due to the fact that his mother was constantly moving their family from place to place. Roget had to deal with his mother's unpredictable bouts of depression and instability. From childhood on, his mother, Catherine, treated him as an emotional support and lived her life vicariously through him. Because of her widow status, she also leaned on him for financial support. Roget felt smothered by his mother's constant affections and frequently used journaling to help him cope with the attention and the death of his father. "Jean Roget's [Roget's father] early death had equally profound effects on his son...Roget would reveal his lifelong struggle in a poignant list, 'Dates of Deaths.' In this list, Roget would only record the deaths of thirty people; those he felt truly close to" (31). Peter would frequently vent to his journal and not share with those who surrounded him. Every member of his family seemed to carry on the English stereotype of not indulging in feelings. Roget was a dreamer, a child constantly lost in thought, but his thoughts were filled with tangible subjects, such as geometry and algebra. He began his notebook at a young

age: “at the heart of Peter’s childhood notebook are his lists of words, written in a neat hand and consisting of Latin words juxtaposed with their English meanings” (39). This was the beginning of *Roget’s Thesaurus*. In addition to that, it was also his outlet away from the world surrounding him because of: “his anxiety about exploring new environments,” and he was put to ease because of his ability to organize the things he came in contact with (40). The way Roget’s mind functioned from his early childhood paved the way to his success.

The *Man Who Made Lists* documents the life of Peter Roget using the theme of his greatest creation, the thesaurus; a word with its synonyms follows every title. In the biography, chapter two is titled “The Brilliant Student” and is accompanied by the word “learner.” This creates the transition from Roget’s boyhood into his college venture. The creator of the thesaurus went to Edinburgh, Scotland, to complete his undergraduate education and to later begin medical school. Roget found joy (a lot of it was relief from his ever-prying mother) in his studies. He went on to become a doctor.

Through his college journey he always wrote. He shared correspondence with his mother and his uncle Samuel. The finishing of the thesaurus did not begin until the end of Roget’s life. He was particularly inspired by the annoyance of another writer’s book of synonyms. Lynch Piozzi’s synonym book was described by Peter as “nothing but a bunch of irregularities” (252). Roget then decided to put his indispensable book of lists “into a form that all English-speakers all around the globe could use to express themselves clearly and precisely. He would make one last effort to restore order to the world” (253). The thesaurus is one of the most recognized books today, which was made possible because of the comfort its writer found in putting his thoughts, his views of the world in a journal. His list began as something that helped him function in the world, but it expanded into a tool used by anyone who is looking for the word that makes a precise impact.

Research today is proving that writing has impact on physical and mental wellness. Dr. James Pennebaker is a professor in the Department of Psychology at The University of Texas at Austin. “For nearly twenty years, Dr. James W. Pennebaker has been giving people an assignment: write down your deepest feelings about an emotional upheaval in your life for fifteen or twenty minutes a day for four consecutive days. Many of those who followed his simple instructions have found their immune systems strengthened. Others have seen their grades improve. Sometimes entire lives have changed” (Griffith). Using writing as an outlet has tangible results.

Writing is changing lives. It is not an abstract concept. Dr. Pennebaker also saw that those who simply wrote down secrets and tossed into the trash later saw improvement in mood. Writing is for the tough situations people go through, such as divorce or having a tough time commuting to work. “Emotional upheavals touch every part of our lives. You do not just lose a job, you do not just get divorced. These things affect all aspects of who we are—our financial situation, our relationships with others, our views of ourselves [and] our issues of life and death. Writing helps us focus and organize the experience” (6). Baker’s message of writing to unwind our minds has been adapted into workshops. The Charlotte, N.C.-based company WordPlay recently offered a workshop titled ‘Writing to Heal’ that borrows heavily from Pennebaker’s work. The participants brought a life event they hoped to work through. The students who participated came away feeling that the writing made a difference in their experiences (13). The most important feature about this workshop and writing in general is that the people benefiting are not authors trying to be published or English majors preparing to write a thesis. This form of expression is for everyone.

Writing improves overall wellness. An article written by *Penzu.com* states, “Simply writing about important experiences for as little as fifteen minutes per day can not only reduce stress and anxiety, it can decrease visits to the physician as well. It can also increase anti-body response, lower heart rate and electro-dermal activity, and lower pain and medication use” (“The Benefits”). Writing for a short period of time has a myriad of benefits. In the United States, approximately twelve to fourteen percent of Americans suffer from depression (School). This mental affliction is treated commonly by prescription. “Retail prices for commonly prescribed antidepressants range from about twenty dollars a month to more than four hundred dollars a month” (“*Consumer Reports*”). People who need to take depression medication are potentially spending \$4,800 dollars a year, if they do not have health insurance. About 82 million Americans have either inadequate or no health insurance (“Healthcare Crisis”). Journaling can reduce the amount of pills people take to fight a variety of mental diseases. Not only does writing help us become less dependent on our medication, it also saves thousands of dollars annually.

It has been shown that writing daily allowed people who have tried many diets to find success in their weight loss goals. “Those who kept daily food records lost twice as much weight as those who kept no records. It seems that the simple act of writing down what we eat encourages people to consume fewer calories. “[It is the] process of reflecting on what you eat that helps us become aware of our habits, and hopefully changes our

behavior” (“The Benefits”). Writing down what a person eats leaves no leeway for dieters to lie to themselves. What they wrote down is the truth, and since they are being honest with themselves, progress can take place in one’s weight loss journey.

The act of writing has been proven to have profound mental benefits on memory. Our working memory capacity—the ability to keep our attention focused in the face of distraction and interference—can significantly improve through expressive journal writing. On average, students saw an 11% increase in their working memory by writing about negative experiences, 4.5% increase by writing about positive experiences, and a 2.5% percentage increase when simply writing about their daily activities in a diary. These percentages were directly correlated with an increase in the grades of the students in the study. (“The Benefits”)

If parents see their students falling behind in class or lacking focus, writing is a simple solution which will cause an incredibly positive change in the work of the student. Not only does it help to improve grades, writing can also be used to help cope with detrimental situations. It is also encouraged that those who face any traumatic experience write about it. “Most people cope with traumatic events by trying to forget them. They constantly avoid thinking about their traumas and try to control their emotions. This method of coping is extremely hazardous to our health and well-being” (10). Overall, writing reduces stress, a factor that has led to a numerous amount of physical and mental illness. Writing as a preventative measure will decrease the amount of stress-related ailments in the United States.

William Ernest Henley was a poet of the nineteenth century. At the age of thirteen, Henley contracted tuberculosis of the bone. A few years later, the progression of the disease led to the amputation of his leg from the knee down (“Invictus”). While recovering in a hospital, this is where Henley wrote the poem he is most famous for, “Invictus.” “I am the master of my fate; / I am the captain of my soul” (“William Ernest”). Henley did not let his circumstance beat him. His spirit of life kept him going. He translated his sense of overcoming into this poem. “Invictus” is the written form of his soul, his determination. His poem went on to inspire others.

Nelson Mandela, the president of South Africa, used Henley’s poem to keep himself alive during his many years in prison. The poet’s spirit survives through his written words. Nothing stopped him even though he had a physical disability. His writing ability helped him see life in a way that he would be motivated to continue. His poem is a legacy in itself and has been used in numerous works. Not only was the poem quoted in the

movie *Invictus* to inspire South Africa's rugby team, it was used in the movies *Casablanca*, and *Kings Row*. It is also quoted in its entirety by the Air Force Academy Cadets for morale and motivation ("Invictus"). Writing helped Henley to overcome his situation, and now his poem helps others do the same today.

Everyone has different strengths. "The Theory of Multiple Intelligences [is] a model of intelligence that differentiates abilities into specific (primarily sensory) "modalities," rather than seeing it as dominated by a single general ability" ("Theory of"). Howard Gardner, the creator of this theory, says that there are 8 ½ intelligences that are universal to the human species. Writing specifically deals with the linguistic and intrapersonal intelligences. Writing is language; writing is communication. When a writer tells a story or describes his feelings through poetry or a journal entry, he is truly expressing himself. The intrapersonal truth is self-expression and reflection. Writing allows a person to sit back and look at his life and the situation he is facing. Whether what is happening is good or bad, the person who is writing gets to take a moment to analyze the situation through one's personal perspective.

Writing brings peace of mind. It is the chance to lay out everything on the page and see life for what it truly is. Writing is the ultimate therapy. Instead of taking a medication that temporarily fixes the ailment, writing allows a person to journey deeper to find the remedy inside. The healing ability of writing is not a myth or fairytale. The unexpected answer is right in front of us. Society needs to turn to this method of ridding ourselves of anxieties. With writing, a person is discovering the truth of the underlying issue. This is a big change from the instant gratification attitude of this country, but the benefits we will reap are incomparable. Writing is the cure.

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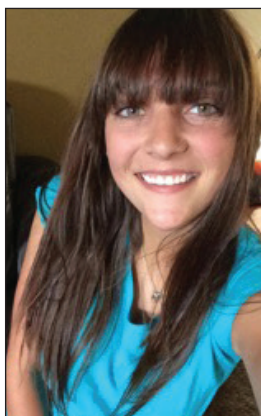
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Caterpillar :: Gracelyn Knapp

A Sudden Death

Mia Wilken



It is an interesting topic, is it not? Death is such a simple thing, yet so complex. Every human being knows it is coming, but it is seldom spoken of. Some people see death in their near future due to an illness, but to others, life is taken from them when they do not see it coming. This is what happened to one of my favorite teachers. On Thursday, March 13, 2014, my teacher, mentor, and trainer was taken from this Earth, as he biked down a two-lane, country highway. Not only was he my teacher, but he helped me choose my path in life, and that is what is helping me push through this tragedy.

Mr. Johnston first became my teacher, when I was a sophomore in high school, when I was enrolled in a course called Athletic Training and Sports Injury. This was the class that introduced me to my future career of physical therapy. This is also the class I began to truly know “Mista J.” Through his lectures, his passion would shine brighter than the sun. Mr. Johnston was the athletic trainer at Millard West High School in Millard, NE. Before that, Mr. J. was the athletic trainer for the USA Olympic team. He had a true passion for helping people and making them well. Whether it was a physical or mental injury, he was there to fix it.

The following year, I enrolled in another one of his classes, Athletic Training and Sports Injury Internship. This was the same class with a twist. Besides getting more in depth information, the class and I were able to become trainers. We worked alongside Mr. Johnston in the trainer’s room, as well as, the sidelines of football, basketball, and volleyball games. This is when I began to learn Mr. J’s true personality. Not only was he caring, but he was rarely serious. Every day in the training room, there were smiles and laughter. Who would have thought in a room for healing injuries that there would be laughter? Athletes would come in, even if they were not injured, just to say, “Hi,” and get a laugh before a practice or game.

Along with training and healing, Mr. Johnston had an unbelievable love for biking. In past years, he biked mountains, trails, and country roads. Every day over his lunch break, he was going for a bike ride on the country roads. On Thursday, he was doing exactly that. At 12:30 p.m., riding down 260th street going west, but a driver heading east struck him. The end of school came, and as students headed for the training room, the bad news began to spread. I received the text at 3:30. At the time, I was picking up my brother. As we were leaving the parking lot, I broke down in tears. The tears did not stop until I had the comfort of my friends. Once my friends left, the tears started back up again.

I could not believe it. My favorite teacher, the man who guided me to a career path, the one person who made me want to go to school, was gone. After all the tears and speaking with teachers who loved him as much as I did, I came to terms with the situation. This was the beginning of overcoming this personal dragon in my life. First, I realized he died doing what he loved. Although it was tragic, it was the first day in months he was able to bike outside. Boy oh boy, it was a beautiful day. I am sure he biked many beautiful trails before, but I began to think he was riding his bike on the most beautiful trail in the world.

Mr. Johnston lived an amazing life and was able to do things I will probably never be able to do myself. One thing I am determined to become is a miniature female version of him in the health field. Hopefully, he is up there guiding me in the right direction and will help me become a successful physical therapist and touch just as many lives as he was able to do. I am nowhere near overcoming this dragon, this life obstacle, but through hard work and determination, I will. He influenced me in more ways than one, and he will continue to live on through me.

We Would Be Wise

Emily Woods

Michelangelo has long been hailed as one of the world's greatest artists. He is responsible for such masterpieces as the ceiling in the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican and the statue of *David* in Florence, Italy. His works are so spectacular that they have been guarded or tucked safely behind museum doors. He may have been an accomplished artist and sculptor, but through his art he also showed a depth of understanding and empathy toward the humanness of our race.

Michelangelo said, "Faith in oneself is the best and safest course." He understood that human nature tends to doubt itself. We regularly check in with trusted peers to make sure that the course we are on is right. Often, we are unsure and weak. Trusting in one's own abilities and gifts is the surest way to lead to happiness.

Looking at some of his unfinished sculptures, we may wonder what the point was of leaving them unfinished. I believe that Michelangelo did not leave them unfinished. I believe he was practicing. Possibly, he was working on getting an angle just right or trying a new technique to reveal details not seen before. The point, however, is that he kept trying new things and new pieces of stone until he got the desired results. He knew well the images he had in his mind. If he practiced and believed in himself, he would be able to recreate the images he saw and bring them to life for the world to view.

We would be wise to take lessons from the artistic journey of Michelangelo. We can take his advice to heart and believe in our own gifts. Each individual should search his own gifts and cultivate them. We should practice our own specialties until they become second nature to us and we have become their masters. There is greatness in all of us. What is inside the stone may need to be chiseled away, carefully, but a shape will form, and we will be able to see the beauty inside it. Michelangelo described his artistic process like this, "I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free."

Great Grandma Hastings's Hands

Leslie Worden

In my home, I have several handmade blankets, which are mismatched patches of old fabric from outdated clothes, shabby curtains, and thread-bare sheets. These little bits of cloth are tied together with a rainbow of bright yarn. Crudely made and not particularly pleasing to the eye, they are heavy and warm. I treasure these blankets, lovingly constructed by a pair of frail, small hands marked with spots and wrinkles, their fingers bent with arthritis, and they were the most beautiful hands I ever witnessed.

At any given moment, I would find Betty Celia Hastings' hands busy. They filled their time in the kitchen cooking for her family, canning vegetables grown from her garden, and stitching together her quilts. When her hands tired of those pursuits, they could be found with large knitting needles in them accompanied by the sound of the soft and rapid tapping and sliding of the aluminum sticks as they wove together her yarns. If her hands needed a rest from all that work, they would be found putting together a thousand-piece puzzle, or painting a portrait of her beloved French poodle. Her hands were never idle; she never let them be.

Great-Grandma Hastings' home was an example of thriftiness. She was a product of WWII, and her drive to find a purpose for every scrap and save every penny ran deeply. That drive was driven further by a need to care for her large and ever expanding family. Her home was always filled with children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She had a use for everything, and her rooms were filled with assortments of old mayonnaise jars and coffee cans holding anything from lost buttons, screws, and lengths of colorful yarn no longer than three inches. Old carpet remnants lined the borders of her garden to keep out the weeds. No matter the scrap, she could and would use it.

Each Thursday morning, Grandma could be found at the local thrift shop. It was the day they marked down their inventory to \$.25. Great-Grandma Hastings would spend her time there, carefully scouring the aisles in pursuit of those precious items that would cost her only a quarter. Her tastes were indiscriminate. She would choose things she knew she would use, regardless of color, texture, or condition. Most of her finds were the

things that were overlooked by everyone else. She would come home with large bags filled with her newly purchased oddities and get straight to work.

It is what she was able to create with all those seemingly useless things that was incredible. Taking the strange assortment of textiles in wools, polyesters, and cottons, Great-Grandma Hastings' withered hands would cut the fabrics into uneven squares and rectangles. She would take those imperfect shapes, whether or not they suited each other, and carefully stitch them into thick patchworks of warm quilts. After finishing one, Grandma would simply place it in a pile with all the other completed comforters. The stack of neatly folded blankets would sit there and wait until someone came for a visit. Anyone who wanted a coverlet was welcome to choose one. I chose one that combined brown, wool plaid with maroon and gray zig-zags, orange hounds-tooth, and green and purple stripes, all tied together with neon-orange threads. Wrapping myself in the tired fabric, I can almost imagine what a hug would feel like from Grandma.

Grandma Hastings was not the kind of woman to offer a soft word or tender squeeze. I cannot recall a gentle touch or warm hug ever given by her. She was a tough woman who lived a difficult life. She was stubborn and practical and had little patience for frivolity. She had no room for open affection; she only knew hard work. The result was busy hands. I was only able to witness the result of her hands' labors toward the end of her life, deep into her eighties. From the stories I gathered, she slowed down a bit by the time I really got to know her.

Grandma Hastings was terrifying to me as a young child. She was filled with blunt words and stern warnings. She would make us pancakes with cream and raspberries fresh from the garden, making sure to fill our small bellies, and send us off to play for the day, with a firm reminder of where we were allowed to roam. Her home was nestled on several acres, but we were only allowed to explore a small portion of it. If we were caught with a deck of cards, she would admonish us harshly about the evils of gambling, then shuffle up her deck of pinochle cards and play with the grown-ups. All of us grandchildren quickly learned to navigate Grandma. We spoke only when spoken to, asked few questions, and made ourselves scarce.

It was not until I was older that I could appreciate the amazing woman she was. My parents brought her home on the condition she would get a spot on the acreage for herself. (She was willing to sell her home but too stubborn to actually leave.) She wanted a trailer, so they bought her one, and placed it next to the house she lived in for fifty years, complete with a white, picket fence. Having her as a neighbor was a difficulty for them. She had many opinions about the changes and updates they were making, none

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of them positive. Having her as a neighbor allowed me to foster a different relationship with her than the grandparent my family visited for a week in the summer.

As I sat and visited with her one afternoon, her hands were busily knitting together a mitten. It was difficult to distinguish between the clicking of her needles and the clacking of her dentures. We sat and chatted while she rocked in her oversized La-Z-Boy, working away at her current project. I spent most of the time listening to stories of her previous lives in Tennessee and Canada, watching her crooked yet adept fingers quickly working in sync with her needles and yarn. She had a never-ending pile of spun wool sitting to her left, and on her right was a loose pile of just completed mittens, oddly colored but bright. I just sat there with my hands folded in my lap in awe at what she was able to create with hands that were, surely, tired after all her years of labor.

I asked her to teach me to knit. She handed me a pair of needles and a ball of yarn, and my lesson began. Her knitting was simple; little loops linked together, creating a chain, and those chains woven together to create endless possibilities. She taught me a stitch and told me, "It's the only one you really need to know." When the short lesson was finished, Grandma picked up her own knitting and continued with her work. It was fall, and she wanted to have a good supply of mittens before the weather cooled. She would hand them out to anyone who needed them.

My great-grandmother's hands were old. They showed their age with spots on her paper-thin skin that stretched over blue and purple veins. The tips of her fingers were bent at odd angles, making it difficult for her to have full use of them. Her short fingers ended in tiny stubs of tidily trimmed fingernails that were yellowed and cracked. Her hands were rough and weathered, her palms covered in thick calluses from decades of work. I never heard her complain about pain or a lack of dexterity. She simply kept working.

The piles of blankets and mittens she amassed were handed out to any who asked and any who needed. At one point, she had such a large stash of her ugly quilts that she shipped over two-hundred to service members fighting in Iraq. She was embarrassed when they mentioned it in the local paper, she did not do it for the praise or accolades; she saw a need and filled it. Once they were gone, she quietly began building a new pile. She knew someone would be able to use a warm blanket.

To get an up close and personal look at my great-grandmother's hands, anyone might think that they were just the shriveled hands of an old woman. Their beauty may not be apparent to everyone; they no longer held their

youthful glow. Her hands were ancient and, to an untrained eye, useless. Her hands would never be seen on television selling lotions or rings, but they had a story to tell. They spoke of someone who would never be content sitting still. Their inability to remain fixed, helped her to create for the benefit of others. It was the only way she could show them love. She never sought admiration or a thank you. The beauty of her hands was in their action, despite the slowness that came with age. They never stopped, because there was too much work to do.

Sometimes, I look at myself and see a reflection of Grandma. Her determination, or perhaps, stubbornness to see a job through or to hold her ground is something she has passed through generations, and it has been placed in my hands. I have been known to spend hours at my own favorite thrift store, searching out my own treasures. I am proud of my thriftiness. Much of my time is spent caring for my family, because they are the ones who mean the most to me. Grandma taught me that. There are countless times when I have looked down at my hands and have found them dry and cracked, ending with chipped nails stained with dirt because of a day filled with endless housework and a garden to tend to. My grandmother would have thought that my hands are beautiful. More importantly, I can see the beauty in my own hands that work so hard for the people I love. Perhaps, one day, when I have grown tired and old, I will look down at my own shriveled fingers spotted with time and find the beauty in them that I was able to see in Great-Grandma Hastings' hands.



It Blushes

Tessa Adams

When the nation flashes its core,
Nebraska blushes.
Modest. Bashful. Discreet.
It is wide eyed from exposure
and emerges as the humble
heart of this giant republic.
Lackluster to some
and a haven of purity to others,
it blinks at its reflection.
Like a face before make up.
Hair before brush.
Skin before clothing.
Its humble canvas sits
open and available to
brush strokes.
Although calloused,
its idle parts refuse decay.
When it speaks it's an
exhale of gentle rhymes
and mollifying whispers,
escorting us through
a calm and unobtrusive life.
It sits suspended.
A sabbatical from expectation.
Because the future is too loaded.
Too unforgiving.
Beneath the union's shell
Nebraska apologizes
for the space it won't take up
and the noise it won't make
until the next time it is exposed,
and it blushes.



Calls to My Mom

Megan Albertson

What am I supposed to say?
Should I really tell him everything?
I doubt either of us has done
this before. A lot is at stake,
more than the time I dyed
my own hair! That was such a mistake-
why would anyone ever want more blood red
or dandelion yellow highlights in their hair?

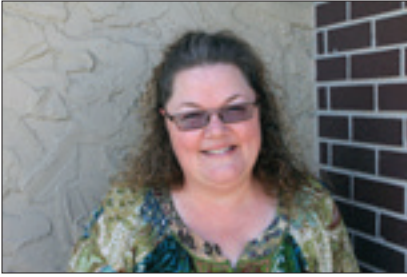
What an awful memory! Just like the memory
of when my mom colored my hair dark black
so I could return to school in peace. She picked
the nastiest, soot black she could find to cover
my Houdini-like dying job. What was I thinking?
At least it lengthened finally, just like these nails!
These things have to be filled every two weeks-
What a waste of money! The money that I will be working
my butt off for this summer. But at least I will not have to be
at school this summer, which will be great.

Summer 2014

My mom is looking forward to this summer, she just wants to come up to the lake and relax. Maybe I should give her a call. I wonder what she's doing today. She's probably running Around like a madwoman, like always. Or maybe, I should just call my father and tell him I love him for the first time ever.



Editors at Work :: David Martin



Crafted Writer

Shawnelle Alley

Look, Man!

Toward hills of grammar and punctuation
Marked by rules in the white space of higher education and
Some dead guy's idea of poetry.

Write, Guy!

Scratch no less than three pages,
After you've written ten, running on
In circles of adjectives you must strike from your existence.

Play, Student!

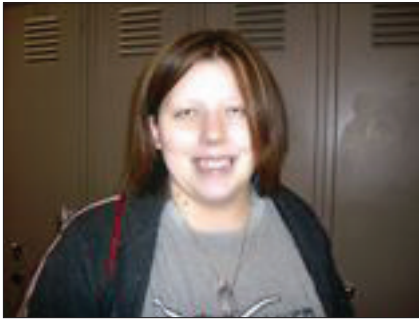
Pretend you are a puppet,
Do it this way – no I meant the other way – the
Way all master marionette's dance with Pinocchio.

Look, Teacher!

You are giving me your voice,
Demanding I carry it on the page powered by knowledge
Of the she I've heard my persona should be.

Hurry, Self!

Don't forfeit your form and style
To martyrdom because a verb is
Ism directed – demanded for an A.

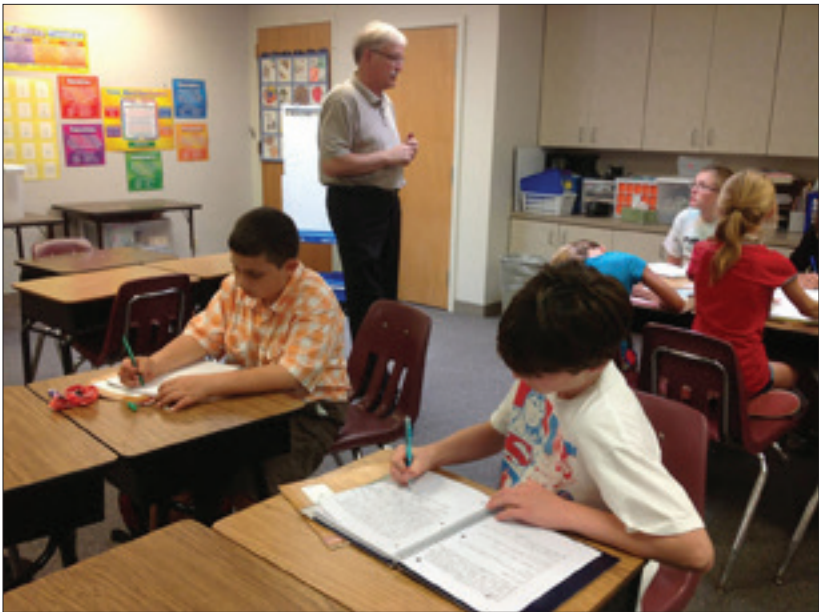


How I Say It

Angelic Armendariz

When they say it
they say *dead*
like it's a disease
that it's the cue
for the tears
the pats
the soothing tones
as they say *dead*
motions of father, son
and holy spirit
like saying *dead*
is bad mojo
Everything
will be okay,
You'll be fine
bitter taste in the mouth
as they say *dead*
like he's standing right behind me
give that knife another twist
in my heart
as they say *dead*
like I'd say "Oh, well" with a shrug
resonating in my mind
Dead

pain spreading like venom
in my body
no anti-venom
gift-wrapped pity when I know
it's never going to be the same
but I want to say *dead*
when I think of you
like "love"
like "memories"
like the way we said
"forever"



Young Writers :: David Martin



Whose Son?

Sjon Ashby

My son was born with eleven toes
and two feet like clay mounds caught
mid-creation
the other world not finished with him,
his legs bowed outward
knees like arrows pointing, away from self,
he kept calm,
because he loved his mother.

My son was born with a red hunch on his back
and extra protein they said to come and go
a syndrome of overgrown extremities,
my mind dulled inward
to fight off complacency, I wondered,
yet he kept calm,
because he loved his father.

My son was born with a spirit in his body
and as he lifted his head off the crib
needles raked his scalp for blood,
the boy I AM shouted
to search his blurry world, for light,
but he kept calm
because he loved.

The Drum

Kris Bamesberger

Don't look at me,
as merely an instrument on which you beat!
Listen to the music that I project,
as it pours forth from my cylindrical being.

She hits me again and again,
Harder, louder, beat by beat, faster.
It may not be the melody for which you are looking,
but feel my powerful rhythm as it vibrates through your body.

With every beat, with every chant,
Moving you in ways you've never imagined.
Let me be the pulse
that awakens your soul!

*“The muse arrives during composition,
not contemplation.”*

–Stu Burns



Wind Fills a Void

G. M. Barlean

We leave our houses and rush to the cars,
to our stores, and churches, and bars.
We have seasons and reasons for breezing
through our simple lives filled
with quiet and wind.
This must be where the wind begins.
We're going unknowing of where the wind's blowing,
but we whine and we howl with a scowl,
that it's windy out there.

Does it suck, or does it blow,
the wind is energy and excitement you know.
It reaches out to the seas, and twists and turns
and yearns to reach new places, leaving
traces of dust on our dashboards,
filling a void somewhere with all its air.

We've known the same people for most
of our days, we shop, and we pray, and we play.
And although we complain, we remain and
sustain, in spite of the wind.
We love our friends, and we know we are
where the wind begins.
And deep down, we know just where

the wind goes and that we can go there,
but we stay here...we stay here.

Does it suck or does it blow,
the wind is energy and excitement you know.
It reaches out to the seas, and twists and turns
and years to reach new places, leaving
traces of dust on our dashboards,
filling a void somewhere with all its air.

We choose to live our peaceful lives
in quiet places, wide-open spaces,
even with the traces of dust upon
our windowsills, letting the wind blow
right on by us to those city streets
and smoky beats where the crowd's
so loud they don't even hear the wind howl.
But we blew right out of that town,
way on down to where the wind begins.

Does it suck or does it blow,
the wind is energy and excitement you know.
It reaches out to the seas, and twists and turns
and years to reach new places, leaving
traces of dust on our dashboards,
filling a void somewhere with all its air.

Summer 2014

Chalk Dust and Tears

Michael Bauman

A circle drawn on a black board,
for all to see,
for shame, for blame, for pain – for me,
for all to see,
before the circular cell, defiant I pose,
pushed to its center – my nose,
my sentence served and I am free
when the black board displays
a smear
of chalk dust and tears
for all to see.

“Writing teaches us our mysteries.”

-Marie de L’Incarnation

Still to Come

Marguerite Bennett

The rest of my life faces me eye to eye.
I am held steady by its glare.
I feel amazingly calm, standing my ground.
Centered.

I am at the center of my life.
I am entering the first quarter of my fifty-first year.
The numbers no longer frighten me,
though at one time they did.

They didn't fit my looks or my temperament.
They didn't match my youthful energy,
my insatiable appetite for adventure.
To speak them aloud felt deceptive.

Yet the date is there.
The number is correct.
I can do the arithmetic.
I am indeed middle-aged.

Once there seemed to be no limits.
Once my entire life spread out endlessly before me.
Now there are times I find myself caught in thoughts
of endings, of time ticking, of mortality.

At times, I feel frantic, yet most days I am beginning to feel amused.
The frantic state is being replaced by excitement.
I am still young. I have the energy to take risks,
to travel the world and pursue adventure.

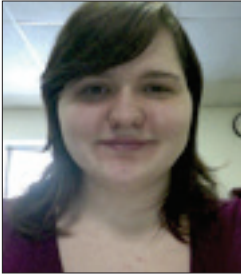
The number is now irrelevant.
So I stare back at my life.
I do not waver.
I will not run.

Summer 2014

There is still much to do.
I stand firm in the knowledge that time is my friend.
Much more life is still to come.
Nothing can stand in my way.



Home :: Kristy Stark Knapp



Best Friend

Larissa Boyd

I hear their taunts as I walk by,
I keep my head down and don't talk.

I sat alone like I always do,
But I wasn't alone for long.

The sound of a chair pulling out across from me,
I looked up to see a blond girl smiling at me.

I've seen her before in class,
She's like me an Outcast.

What I didn't know then
Is that she would become my Best Friend.

Summer 2014

Seasons

Madison Bragg

Winter, dry air and snow.
Animals sleep, their activity low.
Then comes spring,
The birds begin to sing.

Children wait for summer,
“Can’t this school year be over?”
Summer comes
And lasts three months.

Now it’s hot.
Let’s have a vacation, my friends!
Fall winds blow,
Is it time for snow?

*“Those Dutchmen had hardly any
imagination or fantasy, but their good taste
and their scientific knowledge of
composition were enormous.”*

-Vincent Van Gogh



South Omaha

David Catalan

I walk the alphabet streets
I hear the voices of many dialects
I see the faces of mosaic earth hues
I sense the vitality of commerce
American-style
Enriched by European ornamentation
Of language, culture, and personality
I travel through time
Floating on waves of immigrant winds
Leaving names engraved on building fronts
Testaments to the legacies
Of Czechs from Bohemia
Followed by Germans, Poles, and others
Employed by Armour, Cudahy, and Swift
Creating the “Magic City”
Mexicans came to run the rail yards
And to plan for family homesteads
The original Dreamers
Celebrating homeland nostalgia
Through early Cinco de Mayo festivals
And September 16th toasts to a new freedom
Today a wondrous transition is here
Transformational and dynamic
A new wave of immigrant enrichment
Building on the Mexican foundation
Central and South American Hispanic
populations
Filling storefronts along 24th Street
Establishing restaurants
Expert retailers of diverse products
Workers of stoic loyalty
Families cementing cultural solidarity
Prioritizing the education of its children
Earning the right of American assimilation

Summer 2014

Into the social and economic wealth
Of an adopted community
Brought to life
Through a collective spirit
Of compassion, generosity, and dreams



Lyra :: Watie White

Concert

Selena Dobles-Kunkel

i am the pulsing at a concert when everyone screams
and the noise rises into the ceiling and the vibrations thrum in the clouds

i am the crowd clapping and jumping in unison to the song
that plays every night on the radio three or four times that everyone says
they hate

i am the soft moment of silence in between songs when the crowd
is holding their breaths and no one cares about: work, school, parents, pain,
blood

i am the moment of fear before the encore when each soul worries
that maybe there won't be an encore this time and

i am the sigh of relief and excited shriek a moment later when the bass line
to one of their oldies thrums through the stadium

i am the rush in the car when you roll the windows down and your mom
snaps
at you for not hearing her remind you of the "real world"

i am the slow downslide of remembering all the things
you forgot when they were right there and

i am the push of adrenaline when you hear one of their songs
and you feel it all over again and your throat feels newly raw from
screaming

Summer 2014

The Falling Tree

Amanda Eager

I am the vine that did not unravel
from the falling tree. It would have snapped and slung
itself into the waiting arms of telephone wires
before kneeling in the road,
pounding splinters into pavement. I thought I was strong enough.
If I reached high enough,
wrapped myself around tight enough,
I would be enough to
bear the heaviest of weights, as a hammock does
so easily as it lifts the deepest burdens
of a worried mind swinging in the shade.

I rooted myself on dreams of
touching the sun, our limbs extended together,
in a coiled path tallied not by miles, but by the shadows
we left on the ground when it rained. Although temporary,
that dry reflection always seemed
more accurate than the mirrored surface of the pond,
I just didn't know why until, rotting away
from the inside out, my tree fell one day.

Belief

John Gajewski

I'm not sure if I believe in you. I know
You can't be a wizened old man, with a snowy-white
Beard and hands capable of scooping up a narwhal.

Science tends to insist you're not necessary. The beginning of life
Being as significant as a cup of coffee whooshed
Off the top of a car by an apathetic wind,
An accident of nature which learned
How to think and write bad poetry.

We are a miraculous mishap, an army of atoms created
By the elements of exploding stars expelling
Their resources across galaxies many millennia ago.
A part of the universe above living
inside the universe of our body.

As I sat in a stiff wooden desk on a Sunday morning,
My non-divorced parents in the church upstairs
drone monotone prayers in stiff wooden pews,
The sweet middle-aged lady told me you created us
Out of dirt, molding the first ears and nose of humanity
With the precision of a father's first underhanded baseball toss
to his young son. She never mentioned symbolism and metaphors,
Or ooze or building blocks or cells or monkeys.

Yet a piece of me still ponders
Whether there's a place in an accident for a higher force,
Perhaps you were like Twain's Tom, goading
Laws of science into doing all the work.

I wouldn't even consider your existence, except
There are pieces of life's puzzle that bring an intangible, unearthly joy, like
Standing in a barren lobby sharing unstoppable laughter amongst friends
With smiles wide as an ocean, or

Summer 2014

Choirs of strings and brass providing echoes of something bigger
Than what can be seen or heard, or a conversation
With someone whose beauty couldn't be captured
By a thousand poems, who could cause my heart to thump
Like an over-caffeinated timpani trapped in my chest.

I'll be honest with you. Believe
is too strong of a word. Let's go with
Hope.



Maestro :: Marcus Sikora



Baby Girl

Tony Gebhardt

I blink my left,
as well does she.
I blink my right,
she still loves me.

It started at five when she played our little game.
After daddy blinks his right,
she blinks her right
with all her might.

Her scrunchy little nose was cute as a button,
as she blinks both eyes like a little copy-cat.
Her heart is where her Daddy-O
will forever hang his favorite hat.

To finish the game,
I had to blink both eyes.

Summer 2014

As she starts again we do the same,
I hold her heart and say her name.

She knew without a clue just what to do,
without ever being told or ever being taught.
While blinking back with both eyes closed,
my mind began to think a thought.

Ten years gone by
but prayers not forgotten,
I rarely deserved,
and was quite rotten.

With fine young boys and a beautiful wife,
my grateful soul began to whirl,
when God made her part of my life,
an answered prayer, a baby girl.

Much older now while driving home last night,
we played our blinking game.
In the rear view mirror we blinked with all our might,
as years ago it's still the same.

It started out with her blinking first,
as I held a tear in the corner of my eye.
Someday too soon when she is gone,
I will see myself and begin to cry.



Blow Wind Blow

Barb Greer

Sway, rattle, resist.

After three or four days of blowing wind this week,

I want to scream.

It comes from nowhere and goes nowhere, but we see it;

at least, we see the effect.

The trees, sans leaves, manage to sway enough with some resistance
but not enough for the limbs to break.

A light post in the yard falls, broken off at the rusty base, a base just rusty
enough that it couldn't resist, and it couldn't persist.

It fell with a thud, getting my attention.

The white globe shattered as it hit the ground.

The wind, invisible, but its effect visible, comes from nowhere
or somewhere that the local weatherman can predict.

What purpose does it serve?

Does it torment others as it disturbs my sense of calm?

I don't like the inner nervousness that accompanies the wind.

I am safe and secure in a shelter.

What then is it that brings this shakiness to me?

Oh well, it will be gone tomorrow.

To where I don't know, and I will then return to the "placid" being that I am,
Forgetting where it came from and where it went.

The mysterious force of awe and anxiety it carries with it.



Field Giants

Kathie Haskins

Traveling across Iowa and Illinois
One crisp November morning,
We came across several wind farms.

Gargantuan wind turbines
Looking like giant pinwheels,
Bright white, spinning clockwise,
Not quite simultaneously.

Row upon row upon row,
As far as the eye could see,
Against the pale blue Autumn sky,
Transforming wind into energy.



The Hours

Paul Heft

I know dawn watches me,
So I have to outrun the sun
Disappear when day ends
Too many of them to offend.

Clock the hours on tired hands
They could take your hours,
Should I take the time?

Out of sight and out of mind
Feel out paths on the body of this mirage
In deserts, night still flows cold—
The visitor at your back for years.

Clock the hours on tired hands
I've lit up the hours in smoke,
Do I have any time?

Keep some secrets closer than skin
The moon still shows at night—
Cheeks flushed with blood
And what is waxing, what is waning.

I've got a piece of mind that needs peace of mind
How long did it take the redwoods
to scrape the sky?
Can this post withstand the
chemically-salted sea?
I live in the hours we share, just you and me.

Summer 2014

Clipped Wings

Lyndee Hoge

She bears her clipped wings with a smile
Looking up towards the sun-streaked sky

“All the better view from here below
To see the beauty of those who fly.”



Kaia in Lavender Fields :: Kristen Martin



Dad

Tammy Hudson

Sitting here in the chair,
we are alone in the same room.
The room is quiet, and
I feel peace.

You are asleep, and
I am falling asleep.
There are no words,
as no words are needed.

The words that mattered
have already been said.
It's all okay now,
I know how you feel.

The weight is gone.
The pack of anger that
I have carried my whole life,
it is empty—I feel free.

It can take a lifetime
to make a small change,
but in the end,
it always matters.

We are the same, yet
we see through
different lenses;
we live different lives.

Your words matter.
Now I know how you feel.
It matters.
It really does.



The Big Wheel

David P. Hufford

Everything you need is here in this casino.
“The Big Wheel,” “Starbucks,” and wineries.
You could win money with a one-armed bandit,
But they are situated at the entrance.

Go back, go back, and take a chance on them,
Or move your destiny into the modem
Machines that tell stories, wheels to entrance.
But there is a difference between fate and chance.

Fate got you here, tells you when to die.
Chance is the accident of everything.
Guess what? No guessing! Deal with loss of God:
“There is no ultimate source,” they’ll tell you.

It all grinds down to existential dust.
There’s nothing but the wheels placed at the entrance.



The Art of Expression

Anne James

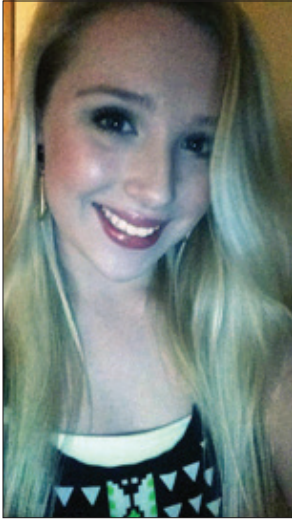
Words, scattered upon the page
like paint splattered across canvas
by a five-year-old artist-to-be,
withstand times of war and times of peace,
beacons of our ever-changing emotions,
flowing like the ebb and tide of the ocean.

Emotions of red, blue, yellow, green,
colors blending, mixing, melding
strangers into one piece.

Only the young can portray
the world, our emotions, life
in such pure simplicity.

The deepest lamentations,
inner depression, pain, Baudelaire's "Spleen,"
contrast our happy highs
filled with sunshine and buttercups,
a world not unlike that of the Care Bears.
Maybe children and their imaginations
should rule the world.

Summer 2014



Summer-2013

Sandra Jones

I proclaimed I would never make it,
Thought I would be long dead.
Convinced the Mayans really did predict the end.
But alas, the school year did end.
Graduation gowns and genuine speeches.
Accompanied by fake pride and even fakier looking smiles.
But it was joyous, true freedom. Abrupt.
Away from the bullying
The torment.
The hatred.

But still, I visited.
Something inside of me craving it.
It was my drug, I the user, bidding for it.
“Enjoy it,” they said.
Your last childhood summer.
Instead, we wasted it away, working.
Making money.
A useless currency, unimportant.

The real exchange we needed to foster was each other.
We should have gone golfing. Went to the lake.

We should have done more, not watched it away.
On couches in living rooms, *The Office* on replay.
Counting down days until we'd be gone.
They'll never see or hear from us again! We proclaimed.
Is it wrong of me to say I miss it?
Please, don't think less of me, baby.
The way the street shone after the summer-time rain.
Those stars: a multitude, abundant, countless, they are immeasurable.
Like looking into God's own eyes.
The beating of rays off my back, mosquitos enticed by my scent,

and our sunburns, pink, peeling, and raw from the days spent at OUR lake.
The campfire smoke permanently engrained in our bodies.
Part of us. Deep into our chromosomes.
Frolicking along, blissfully unaware that we were nearing the end.
Latex filled with hose water, plummeting through the air,
and splashing my new dress.
I got angry at you, like always.
Our last week is upon us.
My mom is a wreck.
We try to enjoy the fair,
but we both know it's just too dismally gloomy.

This place, oh, this place.
A million memories, a thousand laughs.
Not all good. But mostly.
A little part of my left ventricle cardiovascular chamber will always be filled
with this precious hometown of ours.
Imperial.
Your railroad tracks, eerie after an evening fog.
The streets covered in gravel.
Making my planned running courses hellish.
Your smell in the morning. Sunsets for days.

Wheatland, and cornfields, and freshly picked potatoes.
My dad's jacket, always smelling like that place, his work, HIS home.

Summer 2014

How many years did you miss because of it, Daddy?
How much time is now gone?
Forever forgotten, your baby girl is now grown.



Adam and Eve (Danny and Angela) :: Watie White



Desired Reader

Tyler Kinkle

Misused, abused, trying to find a glimpse of hope
Another tear drips off her nose and now her clothes are soaked
She clicks to flip the page and there's something she sees
I want the words and the pages to cover the scabs, so she can't bleed

She's shy, but she wasn't always that way
Her voice is restricted by all the loneliness and pain
My poetry escapes, my poetry a sign
I want the words to jump off the page and into her life

Deep bondage with the bandage placed over all society
She uses metaphors in her life for some variety
Applying me and my life to hers, making hers less tiring
The reader is impacted so much, it's in her diary

Comfort with society through words that lie inside of me
Of issues in the world she comes to me when she is crying see,
As she stares into the contents of the laptop lighting, she
Has a tear roll down her face and that's somehow reviving me

Driving me to make a difference



A Hot Summer Day

Natalia Kruszcak

Summer is the greatest time of year,
Making memories for all to hear.
A day at the pool
Is a day staying cool.
A day in the sun
Is always so fun.
With popsicles melting in the hot summer day,
We buy our ice cream then head our own way.
Cruising with the windows down
As we drive around the town.
As it comes to an end we all shed a tear,
Since summer truly is the greatest time of year.



Inside and Out

Robert Levine

Beginning at fourteen, I walked each weekday morning
up Eastway Road under 5 Court's crabapple tree,
turned right on Ridge Road and headed south
past the corner yard's fine-needed junipers
and vociferously defensive German shepherd,
past the stringy trunks of cedars
planted between sidewalk and street
(how could such apparently frangible wood
prove so strong for building?) and the housing
co-op's office on Hamilton Place,
and turned left into the cul-de-sac
that ended Gardenway east of Ridge—
with the signboard marking the dental practice of
McCarl, McCarl, McCarl, and McCarl—
and followed a paved trail through the Green Belt
and over the Baltimore-Washington Parkway
into Greenbriar Apartments' parking lot
as a long yellowish brick edifice rose across
Hanover Parkway: Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

Designed in contrived contemporary
style, the building had windows
only at its corners. The pall
the absence of natural light cast
made school feel even more than usual to teenagers
like prison. Its inmates numbered over two thousand;

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each bell ending class thronged the halls
and stairs with unrelenting trains of bodies
I strained to keep pace with—taller than mine
with longer legs and speedier gaits.

I thought, as a Greenbelter, I'd fit in better
at Roosevelt, but its science magnet program
pulled in the smartest students from all around,
like Paul Rice in my typing class who dominated
the Science Fair all four of our years:
buck-toothed, his hair curling and fuzzing
outward like brown fleece, sporting oversized
rectangular-lensed eyeglasses and button-down dress shirt.
Discussing the Romantics, I quoted a history book
I'd read that said Jean-Jacques Rousseau
felt it as rational to watch a sunset
as to solve an algebra problem and noted,
"I know which one I'd rather do." Paul's
forehead scrunched and eyebrows bent. "Which one?"

Then there were other locals. In my freshman year,
I shared French class with Ramón—alias "Ice,"
a moniker shaved into the back
of his neck—who robed his enormous torso
every day in a Ferrari-red jacket.
Once during down time he sat taking orders
from classmates for hot electronics;
jaunting into the hall another day
after class, Ramón spoke
his only words to me when, my mind probably
wandering with Thoreau through Walden Woods,
I stared vaguely in his direction: "Are you gay?
Why you keep lookin' at me like that?"

When my adolescent loneliness
overflowed, I scribbled it into poetry
in my loose-leaf binder, and essayistic
squibs extolling the individual
and damning the crowd. By pulling it

out of myself into words on paper
 I wanted to assert its worth,
 but I couldn't, showing no one
 what I wrote. And after school or on weekends
 when homework was light, I sequestered myself
 deep into Lakewood Northway Stream Valley Park,
 comforted by the company of its oaks and sweetgums,
 tufted titmice and crows, clover and daffodils.
 They would always welcome me into their domain,
 sensing another spirit uneasy in the
 human world, and as a sign of our sympathy
 they would grant me a glimpse of their wildness.



Editor Reading Submissions :: David Martin



Weeping Beauty

Wendy Lundeen

He took a hatchet to my tree
And did destroy it thoroughly
Eyes beholding such a sight
I stood frozen, fists clenched tight
Outraged, distraught, I could not breathe
My violent saliva began to seethe
Is this a dream? It can't be true
I blink my eyes; no changing view
Needs a trim? Surely you jest
I think you would fail an intelligence test!

The Willow's beauty is in the weeping
You stole her glamour; now I'm shrieking
My sacred cloister, scarred for life
I'm filling up with twisted strife
Under the graceful, sashaying vines
I felt so safe, serene, sublime
Please produce your gardening degree
You cannot, I guarantee
I mourn my friends' cascading weeping
Since you appeared with fervent deleting.

The cropping lies upon the floor
The mystical beauty weeps no more
You unleashed my aggravation today
As I survey this wretched display
My weeping beauty weeps no more
But I am weeping tears galore
Oh, I'll wait for the glorious day
Her dancing vines again sashay
Until that day, stay out of my path
If you would like to avoid my wrath

My Willow remains less of a tree
But will always maintain her dignity.



Let's Go :: Ashley Roskilly



Chaos

Lacey Lurz

On viewing Triumph of Death,
Nobody knows exactly what is going on.
Even if they think they do, they can't see what's over their shoulders.
A fire blazes and there are skeletons walking around.

People are injured, others are helping the injured.
People are dead, already in coffins hidden amongst the rubble.
Smoke and turmoil spread clear through the entire photo,
all across the land.

A group of Holy men stand to one side,
praying it all away, while nearby the center of the action is occurring.
People are piled on top of other people. The poor fellows at the bottom,
under the boots of those on top.

Something has happened
and the people are angry.
Angry at someone, angry at each other.

Everyone's world has been disrupted, no longer easy, or peaceful.
Something major has happened, and there is no going back.



I Will Remember for You

David Mainelli

(I was asked to write a song for an amazing company called Home Instead Senior Care. They specialize in Alzheimer's care in the home. A video was created for the music that is elegant and beautiful. It captures the essence of how difficult the disease is on the families dealing with it.)

Verse 1

All the places that you used to go
All the people you used to know
The stories that you loved to tell
About a life that you lived so well
It's fine you can rest if you want to
And I will remember for you
I will remember too

Verse 2

All the books you opened and read
All the crazy ideas in your head
The strangers who you made their day
The good friends you met along the way
For now you can rest if you want to
And I will remember for you
I will remember too

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Chorus

But hey, I know it's true
It's ok, I know it's you
Hey - The memories you lose
It's ok, I remember, too

Verse 3

All the pictures of you on the wall
the frames were crooked I recall
The family that won't let you go
The saddest part is you won't know
It's fine you can rest if you want to
And I will remember for you
I will remember too

Chorus

Bridge

There so much I wish we could do
Don't worry I'll remember for you

Poverty

Katie Matthews

Being black and poor seems inevitable
Born into the hood life
The street is all I know
I gotta get it how I live
Hustle hard grind and get it by any means

Lost young man with no help
Stick up kid with no purpose
Confused knowing his fate
Death or jail
He dreams of being different

Making it out of the hood
He never had plans of being a statistic
But it seems like he was born into a cycle
Like he was born to struggle
In the society we live in

Rich get richer and poor get poorer
The government doesn't care about us
They think we are all the same
We have to stop the black on black crime
And come together

We can all make it out together
Prove everyone wrong
We are stronger than they think
We are one!



A Daughter's Birthday Blessing

Vince McAndrew

May you experience anew this day
the miracle of life that you,
against literally astronomical odds,
are a unique incarnation of Sacred Unity.

May you experience your own miracle
of Love's incarnation
in your bones, your muscles, in every fiber of
your body,
in your heart,
in your soul.

Steeped in this awareness,
may you live each day
with a vibrant attitude of gratitude.

May you be open to letting the light
that is you shine,
illuminating your own life, your life-path,
and the lives of all whom you love,
of everyone you know,
even everyone you meet.

Each day of your new year, may you take a
moment
to see beauty in nature,
in your beautiful children,
in your hardworking and devoted husband,
in your talented and loving self.

I send you this birthday blessing with love,
grateful that I am
your "Dad."



French Doors

J. J. McKenna

Peevishly I close the doors between us.
From time to time, I see you glide regally
by the glass. I wonder how and on what
shoal we first foundered and came to feel
the gravel grind the planks and breach the hull,
letting in this stinging, tentacled sea?
Again, just now, you pass by the doors.

Do you say a silent prayer for this wreck
that the next tide will be the spring to float
her gently off the shoal onto the horizon?
Will I, pleased to eat my anger like leviathan,
be inclined for the neap that will keep us here—
mere salvage, blackened, barnacled and
beached?
Once again, just now, you pass by the doors.

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A Funny Day

Joe Mertins

What a funny day.
There is still a long way
till the end of the day.
There are spiders on my teacher.
There are bleachers on my desk.
What a funny day it is.
I don't think I can rest
with all this mess.
I wish that I could drive
right out of this place.
I got polka dots on my face,
and Grace wants a date.
Oh gosh, I think I'm going to faint.

*“Writing is fun, when you
connect prose and poetry
with passion.”*

-David Martin



Parallel Storms

Marsha Warren Mittman

The storm totally unexpected unprecedented
Ripping tearing screeching freezing killing
Smothering in white
In its fury rendering all vulnerable unrecognizable
Seemingly indestructible trees torn snapped
Bent by their unbearably heavy white burden
Sad twisted rent and dying
Leaves fluttering to ground like crushed hopes ideals

As I too am buffeted by an unexpected storm
Debilitating catastrophic rendering my very
Being my very existence almost unrecognizable
My remnants bent smothered vulnerable crushed
Devastated and torn beyond recognition
The complete destruction of all conception and
Perception of who and what I am
Never again to resemble or be what I was

But yet when detritus is cleared there remains though
Wounded a sturdy trunk a steadfast rooted core a strong
Will so both trees and I with nurturing can weather
Our parallel storms and assuredly grow anew



Mirror

Alycia Mordaunt

Every day I look into a mirror
The image I make is reflected back
Sometimes I strive to change what I see
Other times I leave it as is

But a mirror only shows what you want to reflect
Your true image comes from inside
No matter how hard you try to conceal it
The real you shows in the shadow of doubt



The Caregiver

Jesus Narvaez

As the morning sun rises,
the golden light shines through my kitchen window.
The warm wind blows the curtains,
the light shines on the Lady of Guadalupe.

It is a quiet, beautiful Sunday, and I cook eggs, toast, and ham.
Laying food on the wooden, round table,
an old woman sits by the window,
quiet and warm with happiness in her soul.

I sit by her, quiet with the warm wind calming my soul.
Sundays are church days;
the old woman wants to go to church,
but she can't.

With her broken veins, her legs have lost their strength,
so, I make her home our church on Sundays,
and the warm sun shines on us. We say a prayer to God;
it delivers us from temptations and Evil, "Amen."

I remain quiet as I watch the old woman
absorb peace within her skin and soul.

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We begin to eat, and I surprise her with a gift,
a colorful, spring dress with sunflowers.

The old woman doesn't express words;
I filled her with emotions.
Happiness and love is my gift to her.
My soul is giving care to another.

The morning sun shines on the old woman,
revealing as my mother.
I feel so strong, caring for this woman,
and I must continue.



Young Oregon Surfer :: Braeden Martin

Slipping Sand

Grace Novak

Grasping at the sizzling, sun-beaten grains of sand
The minuscule fragments of rock flee
without a wave for their departure

When she lets one go,
another follows unintentionally

One seems like nothing, as she watches it
cascade from her delicate hand

All of this sand on her beach could bury her
Or build an amazing sculpture
for the finest of eyes to see

*“If the English language made
any sense, a catastrophe would be
an apostrophe with fur.”*

-Dave Kellett

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Blessed

Jennifer Okell

(I am a visually impaired person, and I tend to write about things that are true to my life, but every once in a while, I'll write a fictional poem. This poem is about me.)

I believe that I was blessed
with my naturally curly hair
and my astonishing sense of humor.

Each and every day,
we are blessed with many things
but do not begin to appreciate them, until
we are old enough to comprehend our abilities.

Please, look at what you can do for others
and what you can do for yourself, and
know that you are truly blessed.

*“We make out of the quarrel with
others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with
ourselves, poetry.”*

-William Butler Yeats, 1865-1939,
“Anima Hominis,” *Essays*, 1924



The Effect of One

Lisa O'Neal

There sits the scale
Perfectly balanced
Tranquil
And still
When one last grain
Of sand falls
Tipping the scale
A Crash! A Clatter!
A mess
Across the floor
Made by one so-called
Nameless grain
Of sand.



On the Road

Ronald J Palmer

There are potholes on the road
ready to cause damage to
your wheel. There are patrols
that will write you a ticket
if you speed too fast.

Once, I saw sunflowers
growing on the side of the road
from seeds
And, of course, there is broken glass.

On Highway 169 in Eden Prairie
where improvements were made,
there are turtles who tried to cross the road.
Many died.

One year, driving home
I saw one, up against the concrete
hoping to get to the Bloomington side
of Anderson Lake.

I wonder if this is what happens to us, now older
someone put up a road.
We are slow to cross and the traffic is fast, ready to
hit us without a glance.

Do we make it across only to be stopped
by a large concrete wall preventing
us from reaching where we know
we should be able to go, and now
unable to cross back over the road?

But don't worry about that now,
holy cow, there are potholes
in the road ready to
damage your wheel.



Catching Fish :: Abby Sparks Keeley

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Give Me a Pencil

Jennifer Peterson

Give me a pencil to stencil my life down
Let me pour my thoughts through a sandy stem
And watch them bloom black on a piece of white paper
Can this graphite turn idea to diamond?

The slicing sound of an electric sharpener
Strips wood away
And leaves lemon feathers drifting down
A hand pulls back a leaden sculpture
Ready to create.

It may be a charcoaled masterpiece
Or a line or two of poetry.
A set of careful notes, bordered by boredom
In the form of lightly woven spider-web sketches
Hanging softly from ninety-degree margins.

My pencils had chew marks or initials or sparkles.
They were bendy or colored
Whatever was trendy
Now they are five pristinely sharpened golden tools
That nest behind ears
That are pushed through hair buns for safe keeping
I've got to keep an eye on these creatures
That disappear more quickly than hair ties and pennies.

Borrow
Forget
Find
Lend
Has anyone seen my lucky pencil?
What's it look like?
Oh... Well... Um... It's yellow?

Students, please take out two number two pencils
Not number one, not number three
Now be sure to mark the bubbles clearly
Or your test will not be scored.



Mother and Child :: Walker Plank



I Never Knew . . . I Knew

Michelle Phillips

I never knew if this time would come,
If we'd be blessed this special way.
We'd all but given up our dream
Of having a little one someday.

I never knew if I'd have the chance
To hear my baby's cry,
To kiss an owie far away,
To dry a tear-stained eye.

I never knew when our friends had kids
If we would do the same,
Hear "It's a..." in the hospital room,
See "Mommy and Daddy" become our names.

That day in the doctor's office,
Your "Daddy" gave my forehead a kiss,
I gripped his hand and said to him,
"I never knew if we'd get to do this."

Then we saw you, tiny, on that screen.
From that moment on we knew.
An exciting time lay ahead of us,
A family of *three* from two.

And then I knew *you*, little one.
From the flutters to the kicks.
Knew your sleeping and your rising,
Knew your flips and crazy tricks.

I knew you, little peanut,
A reality, not just a maybe,
Knew you are part of us.
Our precious one, our little baby.

All about Me

Stormy May Poast

Stormy Mae Poast

Child of loving parents

Who loves reading and my family

Who hates coleslaw and hornets

Who wants to go to DisneyWorld

Who wishes she could've met her grandpa

Who is scared of spiders

Who dreams of being a veterinarian

Who is determined to do good work in school

Who values her aunt

Who is proud of doing well in school

Who graduated from 4th grade

Who lives in Fremont, NE

Stormy Mae Poast

*“Artists who seek perfection in
everything are those who cannot
attain it in anything.”*

-Eugene Delacroix, 1798-1863

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Ghosts

Hannah Robinson

A lost soul, wafting through
Just a memory, to me and to you
But what of this ghost?
Was it the kind that looks for hosts?
But no, it's just the past
Wandering, lurking
Their job is cast
They appear only sometimes
A slight memory, flitting by
And they help us to remember our lives
Storing our memories in their bodies
Like archives
The secrets, dangers, and fears
And the real thoughts we have about our peers
All live inside these ghostly figures
As our memory renders
But soon, hark, heart
Our ghosts start
To disappear and slow down
And fall to the ground
As the older we age
Our ghosts die as we live our last page



As the Sun Marks Those Who Take the Toll

James M. Salhany

As the sun marks those who take the toll,
When shadows cast in neon light
Reflect on well-worn walks,
Where milky methods search out ways
For satisfaction in excuse's name,
Tempting their own search with confusion.

As the sun marks those who take the toll,
For making the innate curtain burst
In linen and feathered haystacks,
Where repeated plays are shown
Of two actors in eternal makeup,
Deceiving everyone with asides which enlighten

As the sun marks those who take the toll,
With hideous sores which pay
The actors for the show,
As the temptuous strut across the stage,

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Invites the sensual bug to infect
The soul of intellectual advancement.

As the sun marks those who take the toll,
In a world of consistently heightened
Nerves, where the functional labor,
Turned to dope, has become
Swollen, purple lips on a deathbed.



Lion :: Elizabeth Elliot



Ode to Writer's Block

Brooke Schifano

I've seen building blocks and
road blocks and cement blocks
and intestinal blocks, but
whatever brand of block, it's got nothing on you,
Writer's Block, because you
are the most exquisite of impediments.

Before you, I was confined to
the realm of plastic squares and
rectangles the women in buns and
overalls made us stack on top of one another.
The tower tumbled at the slightest touch, but you,
Writer's Block, emerged unscathed and
victorious from beneath the rainbow-clad rubble.

In the fairytale that you enchant,
fair hurdle, the golden-haired prince unsheathes
his fiery dagger, aims the point towards the
eye of the dragon, and forgets, mid thrust, why he had to
blind the dragon in the first place, and
about the princess in the dungeon beneath them and the
derivation of the word "quest" as defined by the

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Oxford English Dictionary, because to him there is nothing but sleep and rest, because why slay the beast, when he can sit at home on his father's golden throne and bask in the beauty of you, Writer's Block, the Xanax of literature.

Characters can sleep soundly, while you,
O famed fortification, are there to guard the ink inside of our feather quills. What would I do without you, most prudent protector of pen, lest I soil the brilliant bright white of my Epson 3040 front loading printer paper with the dark stain of imagination?
You, Writer's Block, are the shelf of half-baked metaphors in my grandfather's garage tucked inside of inch-thick notebooks and stacked in the corner. Without you, who would hold up the old hose and the box of Christmas ornaments? Who would we turn to when we needed a seat?

Alas, most unequaled obstacle,
there would be no sitting, because why sit when there's nothing to write?
Why not ride a bike or go for a run or play a game of checkers standing up by the pool?
While you're there, you might as well go for a swim.

You're just as good as the gym, Writer's Block, and you're open for twenty-four hours not excluding holidays and weekends.
If I could pay you, I would, but as it is,
you don't cost me a cent.

You say to me,
why not swim ten thousand laps or take a stab at the ocean, but try not to get eaten by a shark. Of course,
O harkened hindrance, things like that only happen in novels. Good call. Better than a lifeguard, or an ambulance full of band-aids is you, Writer's Block. Even when there are no words, there is always you to fill a page.



Shadow

April Schmoeller

A dark figure am I,
unseen and unheard by any soul.
I engulf the weak and fight the strong.
I hide in closets, under your beds
and in every corner of your life.
I am the darkness and I am the death.
I strike fear into your hearts,
and doubt into your mind.
I am what you see when you close your eyes.

I am the lie,
and I deceive your spirits.
I destroy all hope,
and strangle any light.
I am the darkness.
I follow you.
I see you.
I know your worst fears.
I'm the despair in your soul.

You let me have control,
and you regret it.
I am with you,
and I'm always there,
watching.

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Rain People

Shannon Semler

I've been thinking a lot about rain –
like how some people see it as nothing
but a sad wet disturbance that
ruins your best shirt, makes roads slick,
and drips off your face to annoy you.

Some people see it as life,
because it makes the plants breathe
and paints the grass a new shade of green,
because you smell its earthy perfume
and want to dance between the drops –

and the ways we think about rain
are like the ways we think about each other.

Someone can look at you and see you
as a downpour, ruiner of the day.
Someone else can look at you and see you
as a shower, fresh, cleansing, and beautiful.

I've always loved those rainy people,
and when everyone else puts up their umbrellas,
I allow the water to pour on me,
to drench my skin, get to know me.

No matter what they say, you are not
a messy storm to be avoided.
You are a splash of color, so open your cloud
and I will dance with you.



That Day in November

Lisa J. Shulman

(written 11-22-1988)

I cry for you.

I feel the horror and the shock,
and I wonder what
would have been.

I think of your ways, your words,
the things you did, from the monumental
achievements to the slightest innuendo.

A spark to ignite the flame of youth,
you inspire my life.
I do not feel helpless among my elders.

I only feel lost,
like the innocence
that passed with you.

For they can recall
where they were, what they were doing,
how they learned.

But I cannot,
so I have nothing to say
when they speak your name.

I can only cry for you.



Looking Forward and Back

D.N. Simmers

*"It is hard to find despite
what the moonlight jukes and joins."*

Wright

So many lost this year. Not old only, but the young.
Who want to push the path through the years.
The wrinkled withered hands they tremble. And
accept this will be the last day, year, to
smile and accept a coffee and a meal.
The young it is harder to put down why.
A baby is born for a week, month, year.
Later it dies.
A new strain of flu. An unusual condition.
A malformed, malfunction of this and that.
All come in and out. Are given a
Ticket. On the back is the time they
have to count and see.
But in the large landscape, where
men and woman are sheep and flocks that
drive towards a gate.
Some get through.
The why not is hard to put into words

The Mind of an Autistic Child

Mason Strang

The evening glows an orangish red,
The sky is a dreadful gray,
There lays a foot of white blanket snow,
But I know there is a way,
Then along comes a young doe,
A shimmering color of taupe,
And as the autistical creature comes and it goes,
It leaves me a ray of hope.



Feelings :: Kristy Stark Knapp



Little Stars

Grace Wagner

All I see are little butterflies,
that flutter in the midnight sky.
All I see are little lights,
shining across the sky so bright.
All I see are little lanterns,
floating as their flame burns.
All I see are little stars,
looking down every night from afar.



Spinning in Space

Donald Wright

I've seen the end of space and all,
A wondrous place indeed,
Where what we know and ever seen
Are portraits on an endless wall.

There all our loves and hates and fears
Spin endlessly in space,
Each one bright, adds in its turn
The printed picture of joy or tears.

The wonder of this lonely place
Gives us pause to think,
For spinning rends each pain away
'til all that's left is calming grace.

The wonder of this lonely place
Gives us pause to think,
For spinning rends each pain away
'til all that's left is calming grace.

Biographical Notes of Authors, Poets, and Artists

Adams, Tessa - “Life is beautiful! I am a creative writing teacher and an English 9 teacher at Millard South High School. I have been there for 10 years, and I love it. When I’m not at school, I am with my husband playing with our three children. I enjoy running, playing with my dogs, reading, and writing.”

Adolf, Cassidy – is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Albertson, Megan – teaches English and debate at Papillion-LaVista High School in Papillion, NE.

Alley, Shawnelle - (Shawnie) loves the languages of the soul expressed in art, poetry, prose, storytelling, and authenticity. From Fremont, Nebraska, she stays active as an artist, writer, student of the arts, and teacher of the English language and creative writing.

Armendariz, Angelic - has been reading books since she learned started to breathe. You never catch her without a book; it is her passion. She started writing poetry a little before her freshmen year in high school. In her free time she likes to read or write, of course. And also spend time with her family, friends, and animals. She is currently attending college in pursue of a Bachelor’s Degree in Neuroscience. She has a huge heart for all animals and is hoping to get a job as a Zoologist. And possibly pursue her dream to open a sanctuary for exotic animals in need. Angelic lives in Omaha, Nebraska with her dad and little brother. Not to mention a Yorkshire terrier named Harley, a Cockatiel named Scaredy-cat, and a Hamster called Rocket.

Ashby, Sjon - writes about nearly everything: poetry, creative non-fiction, and scholarly essays. He teaches English at Bellevue University in Bellevue, NE, and enjoys reading books and people. Married, with three young children, he spends much of his time in conversations with fascinating people about education and matters of the heart-mind. As a youngster, his writing was the way he made sense of what was in his head; the writing voice always came from a place of transformation. While his styles change, the impact that writing has on him remains.

Bachand, Lee - is a reader trying his hand at writing. He finished his first novel, *Yellowbird, There’s a Problem* in 2013 and is busily writing a second one called *Messages*. He, his wife, Judy, and their pets reside in Omaha.

Ball, Caleb – is a student at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, NE.

Bamesberger, Kris – lives in Elkhorn, NE.

Barlean, G. M. - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Bauman, Michael - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Bennett, Marguerite - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Bifano, Leah Frances – “I write because it helps me find meaning in life and gives me “a rhyme and a reason” for existence. I also have a passion for music. I am a musician. I am a student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. I want to get published, and my English teacher told me about *Fine Lines*. She gave me some of her information and advice, and then told me about *Fine Lines*.”

Boustead, Barb Mayes – is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Boyd, Larissa - is 15 years old and in grade 10 at Silver Lake High School, in Roseland, NE. She writes poems when she is upset. She showed her poems to an English teacher, who thought they were good enough to send to *Fine Lines*.

Bragg, Madison - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Brewer, Terri Lynn – is a poet who lives in Omaha, NE.

“Bright Eyes” – Susette LaFlesche Tibbles also called *Inshata Theumba* (Bright Eyes), 1854 –1903, was a well-known Native American writer of the Omaha tribe in Nebraska. She was a spokesperson for Native American rights. She was of Ponca, Iowa, French and Anglo-American ancestry. In 1983, she was inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame.

Carr, Jessica Franke – is a student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Catalan, David - is the founder of Catalan Consulting. Prior to establishing his consulting practice in April of 2008, he was the executive director of the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands from August 2002 to February 2008. David is the President of the South Omaha Business Association and the author of *Rule of Thumb: A Guide to Small Business Marketing*. He is currently working on an autobiographical collection of poems drawing from relatives, friends, and locations. The working title is *vagabundo*, Spanish for *Vagabond*.

Cioe, Paul - taught writing and literature at Black Hawk College and Western Illinois University. These days he picks guitar and sings in and around the Illinois-Iowa Quad Cities. His short stories and essays have appeared in Salt Lick, MVR, ELM, the Chicago Tribune, and the Rock Island Argus.

Dillin, Nicole – is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Summer 2014

Dobles-Kunkel, Selenia – is a student at Mercy High School in Omaha, NE, and loves the arts.

Eager, Amanda - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Eden, Trinity - is a student at Metropolitan Community College in Elkhorn, NE.

Ferreira, Alda – teaches English as a second language in Brazil.

Forecki, Marcia Calhoun - lives in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Her academic background is in the Spanish language and literature. She earned a Master of Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her first book, *Speak to Me*, about her son's deafness, was published by Gallaudet University Press and earned a national book award. She has published articles, short fiction, and once wrote a screenplay for hire. Her story "The Gift of the Spanish Lady" was published in the *Bellevue Literary Journal* and nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Gajewski, John – is a student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Gebhardt, Tony - lives in Fort Calhoun, NE, and is a project superintendent for an Omaha based construction and property development company. He has been waiting patiently for years to start writing about the lessons of the heart, the places he has seen, and the people he has met.

Gradea, Adriana – was born in Cluj-Napoca, a large and important city in the Transylvania region of Romania, where she studied English and experienced the 1989 Anti-Communist Revolution. Then she studied Advanced International Studies at the Johns Hopkins University in Bologna, Italy. She came to the U.S. in 1997, worked in banking, and went back to school for her MA in English (2010) at Bradley University in Peoria, IL. She is now in a PhD program at Illinois State University in Normal, IL.

Greer, Barbara - is Kentucky-born, a high-school graduate, retired, and has experiences covering a broad spectrum of joy and heartache. She loves to "try to figure life out" by writing and can see by her musings that some periods of life were particularly "muse-able." She worked at many jobs over the years: at a cemetery, a women's prison, a metropolitan police department, a natural beef company, a fast food chain franchisee, an alcoholic/drug treatment center, and a large mental health community treatment center.

Haskins, Kathie - grew up in Papillion, NE, and currently lives in Millard with her husband and two children. She enjoys writing poems and reflections about nature and everyday life, and hopes to one day publish a book of her poetry.

Heft, Paul - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Henson, Lucas – recently graduated from Omaha Creighton Prep High School and is now a student at Metropolitan Community College.

Herszbaum-Harding, Mila – is going into the sixth grade this fall at Marrs Middle School in Omaha, NE.

Hession, Ethan – is a student at Metropolitan Community College in Elkhorn, NE.

Hills, Abigail is a student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, where she works on her literature degree with a minor in anthropology. She has written since she was six years old and writes to free herself of thoughts that roll around in her head, to find inspiration, to appreciate the things she has, and because she loves it. Abigail loves nothing more than to meet fellow writers, who enjoy the written word and perfecting their craft, as much as she does.

Hoge, Lyndee - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Hudson, Tammy - has three children, helped her husband run a restaurant business for twenty years, and now is attending Metropolitan Community College with her children in Omaha, NE.

Hufford, David P. - has spent his life teaching and writing, 38 years in the USA, the last 30 of which were at Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs, IA, and he taught in Slovakia and China. Since then, he has traveled to many countries, often on missions for his church. He has published over 250 poems in 20 publications, including three self-published chapbooks and one full-length poetry book.

Jacoby, Zoey – is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

James, Anne - works as a lab technician at Creighton University, Omaha, NE, researching zebra fish inner ear development. She completed her B.S. in biology and French at Creighton. In her free time, Anne enjoys writing poetry, playing the trombone, knitting, and scuba diving.

Jones, Sandra - is 19 years old, from Imperial, Nebraska, and is majoring in Elementary Education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Kirkle, Tyler – is a student at Millard South High School.

Summer 2014

Knapp, Gracelyn - is a first time contributor to *Fine Lines*. She is six years old and will be attending Kindergarten this fall. She lives in Madison, NE with parents, Jim and Kristy, and big brother, Kenton.

Knapp, Kristy Stark - is an artist living in Madison, NE with her family.

Knuter, Lindsey - is a student at Metropolitan Community College in Elkhorn, NE.

Kruger, Stevie Rae - is a student at Metropolitan Community College in Elkhorn, NE.

Kruszczak, Natalia - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Lawless, Jennifer – is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Leeds, Larry – is a retired computer businessman and writes short stories in Omaha, NE.

Levine, Robert - grew up in Greenbelt, Maryland. He earned a B.A. in English from the University of Maryland, where he received the Henrietta Spiegel Creative Writing Award, in 1997; he earned an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from Emerson College, where he received the Emerging Writer Award, in 1999. His poetry and book reviews have appeared in several magazines—including *The Baltimore Review*, *The Alembic*, *The Lyric*, *The Isle Review*, *SAGGIO*, and *Poet Lore*—and on the website *Helium*, and his general nonfiction has been published on *Helium* as well. He has self-published two collections of poetry, *The Account* and *Mystical Symphony*. When not writing or reading, Robert's interests include Judaism, nature, and just about anything in the arts and humanities. Robert lives in Brookline, Massachusetts, and works as a supervisor at a market research company, a private tutor, and a freelance editor and proofreader.

Lundeen, Wendy - retired from teaching in the Omaha Public School District, where she taught Spanish at Central High School and at Alice Buffett Middle School. She is an adjunct instructor at Metropolitan Community College and substitutes in the Millard Public School District. She received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Organizational Communication, a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Secondary Education, and Masters of Arts Degrees in Secondary Education and Educational Administration. Señora Lundeen is a “Yaya” to six grandchildren and is writing a book about her grandsons’ struggles with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, a terminal illness. Her passions include writing poetry, singing in the church choir, traveling, acting, and dancing every year as “Oma” in *Nutcracker Delights*, sharing her love with her grandchildren and leading a group of young writers every year at the *Fine Lines* Summer Creative Writing Camp.

Lurz, Lacey - “I am a senior at Hastings, NE, High School. I enjoy being involved with yearbook, science club, and DECA through my school. I have loved writing since the first grade, and I love to read as well. It has been my dream to be published ever since I knew what that meant, and I always knew I would keep writing no matter what career path I chose in life. Whenever I told anyone what I wanted to be when I grew up, I would say whatever it was at the time, and then I would add, ‘I’ll also be a writer on the side.’ Writing has been and always will be a major part of my life.”

Mainelli, David - is a song writer, poet, musician, businessman, and lives in Omaha.

Martin, David – is the managing editor of *Fine Lines*.

Matthews, Katie – is a student at Millard South High School.

McAndrew, Vince - is retired from the Omaha Public Schools, where he was a teacher, counselor, and administrator. He is now giving full attention to his grandchildren and his poetry.

McKenna, J. J. - His poetry has appeared in more than 50 literary journals and mainstream magazines including *Ideals Magazine*, *Hawaii Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Louisville Review*, *Chaminade Literary Review*, *Concho River Review*, and *ELM*. His poem “At the Japanese Gardens” was nominated for the Pushcart Prize. His first book of poetry, *Wind and Water*, appeared in 2010. He is Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Nebraska Omaha.

Mertins, Joe – is a second grade student in Omaha, NE.

Miller, Bob - has been writing essays since 2007. Originally he wrote mostly about music and dance, and he emailed his essays to his dance students. He has over 200 of them, and he chose this one to share with *Fine Lines* readers.

Mittman, Marsha Warren – lives in Spearfish, South Dakota.

Mordaunt, Alycia - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Murnane, Jeff - is an executive at a small technology firm in Omaha Nebraska. He lives with his two boys and spends time coaching their sports teams, running and writing. Jeff began writing when his boys were young, after agreeing to create new, original stories for their bedtime reading ritual. They eventually preferred only original stories and a new hobby was born. As his boys grew out of bedtime stories, Jeff decided to take on more ambitious projects and started writing novels.

Summer 2014

Narvaez, Jesus - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Novak, Grace - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Okell, Jennifer - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

O'Neal, Lisa - is an honors student at Des Moines Area Community College in Iowa.

Palmer, Ronald J - comes from the mild streets of Bloomington, MN, where he has been writing poetry on and off for a number of years. He has been published in the *Great River Review* and *The Talking Stick*. He is a member of The Poetry Constellation, Bloomington Poetry Group, and The St. Paul Poetry Workshop.

Peterson, Jennifer - is a senior at Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart in Omaha, NE. She loves writing short stories and poetry and is working on a novel. She won first place in the 2011 Durham Museum regional essay contest and placed second internationally in the 2011 Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation essay contest. She was a Round 2 qualifier in the 2012 Anti-Defamation League of Holocaust Education's "Tribute to the Rescuers" essay contest, the state winner for Nebraska in the 2013 Colonial Dames National Congressional Essay Contest, and will attend the winners' Washington Workshops Congressional Seminar in Washington, DC, in June 2013.

Phillips, Michelle – this fall will teach second grade at St. Wenceslaus Elementary School in Omaha.

Poast, Stormy May – is in the fifth grade at Logan View Elementary School.

Ritchey, Angela – is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Robinson, Hannah – is in the eighth grade at Omaha Westside Middle School.

Roland, Kara - is a student at Metropolitan Community College in Elkhorn, NE.

Salhany, James M. - is a professor of internal medicine and biochemistry at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, where he teaches and performs research in the area of molecular biophysics. He did his graduate studies at the University of Chicago, where he obtained his Master's and PhD degrees. His undergraduate studies began at Wayne State University in Detroit, where his interest in poetry and music originated. He completed his baccalaureate degree in chemistry at the University of Florida. His poems attempt to present scientific concepts in humanistic terms.

Schifano, Brooke - “I’m a fairly regular reader of *Fine Lines*, so when I decided I was ready to start submitting work, I thought I’d start with a place I enjoy reading. I’m in college now at San Francisco State studying creative writing and have all of the lofty and simple dreams of a writer: to write, to change the world, to commemorate the crack in the sidewalk outside of the yellow house I grew up in. For now, I’m leaving the specifics up in the air and hoping for a slight breeze. I love public transportation and cats.”

Schmoeller, April - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Semler, Shannon – is a graduate of Bryan High School in Omaha and will attend the University of Nebraska at Omaha this fall.

Shulman, Lisa J. - died in 1990 at the age of 19 from a rare childhood cancer, Ewing’s Sarcoma. She wrote poetry and stories all of her short life, and as a member of the yearbook staff during her junior and senior years at Millard North High School, she was awarded entry into The Quill and Scroll International Honorary Society for High School Journalists. After graduation, she attended Bradley University in Peoria, IL, on academic scholarships. She attended for only six months, until that dreaded cancer returned with a vengeance.

Simmers, D. N. - writes poetry and lives in British Columbia, Canada.

Steele, Kristen – is a senior at Glenwood, IA, High School. “Corvette” is the name of her seeing-eye golden retriever.

Strang, Mason - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Wagner, Grace - is a first time writer for *Fine Lines*.

Ward, Cooper - is a student at Metropolitan Community College in Elkhorn, NE.

Weisbecker, Carolyn – enjoys writing mainstream short-story fiction, middle-grade and young adult fiction, especially while hanging out at Starbucks where she finds daily inspiration and great coffee (okay, mostly great coffee). Recently, she was awarded The Glimmer Train Honorable Mention Award in the Family Matters category. Her non-fiction writing has been published in local newspapers, business periodicals, and a national trade magazine.

Wentzler, Sarah – is a 2014 Papillion LaVista High School graduate. “My family means the world to me, I have one older brother, and he is my best friend. I have 2 pugs named Otto and Zoey, and one crazy Pekinese named Charlie. I love to write and have always had a passion for it.”

Whitney, Leah - moved to Nebraska at the age of seven and spent 12 years of her life living in Bellevue, Nebraska. She currently resides in Omaha and is attending the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Her overall goal is to open a business that engages the community in learning the languages of the world. This spring semester of 2014, she will study abroad in Argentina mastering her first learned foreign language of Spanish. She has high expectations on making an impact on the city of Omaha by reducing racial tensions through education of diverse cultures.

Wilken, Mia - "In the fall of 2014, I will attend the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and will major in Exercise Science and Nutrition. After I receive my degree, I will attend Physical Therapy School. This is the path I chose for my life, all because of one man. He changed my life and is the topic of my essay in this issue of *Fine Lines*."

Woods, Emily - is a student at Metropolitan Community College in Elkhorn, NE.

Worden, Leslie - is a student at Metropolitan Community College in Elkhorn, NE.

Wright, Donald - is a retired newspaperman from Iowa and Nebraska who has also taken a turn with Nebraska state government as a public information officer and as an associated professor of communication at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Wright retired from state government in 1999, and, with his wife, Norma Woods, moved to Oregon City, Oregon, the end of the Oregon Trail. He rekindled his love for poetry after the death of his wife, a longtime teacher in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and, later, an employee of the Omaha Library System. Unknown to him, in 1976 she submitted one of his little love poems for her to *Lyrical Iowa*, the Iowa poetry/prose quarterly, and they published it. He only found it, while cleaning out her accumulated memorabilia, and started writing again to help himself answer some of the questions of her death and his new life. Among the ephemera his wife kept was a 2010 copy of *Fine Lines* containing an illustration by Eddith Buis, a friend and an Omaha artist. On a whim, Wright submitted "Seventh Inning Stretch" to *Fine Lines* and got a strike on his first cast.

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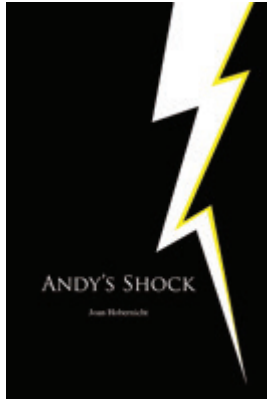
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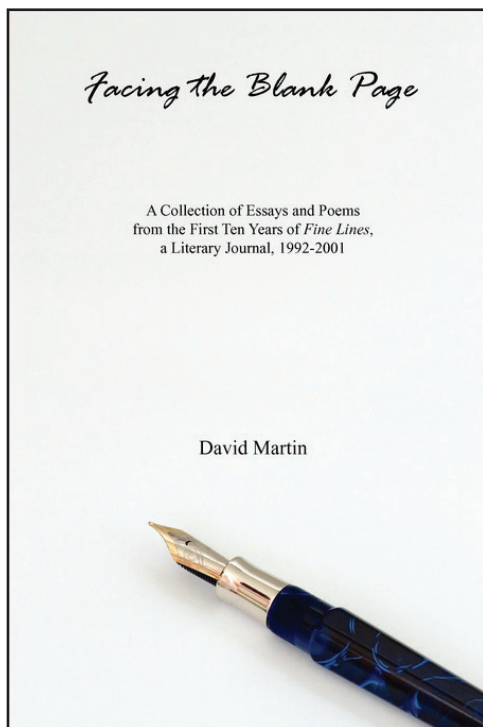
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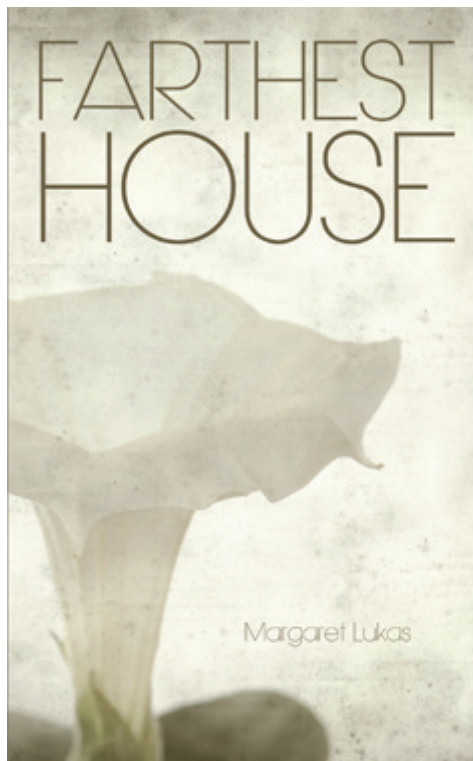
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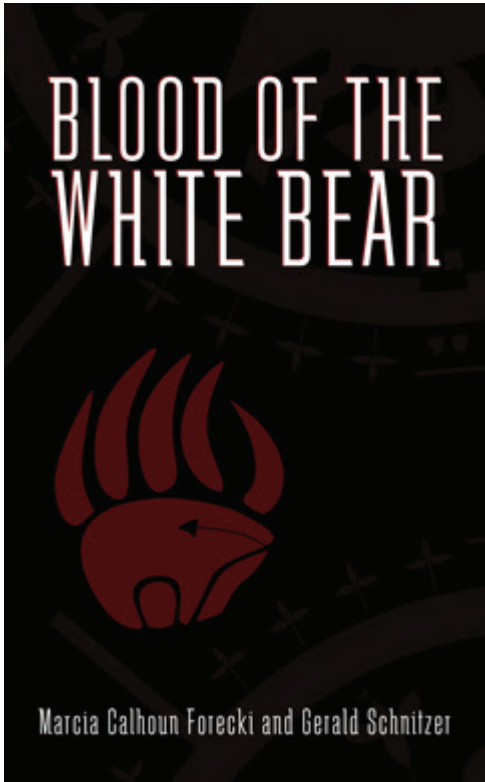
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