What would you do with self expression?

Self-expression: the ability to showcase talents and aspirations. In this edition, we explore what it means to use language, art, and photography in order to best convey how we feel, how we deal with loss and love, and how we respond the world surrounding us.

This is the premise under which Horizons is compiled.

Bringing together poems that will make you smile and cry, essays that make you ponder the past and wonder why, and plays and monologues that will make you laugh and dream about what could be. Writing and visual art is allegorical, metaphorical, political; it involves betrayal, escapes, manipulations.

Horizons is an open forum for the manifestations of thought and a wonderful display of human feeling and emotion. Dive into this edition and into the thoughts of your peers, and perhaps you will gain a new appreciation for the power of language and visual art.
We encourage you to read and feel inspired, become inquisitive or perhaps even angered or encouraged.

Discover the brilliance of your peers in their expression through our Spring 2008 edition of *Horizons*.

This edition is filled with so much joy, horror, sorrow, and yet an undeniable hope of the future.

Enjoy!

- Horizons Editors
INSIDE COVER

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Satisfy
Ines Cenatiempo

I’ve always tried to see the good you say you have
But this truth is detestable to me, and you did me so bad
Every look, every word, every touch were lies upon lies
My sadness is hidden deep in the waves as my sensitivity dies

So I’ll say it harshly: you are a waste of thought
And now I’ll make it worse: you’ve deceived with each word you’ve bought
How dare you write what you have never understood
Love was never your goal; you only stole whatever you could

At least for me, I refused to be swayed by that glare
And to remember it now is my curse of despair
I could pray that you become victim to your own defiled game
Screaming endlessly until you cover my mouth to hide the shame

But karma doesn’t satisfy, and neither will revenge
My perfect solace is to break your pride with the stroke of a pen
And before the animosity is soaked in the ink
I am unattainable: keep that in mind as I take you to the brink
MOTHER AND SON - ANDRE PICARD
Mother and Son
Andre Picard
MY LOVE - INES CENATIEMPO

My love
Ines Cenatiempo

Tragic is this story in its retelling
But this time it’s my weakness I’m selling
It’s the one gift they were willing to give
So my pleas now go to something greater to help me live

All my tries have been energy wasted
Defeat the one entity tasted
This earth holds nothing to save my fall
To heaven I send my heart, bleeding and all

Maybe someday, someone will prove me wrong
And bring back the bass to finish my song
Until then my heart chooses to stay in the clouds
Exchanging the turmoil for more angelic sounds

It will never be easy to climb that far up
Tangibility is not their search, tar fills their cup
But for the one that waits with a passion to drown
For them this heart will make the leap and step down
Sinclair Lewis, in his many novels and short stories, is a champion of the individual and strict critic of society infringing on the individual. One of his biggest criticisms comes from the institution. The institution of marriage can lead to the following of societal standards, leading the couple to live by those standards and not the standards born out of their own love. While he criticizes the institution of marriage, he praises love.

Marriage is supposed to be an eternal bond between two people in love, and yet we see in Lewis’ works two people who have a legal contract, but nothing else. Often these marriages are established out of a social need to be married with no love in them at all. Stewart Snyder in Lewis’ *Main Street*, not having been close with Carol at all in college, upon their graduation asks her hand in marriage. He questions her defiance saying, “What’s better than making a comfy home and bring up some cute kids and knowing nice homey people?” (12) To Snyder marriage is just the next gradual step in life, much like getting a job might be. He has no reason to want to marry Carol other than he wants to start a family because that’s what everyone else does. Marrying out of others wants though does not support the individual. It is only through the individual that love can arise because love is a feeling. You cannot force yourself to feel something that is not there. A marriage like the Kennicott’s and Babbitt’s form after a marriage occurs where love is not the main motive for marrying. What’s left are marriages that produces children, bills, houses, summer homes, and long vacations, but never love.

Will Kennicott is no different than Paul Snyder in what he wants from Carol. He wants her to marry him and return to his small town and have his children. So reminiscent of Snyder is Kennicott that Carol actually says to herself, “Why was she thinking of Stewart Snyder?” (18) Kennicott goes about courting Carol almost like someone does trying to sell a piece of property to her holding up photos and saying, “How’d it be to skate there for a couple of hours, or go zinging along on a fast ice-boat, and skip back home for coffee and some hot wienies?” (23) If it was a relationship based on love the geography of the land would not matter to Carol, as she would follow him anywhere. In fact, if she truly loved him Kennicott would not have to work to sell her the town, but instead she would willfully go. Everything Kennicott says to support his case for marriage does not matter because they are all materialistic and do not reflect Kennicott’s inner self, which is what someone would love.

While Carol, devoid of purpose in her life and beaten by a world that will not accept her feminine charge, gives in and marries Kennicott. Much can be the said with the marriage of George and Myra Babbitt as well. Theirs is not a marriage built out of love, but instead one that was built out of a lack of fight, as we see with Engaged? It was his first hint of it. His affection for this brown tender woman thing went cold and fearful, but he could not hurt her, could not abuse her trust. (86) Babbitt practically marries out of pity, much like Carol does.

This puts two couples into situations that are supposed to be built out of love, but instead are built out of society’s want, or pressure, to marry. This reduces marriage from a state of love into a process like job.

Myra, for instance, is reduced to the quiet housewife like many others. Society tells Myra that she needs to be a quiet home maker where she is seen but not heard. The reader is told that, “Yet she existed only for him and for the children, and she was as sorry, as worried as himself, when he gave up the law and trudged on in a rut of listing real estate.” (87) Myra no longer puts importance on her individuality, but on the needs to others, catering to them like it is a paying profession.
As Claire Eby states in her criticism *Extremely Married*, Myra infantilizes her spouse into Mrs. George F. Babbitt. Through marriage she has undergone a repression of her individuality. She is no longer the Myra who may have desires, wishes, dreams, but is instead the woman following the model of a wife laid for her by other people in society. With this she becomes quiet and when she speaks up to express her disapproval against the correspondence courses Ted and Babbitt are praising they are shocked and disapproving. While these outbursts show the imprisonment that can be caused by the institution of marriage and the human need for escape, these signs of Myra’s acuity are irritants, not stimulants, to George. If Babbitt loved Myra he would love who she is entirely, wanting to hear her thoughts and opinions. Instead though, it is seen as an annoyance that she is not conforming to the social norm.

Kennicott has a similar reaction to Carol’s objection to Gopher Prairie’s growth campaign as he says, “That’ll be about all from you! I’ve stood for your sneering at this town, and saying how ugly and dull it is. I’ve stood for your refusing to appreciate good fellows like Sam. I’ve even stood for your ridiculing our Watch Gopher Prairie Grow campaign. But one thing I’m not going to stand: I’m not going to stand my own wife being seditious.” Both Kennicott and Babbitt cannot tolerate their wives not being subservient to them. It is almost as if the wife becomes a tool to boost the husbands ego, but this is not what marriage, or love, is supposed to be. To love is to take a person in their fullness. To accept who they are completely, even accepting their flaws and their disagreements.

While Lewis builds such marriages in *Babbitt* and *Main Street* to show the problems with the institution of marriage, he also breaks them apart and prevents them from happening to show the same.

Erik Valborg comes to Gopher Prairie as an unrepressed individual just as Carol did. However, the reader sees his disillusionment with life grow as Carol’s did and he almost falls into the trap of marriage Myrtle Cass puts forth. Carol responds to this by saying, “I’m going to be frank and beastly. Don’t you realize that it isn’t just because her papa needs a bright young man in the mill that Myrtle is amiable to you? Can’t you understand what she’ll do to you when she sends you to church and makes you become respectable?” Carol, trapped in the prison of marriage is protesting his willing confinement, much as she herself went willing to Kennicott. The protest here by Carol shows Lewis’s dislike of the institution of marriage because it rips away the person who the individual wants to be and replaces it with a standard put forth by society that one must live up to. The dangers of that institution are shown by Carol’s own warning not to fall into it. By Erik’s avoidance of that trap he goes on to fulfill his dreams of being an artist (actor). However, had he married Myrtle Cass he would have been forced to conform to all the standards of the Gopher Prairie. Erik does not become bound by place or standard in his avoidance of this institution.

While Erik avoids marriage and what would have most likely come with it, Babbitt’s best friend Paul sees no way out of his marriage then to absolutely destroy it through violence.

It was only in Maine where Babbitt and Paul could be free. There they had no wives to control them. The trip only lasted so long and the return built up to Paul’s crime. At the jail Babbitt, provokes Paul not only to voice his violent disposition toward his wife, but an even more telling outburst about how the institution of marriage operates. Paul refers to Babbitt as a moralist, not following personal morals, but the ones set forth by the society of Zenith. Paul refuses to follow those morals by having an affair, and by shooting his wife.

As Paul is trying to stop Zilla from bleeding he see a symbol of their past happiness together as he tells Babbitt, “when I was hunting through the bathroom for some cotton to stop the blood, I ran into a little fuzzy yellow duck we hung on the tree one Christmas, and I remembered she and I’d been awfully happy then.” It is the institution of marriage that had changed their happiness. Suddenly they could not act as they were in college as, was bespelled by Zilla Colbeck, who laughed and danced.
and drew men after her plump and gaily wagging finger, because society is now dictating their actions and making their morals. This is clearly seen upon Babbitt’s return from home when Myra states, “Of course Paul isn’t altogether to blame, but this is what comes of his chasing after other women instead of bearing his cross in a Christian way.” She essentially blames Paul’s actions on him not following society’s rules.

Really though it was following what society displayed as the institution of marriage that drove Paul to violence. Society’s laws ripped the love away from them and replaced it with conformed action.

And while Lewis is always in heavy criticism of this institution and what it does to the two people in it, his criticism all leads to showing of the importance of love.

In Lewis’ Speed we see the importance of love showcased. J.T. Buffum the motor car racer falls in love with Aurilla Rivers on one his auto repair stops. She admits to Buff that, “You do things I’ve always wanted to do—sweep across big distances, command men, have power.” It seems what prevents her from doing this though is the myth of her family past, as she feels, the Riverses owe it to the world to set an example. She wants to be an adventurer but society tells her that she has to live up to a name, up to a standard.

Buffum, obviously begins to fall in love with her as during his own celebration dinner all he can think of is, “Aurilla Rivers would undoubtedly have married the Reverend Mr. Dawson, have gone to Cape Cod on her wedding trip. She would think only with disgust of large men with grease on their faces.” He returns to Cape Cod to become knowledgeable of what she value’s most, only to discover that her family history is a myth and she does not know it.

Upon his arrival back in Apogee Buffum has only fifty minutes before he has to be back on the train. Her running late from school begins to show of pull of being where society wants him, and being with who her loves. As the minutes tick he does not run back to the train, but he continues to wait. His continuing to wait show’s a value of love over everything else.

Upon his asking her to marry he says, “I mustn’t think of it. It tempts me. But mother would never consent.” She references someone else to make her own decision, which in all of Lewis’ works has been the foundation of societal value over the individuals in love. It is not until Buffum destroys that family myth that Aurilla makes her own decision to go with him.

When Buffum states, “Miss Rivers, would you mind marrying me, somewhere between here and California?” he is saying that wherever he goes he wants his love with him. Buffum wants his love close, not far away. In all the marriages in Lewis’ works, while the couples may be living in the same houses as one another, they are always internally far away.

The short story ends with the old supporting the young as Aurilla’s mother prepares a brief case for her. Lewis’ writings always are accompanied by the tonality of youth. To give in and conform is a thing of the aged and his protagonists are always trying to break free from that conformity. With the old supporting the young here we see a want of the old for the young to live and experience. The older character in the mother here is showing an emphasis on freedom, and of course, love.

Much can be said about the ending of Babbitt and the marriage of Ted to Verona. While both the Babbitt’s and the Thompson’s dislike the marriage, George Babbitt himself supports it telling Ted privately, “I’ve never done a single thing I’ve wanted to in my whole life!” He is proud of Ted for not conforming to what society told him was right.

Babbitt even then comments on what society will tell Ted stating, “Well, those folks in there will try to bully you, and tame you down. Tell them to go to the devil! I’ll back you. Take your factory job, if
you want to. Don’t be scared of the family. No, nor all of Zenith. Nor of yourself, the way I’ve been. Go ahead, old man! The world is yours! (378) Babbitt says here that whatever society tells him he has to do his own thing in life. He cannot listen to or follow anyone else, or he will end up like his father, a regretful old man.

Whatever the individual wants to do in life, there will be a fight that comes with it. This fight will come because what the masses want from you will almost never be what you want from yourself. To be an individual is to be different and different is scary to people who live in the Zenith’s and the Gopher Prairie’s. If you’re not who you want to be then you will end up living someone else’s life like Babbitt and not yours. Of all the things worth fighting for as an individual though, love is the greatest.
And this is how I'm feeling
Just to let you know.
That this burning sensation
Has seeped through enough to show.
Deep into this feeling,
Far past the boiling point.
Burning, overflowing now
So bound to disappoint.
I hate with compassion,
When fury takes the wheel.
Emotions flow, boiling now
These words not spoken revealed.
So tell me now sir bittersweet
Silent words drip from your tongue.
Speak your heart, not your mind.
Fears forbear the plunge.
And as for this faded dream,
A simple ignored fantasy.
A mystery you will always be,
My unwritten symphony.
REALITY'S KISS - CAITLIN GOLA
Reality's Kiss
Caitlin Gola

As they lay wrapped
In a blanket of deceit
On a bed cushioned with lies,
They soundly sleep.
Cheek to shoulder
Silk hands to chest.
Deep breathing with a shallow heart
They'll surely rest.
And at that moment
When sunshine breaks,
She'll be forgotten
Shortly after they wake.
Mornings welcomed with
Butterfly kissed eyes
Flutter open wide as her heart
And as deep as his lies.
A kiss to her forehead
And one to her lips
A simple bitter taste
Of all the others he's kissed
She looks into his eyes
And dreams of something real
She sees past his weakness
Sees what they feel.
She lives for these moments
But he lives for these nights.
She longs for something deeper
She's willing to put up the fight.
Interrupted by,
Realities' kiss
A counterfeit smile
The smile she'll miss
Her dreams now lost
She turns to the wall.
Braces the truth
As a lone tear falls.
Maybe tomorrow will bring
An authentic love
A crystal clear morning
Something her dreams were made of.
PALM TREES - SAMANTHA MARINKO
Palm Trees
Samantha Marinko
**DAYDREAM - SHANNON IANNI**

Daydream  
*Shannon Ianni*

I see you. Again.  
But the words don’t speak.  
The thought could kill.  
The senses, weak.  
**Daydream.**  
Just say it all.  
For me. My wish.  
Only in my dreams.  
*Why is it like this?**  
**Daydream.**  
But I will go there for some time.  
Just to have it all.  
A chance taken. Promise kept.  
Something hoped to find.  
**Daydream.**  
And when you learn to see it through  
Take the chance of me and you.
I have a bad feeling about my unsure feelings for you. I know you can feel it; by the way your gaze wanders as I sip my drink. You’re already 10 deep and I like to watch as your thoughts emerge from your face, squirming like cold feet under the blanket of your complexion. I like to watch as your inhibitions melt away, falling to the floor only to find somber emptiness and the company of cigarette butts and bottle caps. I’ve seen you before, and I know it was you by the way your expression changes when no ones looking. By the way I can hear you shaking when you laugh. I’d be lying if I told you I never toyed with these ideas or preyed on such misplaced desires. I can’t lie to you and I can’t lie next to but you know I do either if you let me. Because I’m slowly filling up with an embarrassed passion and frustrated when I try to penetrate you with my stare from across hot rooms through nameless guests at faceless parties. The toxic taste in my mouth warns me that its dangerous but I shamelessly make excuses for y relapse. Two steps forward, three steps back. Your smile speaks of a suffocated curiosity and I’m good to know that you don’t always do what you’re supposed to. It’s amusing to watch your uncertainty, you’re subtle rebellion. I want to love you, I want to fuck you I want to make you cry. I want to touch you I want to be you, I want to see my naked reflection in the darkness of your eyes. Dizzy thinking of what could be I patronize decaying ideals and chip away at an already crumbling belief. Just know that I’m everything she promised and take that with you where we part ways and drink away hazardous ideas. Returning to our respective beds and sleepy lovers, only to tell ourselves there’s nothing wrong with just looking.
The Nonchalant Ramblings of a Madman
Tommy Sands

Early today it occurred to me that there is a dire situation becoming active in the world surrounding the college university scenery. This first occurred to me after reading an intriguing piece of art in our very own art gallery.

Have you ever visited it?

Did you know that exists?

This article discussed and pointed out how people used to care and were not so full-heartedly apathetic towards life and education. We need to wake up. If you are one who has already woken up then please continue to remain conscious. If one stops to look at the situation around us, it does not have to be like this. We do not have to dread going to classrooms and dread midterms, finals, and all of the various tests that we are continuously plagued with.

You enjoy the fluffed grades that you receive; one should know that America is one of the lowest ranked countries in the world right now in education. The mass of people today are apathetically sleeping. Does it occur to you why there are so many diseases and obesity in this country?

The body reflects the thoughts and substance of the mind.

We have become weak and lost our lust for life. When is the last time you picked up a book for leisure? The greatest people in history, the very authors you are reading in classrooms daily, were minds that were strong and went against the mold. Find people to talk to that have contingencies with the world around them. Since when is a midlife crisis something that occurs in a human’s life. Remember the vigor and imaginative passion that one had as a child. The wonderment and inspiration one found from gazing and encountering the world. Look around you at the garbage, the depression, the overall muck of the human essence. Man is great but we have seriously in the post-modern world pumped him full of chemicals and efficiency. As the result follows, our balance in this world and apart from our natural human essence has created a crisis of the most paramount grade.

Did you decide your major in college or were you influenced by others to choose a path in life. It is yours isn’t it. I shudder to say so, but again what one has learned in these past four years about the human crisis. When one goes to bars, what does one talk about, simple pleasures of the flesh, do you really think that was all we were designed for? Read a book, it will help you to cultivate your ideas and thoughts about the world around you.

When sleeping, does one follow a regimented schedule in which every morning awakening is met by the dread of sleeping in or resting a few more minutes? Why is it you think that you are too exhausted and drained every morning to greet it. My biggest concern is that when you look back at these years, will you see nothing but drunken nights and random hook-ups or a well-built education with which to engage the society around you.

There are two people that one can become.

A person who is shaped by the world around you or one who shapes this world into something new. Look at what you see around you, what do you see. I am interested if one could tell me that the education they receive is a quality education. What purpose is there in taking an online class, there is no interaction and the
class is simply easy? But hey if that’s the solipsistic community in which you wish to exist then by all means put blinders and ear plugs back in and continue living as a limp starfish.

Please don’t think that I am badgering you all as morons, but simply calling into hindsight the value placed upon your education. Better yet, if one was to rank oneself as a human being with regards to your education, how would you feel? Like a human or a lab rat who is nibbling on a rotten piece of cheese. It is easy to accept watching television and playing video games all day. That is the lifestyle that is dominating our younger brothers and sisters. That will be the lifestyle of your children as well if such malpractice continues.

Too much traffic, not enough time to do what one wants to do. There is only one life for you sirs and madams and that is a free one. One in which there is the opportunity to do what one wants. Is your life so horrid and languish that one must continuously take spring breaks and vacations.

From what, life?

Listen to how those words echo upon your mind’s walls. Reading has become an obsolete fashion for some. For the past 2,000 years reading has been a way to liberate people. The first slaves learned how to read and became aware of the things around them. Do you even know which Amendment abolished slavery in America? If not then I feel sorry for you because you are already a slave, both in the physical sense and also psychologically. Perhaps a shame has come over you like our dear governor of Albany.

Life is meant to be enjoyed and embraced not wasted and left as a festering fruit in the glimmer of the moon. This world has rotation in it and so do our thoughts, but if these thoughts become obsolete then who is going to guide your life. The standards of society, perhaps one can look at them as well. But these are only the mere thoughts of an insane madman as I sit in my tower above the world and glance down and watch as the ants below me fight over pieces of a cake that we aren’t even sure exist or not.

What was I? Who am I? Am I not me?

Am I a mass of flesh melting under the barren sun?

Have I walked my mind in too many circles?

Have I stabbed out my own minds eye in apathy over my own mind?
LOOKING FORWARD - MARY DANNEGGER

Looking Foward
Mary Dannegger
Hidden Arg
Samantha Selvaggio

So you wake up one morning and look in the mirror. Sixteen years old, a face full of breakouts and some shiny blue braces. You may not be every teenage girl’s dream come true, but is it your fault you’re going through an awkward stage? Normally this would be a crisis for any other teenage boy on any other morning, but for an avid Axe user such as yourself, this is no sweat. Because with one spray you just went from dud to stud; and then you wake up?

It’s unrealistic to trust that a product like Axe that claims it can change your lifestyle, but this didn’t stop the Axe Company from releasing a commercial with a cameo appearance by Nick Lachey. This particular commercial advertises one of Axe’s body spray’s, Clix, and conveys to the male population that regardless of your appearance, if you use these products, women will be drawn to you.

Heartthrob Nick Lachey strutted around town, to the song “Gangster of Love,” with clicker in hand so he could keep track of how many women glanced his way and gave him the eye. He then compares his total with a young man working an elevator who winds up having more than Lachey. At the end of the commercial it shows the elevator man spraying himself with the Clix body spray, stressing the very idea that even if you are the famous and good-looking Nick Lachey, if you use Clix by Axe, your chances on the playing field can exceed even his.

Some young men may be hesitant to believe that they have succumbed to the Axe promise, but if you are a consumer of the product, something about it must have sold you. If this were not the case, then why own it? Millions of commercials are broadcasted everyday on thousands of channels and flooding the television screens of people worldwide. This is the sole purpose of the advertising business - to construct and create commercials in such a way that they lure and persuade viewers to believe they actually need the marketed products. The Axe Company has done more than just obtained this goal, but questions of whether this product really works and whether the commercials are selling fact or fiction, still remain.

The growing popularity of the Axe products has sky rocketed as a result of the vast increase of its users, nevertheless people seem to forget that it has also stripped the younger generation of men of their uniqueness and ability to basically decide how they want to smell. What guy wouldn’t be an advocate for a product that promises to give him the edge in the mating game, especially when women have responded exactly how the makers of Axe had anticipated? Whether women intend to or not, they are receptive to men who give off some form of the Axe brand scent. It has been proven to catch the attention of women and often times be quite compelling.

It is no secret that the media’s favorite weapon is sex. Sex sells and plays an enormous role in the advertisement and success of the Axe line and the producers expediently play right into it. It seems that today all that surrounds us is sex and promiscuity; but hey, would you trade the big bucks in for righteousness?

I didn’t think so.

Advertisers and marketers use this tool to their advantage because it works time and time again.

In the article, Lori Klinger touches upon her belief that all commercials were rated as demonstrating stereotypic sex-role behavior. Much like the Axe commercials, where sex is being portrayed...
along with the assumption that men can just have women at the beck and call whenever they please, so long as they use the Axe products; it is supposed that young viewers are at best reinforced by stereotypic sex-role behavior, which is exactly the target market for the Axe companies; young boys who will believe that they are being marketed truth.

Commercials and ads that display these sexual innuendos depict an animalistic view such as numerous females prowling after a single "Axeified" male. In any event, these advertisements are both appealing and enticing and it is no secret that consumers are responding accordingly. When you combine members of the opposite sex with a dash of fantasy or some guilty pleasure, you can rest assured that people will watch and wonder, "maybe I should try that..."
SUMMER - SAMANTHA MARINKO
Summer
Samantha Marinko
JOHN LENNON - CHRISTINE PALUMBO
John Lennon
Christine Palumbo
Facing the Day

Jared Faircloth

When the sun rises at the start of each day
I ponder what problems stand in my way
How to overcome the difficulty I face?
Where’s the motivation for the dreams I chase?
I will never give up on what I pursue
Hoping one day these dreams come true
So all I can do is face each day
Overcoming obstacles that stand in my way
THE ARTIST - JARED FAIRCLOTH

The Artist
Jared Faircloth

The artist plays his guitar on a street corner
I stare at him the only mourner
He looks for change from wealthy businessmen
Who pass the artist once again
Never a glance
Never making a donation
Rushing to the nearest train station
In their hurry they push and shove
Though the artist struggles, he does what he loves
JOHNNY CASH - LEIGH KOGER

Johnny Cash
Leigh Koger
It’s Relentless - Sam Coletto

It’s Relentless

Sam Coletto

It never ends. No matter how hard I try, I just can’t escape it. Nobody can. At times, everyday life is simply unbearable. One day it’s academic scores, the next day it’s financial woes, the day after that it’s friend or family drama, and the list goes on until I reach the point where I would like to walk in front of the oncoming shuttle, rather than ride it to class. Nevertheless, of course I would never do that because I don’t allow it to break me. I don’t permit it to drive me that far. If God lets me, I wake up in the morning and I do what I have to do no matter what confronts me on that particular day. The way that I see it, there’s no such thing as a life without problems. There’s no such thing as being carefree. We all have our crosses to bear. But if you allow it to, it will get the best of you, and it will be relentless. It’s if you choose to keep moving on and find a way to endure that puts you on the shuttle and not in front of it.
SEARCHING FOR ME - SHANNON IANNI

Searching for Me
Shannon Ianni

The calm sense of hope
As it's slowly fading upward
Seems to be as clear
As the sky appears to be.

Drifting in and out and washing away
Trying to believe that it's here to stay.
But it all slips by.
One by one by one.

And dreaming never leads to what we really want.
And that slowly fading heart will eventually stop.

Looking for anything.
Searching for me.
No Flowers Today Because of Rain

Sandy Sillo

The flower woman
Hard face, gentle eyes.
Wears a blue rain poncho and jeans
that hide her ugly shoes.
Dons a type of cap that hides her thick hair.
Talks to everyone that walks past.
Freckles scattered upon her light brown face.
Face marked by little half moons
That look like tiny smiles.
Fishes of sorrow swimming through her.
Tough-seeming,
tired of standing in the rain.

Walks in circles.
Always a cigarette in her hand.
All day long on the tip of York Street.
No flowers today because of the rain.
I don't think I can title this one.
Sandy Sillo

Time is like a leaf
That floats about
Amid the autumn sunlight --
waiting.

I try to chase it,
I try to see it,
But it keeps jumping to the beat of the wind.

I wonder if the leaf --
Ever had a name
Ever had a friend
Ever had a star
Ever had a life
Besides Wind.

I can’t distinguish its color from here
It either grey or brown or both
But I can’t tell
I can only see its skeleton
Sad, so sad
but what is that I see?
Do I see something else?
(ok this one is about having AD/HD, a lot of my friends thought it was suicidal or something but it's not if you pay attention enough; no pun intended, it's actually meant to be funny)

Calm and ready,
The numbers appear from the tip of my pen.
Anxious to learn, and ready to defeat,
Suddenly it comes, like a lion; I'm pulled into the den.

Words in my head,
Like alphabet soup, are not really words at all.
I can't even understand my own ideas or thoughts, And my consciousness seems to fall.

Miraculously, the AM radio of my mind is interrupted, Beyond the noises and mumbles, Some focus has come into play, It's for the words of this poem—all hope has crumbled.

Seeing right through the black numbers on white, The confusion is growing.
What color to paint my nails tonight?
The symptoms are surely showing.

Contemplating the destiny of my future,
Not knowing how this will come into play, "Come one girl, it's easy, just stay on track!"
Yea, that's easy for you to say.

Clawing and gnawing,
My brain is being bit.
I don't understand these equations and figures, If I could only find where God put my wit.

It could have been named better,
This disorder of mine,
"CANTADD" would have been nicer,
At least I would have warning, and that'd be fine.

Back to reality to see the classroom is empty, And I'm sitting all alone.
I guess I should've watched out,
For the lion's Tuesday roam.
INSTEAD I MADE A LEFT - ERIKA SAWYER
Instead I Made a Left
Erika Sawyer

You define me by your uncertainty, your quizzical means by which you can never find ends ripe enough to
taste. Aspirations that open like presents and fall like pianos. Tied up and twisted in a web I cant untangle
you slowly tug at the thread of my persona as I slide apart with ease, under the delicacy of your mastery, I
am your slip not. You're my drowning ambition, my decaying ideals. You're choking on my last
words, you're crossing my fingers, you're catching my breath. You're my embarrassed passion,
the things I wish I could say out loud. And on nights I lay down and close my eyes hoping that the room will
stop spinning you remind me that we're neither angels or demons but slabs of clay dug up from the
coldest depths of the earth's crust, to be moved and shaped unconditionally. And now I'm chasing after
impossibility, hoping to shake hands with the hands that sculpted you, hoping to see everything that you
capture in your deep sunken eyes, with the same comprehension of what you have come to love so
effortlessly. You're effortless.
WHO AM I? - FRANCISCO FLORES

Who am I?
Francisco Flores
3.3.3 - **SHAWN MITCHELL**

**3.3.3**  
*Shawn Mitchell*

Sleep is not coming easy tonight, he thought.  
Lying in bed, restless, eyes open, dreams fought.  
The lights are out and the world is asleep,  
If only he could let this go, to take this leap.

He is dreaming of you, silly fool, dreaming of you.  
You toss and turn, restless, eyes open, hot, too.  
He sleeps just blocks away while you simply cannot.  
Should you take some pills? Or maybe smoke some pot?

The boy lies while standing, but dreams stay true;  
He may not like it, but his dreams speak of you.  
Dark Knight, sing and dance, attend the tale â€”  
Wake up lost, breathing heavy, feeling pale.

Sleep has been achieved for once, he said.  
Lying in bed, restful, eyes closed, dreams misled.  
Once again the thoughts tumble, forming a life;  
The morning light beckons, ending this internal strife.
OVERWHELMED - Sam Coletto

Overwhelmed
Sam Coletto

As I lie awake in bed,
I contemplate what lies ahead.
The stresses of life, thus far, cause me to dread,
What I shall confront on the road ahead.
These uneasy thoughts, they dampen my forehead,
Calmness does not possess me, but anxiety instead.
I stare into space, then over at my bedstead,
I wish to abandon these thoughts that circulate in my head.
Even in slumber these ideas have not fled,
I consciously must combat them until they are dead.
I optimistically recollect the successful tracks I have tread,
These satisfying reflections, in my mind, I strive to embed.
Incessant nervousness I desire to shed,
As I lie awake in bed.
Untitled
Andre Picard
HEART ON HER SLEEVE - KATE BRINDISI
Heart on Her Sleeve
Kate Brindisi
(this one is a little harsh but I got a lot of compliments on it so I thought I would send it in)

They didn’t understand
every word was a dagger
thrown into my chest.
Every action they made
forced my life into
nothingness.

What did I do.

As black tears dripped off my chin,
red blood fell from my wrist.
Every day, every breath
seemed
WASTED.

I had no one.

They don’t realize
the pain I went through.
I was alone,
and my mind betrayed me.
I prayed for God to take me.
Take me away.
Heaven or Hell,
it is better than this.

We were children.

Playing a game,
playing the game.

I had no one.
Throughout Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Paul Bäumer embodies the naive assumptions, painful realizations and finally, the amputated spirit which characterized the intellectual and psychological journey of the entire Lost Generation (to use the phrase of Gertrude Stein). Those eighteen, nineteen, and twenty-year-olds who found themselves thrown into the unmitigated horror of the Great War, were woefully unprepared for what was ahead of them. Their training had made them masters of soldiering; the drill, pomp and circumstance became second nature, but they received no instruction on how to cope with the harsh realities of the actual front. Their first action, their first bombardment, and witnessing their first death, therefore, proved devastating. When all around them, coming at them, and within them were: shells, gas clouds, and flotillas of tanks "shattering, corroding, death. Dysentery, influenza, typhus, shell-shaking, choking death; the grand ideals of nationalism in which they had been reared, inevitably were rent asunder as they found out that, in fact, death-throes are stronger than any ideology. All that remained was the desire to survive. But to survive for what purpose? Paul is uncertain. He can't imagine ordinary civilian life or what would have been his future if not for the war. He similarly finds no solace in literary pursuits or what was his life prior to the war commenting: "Words, Words, Words—they do not reach me. Slowly I place the books back in the shelves. Nevermore." Discovering all that he now knows and somehow the only thing he seems suited for is war or that which is killing him psychologically (to say nothing of endangering him physically), Paul is not only cut off from his early life "he is cut off from [any] activity, from striving, from progress." He has no past or future, only the paradoxically dreadful yet somehow comforting present. He suspects after experiencing leave (which he inexplicably ends up regretting) that Albert is probably right in that the war has ruined us for everything, however, despite the fragility of the moment and the bleakness of that which is to come, he still endeavors to go on. Come what may, he decides to wait until after the war, if there ever is such a time, to worry about coming to terms with what he has been through. From the beginning the little flames of his generation were poorly sheltered against the storm of dissolution and madness. Throughout their journey, they were undermined by meaningless propaganda and betrayed by friendly fire as well as those who should have been giving them guidance. Each stage of Bäumer’s tripartite journey was dominated by an individual who (for better and usually worse) influenced his intellectual and psychological development. The first stage was the pseudo-intellectual shepherding that Kantorek had accomplished with his presumptuous and self-serving admiration for the so-called "Iron Youth." Kantorek understood instinctively that there is little distinction between sheep and students in a classroom where he, the schoolmaster, has absolute authority. The reason is that his students were poorly sheltered; they had as yet no root and were consequently, easy prey for his manipulation. With simple ostracism, he could get even the most recalcitrant student to enlist. Merely hinting at cowardice or treason was enough with the nationalistic fervor and the clamoring drums of war all around. The pity in this was that such deception was unnecessary and actually quite harmful. Kantorek could have told the truth and thus given Paul’s class a fighting chance, instead of filling them with flimsy arguments of a bygone era which would be of no help on the modern battlefield. Admittedly, even the best instruction would have left the soldiers wanting. But that is no excuse to leave them alone; and alone we must see it through. The next stage was under the domain of Himmelstoss who, if 20 years hence, would have been the epitome of (in Hannah Arendt's phrase): "the banality of evil." A sadist, the former postmaster uses his wartime powers to torture the recruits under his charge. He is effective with the exception of his self-education for Tjaden, and the other bed-wetter. As with Kantorek, however, that is beside the point: what good are soldiers with an amputated spirit? It was, of course, necessary for the recruits to be
molded into soldiers, but the true lesson of Himmelstoss was for them to lose their humanity. Himmelstoss’s callousness would be visited upon him (and Kantorek, for that matter) in vain acts of revenge, although these could hardly be considered any more than victims becoming victimizers—an irony not lost on Paul who finds that the bed sheet ambush ought to please Himmelstoss as “he is saying that we should each educate one another had borne fruit for himself. We had become successful students of his method.”[14] Later on, Himmelstoss tries to redeem himself, and it is a testament to his failure to completely destroy any human feeling in them that Paul, and the others, are largely forgiving; it would be to ignore the obvious, though, if not to speculate that his change of heart had more to do with proximity to the front than genuine introspection and remorse.

The final stage was under the influence of Paul’s beloved squad leader, Katczinsky or Kat. Where the likes of Kantorek and Himmelstoss had insured that the soldiers were “astonished, then embittered, and finally indifferent and even vengeful, Kat countered all that by exemplifying the finest thing that arose out of the war—comradeship. The dehumanization taught implicitly by Kantorek (and made explicit by Himmelstoss) certainly took its toll. Paul finds that ideal of looking out for his friends in the field somewhat fantastic, and yet does come several times to the aid of others from the inexperienced recruit whose gas mask he seized and over his head to an enemy soldier, albeit, there was a bit of self-interest there as well.[16] Still, such actions are far removed from his descriptions of the front as where become the instant human animals and troops marching are not men at all for as We have lost all feeling for one another. We can hardly control ourselves when out glance lights on the form of some other man. We are insensible, dead men, who through some trick, some dreadful magic, are still able to run and to kill. Similarly, he describes himself as though states emphatically that want to live at any price. How can Paul indefinitely live the edge of the shell-hole, half in and half out?[18]

The contradictions can only be resolved persuasively through Kat. It is Kat who taught Paul and the others first-hand that war while all-encompassing and devastating can be waged with dignity. Indeed, it must be. What value are the formalisms of the army when compared to fellowship with another human being? Characteristically, Kat said are losing the war because we can salute too well. Unlike Kantorek and Himmelstoss who were convinced that they were acting for the best and did so a way that cost them nothing, Kat was there and serving with integrity as countless incidents attest to. A more subtle, but perhaps the most influential incident was Paul’s retelling how Kat “brought me out of the barrage when I was still a young recruit and was wounded for the first time? I cried then.” Kat’s selflessness and ability to go on in the best manner possible impressed upon Paul that while death was near everything is new and brave, red poppies and good food, cigarettes and summer breeze. In the end, this is of little consequence as Paul’s flame is also cruelly snuffed out.[23] From his perspective, though, what could have been a more desirable end? Not with a bang or even a whimper, but on a perfectly “quiet” day.[24]


[6] Ibid., p. 87.

[7] Ibid., p. 100.

[8] Ibid., pp. 11 and 19.

[9] Ibid., p. 20.

[10] In contrast, there is a story related of some Israeli students who were called up in the 1973 Yom Kippur War. As soon as they were notified they went back to their rooms at University, and each packed his gear, a rifle, and a book of Yehuda Amichai’s poems. It is a little hard to envision this scene: these days we don’t think of soldiers as resorting to poetry under fire, and Amichai’s poetry is not standard government issue. It isn’t patriotic in the ordinary sense of the word, it doesn’t cry death to the enemy, and it offers no simple consolation for killing and dying. Their choice is due to the restorative power of the poetry, as it has a certain astringent quality of mind, a skeptical intelligence that is impatient with camouflage and pathos and self-deceit, that insists on questioning even what it loves. See: Chana Bloch’s Forward to The Selected Poetry of Yehuda Amichai (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), p. xi.


[12] Ibid., pp. 44-45.


[14] Ibid., p. 49.


[16] Ibid., p. 68.


[18] Ibid., pp. 121 and 139.

[19] Ibid., p. 211.


[22] Ibid., p. 10.
[23] Shakespeare’s famous line from *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (Act V.5) is presumably this reference’s source: "Out, brief candle!"

As he lies on her chest she wonders if this is a sign of neediness, although if post coital lounging is suggestive of psychological discontent or emotional repression her constant re-positioning from pinup pose to fetal position make for a much more interesting case study. His hot breath against her neck annoys her but she dares not move to her claimed side of the bed as she fears that she will find it cold and lonesome by morning, when her anxiety wakes her hours before her alarm. He sleeps so soundly and hardly stirs once, his contentment astounds her as usual, and she thinks perhaps he is too easy to please. His reasoning she decides is either to do with a troublingly docile nature or that he is still naive to her raging psychosis. Either scenario is a forgotten landmine in her untrodden path. Never the less, he has submerged into his unconsciousness to dream of his favorite things, magical or idealistic fantasies unfathomable to her steel trap cynicism no doubt. Perhaps an Alaskan landscape, perhaps tokens of someone else’s nostalgia, perhaps he’s dreaming of a woman, who for now, she decides, probably looks like her.

She thinks of him as an imposter, a friendly martain in a suspicious Mid-western town. His blatant obliviousness to his minority is as charming as it is concerning, and she wonders if the two of them would be shacking up if they came from the same planet. She wonders if their bleak translations exist only in flesh and damp sheets. Perhaps shed understand the language better and hope that he hasn’t misinterpreted. But there is something to be said for his passion for learning, his words and caress are new and excited, which she actually finds refreshing, but she worries that her once skilled performance has become worn out and meaningless. That what she has gained in experience she lacks in enthusiasm and honesty. His words are fresh and uninhibited only drawing attention to hers which always seem to sound like a recycled love scene. A curse from superficial relationships and forced attractions. His weight begins to smother her oxygen intake as she wonders how long it will be before she breaks it off. She figures, even if the relationship wasn’t doomed from the start, it has done everything in its power to torture her with insecurity. An accidental knee in the groin forces him to lift himself off of her sleepily kissing her on the scar in the middle of her forehead. As she finally attempts to drift off to sleep she wonders what makes her so determined to sabotage this relationship and the power of her own persistence scares her.
They always say what’s meant to be will always find a way. But how can you believe that when there’s pain prescribed to days.

The hours passing by seem to drag the more and more. And you start to wonder what the ache is really for.

Do you really think that there’s a great big master plan? Or is it just a cover-up for that non-existent brand.

Think once or twice outside that box that you are forced to live. Maybe then you’ll find that life really has something to give.
MRS. JACKSON TODD: WIFE AND MOTHER - JILL TURGEON

I wanted to escape. I’d planned it so well. I had enough food to last the day packed away for one, and I concluded all works in progress days before my departure would finally take place. I was tired of ridiculous teenage repression exploding into Days of Our Lives every day at work. I was tired of rocking my vile friends to sleep after yet another break-down over gas prices. I had come to the realization that I can never have a dinner party again in fear that I would have to sacrifice my happiness for those of others. It was a simple solution to the plague that swept every single day and night of these past months.

My room has one window. Yes, it has one solitary window in which I can gaze to the outside world, and in a fit of irony, it faces another apartment- that of my mother-in-law’s. She moved in mere weeks after we did- again proving that our obligations as a family will always be underlying unbreakable chains, and we will always wind up right back where we started. Not that I don’t love Mom, I do, I would just like to visit her from a distance. I usually dress the glass of this window in layers of curtains- two to be exact. That way I can hide completely in the day and not be haunted by the vague reflections it reveals in the night. Because very recently we’ve changed our bedroom motif to a deep aubergine, my old curtains have been in the wash, and the new are yet to arrive in the mail. The bareness of the glass forces me to face the mocking images on the outside that remind me there is, in fact, an outside world which I am prevented from reaching.

I never liked this apartment. I’m assuming that this is the consequence of missing my little house on the ocean dearly, but it could be due to the fact that people I’ve known my whole life suddenly seem impressed at the first sight of it. I want to blend in, and this apartment just doesn’t. I know the man who used to rent this place. His name is Andrew, and I can’t produce a proper opinion of him. I’ve spent seven years trying to mask his walls with anything that belongs to me. I’ve been so determined to make that little space my escape, but I’ve never been successful.

There is something deep within me that has always had the notion that I can experience one solitary stress-free day. Jackson and I argue quite a bit. I understand the normalcy of all this, but maybe I want more than normal- for just one day. I’m living in his paradise seeing that he hand-picked this apartment and changed everything about it that he saw as flawed. I just want to live in my own utopia for one carefree afternoon.

I kissed him goodnight and paced up the stairs one more cumbersome time before the morning would inevitably approach me. I opened my door to a perfectly clean room, reminding me that I would not have any chores awaiting my arrival back from the city. Three pairs of gloves sat on the chair beside my bed. The gloves that Christian bought me lay first, and I smiled thinking of how he’d be the first to laugh at me for shivering, yet the first to buy me gloves. Next to those lay the white gloves which my mother won at the fair- a town tradition back in Holmstead. After those lay a pair of generic black gloves that fit every hand I’ve ever seen them on. I was going to bring them all.

I remember my dream that night so vividly. I was late. I missed the train. I know what these dreams mean. They mean that soon after that ”lateness” I will awake with a racing pulse, sweating profusely. I will sit straight up in my bed and try for the life of me to remember anything that could calm me down. I should probably see a doctor. I read about anxiety attacks like that.

I woke up at roughly 6:30am to some sort of argument Jackson was having with the baby’s hamper. I guess it had fallen apart on him when searching for her socks. Regardless, he woke me. ”I know you’re not going to like this, and you’re going to be very upset, but the weather- the weather...it is too rough, too bad, too- I’m really uncomfortable with you leaving tonight.”
I laughed. "You're crazy."

"You're a wife and mother! How irresponsible of a decision this would be! Do you understand the possible repercussions of attempting a trip like this?"

The precipitation broke my heart. I've never been so angry at frosted water. It was as if I was permitted to leave, but only if I ran barefoot. Anyone in their right mind would take a warm floor over wet ground when their shoes are stolen. I tried not to cry, but oh what a failure.

It would be another ordinary day. I would be woken up. The baby would be weeping tears of hunger, thirst, wetness or maybe nothing at all. Regardless, I would be bound to my home. I swear, even my obnoxious little Ford would betray me. "No! I have a life, it's not my job to take you wherever you want to go!"

I sobbed like a child. I lay my head down on Jackson's chest and mumbled something about how I could never get away.

It was 7:03am. My restless husband insisted that I return to bed, so I did. After all, I am subject to this household for however long it takes for me to be brave enough to leave it all behind. My tears stung my cheeks as if even my own production of water was turning on me. I crawled onto my bed, still whimpering lightly. The dog occupied my green chair at the foot of my bed with my clothes beneath him. Maybe it was good that I didn't go, after all, my clothes were now wrinkled and covered in fur. Hah. My dog, bound to this apartment for his entire life, was preventing me from dressing the way I wished when walking through the city. That can't be a coincidence.

As I lay there with tears in my eyes still, I gazed to the window, scarred with streaks of what prevented my trip. Slowly, I covered my eyes with the green blankets that in a few weeks time would no longer match my bedroom. And I swear- the last bit of snow must have fallen just as I drifted to sleep.

Someday I will escape.
Chapter 1J:

My Birth

Let me, Jade, tell you of how I got to where I was today. I am a baby dragon with silver scales and silver wings. I have a cute face, kind of like that of Sera from Land before Time, only without the horns of a triceratops. When I was just an egg, a king of nearby land—or so my mom (Shade) tells me—was looking for a suitable home for the last of my particular sort of dragon subspecies. Shade received me (while I was unborn) from the king. The king, I am told, was looking for those pure of heart, and Shade and Mantis definitely seemed to fit the bill as they wished no evil on anyone.

Thus, Shade received the egg. She watched over it for hours and days, until one day, at the king's request, she rubbed the egg. Suddenly, my eyes opened in total darkness, and my breathing began. It was as if I had waited all my life for this. Using my front claws, I managed to keep clawing away at the egg until, finally, it broke. With a gasp of air (I had nearly fainted), I surged forward, leaping into Shade's arms and licking her ferociously, like a dog. I was happy to be born, and I knew I could trust this person, this maiden, this Shade. I lived happily with her, and she with me.

Chapter 2J:

My First Snow

It was winter. The blue jays are singing and there are dark clouds overhead. I had wandered outside, like I usually did at this time, to play with the birds and eat some grass for food. Taking to the air, I noticed how the familiar sight that was my home seems to get farther and farther away. This worried me, so I headed straight back down. I was never going to leave this place...never.

For whatever reason, I decided to look up at the stormy sky. It was at this point when something white and wet lands on my nose. I sneezed (“A--chew!”), and then looked up again. At this time, several more of the white and powdery stuff was landing. I looked with curiosity at it, and then noticed that the powder stuff seems to be sticking to the ground.

Looking up, I noticed that the powdery stuff seems to be coming from the sky...could I have broken the clouds? Panicking, I ran inside.  åCœMy aunt! My mom! I think I broke the sky!”

Yawning and waking up from her nap, My mom picked me up. My aunt was still asleep in my room. She had a long night last night, taking care of me. I didn't seem to want to stop eating, being fed several bottles of milk, then they had to clean up some of my dribblings.

Panicked, My mom quickly got up and rushed outside. My eyes go wide with excitement. Little specks of white, liquidy stuff was falling to the ground...snow! I was witnessing my very first snow! Hopping up and
down, My mom hugged me. "Silly," My mom said, giggling at what I had said. "That's snow...I don't know what it's made of exactly, I think it's water, but you certainly didn't break the sky.

I smiles comically and lets the snow land all over my body. Soon, I was covered, and I shook myself off. This causes My mom to giggle and get all wet. "Wait until tomorrow," I said. "Then we can play in the snow!"

"YAY!"

The two of us headed back inside and waited for the snow to stop, or at least lessen (the snow was falling hard at this point). My mom gently nudged My aunt. "My aunt!" she exclaimed. "It's Jade's first snow!"

This attracts the attention of my aunt, and she immediately sat bolt upright, taking Jade to the window to watch the snow. "You know," My aunt said between yawns. "I was told that no two snowflakes are exactly alike."

"But there's so many!" I said.

"That," My aunt said. "Is why snow is wonderful! Mysterious and playful, the snow was something we all like...or at least most of us. Some of the others can't stand the snow."

"It makes me sneeze..."

My mom and My aunt giggled and cuddled me, before going to feed me some milk, this time feeding me above the sink.

Time passes by slowly, with me cuddling both My mom and My aunt. Eventually, night begins to fall, and the snow was still blowing furiously outside. "Can I go out?" I said.

My mom giggled and shook her head. "It's much too cold out there at night. You remember what happened last time, right?"

I shuddered and nodded.

I had gone out for a flight one cold winter night, but found that sooner or later, my wings actually froze over. Forced to land on the ground about a mile outside of where My mom and My aunt are, shivering me just barely made it back home, getting the aid of several mantises in the forest on the way. A few even had great sympathy for the dragon and carried my back home.

Upon reaching home, My aunt immediately cradled me and tried to hide me from My mom, not wanting to worry her so late and night. But, My mom sensed something was wrong and sooner or later she found out. This caused her to fly into a massive panic, getting help from all of the mantises to build a fire, which she cuddled me and stood over. A few hours later, around midnight, my wings had unfrozen, but I couldn't do any of my fire spells, instead smoke came out of my mouth.

So, My mom sat down with me, and I tried over and over and over again, until finally my inner body temperature was enough. After that, I promptly fell asleep.

I shuddered again and chirped shakily. "I'll never, ever do that again!"
My mom ruffled my head. "That's good. Now, we have a few more minutes before we have to go to bed."

The snow continues to blow outside whilst I, My mom, and My aunt are in My mom's bedroom, where I sleep. My mom yawns, and My aunt heads into my room for now. But I was still not ready to go to bed.

My mom tucks me in and asks me a question. "Jade, what story would you like to hear?"

I smiled in my own way, and that prompted a huge smile from My mom. "How about the time you and your husband first met?" I asked. I had always loved to hear this story, but I never had heard it all the way through, usually falling asleep before My aunt begins to tell her story. But this time, I was determined to stay awake through all of it.

My mom giggled and ruffled my head. "But you've already heard that one." She argued with a smile.

"But it's my favorite!" I exclaimed happily, thumping my tail on the bed for emphasis.

My mom giggled again and began to tell the story.

"Well, I suppose I could tell you again. After all, a story never hurt anyone now did it?" The sorceress yawns a little, and I shook my head, smiling even wider as My mom begins. "It all happened one day. I had gone to a strange keep, looking for a man, whom I had never heard of. Now, why I did it was because at the time, I had been possessed by a demon, and that demon told me to look for him. And there I was, entering the castle unannounced and calling out the manâ€™s name." I laughed slightly at the thought, and the chirps happily, anticipating the next part. "Soon, however, other inhabitants of the keep began to take notice of me. Next, I saw a very friendly person, dressed in a blue cloak. I liked him a lot, just from the sound of his voice, and that made me at ease somewhat. Finally, I heard a soft voice call out to me; something about this voice was very attractive.â€

â€œWere the stables the same they are today?" I asked with a knowing smile.

"No, not at all," My mom smiled back, ruffling my head. "There were two horses in that stable, and the stable-tender's name was Darren, I believe. Now, the only difference was that there are different people to tend the stable, and one horse--a horse I later found out was the master of the keepâ€™s--was gone. Next, he showed me to my quarters, the very same quarters that they are today, only they're up one floor and there's that staircase of light, something that one of the keep's mages dreamed up."

My eyes began to droop, but it was at this time that my aunt re-enters the room. "Are you telling my about your husband again?" She asked with a giggle. My mom nods. "Well," My aunt begins my tale. "Before I met him, I had noticed that your mom didn't return home to our hut one day, and I went looking for my. I heard from some of the locals that your mom was at the keep. So, I looked for my. I came to the keep and found your mom.â€ My aunt and mom had dropped my voice to whispering, for she found that that was how dragons like to go to bed. "Your mom was shaking in fear, but calmed down once I entered the group of people that had surrounded my mom and put one of my hands on my shoulders. That was the last I saw of her until later, during which time I met two other people in the keep.

"Oh yes," My mom said, surprised to have missed this this time around. "One of the people surrounding me was..." Her voice trailed off as I shut my eyes and was snoring lightly.

Early the next morning, I awoke well before my aunt or my mom can. Flapping my wings in a motion to stretch them, and then moving one wing to rub my eyes, I hopped gracefully off of the bed and began to pace. I had an innate ability to keep track of time, and I knew that I had another half-hour or so until it was time to wake my mom up.
Carefully, I began to walk around in the darkness, stopping almost instinctively in front of a small ball, a very, very soft, cuddly, squishy ball, one of my favorite toys. In a gentle motion so as not to make so much noise, I whacked the ball with my tail, sending it into the kitchen. Then, I raced into the kitchen, grabbed the ball, and brought it back into my mom's room, doing this many times.

Eventually, the time has come and I leapt up onto my mom's bed and began to lick her face. My mom sputtered slightly, then grinned as she opened her eyes, taking me into her arms and hugging me. "Were you making that noise in the kitchen?" My mom asked. I smiled and nodded.

"Mom! Mom! Can I go out and play?" I chirped excitedly.

My mom shook her head. "Not yet."

"But mom...!"

The sorceress simply smiled. "First, we eat. Then, we play, okay?" I nodded my head enthusiastically.

My aunt awoke to the smell of something sweet in the kitchen. She yawned; creating a strange, loud, metallic breathing noise that frightens me most of the time; my aunt stretched and got up.

My mom was by the stove on top the oven, a fire lit below it. A gooey substance was in pans on the stove, a heap of it in my aunt's pan, for my aunt can eat a lot, the goo with chunks of now-cooked meat in my pan, and a meager amount of the goo in my mom's pan. My mom continued to stir the goo around and around, finally stopping to take a seat.

"Why'd you stop?" Asked I, and my mom translated and giggled. You see, most people can't understand dragonspeech; my mom, however, can.

"Silly, it's pancakes we're making."

"OOH! Pancakes! Yum!" I said, with a giggling translation from my mom.

"Yours has a surprise in it." My mom said happily and with a wink.

After about 20 minutes, my mom heads over to the stove again and flips the now-solidified pancakes in the trays. As I climbed up on to my mom's shoulder, I saw that the one in my pan has strange bulges coming out of it. Sniffing it, I recognized the scent, but cannot associate anything with it.

After another 20 minutes, my fire, of course not being very strong and thus why it takes so long, it was time to eat. My aunt sits down with a multi-layered pancake on a plate and starts eating.

My mom takes a plate, and, with me following eagerly, places my pancake on it and gently places the plate on the floor, near my mom's seat. My mom then takes her pancake over to the table on a plate, and before long, I was eating as well.

I takes a bite of the pancake, chews it up eagerly, swallows, and a cute, thoughtful look comes across my face, prompting both ladies to giggle. Where has I tasted that taste before? I eats some more and more...until finally, with an excited chirp, the realization dawns upon my. "OOH! MEAT!" I exclaims, smiling widely as I gets giggles, my intended reaction, from the ladies.
At long last, breakfast has been finished, and My mom has finished putting dishes away. The little dragon chirps happily, knowing that this was the first time that I will ever go outside to play in the snow. From a nearby closet, My aunt produces a thick, miniature jacket. It has four holes in which I was to place my feet, and no back, so as not to hinder my wings.

I chirps happily and giggles a little in short, interrupted snorts as My mom and I struggles to get the coat on. First came my first leg...that was the easy part. So were the rest of the legs, but getting My tail to poke out of the hole in the back of the coat was a struggle, one that I thinks was incredibly amusing, as was zipping up the front of the jacket.

At long last, the jacket was finally on me. My mom goes to the coat rack and gets a heavy coat, while my aunt, in her thick green rubber jumpsuit, doesn't need one at all. I will be cold, but the coat, fortunately traps in most of my body heat.

My mom opens the door to go outside and, with a squeal of a chirp of delight, I jumped outside and into the snow face first. I enjoyed the taste of the snow--it reminds me of water--but suddenly realizes that I was stuck. With a muffled, alarmed snort, I began flailing my legs about madly.

Gasping, my mom quickly trudged through the snow with her boots and reaches me. After a few moments' worth of struggle, I was finally freed. I licked my mom's face and smiled enthusiastically. Not wanting to stop the fun by saying that I was scared, I lied, "That was fun!" And this prompts her to laugh, my mom's breath becoming steam in the air.

Next, my aunt lies down on the snow and begins to move my arms up and down, making a "Snow-Angel with Antennae" in the white powder. My mom follows suit and makes a "Snow Angel with Long Hair" in the white powder. I, however, lay on my back and moved my wings up and down. Eventually, when I was satisfied, I rolled over and looked at my creation, chirping in delight: I had made a "Baby Snow Angel with Wings."

My mom, with a mischievous grin, gets up and packs some of the snow into a ball and throws it at me, hitting me in the face. At first, my eyes go wide, and I wanted to cry because it stings so much, but as soon as the sting has come, it has gone, and I was scooping the snow up into a ball with my tail and using my tail to catapult it back at my mom. I then threw one at my aunt. Soon, however, I began to get cold and hungry. With a small whimper, I shivered and looked down at my tummy.

My mom smiles at the little dragon and brings me inside to eat lunch and starts a fire up herself. For lunch today, my mom and aunt will have soup, and I would have some soup with bits of raw meat floating around in it.

"When will we go outside next?" I said with joy. "I really like it out there!"

My aunt giggles, a metallic sound emitting from my helmet, and smiled--even though her expression was hidden beneath her mask. "Soon, maybe even after lunch. We can build a snow man then."

"A snowman?" The response came thoughtfully as I remembered what a snowman was. "Do we have a pipe and a hat and a scarf?"

I eagerly turns to the soup, which was now down on the ground before me. My mom smiles at my reaction. My aunt Mantis lifts her helmet up so that only her lips can be seen, while my mom slowly begins to sip her tea.
Soon, my mom opened the door again, throwing a heavy coat over her own body as she does so. By this time, the snow was up to about ankle-high on my mom and my aunt, but I was so light that I can walk on the surface of the snow, occasionally sinking through with an alarmed yelp. But every time I yelped, I quickly recovered by throwing my smile back upon my face and continued to walk on, much to the subtle amusement of my mom and my aunt.

“Soon,” I chirped. “When and how are we going to build the snowman?”

Laughing in response, my aunt picked up some snow and packs it as though she were about to throw a snowball. I, in response, threw myself down to the ground, looking to duck. But, to my surprise, my aunt didn’t throw the snowball. Instead, I heard the sound of something being pushed through the snow. Turning around, I see my aunt’s snowball become bigger and bigger.

My mom comes over and begins to help my aunt push the weight of the huge snowball through the ground until it was about half the size of a normal human being.

Next, my mom scoops up some snow and begins to roll it together, making another large snowball, but not nearly as big as my aunt’s snowball. Using the help of my aunt, the two lift the ball onto the top of the other huge ball of snow. At this point, there was a muffled sort of a snort. Looking over to me, my aunt laughed as she sees me using my head to try and make a snowball, sneezing on occasion as well.

“A little would be nice,” I responded, my mom translating for my like always. “But I want to do it almost all by myself!”

The two women smile at my determination and take up sides alongside the dragon, shaping the pile of snow into a ball gradually with their hands. Time goes by. Finally, I was satisfied with the head of the snowman I has made, being about the size of me! Rapping my tail gently against the snow to make sure it was packed well, I smiled and nodded to My aunt. Even without my mom’s translation, the look on my face makes my aunt smile and I knows what the little dragon wants my to do with the snowball. Gently picking up the snowball, and using My mom to support it, my aunt leapt up in the air a little and places the snowball on top of the body surprisingly gently.

I, with one of my grins, raced up to My aunt and leaps high in the air, propelling my body like a projectile with the help of my wings. The impact on my aunt’s upper torso was so great that I was tackled to the ground. With a giggle, my aunt lifted me up and tosses me gently into the air, catching me. I gave a startled yelp, and this prompts hysterical giggles from my aunt, who hugged me.

“Don’t do that,” She said. “The last person I heard of who licked metal got their tongue stuck to it.”

I shivered involuntarily at this message, then went over to my mom and tackled her. She giggled and responded by mock wrestling in the snow with me, snow flying everywhere.

Soon, however, I was too cold, and I began to shiver violently. Looking up at the sky, my eyes go wide. It was nighttime, and whatever warmth the hidden sun was giving was completely gone.

Mom picks me up and begins to cuddle me, bringing me indoors. Once inside, mom takes a match and lights a fire under the stove, placing my favorite meal, swordfish, on the stove. Also on the stove are three cups
filled with a black substance. It looks sticky, but from where I was standing I cannot tell. My aunt comes over and puts some water into the cups, and the three sit down quietly.

After a few moments, my mom gets up and takes the first cup and gives it to my aunt, the second cup to me, and the third cup I kept for herself. I sniffed it, a little confused about what substance could be in it, but began to slowly lap it up. Smiling, I made an "OOH!" sound that actually was closer to a "BRR-OOH!" noise. My mom has made hot chocolate!

"So Jade," My aunt said, taking the swordfish off the stove, cutting it into pieces, and placing it on three dishes, one for each of them. 

I nodded my head, smiling as I did so, with my mom translating as always. 

My aunt chuckled, a strange metallic sound emanating from her helmet, and nodded. 

Time went by. I finally warmed up and finished my hot chocolate, then finished the portion of particularly spicy swordfish. After a while, my mom decides it was time for me and her to go to bed. Together, we headed to their bed. I yawned and my eyes began to droop.

My aunt sat down next to me and ruffled my head. "Relax and be happy! It will snow again soon."
Chapter 1M:

Growing Up

Let me, Mantis, tell you the stories and memories I have of living in the Middle Ages. Of my parents, I have
little memory. But, what I can tell you is the story of how I was born, and how I got to the forest. You see…

When I was born, I was born with a cyst. Granted, a cyst back then meant that you were born with an
organism that ate you up inside until the cyst remained and you died, something else entirely from what
today’s cysts are. You’re either born with a cyst, or you contract one during conception. It still
plagues the land of Mutanatia, and there is no end in sight. But alas, let me go back to that time. The only
way for a cyst to be cured is to be infused with the blood of a giant mantis living in our forest. It wasn’t
the same today as it was back then. Instead, I had to be â€œhooked up,â€ if one can even call it that, to
a mutant mantis by using wooden reeds plunged deep within my skin. It was a risky procedure. They had to
attach a filter, similar to that of a sand filter, but its holes were even tinier, pricked by a pin. The procedure
would go that the mantis and you are strapped down to a table. The table is then rotated so the blood goes
down the tube as you are upside-down, then rotated again so that the blood flows into your veins.

The procedure can have many complications, but fortunately none of them occurred while I was saved. But
yet, side effects occurred. For one thing, I am twice as strong as a normal human being, and that is
something to be proud of in my opinion. As a little kid and until you die, you have to wear a rubber
jumpsuit, specifically tailored to fit your needs. Thus, I wore one, and am wearing one even as I write. In
order to further protect you from germs on the outside, you have to go and wear a pitch-black helmet at
least, pitch-black from the outside, so that no one can see you. A final side-effect, and one we have all but
phased out to boot, is that you grow antennae. Thus, you walk around town (if you’re brave enough) as
a horribly grotesque monster, safe only to really walk around (unless you need to work to survive as I did)
on All Hallow’s Eve, or as it has come to be known, â€œHalloween.â€

Now, you see, there’s also a real-life side effect, too. Mutant Mantises, which is what I became, are
hunted for their skin (which is tougher—twice the strength, remember—and also green), their helmet,
their antennae, and their giant mantis friends—the giant mantis’s hide is even more valuable than my
own.

Chapter 2M:

The flight to the forest

Hi, it’s Mantis once again!

I have only fragmented memories at this point, but this memory I was the most proud of: I wasn’t only
a child born like a monster; I was also a slave. My parents looked much the same as myself, yet they
possessed not the amazing strength I had. When they died a few years later from abuse by my master, I
resolved not to have the same fate as them. Time went by, and eventually, after I had grown my antennae, I had possession of my superhuman strength. There I was: in shackles, being whipped time and time again by my master, when suddenly I realized: I could break out of the shackles. I waited one night, until my master, who elected to do all his beatings by the dull blade of his sword, had gone to bed. Beginning to strain against the shackles, I notice that there was a rock nearby. My legs weren't as long as they are now, but I still could have done well and reached this stone. This stone was about the size of my fist, and quite heavy to the average human; indeed, it was the stone that held my dead parents bodies to the ground. Squirming with all my might, I reached over to the stone and flipped it in the air with my legs. It hit the middle of my shackles, breaking them. After recovering from falling flat on my face, I heard the sound of alarmed voices nearby. Moving my arms as far apart as I could I broke the chain and smashed the guard rushing in over the head. My master was next. My master's death was simple: I choked him to death using his own sword. Free at last, I camped out at a nearby meadow, the grass was dark enough to hide my rubber suit, and I was free at last, or at least I was until I realized where I was the next day and realized someone was after me.

I was standing on a hill, overlooking one of the many jousts that took place over the king's daughter. Jousts were my favorite events to watch. Ever since I was a little kid, when I went with my parents, I loved them.

Now, what can I tell you about this? Well, all I remember was my antennae twitching and my body being hurled involuntarily but by itself (you see, my antennae can control my movements and helps my avoid things that I might not otherwise see) to the ground. I heard a whooshing overhead, followed by screams from the people down below. Getting to my feet, I heard the sounds of footsteps running away from me. Looking down, I saw the roof of the king's seating area pierced by a spear, and the king, well, let's just say the king wasn't moving at all. Things didn't look good.

This is because, as I stood up to survey the damage, I noticed that everyone and I mean everyone was looking up at me with a murderous rage in their eyes. The king was a well-liked king around those parts, and I had nothing to do but flee, and flee I did, up the hill, through the village with people running behind me. I did nothing but run, and run, and run!

Eventually, I reached the forest. Running as fast as I could remember, I could run faster than a normal human. I ran about halfway into the forest, I forest I had frequently visited, as all my mantis brethren lived there. I didn't stop to turn around until I had run about halfway through the forest. It is then that, through the small slit in my mask, used for breathing, I started to smell smoke. The elder mantis of the forest, Mantitia, approached me and channeled me telepathically. "What's wrong? She asked.

"No time to explain! Just run! Get everyone pick up your kids and your eggs, and just run! The forest is on fire!" I responded.

Deeper and deeper we went into the forest, until we came out the other side. "Mantis! The elder mantis said once again. "We want to save the forest!"

I muttered something that I dare not repeat under my breath, the equivalent of using a racist term to a giant mantis which felt rather stupid of me to do after the fact but I noticed there was a lake nearby. I managed to procure a severed head from one of the other mantises, lost during a mating ritual, and I hesitantly drained the gooey, green blood from it. Eventually, the blood stopped flowing, and I dunked it under the water. "Male mantises and lady mantises! I screamed. "Find a severed head and fill it with water! Move! Now!"

It took several hours, and several mantises died and many of them were burned, but we managed to save the back end of the forest. It was there that we lived happily, and we planted many other
trees, trees that would not grow back until hundreds of years later. But my new-found family and I were happy.

It would be a few months later that I would meet Shade.

Chapter 3M:

Meeting Shade

“Something’s moving through the forest.” The Mantis Guard, Mantidae, telepathically communicated to me. Mantidae wasn’t exactly the brightest Giant Mantis in the world. To her, a squirrel could be moving through the forest and this was cause for alarm. Why Mantitia never took the initiative and took the lead

“Is it a biped?” Mantidae was clearly proud of the new word she had learned. "And it’s moving towards the lake, where you are. Let me just stop her and... Stop! What is your name?”

I paused for a moment, then, “What just happened?”

“I said. There are others for certain. It’s not a hunter. Not in that dress, anyway. Additionally, I think she might be a bit afraid because as soon as she saw me, she screamed.”

I sighed. Giant Mantises, unless you’re a hunter, will always have that effect on you. They’ll always make you scream. She apparently made great headway past the otherwise slow-moving mantises and ran into the hut I had built. Slowly, I sneaked towards the back of the hut. The woman in the black mask nearly screamed as I grabbed her from behind and covered her mouth through her mask. Her eyes were wide with fright.

“Shh!” I said. “It’s okay.”

“But you’re...!”

“Yes, I know. What are you doing here?”

“I’m hiding. My parents tried to kill me.”

“I’m hiding, too. You see, the entire village wants to kill me for something I didn’t do.”

It was the start of a beautiful friendship. Eventually, Shade would get married to Tim. Tim wasn’t the most attentive to her, that’s for sure. A spear got thrown at her once, and the first thought he had was “where did that spear come from?” and not “are you okay?” As a result, Shade would divorce Tim. And this is where the next part of my story begins.
Chapter 3M:

Working after Shade’s divorce

Well, as I’ve told you, I am a mutant mantis. As a result, not very many people understand me. This was especially true of where I worked after Shade got divorced. Many people assumed I was a man because 1) My mask deepened my voice, and 2) the muscles that I had made me look like a man. I would be turned down from several jobs because, to be quite honest, they didn’t understand what I was. Eventually, though, I would get grunt work shoveling bales of hay at a nearby farm. It was about a mile away, and through a swamp in what it now known as France, but was known as Gaul back then.

The first few days were fine, but then one of the wise guys got the idea of “I wonder what’s beneath the helmet.” They would spend several days trying to crack me over the head to knock me out and remove my helmet that way. They spent even more days trying to crack the front of the mask. Granted, they would do it when I wasn’t prepared for it, but it still way annoying. My antennae helped me through that bit, because they would involuntarily pull me out of the way of the impending blow. But yet, I was not happy…who would be?

Day by day this went on and on, getting knocked to the floor as I carried some of the bales of hay to the barn. Granted, this farmed was very poor, so you had to bundle them up and tie it yourself. One day, I nearly got cracked over the head as I was carrying the hay, so I dodged, but it was before I had tied the hay up, so the hay went flying. At about this time, I hadn’t had Jantis yet, so Jantis couldn’t help me. But yet, I continued on, picking up the hay and packing it together, tying it, etc.

Time continued to go by, and they continued to bother me. One day, I was determined that I had had enough. So, I got tough. Instead of whining all the time about how I was picked on, I secretly began to fight back.

When they were around the hay wagon, I’d throw one of them in there and keep walking as though nothing happened. Several times, I threw them in the mud puddles after a rain. It continued, until one day, they finally tackled me to the floor, and found out that I was a woman. After a moment of processing their stunned looks, I jammed my helmet back on my head and proceeded to dish out justice. One man’s collarbone was broken in the scuffle, and the other man’s hand was broken. Finally, I was left alone. All I had to do was fight back, and I resolved to never fight again unless I absolutely had to.

Around this time, I met my boyfriend Zach. I would later marry him as well.

Chapter 4M:

Meet Zach, Marry Zach

The wedding bells chimed one day as the two of us, Zach and Mantis were married. However, there is more to it than just that. When we were dating, we didn’t do much with romance as I wanted to wait until marriage. However, we did make out in a meadow one day, and bit by bit, we got to the point where we
were comfortable enough to make love to each other. Time went by. We were thoroughly in love with each other.

You see, Zach was a wealthy prince from another kingdom, and I happened to find him by chance. I met him one day when I was at a tavern. A man had been trying to pull out my antennae when suddenly; my husband burst through and stopped him. It was from that moment on that I fell in love with him.

Our favorite date was the tavern that was down the hill from the hut. We used to eat swordfish there all the time. Sometimes, I would bring it to him at his place in his kingdom, but most of the time he would visit me.

He also told me that we would marry someday, and thus we did. The trip to his kingdom when I was dating him was my favorite. He lived in a meager house, but yet, I knew there was more to the man than met the eyes. Time went by, and we became enraptured in each other.

I was on the way home from a date one day, when he told me to take off my helmet. I told him I'd die, but he persisted. Long story short, it turns out that it was just a psychological block that the doctors had imposed upon me: I could exist without my helmet, though I didn't dare take it off for anything other than kissing my future husband.

There's not much to say about the wedding; it was simple; we were married in the forest by the Elder mantis Mantitia, and we lived happily ever after. However, on that night, and this is where the fun begins, my daughter, Jantis, was born before we got married.

Zach and I were scheduled to get married by the elder mantises at about 7 at night, or at least I think that's what the time was; I was illiterate at that point, could barely recognize numbers and letters to save my skin. About a half-hour before we were to be married, Zach stopped by my room and asked how everything was. It was at about that time that I went into labor. I shall spare you of all the boring parts of this; I am twice the strength of a normal human, but then again my daughter was also kicking my insides at about twice the strength, and well, let's just say the two didn't cancel each other out to say the least. It was a big scandal amongst those mantises in the forest who were very prim-and-proper, but not so much amongst those mantises that were not ashamed to talk about this. There was an argument going on at that very moment as I first cradled Jantis in my arms and gave her a smaller version of the helmet that I wear as to whether or not I should be ejected (forcibly or otherwise) from the forest. The debate raged on for several hours after she was born, and they finally came to the conclusion that as long as I remained in the forest, they could gossip about it for as long as they liked. I agreed to this, and every now and then I'd hear many things (things that I dare not repeat) whispered about me, but it soon died down.

Chapter 5M:

Jantis's Birth

Zach and I got married by the mantises, but that's a minor note. Perhaps I should tell you about the actual birthing process, sparing you the labor-intensive bits of it. Well, the first thing to come out was Jantis's antennae, followed by her head, neck, arms, and so on. She wasn't as slimy as human babies were, but she came out more looking polished than slimy.
The elder mantis, Mantitia, came by and examined the baby. It was determined that since she was only $\frac{1}{4}$ mantis, she didn't have to wear the helmet, and would not die also adding to that fact that she wasn't actually coughing, sputtering and dying right in front of us. You see, that's how we did things back then, what with being away from an actual doctor and all. The question was asked. If the answer was no then we could determine what we would do.

Zach was a joyful father. But the joy would not last for long, as within 30 years, which is nearly a second in the life of someone who is going to live forever, Zach died.

Chapter 6M:

Zachâ€™s death

Zachâ€™s death hit me hard. Sure, I knew he was going to die, what with (as Shadeâ€™s daughter Serenity discovered from the stoneâ€™s engravings) the fact that as long as you donâ€™t get recorded in history, you donâ€™t die. Zach was a prince, recorded in the annals of history. Thus and therefore, he had to die; he was not protected by the stone. As I said before, it hit me hard. I spent weeks and months in a depression, crying to myself yes, the tough and strong mutant mantis was actually crying about the things we could have had if only he was not a prince.

Burial in his kingdom was short and sweet, and various members of his family gave me their condolences. But no one knew how hard it hit me. It was like the very soul of my body had gone and been destroyed, and quite violently for that matter. Fortunately, his inheritance was enough to last us for the rest of the year, which was good for us because I did not leave my room. After about 11 months, I decided that I had to go back out in the real world. Gone forever he was, but his memory still lived on. Would he want me to be as depressed as I was, I often wondered. The answer was no. And that is why I held on for my life. I would not give the stone the satisfaction of ending my life.

Burial in the forest was another story. You see, since the members of the kingdom still regarded me as an escaped slave, I had to go ahead and bury him 11 months later without the body, which is something I was okay with; I believed it was more important to have the spirit be buried close enough to you than have the body be moved far away. One of the things he had left behind was his blue cloak. What we did, therefore, was we buried the cloak; it may have decomposed by now, Serenity says it has been decomposed by now, but perhaps it hasnâ€™t. The cloak was buried in a fantastic ceremony of it being passed from giant mantis to giant mantis, with each person saying what they wanted about my husband, even if it was a bad thing to say. There was hardly anything bad said, except the prim-and-proper maintained, and still do to this day something I find to be quite amusing, actually that we shouldnâ€™tâ€™ve made love until after we got married. Shade had just lost her husband a few years earlier, so she was quite emotional. With Jade, we made pretend that he was just sleeping in any circumstance, and we were just waiting for him to come back and take his cloak.

But, however, I would not have very much solace. I would have to return to work on the farm.
And here is where my, Mantis's, story of the Middle Ages ends. I returned to work on the farm, and the owner there was so grateful for my return—the people working there had hardly any strength compared to me. This was the legend I was talking about, boys. He said to them, much to my satisfaction. They call him the Lady of the Suit, though I have no idea why; he's obviously a man, and they say that he will enact quite a punishment on you if you DO NOT GET TO WORK! He's the most efficient thing there is, and I'm going to pay him 20 gold more than all of you slugs! Now get to work!

I laughed, and from that day on, we always had enough to by swordfish at the local tavern every week. I always made sure we had at least 5 gold to live on in surplus (remember, we hadn't finished off all of what Zach left us). The Middle Ages for me is where I learned to laugh and cry, hope and pray. But my life wasn't finished by any accounts, as you will see in Chapter 1RM, which takes place during the Renaissance.
I can't remember.
I forget what it was like,
not being alone.
You were my world for so long,
now I regret it.
And all that I hold onto,
things I can't get back.
The memories of the past
are skewed and distant.
Recently all that I have
are glimpses of you
and the person you've become.
What was good is gone.
All that was asked of you
was to remain true,
to not have to hide,
have faith in what we called love,
respect what has passed.
I watched as it came to this.
All the secrets kept
never just quite had me fooled.
Youâ€™re someone different.
You deface any truth left
of what we once shared.
So I guess it never was
what I thought I felt.
Leave it alone, this beautiful sigh
In an empty room, on this nothing-filled night.
Nobody here, everyone there
Staring through a screen with limited air.
It’s like the endless tracks and the sound of a gun.
The best thing to do is persevere but all I want to do is run.
The drop of your heart when you hear a name;
The decision you make to play the game.
What a feeling when nothing’s alright.
So close your eyes and block out the light
And block out the pain;
That emptiness that never fails to stain.
Let me leave, let me hide.
Take me back to a place, a time
Where everything is alright, and hurting isn’t real,
Where hearts don’t break and doubts are fake,
Where nothing hurts, so nothing has to heal.
DON'T YOU SEE? - CHRISTA BLAIR
Don't You See?
Christa Blair

Don't you see,
what we have is killing me?
I try so hard,
I speak so softly,
just to make you love me.
Don't you see,
who you are is killing me?
Be the one I fell for,
The one that held me tight.
Promised never to go astray,
to love me day and night.
Don't you see,
where you are is killing me?
I want you in my bed,
more than anything in this world.
To keep me near,
kiss me sweetly,
tell me you'll always be here.
Don't you see,
What you do is killing me?
Your pride is over consuming,
your love just can't get through.
Baby come back to me, please.
I need you back, I need you now,
Cause I just can't go on like this.
Don't you see,
that it's killing me,
you have to chose,
it's either her or it's me.
These emotions are seeping from my heart
But I feel like my words are dissolving, I don't know where to start
One minute I'm strong, capable, perfectly fine
But the illusion vanishes as tears blind my eyes

It hurts, I know, but not only for you
Trust me, it killed me a thousand times over to hear my words come through
It's not something I regret, despite the great cost
By letting you go I saved myself an even greater loss

For you, I promise, my heart will always mourn
I know that's hard to see when my words pierced with such scorn
I said I would care, but not even love begins to describe
The raging dimensions of feelings I have deep inside

This wasn't the first and it won't be the last
Of my attempts to write a love letter that won't smoke up the glass
And even though I've said all that I possibly could
My soul continues to drip with millions of silent words

So sit there and read this, and add to my list of flaws
But remember you were the only one to see me completely raw
Promise you won't tell, please keep it deep inside
In a place that won't wear the memories with the passing of time
There is no more fundamental problem in religion than why bad things happen to people who do not seem to deserve them. The question becomes increasingly evident when speaking of the Holocaust, an event that all Jews seek answers for. To put an end to this theological and philosophical debate would be inconceivable; attempts have been made to come to grips with the conflicting views about the role of God within this obscenity: to find the answer to the problem of evil. The questions will persist, but ultimately, both God and humans committed the sin of silence: humans by remaining indifferent and God by being buried alive by the indifference.

Elie Wiesel is the most well-known survivor and author of the Holocaust. The Nobel Prize Winner had lived only for God in his childhood in Hungary; his entire life had been shaped by the disciplines of the Talmud and he had hoped to be initiated into the mysteries of the Kabbalah some day. Yet, all his hopes vanished when, as a boy, he was brought to Auschwitz and later to Buchenwald. During his first night in the camp he saw the black smoke rising to the sky from the crematorium where surely his mother and sister had been taken; it was in that moment that the flames consumed his faith forever. “Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live,” he wrote in *Night* years later. Never shall I forget these moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust.

His stories reflect his prayers to God; they are connected because they all share the same prayer and the same questions. Worship evolved into accusing and denouncing God, demanding an explanation from him. Wiesel writes, “If the death of the Jews has no meaning, then that’s an insult, and if it does have a meaning, it’s even more” (Wiesel, *The Gates of the Forest*, 197). Does God defend himself? Does he give his reasoning for the suffering of six million? No, so the Jews continue to ask questions that remain unanswered.

In Christianity, ultimate evil is the death of Jesus on the cross. This evil, however, was seen as being justified by Jesus’ resurrection which brought redemption to the world, the possibility of eternal life, and the triumph of right over wrong. The Holocaust is the ultimate evil in Judaism, and Jews do not see this evil as compensated by a guarantee of a personal afterlife. Although there are some ways to perceive some benefits that came out of the evils of the Holocaust, it became impossible for many Jews to maintain their traditional idea of God.

Although Wiesel may seem like a heretic in questioning God, it can easily be shown that he is within a tradition which finds its sources in Biblical theology and which develops throughout Jewish literature, notably Kabbalistic writings (Cargas 134). The blasphemy Wiesel commits is traditional and uniquely Jewish because it is based on disappointment, not rejection of God; it is inspired by a sympathy and love of God.

Wiesel, in *Night*, also retells the incident of the Gestapo hanging a child, where even the SS were disturbed by the prospect of having to hang a young boy in front of thousands of viewers. The child, who had the face of a sad-eyed angel, was silent, despairingly pale and almost calm as he reached the gallows. Behind Wiesel one of the other prisoners asked: “Where is God? Where is He?” It took the child half an hour to die, while the prisoners were forced to look him in the face. The same man asked again: “Where is God now?” And Wiesel heard a voice within him make this answer: “Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows” (Wiesel, *Night*, 50). For Wiesel, God died in that moment, and the faith in the God that he knew as a child was destroyed. No longer did his name bring shouts of praise from Wiesel; in fact, God seemed unworthy in the face of his worshippers to accept their worship.
Many other Jewish theologians and writers are within this group who traditionally criticize God after each major tragedy in Jewish history. Richard Rubenstein emerged in the 1960s as a significant writer on the meaning and impact of the Holocaust on Judaism. His first book, *After Auschwitz*, made radical theological claims. In his argument, the experience of the Holocaust completely shattered the Judaic concept of God, the one who entered into a covenant with Abraham. "In the covenant, the God of Israel is the God of history" (Rubenstein 23). Rubenstein says that Jews can no longer call God omnipotent within history or call themselves the chosen people. After the Holocaust, Jews lost all hope and now there is no meaning to their life. He says that, "as children of the Earth, we are undeceived concerning our destiny. We have lost all hope, consolation and illusion" (Rubenstein 70). In *After Auschwitz*, Rubenstein concluded that God is dead. If God is not dead, at least belief in God is dead.

Protests against God began with Abraham: "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25) Later, the prophets questioned,

Wherefore does the way of the wicked prosper? How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you "Violence!", but you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife and conflict abounds (Habakkuk 1:1-3).

According to Harold Schulweis, world-famous Rabbi in Encino, California, this "is the unprecedented struggle between man and God in which the Jew asserts nothing less than his moral equality with his Father" (Cargas 133). The Talmudic sages continue on with the same endless questions, reinterpreting Exodus 15:11 as "Who among the silent is like you, O Lord, seeing the suffering of his children and remaining silent?"

If the trials God gives to the righteous are an expression of his love, then the trials of God by the faithful are also a demonstration of their love. The moral challenge to God does not manifest arrogance but profound disappointment in a loving parent. It is an encounter which assumes a deep intimacy with the Divine (Hertzberg). In his play, *The Trial of God*, Wiesel invokes the Jewish tradition of convening a *bet din*, or rabbinical court, and charges God as the defendant. He wants to force God to answer out of the silence that intensifies the anguish. The trial itself is harsh and legal, but the purpose of it is not to criticize God, but to express the Jews’ desire that He at least offer a plea on His own behalf.

God’s answer speaks with silence; His answers are not understood. In the same way, the book of Job deals significantly with the issue of suffering. Job was a righteous man who constantly made sacrifices to God for his family. Satan is the malicious angel who argues with God that the reverence Job has is fake; if he were threatened Job would abandon all devotion to God. God agrees to the challenge and takes away all of Job’s wealth and his children. Yet, despite all the disasters that befall him, Job declares: The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord (Job 1:21). Next, Job is afflicted with disease and his wife tells him to curse God. He continues to resist, "Should we accept only good from God and not accept evil?" (Job 2:10). Job’s friends come to give him false comfort, saying that suffering is punishment for sin; at this, Job begins to protest his innocence.

Job questions the same way Holocaust survivors do: why do the innocent suffer? Could it be that God punishes the righteous for their few iniquities so that they will ultimately be rewarded and exempted from further retribution? (Ariel 103) Was this a test of Job’s devotion? The answers God gives do not satisfy Job, for they are not the ones expected concerning divine justice and morality.

As much as Wiesel demands answers, he is apprehensive to know them. He yearns to know God but is afraid to do so. To enter that garden of forbidden knowledge, the same way Adam and Eve did, could bring him insanity or complete unbelief. It is possible to love God, but not to look at him; if a person would be able to comprehend the face of God, he would stop loving him.
Wiesel has seen the face of God, though, without His mask and in the eyes of the young boy on the gallows. Despite the torment, he continues to love God. Yet, the yearning for God and answers bring him no comfort. Man can live with a cruel God, who creates men to murder them, who chooses a people to have them slain on a sacrificial altar, but he cannot live in a world without God. Better to be insane, better to blaspheme, than to be without God (Cargas 136). Therefore, he must condemn God for the two most unforgivable of crimes: useless murder and indifference.

In accusing God, Wiesel also accuses man, who being created in the image of God, inherited His cruelty. There is no guilt-free human; we are all unclean. Everyone shares in this atrocity, this rummage sale, the liquidation of the human species by the cruel enemy who has sown from time immemorial to destroy him, that hairless, evil, flesh-eating beast: man himself (Sartre 177).

The inhabitants of Solom didn’t kill children before their mother’s eyes. The citizens of Gemorrah went in for their vice, not for death. Our generation is far worse than theirs. It’s the generation of the guilty. We all have to share in the crime, even if we combat it; there’s no escape from the trap.

I feel ashamed as a human being living in this century. I am ashamed to think that I belong to a civilization which has done what it has done. And I do not speak of the Germans. I speak of everybody else (Wiesel, A Witness Speaks 42).

Man, like God, is charged for one crime: being a spectator, being indifferent. Our worst sin is not of criminal action, but of non-activity, apathy and indifference. Evil and weakness is human, but indifference is not. To Wiesel and countless more, it is incomprehensible how humans can so easily be inhuman. pinched my face. Was I still alive? Was I awake? I could not believe it. How could it be possible for them to burn people, children, and for the world to keep silent? (Wiesel, Night 41)

This same question that struck so hard while he was living the nightmare was the same question that lingered after the war. He began searching for an answer, This was the thing I had wanted to understand ever since the war. Nothing else. How a human being can remain indifferent (Cargas 137). The answer, of course, has never been found because the question is constantly being relived. One should not be asking: Where were the Germans?, but: Where was man? To go further, one must ask: Where was the Jew, and where is the Jew now? Does the Jew, like God, insist on remaining hidden?

What destroys Wiesel, above all, is when Jews fail to care for one another. Not just Jews, but all of us are held accountable with the statement: The Jewish brain has killed the Jewish heart. The meaning of the Holocaust and its lesson are the cost of indifference (Wiesel, The Jews of Silence 103). For them to care would mean for them to speak out in the face of evil, to not silently accept the fates of the crematory flames.

The injustice perpetrated in an unknown land concerns me; I am responsible. He who is not among the victims is with the executioners. This was the meaning of the Holocaust; it implicated not only Abraham or his son but their God as well (Wiesel, Gates of the Forest 166).

The Bible makes it clear that God will not judge us by our deeds, but by what we have not dared to do. Yet, God committed the same crime of dormancy.

The problem of theodicy is composed of three basic assumptions: God is good, God is all powerful and evil is real. When responding to theodicy, one of these three premises is either denied or modified. In most philosophical schools, many tried to deny that evil was real. It was argued that what is called evil is a negation, a background for good, and thus not an entity in itself, or it was asserted that evil is illusory or only subjective, and understood in a larger, more objective panorama, it would prove not to be evil at all (Karesh 221).
Dostoevsky had said that the death of a single child could make God unacceptable, but even he, who understood the meaning of inhumanity, could not imagine the death of a child in such a situation. The horror of Auschwitz is a severe challenge to the more conventional ideas of God. The remote God of the philosophers, lost in a transcendent *apatheia*, becomes intolerable (Armstrong 375). Many Jews can no longer consent to the Biblical idea of a God who reveals himself in history, who, agreeing with Wiesel, lost all supremacy in Auschwitz. The idea of a personal God is difficult to swallow. If this God is omnipotent, he could have prevented the Holocaust. If he was unable to stop it, he is impotent and useless; if he could have stopped it and chose not to, he is a monster: the Holocaust put an end to conventional theology (Armstrong 376).

Wiesel rejects all philosophical accounts of evil as trying to explain the tragedy that took place in Europe. To even attempt to use reason to bring some kind of rhyme to the situation leaves him with a bad taste, "On your way throughout life you'll meet men who cling to reason, but reason gropes like a blind man with a white cane" (Wiesel, *Gates of the Forest* 11). Wiesel denies all three assumptions and instead says that to be a good Jew requires God; it makes no difference whether he is with God or against him, for he would rather live in disappointment than in disbelief.

The Bible's answer to the problem of evil is that God's ways are beyond man's comprehension, as God makes clear when speaking to Job. Rabbis began introducing other arguments to explain the dilemma. For example, some rabbis, one being Rabbi Akiba, agreed that sufferings were accepted gladly because they would cleanse the soul of impurities. More contemporary thinkers, like Elisha ben Abuya, chose complete disbelief in God. However, Wiesel sees indifference as the crux: God is not dead, for he is immortal, but he has been buried alive by man's indifference.

With this comes the question: Are we to blame for God's indifference? Not exactly. God and man are equally responsible, but the creation of the villainy of the Holocaust, and of the world, continues to be debated. As much as the Bible had removed the demonic element of God from its theology, it is still evident in Exodus 4:24 where God is about to kill Moses. Rudolph Otto, German historian of religion, and William James, American psychologist and philosopher, agree that this demonic quality must be accepted as part of the religious experience, because, again according to Job, evil was created by God.

The problem of evil is thus perhaps best understood as the existential expression of a central theological issue of which it is a necessary corollary: that is, the challenge to theism to account not only for the existence of evil but for the existence of anything at all other than God (Jacobs 93). This means that in trying to explain something that is finite, there will also be an attempt to try to explain evil. Since there is a relationship between finitude and the problem of evil, it means that there is an element of evil within God, since finiteness is derived from it (Hertzberg 43).

From the perspective that Hertzberg and Wiesel develop, God is not all-powerful, nor is he the perfect image of love, for he has shown the opposite of love for the Holocaust Jews. As Wiesel put it, the opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference (Liukkonen). The Nazis showed this indifference in their tyrannical nature; some Jews and many non-Jews have shown it through their inhumanity toward those who suffered at the hands of Nazis and other tyrants.

The mystery of how God could have permitted the Holocaust remains inexplicable. The only viable explanation is that it, like all evil, poses a challenge to us all. When confronted by evil, it must be opposed without compromise and hesitation. All evil challenges us for a response that sees each victim or potential victim as created in the image of God. Only the absolute conviction that he who saves one life saves the entire world can offer meaning in the face of absolute evil (Ariel 48). Evil challenges us to complete moral action because to mend the world evil must be resisted.
Jewish thinkers today reject the view of blaming the victim or looking for the source of evil in human sin. However, the rabbinic emphasis on human responsibility for the evils of the world is still emphasized. Human beings are responsible for the actions of their own governments. In the Holocaust, there were perpetrators, collaborators, and witnesses, as well as governments that failed to act and end the atrocities; this indifference kept God under guard, but God was equally culpable. He heard the screams of Birkenau, â€œthe strangled prayers of thousands of human beings condemned to vanish into the darkness of nameless, endless ashesâ€ (Liukkonen) and offered a deadly silence. God can be disappointed with a sinful human race, but we can also be disappointed with an unresponsive God. In the face of this grim conclusion, all one can say is that humans remain responsible for preventing, whenever it is within their power, any and all instances of human evil.

Works Cited


TRAIN - KATE BRINDISI
Train
Kate Brindisi
God after Auschwitz? Before certainly, but after, and by implication: God in the death camps?[1] In his trilogy (Night, Dawn, and Day), Elie Wiesel tries to come to terms with this dilemma however wanting any words may be in addressing Auschwitz, the inexplicable. It begins with the simple yet profound faith of Eliezer the young Chasid who (along with his family and community) are irrevocably torn from their former lives and thrown into the horrors of the camps. Then his journey ends. Not with death per se but not with life either. Does he have a choice? Despite being liberated, he is forever caught in-between. In thinking he has chosen life (as Elisha in Dawn), he finds terror, violence, and death. In consciously, or perhaps, unconsciously choosing death (as Eliezer in Day), he ironically finds life even if only based on "lies." In both cases, his existence is in great measure dependent upon his conception of God who is ever present whether or not formally acknowledged.

Eliezer’s prior experience of sadness had been lamenting the destruction of the Temples as the pious remembrance of the distant past. This student of Talmud with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge of the Kabbalah would be brought from this kind of otherworldly existence face-to-face with the very human reality of crematoria, babies thrown into pits, children hanging from the gallows, man turned against man, son against father. In sum, the death of God—at least in the manner in which he had known of God.[2]

Out of the destruction emerges a new person. He has a past, no future. He tried to rebel against God several times, but a closer reading reveals his embrace of neither atheism definitiveness nor open-ended agnosticism. Eliezer, against his better judgment, inevitably acknowledges God. Who else is he to argue with? Eliezer’s own naive faith was murdered. He certainly doubts God’s absolute justice, and therefore, has no retort to a fellow inmate’s chilling substitution of absolute good with absolute evil: Hitler as God for alone has kept his promises, all his promises, to the Jewish people. [3] Nevertheless, he feels pity for Rabbi Drumer and in so doing reaffirms God’s in the sense of hope as an essential postulate to survival:

Poor Akiba Drumer, if only he could have kept his faith in God, if only he could have considered this suffering a divine test, he would not have been swept away by the selection. But as soon as he felt the first chinks in his faith, he lost all incentive to fight and opened the door to death.[4]

Reaffirming the value of his former life and returning to it are, upon his liberation, contradictory aspirations. Where is he to go? There is no going home; all the buried treasures in the basement could never be worth the journey.[5] It is at this point that two divergent yet not entirely different paths are offered. There is the way of Dawn, where the pathos and insecurities of what was once referred to as the Shetl mentality of the are exchanged for the the Israeli: courageous, assertive, and violent, too. It is in this identity that Elisha finds a way forward physically albeit, not mentally. There is a profound disconnect between what he is doing and what was done to him. While morally dangerous (if not disingenuous) to equate a Jewish terrorist with the SS, this is the very parallel that emerges precisely because he has not resolved his past.[6] He thought studying philosophy would provide his much sought-after answers to the multitude of questions that his memory contained.

In the concentration camp I had cried out in sorry and anger against God and also against man, who seemed to have inherited only the cruelty of his creator. I was anxious to re-evaluate my revolt in an atmosphere of detachment, to view it in terms of the present. So many questions obsessed me.[7]
Before he could examine the difference between suffering and rebellion (and therefore free himself from the past) he joined The Movement, thus, returning to it; returning to a past where he has no volition, although now he would be the giver instead of receiver of cruelty.

Elisha’s future remains a question mark except on the question of God. Elisha is God. He is not the only one who is God every member of the resistance is. Murders committed without hesitation or deference to the old laws of Thou Shalt and Shalt Not in pursuit of securing the Promised Land become divine affirmations of life. The seemingly distant Master of the Universe is once again the active, avenging protector of Israel. History has been a divine test and the Jews failed. Not on the basis of adherence to the Commandments, but because of observing them only too well. In this new understanding of the relationship between Israel and God, there can be no sympathy for the victims, only for the survivors, and in a very real sense, the persecutors. The butcher cannot be held responsible for killing sheep; it is the sheep’s fault for so easily being led to the slaughter. The only response to violence is violence and incumbent to committing such actions the enemy’s hate must be met with your own deeply felt, uncontrollable hate; it makes things easier anyway.

Eliezer in Day preserves the aversion to revenge present at liberation. He has no desires, no questions only an answer in the form of suicide. Where becoming God or seeing love were empowering to Elisha, Eliezer can only feel pain and derives pleasure (if it can be called that) from the pain of others. When he has relations with Katherine who truly loves him, he does not reciprocate affection. Instead, he: takes her brutally, trying to hurt her; Without exchanging a kiss. His conception of love is analogous to that of his God. As he took Katherine, God has taken man. Eliezer’s God is the epitome of malevolence, and worse still, sardonic:

Condemned to eternal solitude, [God] made man only to use him as a toy, to amuse himself. That’s what philosophers and poets have refused to admit: in the beginning there was neither the Word nor Love, but laughter, the roaring, eternal laughter whose echoes are more deceitful than the mirages of the desert.

Interspersed between that laughter has been flagrant injustice with which Eliezer is all too familiar. He knows God likes to sleep with twelve-year-old girls. He knows also that his doctor, Paul Russel, a self-professed believer, admitted to suspending belief in the operating room. There I only count on my own. Eliezer was not so fortunate. He couldn’t count on himself, because his prior self was the believer, and his present self, in the absence of God or love, was devoid of meaning. His accident, then, is not so much a failed suicide attempt, but more of the same nothingness that characterizes his continued existence. Only Gyula’s poignant words and action (reducing the portrait he had been working on to ashes), reconciled Eliezer to life if not for his own sake than for Katherine and his friends. If God is dead than so is memory.

God was present throughout: in the death camps, during the rape of Sarah, but also during Eliezer’s survival through all those inspections (could he really run faster than Mengele’s eyes?); when Elisha’s assassin forgot his intention to kill (who is the source of that auspicious laughter?); and when Eliezer survived the accident (presumably proof of God’s true sense of humor). God’s evolution throughout these novels is really that of the survivor in wrestling with the concept. Each believed in God. The only difference was the prism through which they saw God’s whether that of the pristine faith of a child, the conflicted yet determined terrorist, or that of the cynical, defeated man.


[3] Ibid., 45; Ibid., 81.

[4] Ibid., 77.


[7] Ibid., 12.


[9] Ibid., 22.


[16] Ibid., 35.

[17] Ibid., 34.

[18] Ibid., 83.

[19] Ibid., 59.


[21] Ibid., 85; *Night*, 72; *Dawn*, 35; *Day*, 14.
The Summer Fling Has Been Flung

Katie Duratti

The Summer Fling. We see it in the movies and on television. We read about it in books and magazines. Just picture lazy days lounging on the beach that turn into romantic nights by the ocean. Weekend getaways. The best bars and parties with your summer love by your side. Late-night movies. Endless games of one-on-one mini-golf or beach volley ball. It’s the ideal quasi-relationship full of adventure that comes to an end when the leaves begin to fall. Sure, it sounds like a lot of fun, but is it as easy at it seems?

Don’t get too attached, it’s all going to be over come summer’s end. Easy, right? Well, maybe not. Pretty soon you’re spending everyday together, sharing intimate details, and the attraction becomes deeper than originally intended. You and your partner get caught up in the romanticized idea of summer love and are throwing around that four letter word like a baseball on opening day.

Too much, too soon? Or the perfect foundation for a long-term relationship?

Wait a minute, wasn’t this supposed to be just fun? Before we know it, our little no-strings-attached, stress-free-fling has turned into something that will inevitably bring lots of heart break.

So what happens when the summer fling goes bad? The guy turns out to be kind of a jerk or the girl is a bit of a whore. And guess what? We care. We get hurt and have to deal with all the normal the relationship drama. Suddenly, it’s not fun anymore. The unspoken agreement of exclusivity until summer’s end becomes a problem, because, well, it was unspoken. How can we be sure that we are on the same page as our partner from the beginning?

We can’t.

Yet, we don’t realize it until it’s too late.

Maybe that’s too cynical, maybe that doesn’t happen at all. Maybe the relationship lasts the entire three months without a bump in the road. But now, summer is over, Labor Day is looming and it is time to make a choice. We can leave the relationship now and always remember it for what it was, a fun adventurous love story that was perfect in the three months that it lasted, or we can try to make it work in the real-world and potentially ruin everything we had.

Let’s take option two.

We go back to school, classes start, extra-curricular activities, and work, how much time does that leave? Even if you are lucky enough to be from the same area, your relationship has to drastically change. No more can there be daily hang outs and lazy days at the beach. Instead, we have to add the stresses of daily life to the stresses of an actual relationship, neither of which was dealt with during the summer. That care-free lifestyle that made your love seem euphorically perfect is now gone and will not be seen again for another nine months.

If your love can withstand this dangerous transition, then you are one of the lucky ones.

Basically, just enjoy the time for what it is, make sure it is easy and fun. If it is more than that, you better be sure it’s worth it.
The Green Monster is undoubtedly the most recognizable feature of Fenway Park and even more importantly, the city of Boston. Unfortunately there is talk in Boston of building a new stadium. The future of Fenway Park is reliant on the owners to preserve it because of its cultural and historical impact. Since the new owners took over, the oldest and smallest ball park in the major leagues has under gone major renovations. The improvements to Fenway have served as a means to keep fans coming, bring in new fans and also improve the surrounding neighborhood. These improvements will keep an icon in place for many years to come and affirm the neighborhoods and the city a bright future.

In Emily Shartin’s Boston Globe article, “Faithful to Fenway,” she reveals the fact that the current ownership group and the organization as a whole have been honored for their efforts in restoring the 90 plus year old ballpark. An important fact is that this ownership group hasn’t made these improvements for just the good of the organization but they also recognized the importance Fenway Park has on the surrounding areas. Shartin quotes Erin Kelly, a preservation advocate for Preserving Massachusetts, “The park isn’t just a park unto itself, Fenway impacts the whole neighborhood.” This statement by Kelly couldn’t be more relevant. The Red Sox have always been beloved in Boston, even while going 86 years without a world championship. The team’s recent success has propelled the fans and the adjoining community to further support the team and encourages the idea of preserving Fenway.

Fenway is also a major tourist attraction. People come from all over the world to take a tour or even take a picture outside of the historic facility. With all the historic sites in Boston, Fenway Park is near the top of the list. Every summer my friends and I make at least one trip up to Boston and make sure that we visit Fenway. Even if we don’t have tickets to a game, it is fun to go to the Cask ‘N’ Flagon and watch the game from there. Economically, Fenway Park is enormously important to the city of Boston. It’s power to bring in visitors and high revenue is enough evidence to see that the loss of Fenway would be devastating.

Fenway is seen as an iconic figure and people in and around Boston are starting to realize that the ball park is critical to the revitalization and further development of the city. There is the notion that if the Red Sox were to leave Boston and Fenway be destroyed, the cultural impact would be overwhelming. The important idea is that the organization recognizes that it is part of an urban neighborhood. Many of the buildings on the outside of Fenway date back to the 1930’s. Developer John Rosenthal stated, “The Red Sox recognize that they are more than an 81-day business.” That meaning when the season is over or even when the team is playing in another city, they always have a strong presence in the community.

The Kenmore Square area is one part of the neighborhood that has benefited with the team staying at Fenway. In Shartin’s article she quotes Tim Kirwan, managing director of the Hotel Commonwealth as saying, “People don’t know Kenmore Square per se, but they all know Fenway Park. Having them stay here sustains all of that history.” The team has been a driving force in revitalizing the neighborhood. Retail outlets, restaurants, as well as the Hotel Commonwealth have been recent additions to Kenmore Square. The Red Sox organization has been involved in restoring a façade that is now the home to the Game On! Restaurant and also the improvements to the sidewalks and lighting of Lansdowne Street. Something to consider is that with all the improvements to Fenway and the surrounding area, a significant effort has been made to make sure that any further development doesn’t harm the neighborhood’s attractiveness.

The atmosphere surrounding Fenway before any home game is one of amazement. With famous restaurants like the Cask ‘N’ Flagon, Boston Beer Works and all the people buzzing about with excitement, it is apparent how important Fenway and the Red Sox are to the culture of Boston.
The very idea of renovating old ball parks instead of building new ones is discussed by Richard Sandomir in his New York Times article, “To Raise Money, Baseball Tries New Squeeze Play.” There are only a handful of old parks left, which makes preserving Fenway that much more important. There is a nostalgic feeling when attending a game at there. By demolishing Fenway, all of that would be gone. Sandomir conveys how teams with historic ball parks such as the Red Sox and Chicago Cubs are taking advantage of the demand for tickets and renovating their “old gems.” The question could be asked, if the owners built new stadiums instead of renovating the old ones, would the demand for tickets still be high? The answer can only be debated because for the time being both teams appear to be staying put for the foreseeable future.

One of the main problems the Henry ownership group encountered is how do you restore a 95-year-old ball park and make it into a place spectators will want to come back to time and time again? The Henry ownership group has taken this task and handled it to every extent possible. Since 2002, they have added seats above the famous Green Monster. Those seats offer a spectacular view from one of the most popular “walls” in sports. The new owners also added seats above the right field roof. With an amazing view of the bullpens and the famous Pesky Pole, the new additions to the right field stands have been a hit.

As discussed in Sandomir’s article, the challenge for teams like the Red Sox is how to modernize an old ball park while respecting the tradition and lure that is important to the fans. The Red Sox have done just that. What better places to catch a game then above the Green Monster or astonishing view from the right field roof? Upon a visit to Fenway, one will see that with the new renovations an old ballpark has been given new charm.

The goal of preserving Fenway is to do so without starting from scratch. If the ball park were to be destroyed the culture in Boston would never be the same. Even if the team were to stay in Boston and build a new stadium, the cultural significance of having a professional baseball team and all its history would be diminished. While Fenway is the smallest stadium in the major leagues, the Red Sox are one of the biggest draws. The numbers speak for themselves; Fenway Park and the Red Sox are important to the culture of Boston.

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I was born during the rains. The rains that brought my country back to life. The farmers blessed the rain for allowing their crops to drink. The soldiers blessed the rain for washing away their blood-stained memories. My mother cursed the rain for creating my existence. I could not be washed.

The showers poured down to clean the earth where I was born. To clean my mother whose removed actions were expunged at my birth. I was left with a dirt that refused to be rinsed.

The healer told my mother to hold me every day while rubbing dried cassava leaves and ginger root over my eyelids. He said it would evoke in me the ability to bring a smile to my mother’s face. The leaves were dampened the moment they touched my saturated skin and must have lost their healing power. In that instant my mother left me to lie beside the discarded ginger root near a ditch that flooded with the rains.

My aunt named me for the peace that had befallen our country on the day of my beginning. Peace. Dzifafa. Dzifafa does not remind my mother of my birth, only grief and sting can do that. The face of the rebel who created me was unknown to my mother’s wet eyes, but to her, he lives in me. I understand that my name holds in it something I will never find.

When it rains I lie on the scorched red sand and pray that it will wash away my innermost filth. When it rains my mother spits pieces of hate onto the ginger-crusted earth where I lay.
The sky lit blue.

My wrists burned. My feet shook in their struggle.

The yells grew across my body as the women held tight.

“She’s a fighter this one.”

“Yes. It’s better that she fights. She’ll need that spirit,” my aunt snapped. I saw her eyes over my chest and watched as her stare grabbed the healer.

My mother’s nails bit into my ankles. I let my eyes shut out the words of the women.

My cousin was here a year ago, lying on the earth. Her young body framed by the shadow below her. Under the heat she pinched her eyes in, allowing the women to work. Her yelp and tears brought me to a run. I did not stop until the ocean met my toes.

My ceremony was shared with two girls that day, each of us biting our own tongues. Mud made beneath me, as my sweat drenched the sand. Someone held my head and rested a hand on my cheek. I started to speak in protest.

“Shh, child. We’re almost through. Be proud, today you’re a woman.”

The sky washed grey.

My words were taken by the flash of lightning between my legs.
The ground beneath me starts to shake. A rumble and a tremor with each pull. I open my eyes and sandy red mud fills them with grit. I close them again before I lift myself from where I lie and stand to get a better look at the men down the shore.

The rain came this morning and brought with it a day for collecting. Every man and boy of strength assembled early this morning and prepared the nets. The oldest men say the rain confuses the fish; they feel up is down and swarm the surface near the shore. The harvest is best when the rain washes the sand into the ocean, filling the water with more earth.

My mother sent me when she heard the first drop hit our tin roof. She told me to leave our home, that I was sure to find work by the ocean and away from her. My aunt comforted me by telling me that I was needed on the shore. There would be other women and girls arranging baskets and preparing for the harvest by the waterâ€™s edge. But my job would be special. My healing hands would be sought by all.

And so I mend the broken. Nets with snags find their way into my blistered fingers so that I might repair their stability. Boys with rope burns find their way to my care so that I might soothe them with healing herbs. Men with knife wounds find their way to my hands so that I might piece them together. Wives with troubles find their way to my ears so that I might remind them of their good fortunes.

Today the fish will be big. The men have been crouching low, heaving heavy and pulling lines over the submerged cliff. Each lift pulls at the earth and the shakes go by. Soon the fish will lay upon the sand sucking in what they can of life.

The determined rain chills the workers. When the fish are basketed the men will warm their working muscles by the blazes built by children. With the baskets at home the women will warm their tired hands by the fiery coals.

When the people of my village tend to their fires I will cool my heated spirit in the empty sea. The rains bring no soothing cool to my own mind. Through the dampness I feel the heat that rises from the earth and I will seek the ocean for a calming chill. With earth in my pockets I will walk to the cliff under the sea and breathe out what I can of life.
GRANDFATHER & SON - CHRISTINE PALUMBO

Grandfather & Son

Christine Palumbo
JUST A SOLDIER FORGOTTEN - MARI BROWN

Just a Soldier Forgotten

Mari Brown

I am not a war hero, just a soldier forgotten.
The Civil War needed men
So I dressed in the blue uniform made of cotton.
I packed up my rifle, said good-bye to my boy Ben.
My wife was tear-y-eyed
But she held strong
To me she said "Good-bye,"
And to her I said "Not for long."
As I marched with the troops to the line,
I said what could have been my last prayer,
"Lord help me stay strong, help me be fine,"
And I made the sign of the Cross, to add extra flare.
The first shot was fired,
Real close to me, I think,
I was already tired,
Man, this war would stink.
Shot after shot I release my gun
Men dying all around me
I wish I were at home with my son,
Building a fort in the tree.
Night after night I gazed at the stars
Wondering if my wife was safe at home.
She was probably canning jelly in jars
While taking care of our son alone.
All of a sudden cannons shot off
The troops were caught off guard
All the exhaust made us cough
Our fort was badly marred.
This would be my last battle
I received no war pardon
Now I couldn't go home and feed the cattle.
As you can see, I am not a war hero, just a soldier forgotten.
Two foes, one weapon.
Hate. Anger. Distress. White cloud over heads.
Bodies buried under rubble and hate.
Lives lost. Innocence non-existent.
Smiles fade. People unrecognizable.
Who's who? Ashes or dust?
People burn. Remains of the lost.
How many should die? Bodies struggle.
No hope for some. Cries to which no one can tend.
No one leaves without scars, emotionally.
Faces peeled. Arms, faces melted, disfigured.
The lucky ones? Not a dream, reality!
Awakening, not knowing what happened.
Questions never answered--silenced.
Dense cloud of smoke. One face turns.
"What have we done...?"
Teardrop crested around cold heart.
Never more. Why?
Eminem Persuades Political Passion
Sarah Hou

Eminem is the world’s most famous white rapper to rise to the top of a hip-hop empire. Marshall Mathers (a.k.a. Eminem) has always been known for stirring up controversy in his songs. He may be an adverse rapper with consequential lyrics but in this song he’s raising a cultural voice. A few days before the 2004 presidential election Eminem aired one of his political hate anthems condemning the politics of President Bush. Eminem’s song “Mosh” speaks his pure personal distaste for our president convincing his fans to listen and to follow him, which means don’t vote for Bush.

The music video aired a week before election reaching the number one most requested song within less than 24 hours of its release. “Mosh” is Eminem’s cry out to the public to disarm this weapon of mass destruction, our President of the United States. The video is an animated story visualizing the issues of racism, the war on Iraq, taxes being cut and all the problems within the land of the free. Airing the video on MTV targets the youth of America to stand up for what Eminem sees as a shared consensus of George W. Bush.

Before the video aired director Ian Inaba claims in his note on the “U.S. Labor Against War” website, “Now, it’s up to the broadcasters. Will they ban the top selling musical artist for being antiz establishment while they allow other propaganda to air? Or will they finally allow an artist who has the courage to speak out to take center stage and utilize the airwaves for something other than typical celebrity fodder?” Well they did air the video and it has become one of the most controversial mediums of political party biases.

The music video starts off in a classroom with children saying the Pledge of Allegiance. Slim Shady, another nickname for the rap star, writes “Today’s Lesson” on the chalkboard, then it cuts to an angered Em putting up newspaper headlines reading, “Civil Liberties at Stake” and “Bush Knew.”

The chorus chants, “Come along follow me as I lead through the darkness/As I provide just enough spark that we need to proceed/Carry on, give me hope, give me strength/Come with me and I won’t steer you wrong/Put your faith and your trust as I guide us through the fog/To the light at the end of the tunnel/We gonna fight, we gonna charge, we gonna stomp, we gonna march/Through the swamp, we gonna mosh through the marsh/Take us right through the doors.” Eminem is changing his voice from a cynical, raging antagonist to an opinionated political protester. He uses his lyrics to promote his disgust and hate for President Bush, these half-truths then appeal to more liberal values and beliefs. Eminem is telling his fans to put their trust in him and follow his Bush hate song.

As Slim Shady (another of Eminem’s personas) raps, “They tell us no we say yea, they tell us stop we say go/Rebel with a rebel yell, raise hell we gonna let em know/Stomp, push, stomp, we gonna March/Through the swamp, we gonna mosh through the marsh/We gonna fight, we gonna charge, we gonna stomp, we gonna march/Through the swamp, we gonna mosh through the marsh/Take us right through the doors.” Eminem is changing his voice from a cynical, raging antagonist to an opinionated political protester. He uses his lyrics to promote his disgust and hate for President Bush, these half-truths then appeal to more liberal values and beliefs. Eminem is telling his fans to put their trust in him and follow his Bush hate song.

One of the most hateful and powerful lyrics of the song is when Eminem raps, “Let the president answer on high anarchy/Strap him with an AK-47, let him go/Fight his own war/Let him impress daddy that way/No more blood for oil, we got our battles to fight on our own soil/Look in his eyes its all lies/The stars and stripes, they’ve been swiped, washed out and wiped/And replaced with his own face, Mosh now or die.” As Eminem raps these lyrics a picture of Bush being put in an army uniform appears, the moshers have now reached the voting booths at the White House and are pumping their fists in protest marching into the voting line. The music video ends fading to black with the text “Vote, Tuesday, November 2.”
In Michelle Goldberg’s “Anti-Bush Anthem” she writes, “Once again, Bush proves he really does have wonder working powers by behaving even more callously and irresponsibly than the most outrageous rapper, he’s turned music’s foremost enfant terrible into a role model of civic engagement.” Eminem’s persuasion of slander against George W. Bush has succeeded. With a large population of Eminem fans and the controversy about the war, MTV has not hesitated to air the music video and persuade its viewers.

Eminem’s personal position may come across as political argument but he has many fooled. He has never before the year 2004 rapped anything so political and after the events of 9/11 he’s decided to speak his mind. His loyal fans may now just agree with what he says simply due to his celebrity. Through the hands of the media a hateful rap star can transform his voice in ways to persuade the election. Eminem has stated his position that we should hate the President of the United States through his lyrics. He now claims to his fans he knows the truth and to join the “Mosh” against our country’s leader by voting.

Works Cited


IGNITION - KATE BRINDISI
Ignition
Kate Brindisi
I know back in October, shortly after I announced the possibility of my candidacy for President of the United States, I did recognize that a white, middle-aged, Jesus-trumpeting alternative is just what the people needed, and a month later, even after being refused a spot on the ballot, I stand by that.

My name is Stephen T. Colbert, and I would like to announce here, live on my television show, to all my loyal viewers and would-be political supporters, that something must be done.

I mean come on! My name is Stephen T. Colbert. How much more American can a name get? I am the spitting image of an American! Born and raised on a farm by my parents, I was one of 9 children. My brothers taught me strength and persistence. They taught me that crying was never the answer, but sometimes fighting was. That understanding seems appropriate for a U.S. President.

And my sisters are responsible for my softer side. I’m thoughtful and compassionate, and man do I know how to treat a lady? No Monica Lewinsky scandal here, folks. I’ve been married to the same woman ever since I said “I do.” How many other candidates can say that? My sisters also taught me patience. All those sisters and only one bathroom, I bet I have better bladder control than any President this nation has ever seen.

So Obama went to Harvard Law School; I went to Northeastern. Not too shabby, right?

Yeah maybe Joe Biden is an avid reader of poetry, but he was never featured in a New York Times best seller, was he?

So Hilary was the first lady, but can she say she’s won an Emmy?

Maybe Rudy (real name Rudolph) Giuliani was named after a reindeer. Well, I can think of plenty of famous Stephens. There was world-renowned author Stephen King, guitar legend Steve Vai, award winning movie director Stephen Spielberg, Steven Tyler from Aerosmith, Steve Irwin the Crocodile Hunter, Steven Prefontaine, the world-class Olympian, Stephen from Laguna Beach, the list goes on.

And honestly, doesn’t President Stephen T. Colbert have a nice ring to it?

So, this is my real dilemma: in such a democratic nation, why is it impossible for a qualified American citizen like myself to get my name on the ballot?

The only requirements, as noted by the Democratic Party chairman in South Carolina, are the following. First, one must demonstrate that he or she is practical nationally. And secondly, they must have spent time campaigning within the state they are looking to be on the ballot for.

In my case, I wanted to be on my home state of South Carolina’s ballot. Well, I ask you this South Carolina, whatever happened to home sweet home? Home is where the heart is? No place like home? Thanks a lot for all the support.

So let’s consider those two requirements. Viable nationally. Why not? I’m part French, and part Irish. I’m a middle-aged white male. Sounds kind of like every other president, doesn’t it? If they were capable of being workable nationally, what makes me different?
And second, you must spend time campaigning within your state of which you’d like to be on the ballot. Well, you just ask those South Carolina folks, I did my share of campaigning, alright. Just a few days ago, in fact, I made a campaign stop to receive my key to the city from Mayor Bob Coble. Nearly 1,000 people were there.

And not just any people. Young people, mostly. College students. They are the upcoming generation. I think my method of campaigning, although not typical, is perfectly acceptable. I should have the right to target whomever I please. A younger generation ensures loyalty for longer; I think it was a wonderful political tactic, on my part.

Maybe that’s why they refuse to put my name on the ballot, because they’re afraid of me. I mean, I did make up my own word. That’s right. Truthiness: A satirical term used to describe things that a person claims to know intuitively or from the gut without regard to evidence, logic, intellectual examination, or facts.

That’s my word. And it’s not just any word, but it was the 2005 American Dialect Society and 2006 Merriam-Webster word of the year. That alone should’ve guaranteed me a spot on the ballot.

Anyway, Steve Young, the author of Great Failures of the Extremely Successful has doubted my politics as of late. He thinks I take my candidacy seriously. Well, he couldn’t be more wrong. He had been wondering why I wasn’t debating. Well, Mr. Young, because first and foremost, I was just trying to get my name on the ballots.

That’s right, I said ballots. Plural. I decided I wanted my name on the Democratic and Republican ballots. I’m neither, so I figured, I might as well run as both. But of course, that didn’t work out.

I paid the $2,500 filing fee, only to be told I wasn’t a suitable Democratic candidate. I decided against trying for the Republican ballot, too, after that setback. It wasn’t worth my money. Plus, Mr. Young recommended I get a sports car or a girlfriend instead. Well, thanks Steve, but I’m not sure my wife would approve of the girlfriend. Steve, why don’t you just face the truthiness and move on.

America. I should be on the ballot. I’m a simple man with a simple mind. I hold a simple set of beliefs that I live by. Number one, I believe in America. I believe it exists. My gut tells me I live there. I feel that it extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and I strongly believe it has 50 states.

I may not have an Ivy League education. Maybe I can’t decide on a political party. Maybe I do have a little French in me, and I know we mostly Irish. Maybe my father wasn’t President in the past. And maybe I was never First Lady. But I think I have what it takes to be on the ballot. I think I deserve this. And I think America deserves this. With truthiness and justice for all!

I believe in democracy. I believe democracy is our greatest export. And I think, with me, not necessarily winning the Presidency, (although I probably would if my name was on those damn ballots) but just given the right to run, would further advance our democracy and once again, we’d reign as the greatest nation. That is, of course, especially if I’m President.

Thanks for your time, and please, sign my petition on your way out. I’m going to try to run for Prime Minister in England, but I need a couple signatures first.
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25 Nov. 2007.


SUBWAY - JAMES DEGROAT
Subway
James DeGroat
Scene: Man stands on stage with a wall of sheetrock stage right of him. He is working on filling the screw holes and cracks with joint compound while he talks to the audience. As his frustration elevate throughout the monologue he becomes more violent about slapping on the compound and smoothing it out more critically.

Character: Man mid-twenties. He wears worn out jeans that are obviously his work jean and a t-shirt the same.

Guy: So get this. You know that big snow storm we had? Well it blocked my car on the side of the road. (beat) So I get up the next morning and canâ€™t get out. I tried everything. Drive, reverse, pushing in neutral, pushing with the door open and one foot out of the one foot on the gas revving the engine. I accomplished nothing except filling the air with exhaust. So now Iâ€™m pissed and Iâ€™m gonna be late for this damn job, as if I really want to be here anyway, now I have to work to get to work. I might as well not bother coming. So my girlfriend hears me swearing and sticks her head out the window. I told her not to bother because she wonâ€™t be able to do anything anyway. So, what does she do? Comes out anyway, as if sheâ€™s going to help me push or something. Yeah, right. Maybe if she wasnâ€™t a girl, but then she wouldnâ€™t be my girlfriend, so I guess I canâ€™t complain. So I tell her to just stay there and Iâ€™ll go get our roommate to help. Our roommate. That unless lump of crap that lives with us only because he has money and me and her canâ€™t afford the apartment on our own. Heâ€™s such a lazy bastard I didnâ€™t want to have to wake him up because he sleeps like heâ€™s dead. A fuckinâ€™ air horn wouldnâ€™t get him out of bed. I still have fucking bruises from last week because he swings at whateverâ€™s waking him. What a dumb fuck. Go ahead hit the persons thatâ€™s wasting their time to get you up so you donâ€™t lose your job because youâ€™re always late. Whatever.

So anyway, Iâ€™m making my way up the four fucking flights of stairs and whaddaya know she forgot to leave the door unlocked (sarcastically) isnâ€™t she amazing? She locked the God damn door as if she wasnâ€™t going back up there in like two minutes. After she was done nagging me while I tried to push a car out of a fucking snow bank. So I had to go back down and get my keys which were still in the ignition because I didnâ€™t bother to shut the car off. Why should I? (elevating volume) And do you know what she did? Youâ€™re not going to believe this. In the couple minutes it took me to walk to the fourth floor and back down, she got the car out. (angrily flailing his arms at the audience) She got the fucking thing out! When I got back down to the side of the fucking road she was leaning against the truck of the car, which was now in the middle of the road, and she had this big grin on her face like a bratty little kid that brags about winning even though everyone knows they were cheating the entire time. And she says, (imitating a cheerful girl voice) â€œReady to go!â€ So, when I was finally done staring in shock and trying to figure out how the hell the car got from stuck in a snow bank to(cheerful girl voice) â€œready to goâ€ I asked her how she did it, and do you know what she said to me? DO YOU?! She says, (imitating a girls voice) â€œI kicked the snow out from in front of the tires.â€ Then she rolls her eyes at me again and says, (imitating a girls voice) â€œMan logic, just plow through it!â€ Can you believe that crap? Whatever, I loosened it.
The Wrong Kind of Buds
Bridget Steckis

Scene 1: Three characters, 1,2 and 3 (each character may be played by either a man or a woman), all between the ages of 25 and 28 sit in the kitchen of a decent looking apartment around the kitchen table. A crew of bumbling yet loveable characters, casual dress all around, looks of annoyance and disdain are worn on their faces.

1: This shit is getting out of control.

2: I know but I’m done with it.

1: We’re not just done with anything because obviously we’re planning to do something.

3: Hey we need to know exactly how we’re going to work this. If she just walks in here and we don’t know what the fuck to say we’re going to mess it all up.

1: Relax. When she gets home we’re going to be like, hey, what’s that on your face?

2: What the hell does that mean?

1: We have to make her alert right off the bat man.

2: Off the Batman?

1: Is this better? Off the bat, you fuck.

3: Stop. You two idiots are going to be the ones that completely Hiroshima this thing if you don’t shut the fuck up.

(pause)

1: Yikes, sorry man.

2: Yikes? What are you, five?

1: (Beat. Looks at 2 offended) Six.

3: Alright alright, will you just explain something to me?

2: What?

3: What the hell are we going to do? (Takes out a bag of weed and puts it on the table. Throughout the following, 3 goes through the motions of rolling a blunt while the conversation unfolds.)

2: I say we bring her in here and tell her how much we care.

1: Touching.
2: No I’m serious.

3: (Takes out weed from the bag and begins grinding it) We can’t just wait till she comes in here and say (melodramatic) ‘I love you.

2: We have to make it clear that we’re going to be here, douche.

1: She’s crazy. You’re well aware of this, as am I. Granted, we’ve known her for years but I can’t help to think she’s going to walk in here and go ballistic on us or something.

3: She’s not gonna fuckin do that. Listen, she comes in here and we say ‘you’re scaring the shit out of us you idiot’ and tell her we’re kicking her out if she doesn’t get her shit together.

1: Yeah man, I’ll take that plan.

2: We can’t just kick her out. What kind of plan of action is that?

3: Dude this is to the point of ridiculousness and you know it.

2: I’m not saying it’s not, bu—

3: (Interrupting) She’s completely screwing herself over and you want to just sit here and watch our friend star in some sort of sadistic side show?

1: (aside) That was the most S’s I’ve ever heard in my life.

3: (still plowing through their thought) Fuck no. Drugs were supposed to be a fun half hour comedy and they’ve turned into an epic trilogy. (Takes out a Dutch and begins to take it apart.)

1: Or one of the Harry Potter movies. Lord of the Rings perhaps;

2: (Also not acknowledging 1) Hey I never said that. What do you think we’re even doing here? Obviously we’re going to try and do something or else we wouldn’t even be having this god forsaken conversation in the first place.

1: Ok people, I’m actually going to try and be the voice of reason here for once and say we need to stop. I mean seriously. How are we going to help someone else when we can’t even get our own shit together?

3: Hey fuck you. This is the definition of together.

2: Moral of my story here is, she got into trying drugs in the first place because we all were. Don’t you ever think about that? I can’t help but feel guilty about this mess.

1: Yes I think about that, but seriously, it’s not mine or any one else’s fault that we were able to draw the line between fantasy and reality and she can’t. I don’t want to continue to support her based on personal guilt man.

3: Exactly. We’ve been friends since freshman year of college dude, and we all jumped onto that ship together. I love her, that’s a given, we all do; (Finishes rolling blunt and begins to lick it closed)
1: But her behavior regarding her drug use has clearly gotten far out of her control and even farther out of ours.

2: How very high school guidance counselor of you.

1: Will you shut up for one second and listen, you’re the one who’s trying to be uber serious about this.

2: Did you just use the word uber?

1: Will you stop analyzing my word choice and just LISTEN?

2: I am listening.

1: (Anger is escalating) No you’re not. You’re sitting here and acting like a child when we’re supposed to be figuring out how to save our best friend.

2: Listen asshole, save the Mr. Rogers shit for your little sister. Don’t talk to me like you’re some valiant hero acting alone for this great cause. You’re the one whose been sitting here making stupid comments about S’s and Harry Potter movies;

1: Oh fuck you.

2: (More intense) Don’t sit here and call me a child you self righteous piece of shit, when you’re the one sitting here making jokes and generally not contributing to the seriousness of this issue. Which is the original reason we all decided to talk about this goddamn fucking bullshit.

1: Well maybe if you would stop trying to be something you’re not;

2: Be something I’m not?? What the hell are you talking about?

3: SHUT UP!!!!!!! (Beat) Just shut up.

(There’s a long pause)

1: Remember when we tripped on mushrooms and I thought my arms were rubber bands?

(The three share a laugh)

3: Yea dude, and I laid out on the ice on the back porch for like 45 minutes and I swear to god I thought I was on the beach.

2: I walked outside to smoke a stoge and you told me to listen to the seagulls. Which I’m pretty sure, even though I was trippin’ balls, were blue jays.

1: Why would there have been any birds at all fool, it was like January.

3: I don’t think I imagined the seagulls.
Scene 2: About 45 minutes later. Our bumbling yet loveable characters have all moved to the floor of a hallway directly near the front door. 1, 2, and 3 are all seen sitting in a row with their backs against the wall looking into the audience. The lights come up.

2: Heyyyyyâ€¦ So, how are we supposed to be doing this again?

1: (laughs while saying) Oh shitâ€¦

3: Is it wrong to say I completely forgot about that for a minute (beat) or thirty?

1: (Still chuckling and shaking head) Noâ€¦

3: (chuckles too)

2: Alright alright, itâ€™s time to be proactive here.

3: (Melodramatic) Lead me oh valiant one.

2: (beat) When is this bitch coming home?

3: Earlier I think she mentioned some time between 6:30 and 7:30, and itâ€™s like five thirty-something right now.

(Long pause)

1: Is anyone going to say anything?

(pause)

3: (laughing) Iâ€™m not gonna lieâ€¦ (shakes head) no. (laughs)

2: Shut up you high bastard.

3: (giggling)

2: Weâ€™re intelligent, functioning individuals who can pull it together.

3: Hahahaâ€¦ functioning.

1: (to 3) Shut up.

3: MMMmkay.

1: Do you realize weâ€™ve been trying to do this for over an hour and weâ€™ve gotten absolutely nothing accomplished? Nada. Not one thing. Square one.

3: Iâ€™ve accomplished being high.
2: *(To 1)* Well if you hadn’t been picking fights!

1: Oh come off it.

2: Ya know what?

1: What?

2: You’re damn lucky I’m high.

1: *(laughing)* Oh am I?

2: Fuck yea.

1: Hey man I’ll fight you. Like seriously. I’ll fight you. I’ll seriously fight you dude.

3: How about, 1. You two are both douches! *(pauses to think)* B. Can we forget this and move on? And lastly we’re forgetting the whole point here.

2: Shiiiiiiiiiiiiit.

3: Maybe she said 5:30?

*(The door is heard being unlocked and 4 walks into the room. 4 enters looking more than fairly disheveled, wearing a pair of headphones and a coat. 4, the only character whose sex is definite (a female) looks at a motley and now stoned group of individuals still sitting on the floor. They stare. 1, 2 & 3 at 4 and 4 at 1, 2 & 3. There is a long pause.)*

1: You look like you got hit by a bus.

4: Well I feel like I got run over by an 18 wheeler so I guess I’m doing pretty good in comparison.

2: Where have you been all day?

4: At a friend’s.

1: Who?

4: A friend from work, why?

2: What were you doing?

4: Hanging out man.

3: Doing what?

4: Jeeze what the hell is with the interrogation?

1: We’re not interrogating.
4: *(interrupting)* And furthermore, if you're going to address me could you at least get off the damn floor?

3: *(Clearly none of them are getting up)* Woah dude. We're just trying to look out for you.

4: *(Increasing anger)* See guys, here's the funny thing about living with your friends and not your parents, you don't need anyone to look out for you. *(Walks back out the front door without another word)*

1: That was definitely an interrogation.

3: Asking 20 questions as soon as she walked in probably wasn't the best set up.

2: Yo someone's gotta break the ice or we're never going to do this right.

1: Damn it! Damn it all to hell. *Why* did we smoke that weed instead of figuring out how the hell we were going to do this?

3: Because I roll sweet blunts. *(Chuckles)*

2: *(To 1)* Okay, now you sound like one of those creepy anti-drug commercials. Now shut the hell up and let's put our thinking caps on here.

1: Dudes, all we have to do is not beat around the bush.

3: *(giggling to themselves)*

1: *(Looks at three perplexed but continues on)* *we just have to be ya know, direct and to the point.*

3: *(Still giggling)*

1: *Why* do you act like you're on crack every time you smoke?

3: *(Chuckles)* *Bush.*

1: Why do you act like you're on crack every time you smoke?

2: I say we hit the bong while we think about this.

1: *FUCK NO!* *(pause)* Ya know what? We're done here. I'm fucking sick of sitting around and just running in circles with each other about this shit. *(I stands up like they are taking the lead of something with their back to the front door facing the other two. The following is a true rant, spoken with building intensity, nearly all in one thought, one breath.)* Next time she comes home we're going to walk on the wild side with our psychedelics and our uppers *(re-enters the apartment with a backpack on. 1 does not realize this and 4 stands behind listening. 2 and 3 sit staring at both 1 and 4 in stoned shock of what they're witnessing)* but ya know what, we're fuckin 27 now and you can't just continue to walk around while you're rolling on E and expect us to feel bad for you when you can't hold down a fucking job. I mean seriously, where the fuck does she get off just thinking that we're going to support her through all of her bullshit. Why is she so great that she can forgo paying the rent for three months and we're the ones who pick up all the slack? And she has the balls to give me a hard time for smoking weed? Please! She's the one who tripped on mushrooms throughout the
entirety of my sisters wedding, that shitbag, I had to explain to my whole family who the fuck I brought as a
guest (resentfully) ohoho ha ha, yea my friend just has really big pupils and an eye watering problem, ha ha
ha. Not to mention the fact that she fuckin got piss drunk and decided to take two hits of acid before
going on a fucking interview. Are you god damn crazy? What grown person in their right mind behaves like
that and expects anyone to treat them with any sort of respect? Then she comes home and trips face for
nine hours and just expects someone to be there for her during the come down. I mean, what the fuck,
seriously. I’m fucking done with this shit. Fucking (beat) Done.

(Pause. 1 and 2 still stare in shock)

1: What?

(2 and 3 continue to simply stare in 1’s direction and behind at 4. 1 pauses a moment, turns back and
faces 4. The lights fade to black.)
June 24th 2003.

I became the newest member of the Dairy Inn staff. It's a little family-oriented fast food and ice cream shop less than a mile away from my house. I always loved walking or riding my bike there as a kid, so now at age sixteen I figured it would be a good first job. (Not to mention my mom told me not to come back to the house without one.)

Well, a little less than five years later, I'm still there. Assistant Manager and all. A popular saying in this industry is that the customer is always right.

Yeahhhhh.

Out of everything I've learned these past four and a half years, the one thing that prevails the most is that the customer is almost NEVER right.

"I ordered large."

"Nope, you didn't."

"I said this."

"Try again."

"That's not what I ordered!"

"Actually, it is exactly what you asked for."

One of the most fun games is when customers say you charged them the incorrect amount. And it's just so fun to watch their face when you prove them dead wrong.

Here's what you do:

1. Open the register
2. Check the price
3. Break their little hearts by telling them they're dead wrong.

But of course there are still the annoying customers who ALWAYS cause a problem. The ones who stare at the price board for over five minutes even after you told them no. No, hard and soft ice-cream is not the same price. I promise, it's not. Stare all you want. It's not going to change anything.

Or how about the non-English speakers. Not intending to discriminate, but if you can't order in the language I'm speaking, please do not even come into my store. Oh you want "esstrawberry" or "esprinkles"? Sorry we don't serve that. How about "espridis"? Oh sorry, which one is "espridis"? Rather than pointing to it why don't you learn how to say it in English. I don't even bother to ask any further questions.
My personal favorite, acquired over my years at The DI is the customers who try to tell you that you’re doing your job wrong.

You had that flavor last time.

_Nope, sorry._

Yes you did. I was just here last week. Someone gave it to me.

_No, you’re still wrong._

Yes you did. Are you new?

_Actually bitch, I’ve been here for over four years and I’m pretty damn sure I’d know about something last week._

Then they either get all pissed and storm out or ask for the manager.

I have to say, this is the best part.

I simply turn away from the counter, walk to the back of the store, and then proceed to return to the counter and ask, _Is there a problem?_

Those faces are classic.

So if you think you’re going to come into my store and put up a fight, you picked the wrong person to mess with. Over my years of being bossed around and nervous that I was going to get fired when the customers did something wrong, I learned that it’s all complete bull. And I don’t take the BS from people.

You’re wrong.

I’m right.

I’m the manager.

You’re not even on staff.

So don’t believe what you hear or what you’re told if you enter the business the customer is always wrong.
WHITE DOOR - JAMES DEGROAT
White Door
James DeGroat
Irony is my muse, depression is not. I realize this when I find my suffocated emotion regurgitating on the virgin pages of a blank book which makes no attempt to camouflage the obvious vulgarity and shamelessness of a decomposing tale. The one where I fall back, fall off, fall over myself, fall into regression, fall off the wagon, fall in love, fall into the wrong crowd, fall down the stairs, fall for someoneâ€™s lie, fall forward, spring back, falling fast, falling snow, falling under pressure, falling asleep with a cigarette in my mouth, falling in my nightmares that are still sometimes about you. And just like a child that stops loving a toy, I kick the carcass of my past under the bed with a mouth full of embarrassment and a taste of guilt that comes from my own betrayal and a depressed notion that my weakness and petty self-indulgent beliefs have taken shape, spread itâ€™s legs, and flown ass up in to the setting sun, dropping my name at every party this side of the equator. To converse over a coffee at an out of the way joint as to avoid a pass crossing with someone I might know. Someone less embarrassing, someone who doesnâ€™t make me feel so guilty by association. So guilty for my obvious annoyance and pretentious shallow behavior, like the way I speak horse and low as to counteract the gut splitting, food spitting laughter that seems to bounce like tennis balls off the mountains causing avalanches. At the end of our reunion I will lie to find new ways to ignore my gripping past whose persistence is remarkable. And as I walk back to my hotel with my regained freedom, I can feel a little bounce in my step. But all of a sudden I am sitting alone in a room that smells like a stale hospital bed. I can hear the wallpaper peeling, the faucet dripping, the paint chipping, the roaches laughing, as the ritual self-loathing sets in. I tell myself that I did a good deed, so why the self-abusiveness? I canâ€™t remember what its like to laugh louder than everyone else, to dance in my underwear, to make out on the back of the bus, to make a scene and laugh at the judging stares. I feel my face get hot as I realize that Iâ€™d rather wear a ball and chain than a sign that reads, â€œkick me.â€
An eagle brushed down against the ebbing black water. In one swift motion the graceful predator snatched up a sunfish and carried it off in its gleaming wet claws. I watched as it soared proudly overhead with its prized catch, as I walked mindfully along the riverside in the dewy grass and between the cattails.

The river was high and carried a new sound with its swift current that bright and sunny mid-spring afternoon, a sound that I had never heard before and more than likely would never forget. The sound of the water seemed to call me, beckoning me to its beds, begging me to come and play in the crushing white waves.

The water rushed angrily against the underside of my kayak. Legs pushed forward, arms gripping my paddle tightly with wet white knuckles; I pushed onward down the rapid river. The wind whipped against my face, thrashing my tight ponytail from side to side. On the air was a song that the wind carried through the branches of the nearby trees.

The kayak was an extension of my body, cutting skillfully through the rapids and gliding gracefully on the waves. The trees were thick around the river and I was isolated and amazingly at peace. Between the wind and the waves I was comfortable; I was safely tucked into my niche all warm and cozy. I’m sure the birds were chirping happily that day but the sound of the river had my total attention.

Suddenly as if the world began to rotate against me, the wind took my kayak and sent it twisting in the current. I shoved my paddle hard in the opposite direction of the turn but it was too late. The kayak flipped.

I had been a confirmed “water bug,” as my father enjoyed calling me, since approximately birth. I enjoyed any kind of water activity there was and as I had increased in age, my time spent in the water increased as well. My latest water sport was kayaking, and growing up in the Adirondacks there was always some place to practice. I had spent nearly every waking hour last summer out on the water, and now that it was finally spring I was preparing to do the same.

I had gotten interested in kayaking one summer at a Girl Scout camp that my mother hoped would help expose me to the world, and get me out of her hair for a couple weeks. My instructor/counselor swam out to a semi-deep part of Pond’s Lake, and each of the campers then took turns following in a kayak. The water felt cool against my skin and the air huddled above the water was dewy in the sunlight. There were mountains surrounding all sides of the lake and we felt secure and protected by it. He spoke in a calm voice and instructed us in the proper procedure to tip over the kayak safely and flip back over calmly. We were to let ourselves fall into the water and try to flip ourselves back to the surface using our arms and focusing on each muscle movement. He said this exercise would help us to stay calm and in control if we accidentally flipped over while out kayaking by ourselves. Now all that was left was to practice and remember.

That morning I had woken up to the sound of the branches outside my window tapping a “Good Morning” tune against the window pane. I went downstairs to the deserted kitchen, plunked on a light and felt the cool linoleum against my bare feet. I reached up into the cupboard and pulled out some bread, peanut butter, and other fixings required to make a picnic lunch. I popped some bread in the toaster and headed back up to my room. I flipped on the T.V. and became totally absorbed in the weather report.

When the bitter smell of my toast burning downstairs reached my nostrils, I re-entered the conscious realm and swore as I entered the kitchen. I tossed the burned toast in the garbage and grabbed a granola bar instead, and headed back up to my room.
I glanced at the clock, and realizing I had just an hour left to get ready for my grand adventure, I reached up for my cardboard box marked "Water Gear." I pulled on my wetsuit over my swimsuit. My wetsuit had become like a second skin and long past were the days that I would fidget under the tight black suit. I left my parents a note in my usual chicken scratch, saying where I was headed and when I was due back.

I went out to the car and loaded up my gear into the back of my hand-me-down beat-up pick-up truck. I pushed my backpack in first and then secure my shiny red kayak with some bungee cords my father had given me the Christmas after I got my license. I drove down a dirt road shortcut that my family and I had been using since we started coming to visit the Hudson River.

It was approximately a half hour ride but I knew the mid-spring rapids would be more than worth it. I parked the car and placed the kayak and my other gear onto the dirt loading dock that the white water rafting companies in the area had created. I noticed the water was high as I slid into the kayak feeling the warm plastic becoming cool with the water surrounding it. I pushed off and paddled away into the vast river.

At nearly one-thirty in the afternoon I paddled up to the slight bit of cleared land near the side of the river where I ate lunch. I walked and watched some creatures of the wilderness. An eagle caught my eye and I followed it with my eyes for a bit while I scarfed down my pb&j sandwich and some chips out of my waterproof pack. I checked my watch and headed back into the water.

I could hear nothing but water rushing, I was flipped. My head throbbed from bumping it on a rock on the way down. I tried to flip back right side up but the current was too strong for my out of practice body. I reached up and struggled to release my legs from what now seemed to be my prison, hard and unwelcoming.

Finally, I kicked through the neoprene covering. It was like a new child walking for the first time, my legs felt freedom. I tried to surface and bashed my face against the side of my kayak. I felt bruised and starved for air, every inch of my body cried in agony.

All sense of time was lost. I broke the water’s surface and gulped the air, my head was now throbbing as if someone was dropping a bowling ball on it in a rhythmic pattern. I became dizzy and my face burned. I slipped under the water’s surface, with a sudden loss of strength.

When I managed to surface again I felt a jerk of pain as I realized my foot was now tightly wedged between two large rocks upstream and the rest of my body was being pulled downstream after my kayak. The current was strong and although I tried desperately to both stay afloat and free my leg from the river’s teeth, I was continuously sucked under the surface.

I duck dived time after time opening my burning eyes under the fiery river. The river seemed to scream and thrash my body as I struggled to reclaim my leg from the river’s possession. Each time I dove I sucked more water deep into my lungs.

In between freeing my leg and trying to stay afloat I found my voice. I cried out for help. My lungs burned and my limbs were almost completely numb. My muscles were weakening, and I knew my only chance for survival would be to be rescued, and to be rescued I was to hold on. But hold on to what? These thoughts alone were exhausting and I slipped under the water again.

I tried to fight but my body gave in to exhaustion and instead of gulping air my body was sucking in water and my lungs felt as though I were swallowing fire. My arms flailed helplessly at the water’s surface, reaching instinctively for an angel or maybe even a miracle. I floated just below the surface and just before everything went black I remember seeing the most beautiful site in my life, the view of the sky from under the water’s surface, a view of heaven I may never forget.
From the river’s belly I felt nothing and thought next to nothing. I remember coldness, warmth and feeling as though I was floating on air. The warmth of the late afternoon sun caressed my face and arms. I was engulfed by an angel’s wings and struggled to free myself from the unknown offender.

Words cannot describe the freedom and fear tasted by a victim of a drowning; freedom from all life’s cares, and fear of never returning to a life at all. My heart experienced the freedom and my stomach experienced the fear, but my mind experienced nothing at all. I was almost completely numb, and what wasn’t numb was severely fuzzy. Only one feeling was left in my physical being – pain. With one last wind of strength, I forced my eyes open and saw murky red water. Peering through the clouded water was like looking through a clown house mirror, I saw a distorted figure, my foot.

Recognition of the distorted limb shot pain through my peaceful floating state of mind and seared my spine. All the pain returned and I was deaf with water in my ears. My fingers grazed the surface once again as I struggled one last time for my life. I’d lost time, I’d lost consciousness and I’d be damned if I was going to lose my life as well. I tried to focus, but my head was too heavy with pain, and my eyes were burned shut. I clawed the surface of the water, crying inside and more scared than a parent who has momentarily lost their child. Fear took hold but determination fought fire with fire.

My determination was as vast as the river that had now become my prison. The victor in this battle would determine my life or lack thereof. Determination fought admirably with the fierce river. The river tussled my limp body between the rocks and floating debris shaking me senseless. I could feel the freedom of the air with my fingers and it taunted me, and called for me as the river had earlier this morning.

With a last burst of anger the river threw my body back and with its' crushing pressure held me tightly under the current. My neck gave out and my head lolled back hard against the hard and unforgiving riverbed. A tear ran down my cheek as I watched the eagle I had followed earlier, soar overhead with the freedom and grace that I knew I would never experience again.
SNAKE IN THE GARDEN - KATE BRINDISI
Snake in the Garden
Kate Brindisi
We walk down the main entrance passing by various sweet shops and arcade games. People of all ages are scattered around heading to their particular destination of interest. My heart is beating fast with eager anticipation to get to the end of the entrance where we turn left and face the infamous Dragon Coaster, the ultimate thrill ride at Playland in Rye, New York. Today’s the day. After many years of being too small to be allowed on the bigger rides, I finally make the height requirement. My mom and I wait in what seems to be an eternally long line (although it isn’t actually all that long) as I think of what I am about to undertake with mounting, nervous excitement. I can tell that riding the big roller coaster is going to be so much fun just from seeing the teenagers’ laughing faces and hearing their wild shouts of enthusiasm.

My turn is finally here. We step into one of the middle cars. A ride operator comes around to double check that we are safe and secure. Satisfied, he gives the thumbs-up to another man in charge who then says, “Enjoy your ride.” The car begins to move forward and smoothly bends around the track, and then boom! We start to go uphill and the sound of the clanking chain-link track that is pulling us generates a true moment of fear within me. I take a deep breath trying to relax as I look over at my mom who appears to be as calm as can be. Observing her relaxed, confident demeanor, I remind myself that I will be fine just like everyone else is that has come off the ride numerous times; I need only to hold on tight and roll with it. Suddenly, the top of the hill arrives and the screams release into the air as our blind trust is completely attached to the mechanics of this thrill ride that now hurls us into gravity’s grip at lightning speed.

The worst (or really the best) is over. We made it downhill and proceed to twist, turn, and go up and down until straight ahead of us we see the dark cave of the Dragon’s mouth. A flash of fear flies into, but then quickly out of, my body as the dragon appears to swallow us. The screams echo in the enclosure and the noise of the car zooming along the tracks are louder than ever. Faster than a slow eye blink, we are relieved to find ourselves on the outside once again. A few more stomach-moving dips and we have returned home. A frenzy of cheering approval unites our conquering spirits to a new level. To my exhilarated self I say, “I did it! I rode on the Dragon Coaster!” Out loud to my mom I say, “That was great. Let’s do it again.”

My enthusiasm for roller coasters has continued to grow as they’ve gotten bigger and faster. Recalling that feeling of my first roller coaster ride some thirty-five years ago helps me know that I’m alright to engage in relatively safe risks now and then. Whether I’m achieving the aspiration of taking the plunge on Jackson, New Jersey’s infamous Kingda Ka (the world’s tallest and fastest roller coaster), going on a very important job interview, giving an oral presentation, or simply picking up the phone to call someone I haven’t spoken to in a very long time, the courage and confidence that I need to accomplish these feats has certainly been encouraged from my fear-defeating experiences with thrilling roller coaster rides. Fear is an overrated bully that attempts to suppress us from living our lives to their fullest potentials. If we don’t want to miss out on the most wonderful, thrilling roller coaster experiences that life has to offer us, we must learn to trust the safety of the ride, and try various methods that can aid in conquering our initial hesitations.

Focusing on other people’s actions and reactions before, during, and after riding the highlighted, ultimate roller coaster of any given amusement park, and then mirroring the aspects or techniques that you believe might be helpful to the enjoyment of your own experience, is one easy, first-hand way to test out. Asking people direct questions related to your biggest fears (especially while you’re waiting in line with all fellow riders) is yet another comforting idea. People tend to create their own discomfort by worrying about what might happen. I can imagine that if a person over contemplates on all the negative possibilities that can occur on the ride, he or she will make themselves physically ill before their turn even arrives. My
testimony is that screaming as you go down that first big drop, whether lightly or at full volume, releases all tensions and anxieties hindering the intended pleasure of the ride. It is supposed to be fun and exciting while offering the opportunity of accomplishing a very popular challenge. Once you come to terms with the fact that roller coaster riding continues to be a growing phenomenon, you will begin to accept the idea that feeling afraid of the monstrous contraptions is neither necessary nor warranted. The "butterflies" are normal and can be integrated into a desired part of the adrenaline rush, which quite often becomes an addiction.

Becoming comfortable with roller coaster riding does not lend itself to reckless behavior. I would be remiss not to acknowledge the statistically low, yet nonetheless real possibilities of personal injuries and deaths that do and can occur as a result of roller coaster mishaps. Unfortunately, problems have surfaced due to faulty mechanisms, wear and tear not attended to properly, regularly scheduled maintenance checks not being performed, and ride operators simply not paying attention to extremely important details such as making sure each passenger is buckled in securely. However, various sources have stated that most of the injuries and deaths have been caused by the riders themselves from not adhering to the rules of the ride which normally include sitting back with arms and legs kept inside the car and being of healthy physical condition. Rules are implemented for safety reasons and cannot be ignored by the riders.

Although I’m sure it goes without saying, we hear of accidents happening everyday from extraordinary challenges like mountain climbing, everyday sports activities like swimming and running, to freak injuries such as getting out of bed in the morning. As far as accidents deriving from any amusement rides, Helen Cordes tells us in her online Family Life article The Truth About Amusement Rides that statistically, the chances of death or injury are much higher on the car-ride to the park than in the park (Cordes). The reality is that we take a much bigger risk with our lives by driving off in an automobile each and every day without any sense of fear, and usually without the end result of exhilarating pleasure. In Nate Naoversen’s Themed Attraction website, we learn that beyond park inspection programs, more than 85 percent of all permanent parks are subject to government codes and inspection requirements, and daily inspection of roller coasters can take longer than four hours (Naversen). Therefore, we can conclude that we are much safer on the well-thought-out, well-constructed metal loops, twists, and turns that are created for our enjoyment than we are in our daily, non-inspected, routine lives. Defy fear, take the risk, and ride the roller coaster.

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I AM THE STORM â€“ KENNETH TROCHSLER

I Am the Storm
Kenneth Trochsler

I am the rain.  
I am the tears of the sad,  
Built up over an eternity,  
Set free with fury misunderstood.

I am the thunder.  
I am the cry of the hopeless.  
Making myself heard,  
So that someone might save me.

I am the wind.  
I am the sigh of the lonely.  
Wrapping around your body,  
Caressing what I may only dream to have.

I am the lightning.  
I am the power of hate.  
Built up and unleashed,  
To set fire to the guilty and the innocent alike.

I am the storm.  
I am the epitome of pain.  
And although I enrage the skies,  
Only better and sunnier days do I leave behind.
He would sell a satellite if it crashed in his backyard, to a man with a looking glass around his waist that looked like he knew something about space. He wouldn't haggle the price, nor would he argue or entice the buyer with swindles or sales fit for the prize that fell from the sky like stars through time. Instead he would read lines from a book he had read which soothes the soul and settles the head: "land lock the lot of sailors wives, in stock, inland from shoreline skies. Their plunges for blunders and riches alike steer their thoughts towards days spent in light. As for the captains and shipmates who drink, feed them more liquor from the barrels we'll sink, as soon as they fall and drift off to sleep, they may tell us the secrets they had promised to keep." His favorite of times was high-noon tea, where he could sit and smoke and enjoy the sea. Out of a window normally wet with rain, he peered through the glass fastened tightly to the pane, where plants in pots drooped over the sides and sit and sat alone, then died. Through his yard dressed in green, through the thicket and bushes, sat a dog he had named after an aunt or uncle who died on the twelfth of a month in the fifties. From here the story shifts for disaster as the man no longer flows in the rhythm he had mastered. His words don't make sense and the smoke goes to his head. He no longer reads from books before bed, no longer does he peer from his chair out the window. His thoughts focus on the fact he's a widow.
Patience
Allegra De Vita
ODE TO THE NIGHT OWL  

Jared Faircloth

In the late night my mind comes alive
While others slumber my thoughts tend to drive
Some great works are created in the dark
While the journey of imagination embarks
I love the night owl, he’s a fond friend
Awake, while the world sleeps for hours on end
I sit at my desk in the light of the moon
While the owl sings his joyful tune
Praising the inspiration of night
Though the sky is dark my thoughts are bright
He carries the boat out to the ocean, looking for one's soul
Water stays calm in the beginning of the night
Man decides to take a short nap to regain the strength of body and mind
Dreams cycle throughout man's sleep, pounding every vein in his head and eyes
Throughout the dream comes a light filled with beauty and darkness
A light that brightens the soul but engulfs it in a shadow of flames
Light becomes too strong and a shouting voice is heard
Loud bells ringing back and fourth
Opening the man's eyes and body
Heart shivering and eyes flowing with tears
Before his eyes is a dark-blue colored sky
Stars gathering among the night
A light suddenly begins to glow among the ocean
Bringing the man to its feet
String of light bursts out the ocean, knocking the man to his knees
Light shoots to the sky among the stars
One star begins to brighten into glowing red
Another forming into ocean-diamond blue
Other turns into the purple of a shining jewel
Final one turns into the green of a healthy-grown leaf
The string of life connects among the five stars
Forming a circle, spinning with a flashing agility to the ocean
Circle finally hits the ocean's surface
Forming a sharpened symbol, drawn to thy circle's middle
Man grabs the edge of the deck
Bringing his weak and crippled knees to stand for the legs
His face turns to the circle of stars among the ocean
Wondering of its glistening appearance
The symbol is of a rose, glistening of wondrous light
Man stares, wondering of its meaning and purpose of being born before him
Symbol begins to rise before his very eyes
Staring at him in the awakening of power and great might
His hand slowly reaches for the symbol
Reaching for an answer and truth to a question of life
Symbol begins to shatter and breaks into flashing streaks of light
Spilling with dust full of wondrous color
The streaks of light travel around the weak man
Grabbing and strangling his body
Arms and Legs begin to immensely burn
Screaming in pain for relief and healing
Throat begins to be strangled
Clutching every last breath from his lungs and throat
Chest begins to burn and glow
Green glowing light ripping out of his chest, leaving the man of no feeling or emotion
It is of his soul that faces in front of him
Not of full glowing light but part affected by shadow and bind by a reflection of darkness
Man begins to lose feeling of his heart and mind
A sudden reaction to the streaks of life, releasing the man of his pain and grasp for life's breath
Streaks of life gather together, forming a beautiful flower
A rose, each of its rosebuds with unique veins of color
Similar to thy glistening stars of the born symbol
Each of the rosebuds beginning to form over the darkness of the broken soul
Using each of its gifted light
Healing the damage it has obtained from countless battles
Soul brightens stronger than ever, returning to man’s body and mind
Man regains full consciousness with the body of a human
Connected with feelings of a shining star
Boat reaches the shore
Man’s feet finally feeling pure, warm sand
Turning back to look at the sparkling ocean, he spots rosebuds in the distance
Flying along the beautiful water
With the shining sun and wind as their wings
A cold, breezy day
In Dingle.
No rains today â€“
Only sunshine and soft blue sky.

The town is lined with stucco yellow, pink, green, blue storefronts
Sleepy-eyed stray dogs meander up and down sidewalks,
Moss grows on mountains and covers rooftops
Few people are here.

Fires always lit.
Cars always slicing by.
Pubs always open.
Music always playing.

Europe!
The scent of this place
So fresh, crisp, new --
is what Heaven or Paradise
must smell like.

The winds -- always restless
The skies -- always changing pace
The sea -- always speaking â€“

The Lord must live here
How could He not?
STILL - ALLEGRA DE VITA
Still
Allegra De Vita
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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CHRISTA BLAIR is a Senior Exercise Science and Pre-PT major from Russell, MA. She plans on graduating in December 2008 and go on to Graduate school in Springfield, MA for a Doctorate’s in Physical Therapy, and interning at Physical Therapy Partners in Westfield, MA.

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KATE BRINDISI is a Senior Media Studies Major from Cedar Grove, NJ. She plans on traveling around Europe for a bit, then hopefully her internship at Vanity Fair turns into a permanent position. Her other publications include: The Spectrum newspaper, Pioneer Magazine, The Cedar Grove Observer.

MARI J. BROWN is a Freshman Media Studies major with a minor in Journalism from Boise, Idaho. She plans to graduate in May 2011 and go on to Graduate school to become a news broadcaster.

INES DI MEGLIO CENATIEMPO is a Sophomore Spanish major and English and Political Science minor from Fairfield, CT. She plans to graduated in May 2010 and go on to work in the area of international affairs in an embassy type environment or be a news writer, in to maintain exposure to what is going on in the world. She has had a few articles published in Ridgefield Magazine, won various essay contests in high school and at SHU, placed third in the Rycenga Freshman Essay Contest, and the paper here in Horizons is also being reviewed for SHU’s Across the Curriculum Contest.

BRYAN COCCO is a Senior Graphic Design Major from Northhampton, MA.

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JAMES DEGROAT is a Senior Graphic Design Major from Pelham, NY. He plans on securing a position with a graphic design or advertising firm.

ALLEGRA DE VITA is a Freshman Neuroscience Major with a Music Minor from Trumbull, CT.

MARIE LEILA DOUAHI is an English Major with a Minor in French from Manhattan. She plans on pursuing a career in Journalism which will enable her to travel and utilize the different languages that she has acquired. She plans on graduating in May 2010.

CANDACE DUMAS is a Sophomore Exercise Science/Physical Therapy major from Fayetteville, NC. She plans on graduating in May 2010 and plans to go on to work, travel, and start a family.

KATIE DURATTI is a Senior English Major from Wakefield, MA. She plans on travelling to Australia, South Africa, among others. She also is pursuing teaching through NYC Fellowship or Teach America.
JARED FAIRCLOTH is an English Major from Niantic, NY. He plans on attending Graduate School for Education and he plans on graduating in December 2009. He has been previously published in Eden Literary Magazine, 2003 & 2004.

FRANCISCO SEBASTIAN FLORES is a Junior Graphic Design Major and Media Studies Minor from Ibarra, Ecuador. His other publications include: One of my paintings (AMIGO) will be shown in the society of Illustrators in New York City this April.

CAITLIN GOLA is a Media Studies Major from Vernon, NJ. She plans on graduating 2010.

JASON GUBERMAN-PFEFFER is a Senior Political Science major and Middle East Studies, History, and Honors minor from Stratford, CT. He has been published in MidEast Web for Coexistence, Connecticut Post, The Media Line, Scholars for Peace in the Middle East Newsletter, and the online scholarly journal, ThereisKnowledge.com. He plans to graduate in May 2008 and go on to graduate school along with doing Public Service.

SARAH HOU is a Senior Media Studies/Art & Design Major. She plans on moving to Beijing, China.

SHANNON IANNI is an English Major and Spanish Minor from Stamford, CT. She plans on attending Graduate School for Secondary Education and she plans on graduating in May 2009. She has been previously published in PIONEER MAGAZINE and SHU SPECTRUM Newspaper (Fall 07- Sp 08).

LEIGH KOGER is a Junior Exercise Science Major from Danbury, CT.

AMANDA MACDONALD is a Junior English major and Sociology minor from Shelton, CT. She plans to graduate in May 2009 and hopes to go on to some type of journalism or editorial job for a newspaper or a magazine. She has published many works in three editions of the Shelton High School Poetry Club publication Sliced Bread, has posted a couple stories on zoetrope.com, and was published in last year’s edition of Horizons.

SAMANTHA MARINKO is a Sophomore Media Studies and Communications major from Fair Haven, NJ. She plans to graduate one year early in May 2009 and go on to work with a magazine publication. She has had photographs published and she is a staff reporter for the Spectrum.

RYAN MAURO is a Senior Graphic Design Major from Southbury, CT. He plans on seeking employment as a creative professional.

SHAUN MITCHELL is an English Major with a concentration in Secondary Education. He plans on graduating in May 2008 and also plans on working in Fairfield Ward High School as an intern. This is his sixth publication with Horizons. His other publications include, â€œOde to Being Drunk,â€ â€œTransition,â€ â€œThe Tale of J. Alfred Smith.â€

CHRISTINE D. PALUMBO is a Graphic Design, Illustration Major from Cedar Grove, NJ. Her other publications include: In the fall of 2007 I was inducted into the Society of Illustrators of Los Angeles West 46 Exhibition as a student for my â€œJohn Lennonâ€ portrait piece, done in graphite. In the 2007 Sacred Heart Student Art Exhibit I was awarded first place in the Intermediate category for â€œJohn Lennonâ€ and also first place in the Foundation category for â€œModelâ€

ANDRE PICARD is a Junior Graphic Design Major from Meriden, CT. His other publications include: Gallery of Contemporary Art Award Winner last two years, for both Illustration, and Graphic Design
THOMAS SANDS is a Senior English and Philosophy Major from Newburgh, NY. He plans on going to Law School. His other publications include: Poetic Musings 2006, American Poetry Club 2008.

ERIKA SAWYER is a Senior Media Studies major from South Deerfield, MA and in currently finishing her second full length screenplay for her senior project. She plans to graduate in May 2008.

SAMANTHA SELVAGGIO is a Junior Media Studies Major from New Hyde Park, NY. She plans on continuing her internship in the broadcasting/production field. Her other publications include: Producer of The Pulse (Sacred Heart Media Studies Television show of student productions)

SANDY SILLO is a Senior English major with a Literature Concentration from New Canaan, CT. At Sacred Heart University, she is a Residential Assistant and a Classroom Learning Assistant for American Literature I & II. She will graduate in May 2008 and plans to teach Secondary Education. She has been published in the 2005, 2006, 2007 editions of Horizons. This is her second time as an Editor and she has enjoyed it a great deal. She would like to thank all of our contributors!

TIMOTHY SPATH is a Junior English and Spanish major from Cutchogue, NY. He writes for the school newspaper and plans on writing a book or two. He plans on graduating in 2009 and thinks it would be nice to travel while writing, speaking Spanish, and saving the world.

BRIDGET STECKIS is a Senior English Major from Wading River, NY.

PATRICK SULLIVAN is a Senior Media Studies Major from Stratford, CT. He plans on going into some form of production, either television or radio.

WENDY L. TERENZIO is a Senior English/Secondary Ed Major from Milford, CT. She plans on graduating on May 18, 2008 and is considering graduate school.

KENNETH TROCHSLER is a Biology Major from Naugatuck, CT. He plans on pursuing a career studying Marine Life near the West Coast. He plans on graduating in May 2010.

GREG TRUTNER is a Junior Political Science and History Major from St. James. He plans on graduating in May 2009.

JILLIAN TURGEON is a Freshman Social Work Major and Psychology Minor from Somers, CT. She plans to graduate in May 2011 and go on to graduate school to get her masters in Social Work. She then hopes to continue working with the Autistic population and her ultimate goal is to open a non-profit respite camp for families with children in the Autism Spectrum. She has been published in Scriptura Literary Magazine and has won the Creative Connections Literary Contest and the American Poetâ€™s Society Poetry Contest.

KEITH WILKINSON is a Psychology Major with a Minor in Religious Studies from College Point, NY. He plans on attending Graduate School and he plans on graduating in May 2010.
NOTES ON EDITORS

KATE BRINDISI is a Senior Media Studies Major from Cedar Grove, NJ. She plans on traveling around Europe for a bit, then hopefully her internship at Vanity Fair turns into a permanent position. Her other publications include: The Spectrum newspaper, Pioneer Magazine, The Cedar Grove Observer.

EVAN GILLETTE is a senior from Rochester, NY. He is majoring in Information Technology. He is graduating in May 2008 and is attending grad school at Sacred Heart. This is his third year as WebMaster for Horizons.

AMANDA MACDONALD is a Junior English major and Sociology minor from Shelton, CT. She plans to graduate in May 2009 and hopes to go on to some type of journalism or editorial job for a newspaper or a magazine. She has published many works in three editions of the Shelton High School Poetry Club publication Sliced Bread, has posted a couple stories on zoetrope.com, and was published in last yearâ€™s edition of Horizons.

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BRIDGET STECKIS is a Senior English Major from Wading River, NY. She is a character actor who performed in several Sacred Heart productions. Although she may not choose acting for a career, she will always be a character. (That's what you get for not giving us your own bio.)
The Creative and Performing Arts  

at  

Sacred Heart University

Housed in the College of Arts & Sciences and rooted in liberal arts tradition, the creative and performing arts at Sacred Heart University strive to provide each student with an awareness of and an appreciation for the beauty and order of artistic endeavor. The creative and performing arts inculcates an aesthetic approach to the physical worlds of sight, sound, and space, emphasizing not only the achievement of creativity, but the very processes that foster those achievements. They afford students multiple opportunities to develop their imaginations, employ their unique creative activities, discover themselves as aesthetic beings, acquire knowledge about the world of art, and ultimately become makers of the beauty and order they have been taught, by their study of the creative performing arts.

Additionally, the creative and performing arts serve to enrich the university at large. By summoning from within all of us a response, to our spiritual and aesthetic needs, by fulfilling the desire for order felt by all, by allowing us to indulge our mysterious sense of the beautiful, by connecting us to the historic treasury of art, music, drama, literature, photography, and film, in short, by teaching and delighting, the creative and performing arts play an integral and critical role in helping us realize fully our essential humanity.

Dedicated to interdisciplinary and multifaceted nature of the creative and performing arts, Horizons is a student edited journal that showcases the talent of Sacred Heart University in writing, art, and photography. These works by students strive to awaken sensibilities, to challenge assumptions, and to extend and encourage lively debate.

As a student edited journal, student editors are needed in poetry, fiction, drama, art and photography. Independent study hours are possible. For information about becoming a student editor or submitting work to Horizons, please contact Dr. Sandra Young, faculty editor, English and Modern Foreign Languages.

For more information about the creative and performing arts at Sacred Heart University, please contact Art and Design, English, Media Studies, and Music.