

The Stony Brook

PRESS

The Community News and Features Paper

Vol. XXVII, Issue 14

“My brother was chasing me with a javelin”

May 12, 2006



Roth Regatta 2006

President Hu Jintao Visits the U.S.

By Lukasz Chelminski

Unless you've been living under a rock for the past few years, you've likely heard a lot of news about China. Well, there is good reason for that. The communist (state capitalist, but I digress...) country's economy has had an annual growth rate between 7 and 12 percent every year since 1992. Compare this to the U.S. average of just over 3 percent and you begin to get the picture. Amazingly, the news only gets worse for us from there. Our annual trade deficit with China reached \$202 billion in 2005. This is up from \$102 billion the previous year, for a grand total of some largely theoretical number since China began economic reforms of its centrally-planned economy — thus opening the floodgates for foreign trade — in 1978.

Considering China's focus on economic issues, it is no surprise that President Hu Jintao's first stop on April 18th was Bill Gates' mansion in Washington. Well okay, I guess it is a bit of a surprise. This sent a clear (from a Chinese perspective, but likely lost on a lot of Americans) message to the U.S. government that China is very concerned about economic issues. Before President Bush brought it up on Thursday, the matter of intellectual property was discussed by Gates and Hu. It is a major problem in China; roughly 90% of software sold there is pirated. In exchange for a promise to crack down, Hu was gifted with an announcement that Microsoft would invest \$900 million in China during the next five years. After the Gates dinner on Tuesday night, Hu visited Boeing's Washington plant on Wednesday.

Speaking of subtle cues, the leader's visit to the White House the next day hit a few speed bumps. While Hu was counting on a "state visit", to raise his prestige at home and China's abroad, all he got was an "official meeting". A state visit is a formal affair, with red carpets galore and a dinner at the White House. The official meeting — chosen in lieu of talks at Camp David — did include full military honors, but came up short on the dinner; all the Chinese got was a "social lunch". While Camp David would have been palatable to Western leaders, the Chinese like to conduct business in a more formal atmosphere. Whether this was looked over, or meant as a sign proclaiming that the U.S. isn't going to dance to China's tune, is uncertain.

Either way, this oversight did affect the way China's leaders perceived the occasion. Eighty percent of China's population is satisfied with U.S.-China relations, while the U.S. is leery of China due to the economic issues between the two countries. As a result, President Hu was seeking prestige and respect, not only for personal gain but because of certain expectations his people had for this visit. On the other hand, with midterm elections around the corner, the U.S. government felt like it needed to confront China on outstanding issues.

Then there was the case of the Falun Gong uh... representative. Some have pointed out the casual response time of the federal agents in detaining the protestor during the ceremony on the south lawn of the White House was an indictment of the government's motives. While President Bush rarely encounters situations like this, Dr Wang Wenyi had enough time to shout several sentences before she was escorted out. Adding to the controversy, she did the same thing to Jiang Zemin on a visit to Malta in 2001. Don't they do background checks for this kind of stuff? Yale sure did: those allowed

to see President Hu speak at the university's 600 seat hall on the following day were picked from among people who did not have dissenting views on China's regime. The president later apologized to Hu for the south lawn incident.

It was blacked out on Chinese television and likewise did not appear in any print media there. All of China's media is state-controlled. In addition, the government employs at least 30,000 censors to filter out unwanted material on the Internet. There has been controversy recently over



Jintao molests the Bush
Courtesy of sexual innuendos

Google and Microsoft aiding China in the effort by catering to China's censorship regulations. China had this occasion covered: a record number of U.S.-based Chinese journalists reported on every suitable moment of President Hu's visit. There were 54 alone in Washington, D.C. for his meeting with George W. Bush.

As a result of such Chinese policies, the administration could possibly have been trying to send a message to China using the protestor. They still face embargoes on certain kinds of items from a variety of nations due to the infamous Tiananmen Square incident of 1989. Humanitarian issues (don't laugh) were some of the number of publicly announced topics President Bush brought up to Hu during the White House visit. The Chinese have urged the U.S. to practice what they preach, pointing to oversights like Guantanamo Bay, where we keep prisoners after stripping them of certain internationally recognized human rights.

While ignoring the violations of human rights in Sudan and Burma, the president did seek Hu's help with regards to Iran and North Korea. Hu rebutted by saying that he supported a peaceful solution in Iran. He placed the blame equally when asked about North Korea, stressing that flexibility is needed from both Washington, D.C. and Pyongyang if talks are to resume. The Chinese president stressed the need for patience and dialogue in both situations.

Taiwan has always been an important issue to China. The U.S. formally recognized the People's Republic of China in 1972, and closed their embassy in Taiwan (The Republic of China) in 1979. Since then, the U.S. has been performing a balancing act in an attempt to keep both sides happy

and prevent conflict. Beijing and Taipei both officially adhere to a policy that says there is only one China. Taiwan is a thorn in China's side, representing a failure to control domestic matters; the same is true of Tibet.

The People's Republic of China has over 700 ballistic missiles aimed at Taiwan, and regularly holds practice drills simulating a conventional invasion of the island. While the status quo has been maintained for decades, recent rumblings out of Taiwan have upset the People's Republic of China. President Bush stated that the U.S. "...oppose[s] unilateral changes in the status quo in the Taiwan Strait by either side." Additionally: "We urge all parties to avoid confrontational or provocative acts and we believe the future of Taiwan should be resolved peacefully." He also added that the U.S. "does not support" Taiwan's independence.

Taiwan had been watching President Hu's visit to the U.S. very closely. Upon hearing that the U.S. would not punish them for recent actions, such as Taiwanese leader Chen Shui-bian's February declaration that the National Unification Council had "ceased to function", a sigh of relief could be heard from Taipei. While Bush said that he "does not support" Taiwan's independence, he did not change the wording to say that it is "opposed", thus maintaining strategic ambiguity. If it isn't broken, don't fix it.

Of course, the real issues were economic, as mentioned at the beginning. The United States' huge trade deficit with China was the main problem President Bush hoped to address during the two-hour audience Hu actually got with him (considering translation time, this was likely whittled down to something closer to 40 minutes). Bush insisted that China must act more quickly to revalue its currency, which the U.S. government states is undervalued by as much as 40%. Analysts state that the figure is probably closer to 10%.

The connection between the deficit and the revaluation is that the cheap currency means that it costs less to harness China's workforce than it does to produce things domestically. Since it is cheaper to produce things there than it is in the U.S., a huge amount of American goods are imported from China. The G7 nations have also urged China to revalue the Yuan, saying that the deficit with the U.S. is hurting the global economy. The whole world is inexorably tied to the two markets.

Hu's response to the issue was to point out that many Korean and Japanese goods are now assembled in China, which led to an increase in the trade deficit. He has a point: experts point out that Japan's currency is also undervalued. The industrialized nations of Southeast Asia currently use China as a factory to put together their wares.

Moving on, Hu insisted that the U.S. should allow the export of more high-technology products, which would go a long way toward reducing the deficit. The previously mentioned deal with Microsoft and one with Boeing for 80 737's valued at \$4.6 billion before setting foot in Washington, D.C. was a strong hint. As a rapidly industrializing nation, China dearly needs such imports. As a grand total, the Chinese spent \$16 billion in the United States surrounding the visit.

The administration shouldn't be so quick to blame China. Even the G7 has warned the U.S. that

Continued on next page

Romual Accused of Soliciting Votes

By Rebecca Kleinhaut

What election would be complete without a scandal?

The Elections Board's decision not to investigate the nine-vote win of Romual Jean-Baptiste has left some people with a bad taste in their mouths. Some select students allege that the President-elect was soliciting votes in the last few hours of the USG elections.

One witness, who chose to remain anonymous, received a call around 12:30AM from a friend who was working in Kelly Deli to inform him that Romual was wearing a campaign shirt and "telling people to vote on his computer." This witness then called Samuel Darguin, the second Presidential candidate, and together they gathered up a laptop and a group of people in order to set up a station of their own. However, once they got to Kelly Deli, the witness said that they could not get their Internet to work.

At this point, a group of students entered the Kelly Deli, and the witness claims that Romual began to promise them "outlandish things", such as lowering food prices, in an attempt to solicit votes. According to the witness, Romual allowed the students to log on to SOLAR from his computer. He says that he saw Romual pressing buttons after the students logged in, and although he cannot completely confirm it, he deduces that Romual was filling out the ballot with himself and his running mates. He claims to have seen the webpage that came up after the votes had been submitted on Romual's computer screen. He also maintains that he heard Romual tell people not to use his computer if they were going to vote for somebody else.

Although these allegations have been made, it is unclear whether or not they actually violate anything concrete. Sharon Weiss, a member of the Elections Board, was also at the Kelly Deli while

Romual was using his computer there. According to the witness, Romual told her that he was letting people use Facebook. Sharon informed the candidates that soliciting votes on their computers could result in termination from the ballot. The witness stated that he was not aware of this at the time, and Sharon's warning led Samuel and his supporters to stop their attempts to set up a polling station.

Although Sharon did not comment directly

on the situation, she did tell the *Press* that setting up a polling station does not technically break any of the legislation that is listed in the Elections Board Bylaws. The closest violation is stated in Article IX, Section 2, which says: "Electioneering within a one-hundred (100) foot radius and/or within either eyeshot and/or earshot of a SINC Site is expressly forbidden. Electioneering is defined as the advocacy in written, oral or other fashion for or against a candidate for office or for a referendum item while an Election for that office or that referendum item is in progress." Therefore, it would prove difficult for any action to be taken on the part of the Judiciary Committee.

The witness left at 3:00AM, and he claims to have seen approximately twenty-five people at Romual's computer. Gina Farber, a member of the Social Justice Alliance, also corroborated the witness's story. Although she cannot confirm that it was used for voting purposes, she claims to have seen Romual with a laptop at the aforementioned time and location. Other witnesses, such as the worker in Kelly Deli, could not be reached for comment.

Although the witness told Samuel to challenge the results of the election, and eventually got him to talk to the Judiciary Committee, "Sam wanted to let it go." His campaign was not without its controversial moments; he recently faced a hearing for his use of a campus photocopier for campaign flyers, as well as for reserving a table for promotion of his candidacy. He could not be reached for comment.

Romual chose not to comment on these allegations. He did, however, note that he believes any investigation into these claims to be "a waste of time and consideration."



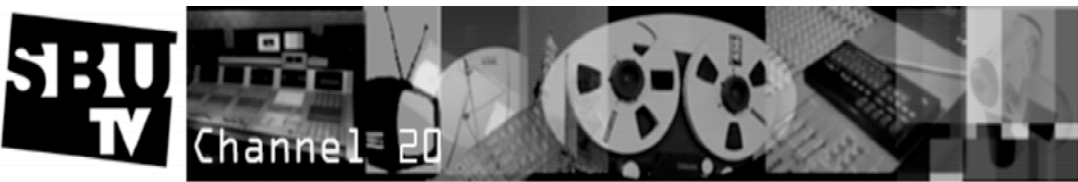
Monsieur Baptiste
Courtesy of a Camera

The Hu What Now?

Continued from previous page

it needs to rein in its deficit spending and do something about the savings rate in the nation: American citizens currently have an average savings of negative 1%, compared to Chinese citizens' 25%. This has a little to do with the lack of public primary schooling and health care in China (communism, huh?), but stands as an impressive feat nonetheless.

While it is a drop in the bucket compared to the trade deficit, Chinese expenditures in the U.S. show good will on their part. Despite rumblings from Congress in the form of two recently drafted punitive tariff bills and the slip-ups during President Hu's visit to the White House, the Sino-U.S. relationship seems to be improving. Visits have gotten more common; there have been six since 2001, and many more non-presidential but high-ranking contacts. And why shouldn't it be improving? Being superpowers, both nations are interested in maintaining the status quo. With the United States calling China a global "stakeholder", Hu reciprocated during the visit by saying that, "China and the United States are not only stakeholders, but they should also be constructive partners — be parties of constructive cooperation." And that's what it should all be about, right? We'll see.



Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4:00	Ski & Snow	Ski & Snow	Ski & Snow	Indi Film	Indi Film	Indi Film	Infonet
4:30	Clips & Quips	Clips & Quips	Clips & Quips				
5:00	World Business	World Business	World Business				
5:30	National Lampoon	National Lampoon	National Lampoon	USG Senate	USG Senate	USG Senate	
6:00	SBU News						
6:30	AAE-Zine	Think Talk	Think Talk	SBU Sports	SBU Sports	SBU Sports	
7:00							
7:30							
7:30							
8:00							
8:30							
8:30							
9:00	Big In NY	Big In NY	Big In NY	Seawolves Sports	Seawolves Sports		
9:30	SBU News	SBU News	SBU News				
10:00	SBU Sports	SBU Sports	SBU Sports	AAE-Zine	Broken Radio	Broken Radio	
10:30	Broken Radio	Broken Radio	Broken Radio				
11:00	Seawolves Sports	Seawolves Sports	Seawolves Sports				
11:30	National Lampoon	National Lampoon	National Lampoon	National Lampoon	National Lampoon	National Lampoon	
12:00							
12:30	Student Shorts	Student Shorts	Student Shorts	World Business	World Business	World Business	
1:00	USG Senate	USG Senate	USG Senate				
1:30	Student Shorts	Student Shorts	Student Shorts	Clips & Quips	Clips & Quips	Clips & Quips	
2:00							
2:30							
3:00	Indi Film	Indi Film	Indi Film	Ski & Snow	Ski & Snow	Ski & Snow	
3:30							
4:00							



1st Annual [AA]2 Career Day

By Ja Young

On April 29th, twelve Asian American alumni and a distinguished guest spent the afternoon in the Stony Brook Student Union talking to current students about career choices. They also critiqued resumes and put students through a mock interview process.

For the pre-law and thinking-about-law students, being able to one on one for a few hours with the Dean of Students at CUNY Law was a rare treat.

Political Science major Jin Woo Cho thought it was great, and really appreciated how Dean Frank Shih had made them think through what the law was first, and then to analyze why they wanted to be a part of it.

But pre-law students were not the only ones to benefit from Dean Shih. As the former Director of Academic Advising at SBU, he was an invaluable resource for other students as well.

While Dean Shih represented the more experienced professional, the students enjoyed having young alumni there. As Maria Ng said, "The alumni were really friendly and helpful. Since they were still young, they could remember and offer their knowledge of their first interviews and job experiences."

The alumni panelists included:

John Cordero, former CASB President, is now Senior Account Executive for Grand Central Marketing with clients from HBO to National Geographic.



Courtesy of Norman Gan

Michelle Gong, another former CASB President, is now Coordinator for Continuing Medical Education at the Cardiovascular Research Foundation.

Sherry Ha, former ASA VP, is now an Advertising Budget Analyst for Macy's corporate headquarters.

Charles Kang, a former AAJ Editor, is now a Senior Financial Analyst at JP Morgan Chase's private bank for the super rich.

Lucille Kim, the first Asian American elected as Freshman Rep in USG's history, is now an Academic and Pre-Professional Advising Center Advisor.

Tuan Le, former E-Zine Webmaster and VSA Cabinet member, is now System Implementation Engineer for SITA, one of the largest companies dealing with software for airport security.

Kevin Quan, former AA E-Zine Editor and ASA PR Rep, is now in corporate headquarters of New York Life Insurance.

Anson Wong is now a VP of The Yield Book, a division of Citigroup.

Gary Wu is a Comp Sci grad student.

He will leave SBU in June for ask.com at close to a six figure salary.

Unfortunately the students who were pre-med majors had the day's major disappointment. Alumnus Dr. Christopher Ng, a local physician and assistant professor at SBU's School of Medicine, was the only M.D. coming. On Friday he cancelled but by then, flyers were up all over campus. Although staff in the SBU SOM were still trying to get a replacement Saturday morning, finding anyone, Asian alumnus or not, was impossible.

It was the pre-med students, however, who included the only student who totally frustrated the alumni. They talked about him afterwards - students who are so close minded they are courting disappointment. Like an ostrich with his head in the sand, he was not only clueless but unwilling to listen to advice. He insisted, 100%, he was going to be a surgeon, and he did not want to talk about alternative careers in the health industry.

But when alumni asked him about his grades, he admitted they were not high, but claimed he would get them up. Alumnus Howard Hua, currently in law school, said "The AMA controls the process and limits the number of doctors in this country. When the lowest GPA's of students getting into American medical schools - IF they have outstanding scores to offset their grades - is 3.6 - by the end of sophomore year if you aren't above that by then - your chances of getting it up high enough are close to

impossible. I'm not saying to give up, but at least open your eyes to what other careers are out there."

His wife, alumna Sawanee Khongsawatwaja, is in one of those careers as Finance Coordinator for the Int'l Center for AIDS Care Programs (ICAP) at Columbia University. After SBU she went on to get her Master's in Public Health Administration and this fall will be starting her MBA. She oversees four grants worth hundreds of millions supporting operations throughout the world.

Sawanee said medicine is a multifaceted endeavor. The best surgeons in the world still need the best administrators. If you sit on SBU's West Campus looking at the architectural monstrosity across the street with its thousands of employees and patients - you know how true that it.

Those pre-med majors who did make the best of it really felt the one on one interviewing was valuable. One student came out of the mock interviews moaning, "Oh my God, I couldn't even answer the general questions. The guy before me was so good

PUSO Fest 2006

By Maria Ng

The Philippine United Student Organization, PUSO, hosted Paraiso, their annual PUSO Fest this past Friday, April 28, in the SAC auditorium. Like most cultural shows on campus, PUSO Fest featured student performers who acted, sang, and danced. The unique aspect of PUSO Fest this year was the incorporation of a modern play into their program.

The show featured the current economic and military problems of the Philippines. By highlighting the struggles of different individuals, the audience learned about the hardships associated with living in the Philippines as well as the difficulties of immigration to the United States. Neither life is easy. The play called attention to the strength that is needed to survive.

In the Philippines, life is a constant torment. The military have turned against civilians. Shootings are common and the safety of one's family and friends are constantly on people's minds. It is easy to lose a life in the Philippines. This was obvious during the height of the play, when a mother lost her nine-year-old son just because he was walking in the streets. He was caught in a cross-fire that did not concern him. At this scene, the audience went still. Anne Beryl Corotan, PUSO President, played the role of the mother, and the audience felt her pain. A few nervous chuckles broke the silence, but the event was far from funny.

The impact of this scene was extreme because the play had previously been infused with lots of witty humor. Even though the show was based upon a serious storyline, it was delivered with a lot of jokes that kept the audience from getting too bored with the facts behind the play. Every so often, a band would come out, or an actor/actress would break out into song. This served to keep the play fresh. The songs helped accentuate the emotions of the particular scenes they were involved in. One performer, Sylvia Ann Crispino, who played the role of Pearl, an aspiring singer, had an incredibly beautiful voice.

The monologues in the play offered insight into the minds of the actors and actresses' characters. A particular character that stuck out was the woman prostitute, but I sounded so stupid."

But sounding stupid was something all the alumni could identify with. They moaned about their first interview too. "Horrible. I was horrible," said Anson Wong, who only 7 years after graduating is a Citigroup division VP. "It's practice," he said, "just lots of practice. Each one gets better."

So for those students who did their first practice this Saturday - they can all know that at least their first real one will be better.

And for next year, as Gary Wu said when he left, "There were lots of things we learned we should do differently but it was worth it. I will definitely come back to do this next year."

Wanted! Writers, photographers, and all students interested in media.

Kat, played by Gloria Glumatico. When she first arrived on the stage, the reaction of the audience was that she was a typical prostitute, possibly worth less than other humans because she regularly subjected her body to disgrace.

When she reappeared a few scenes later, however, the audience's attitude was altered. She was an immigrant from the Philippines whose husband back home was so ill he could not work, and they had a son.



She had been lied to about the position she would get in the US and had been really

been brought here to be in the sex trade. She had no option but to agree in order to support her family. Her embarrassment caused her to lie to them. She conjured up a job as a nurse's aide to hide her true occupation.

Many of the other immigrants in the play complained about the hardships of America. America is not always the utopia that many people make it out to be. It is hard to develop a new identity and to find a new way of life. It is even more difficult for illegal immigrants who cannot go to school or get jobs they were trained for.

It might be difficult to comprehend why anyone would decide to emigrate. Yet, when the only other choice is to go back to a country where shootings are commonplace, there really is no choice at all. Should pride and self-identity be sacrificed for the safety of your family? It is a question that PUSO Fest raised amidst all the entertainment it provided for the night.

This year's PUSO Fest brought to light an important point. It should be noted, however, that this is an issue that is not specific to Filipinos. All immigrants feel out of place. It is always hard to start a new life.

PUSO ended their night with a showing of cultural, ballroom, and modern dancing, and a finale video, dedicated by last year's President Steven Raga to his predecessor, JD. As tradition dictates, all PUSO members boarded the stage for the final video. Videos were played throughout the show. They made up a mini storyline that served to place humor and create continuity between generations of PUSO Cabinets. When the lights finally went on, it was clear that both the audience and performers had enjoyed themselves. An afterparty at Shamrocks ended an eventful and enjoyable evening.

Weekly meetings Fridays at 2 PM at our office in Student Union 071.



Roth Regatta 2006

By Adina Silverbush



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The Stony Brook Press is published fortnightly during the academic year and twice during summer session by The Stony Brook Press, a student run non-profit organization funded by the Student Activity Fee. The opinions expressed in letters, articles and viewpoints do not necessarily reflect those of The Stony Brook Press as a whole. Advertising policy does not necessarily reflect editorial policy. For more information on advertising and deadlines call (631)632-6451.

Staff meetings are held Wednesdays at 1:00 pm. First copy free. For additional copies contact the Business Manager.

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Regarding the Elections

As the newly elected editorial board of the *Stony Brook Press* takes over the paper, USG is also undergoing changes in its officials. Our paper was proud to cover the election and give our fellow students a chance to be informed before they voted. In our election guide, we published many articles having to do with the elections as well as many interviews, debate coverage and candidate endorsements.

These elections were very confusing and difficult for us to cover. In the time leading up to the election, the elections board had changed the list of candidates running on a daily basis, for a multitude of reasons. Many of the students taking office had failed to attend the leadership training, which was supposed to be mandatory to be eligible to run for office. After the polls opened, some candidates were added to the ballot late, giving the other candidates a clear advantage over them. Ultimately, many of the elected candidates may not be truly representative of the student body because of all the problems with the election.

After the election was over, accusations were made that one of the candidates, Romual Jean-Baptiste, had

solicited votes. He won the presidential election by a margin of less than one percent—nine votes more than his competition. It's very likely that no further action will be taken by USG to change the current elected officials even if these accusations prove to be true. This being the case, the *Stony Brook Press* as the official campus paper, is dedicated to making sure the controversial officials as well as all other USG officials are doing their jobs and acting in the best interests of the students, not themselves or their political parties. We will be attending senate, executive board and judiciary meetings throughout the year in order to keep a close eye on all of USG's endeavors.

For the upcoming school year, we hope to increase the amount of investigative pieces in the paper. We ask you, our readership, to be our eyes and ears. If you have a story you would like us to investigate please contact us ASAP by E-mail at sbpress@gmail.com or come by the office, room 060 in the Union Building to speak with an editor. Let's work together to put an end to all the bullshit that goes on here.

LETTERS

To the Editor:

On Friday, April 28, I attended the Anti-Prom held by LGBTA. I learned of this event through an advertisement posted outside their office or meeting place, and received the impression that it was a dance/social event where LGBT students would be able to go to and freely have a good time, with or without a date. This impression was accurate.

While I was there, I noticed an older male individual pass very close by me and give me an intense stare. This happened twice. After the second time, my gut told me to leave very quickly, and I did so. I am not sure whether or not he was there for the event—I didn't get the impression that he was. If he was there to attend the event, that stare would mean one "get out of there!" thing. If he was an employee or some kind of curious bystander, that could mean a quite different threatening thing—or it could mean the exact same thing.

The reason I am writing this in addition to addressing this privately in more detail (which as of this time I do wish to do) is to reflect on something very specific. I did not have a plan to deal with this situation in which I felt unsafe, and may have endangered myself greatly. I had a secure location where I felt very comfortable to which I

was able to escape quickly: the Stony Brook Press office was doing weekend production. I had a witness—an acquaintance—who saw me go to the event and leave for home. This was mostly chance. I considered calling home to tell where I was going, but did not do so. But women in similar situations often learn to trust their gut and have a plan. That's something gay people need to know, too, but it's not a skill you're going to be taught specifically very often. By the way, it royally sucks for me to write these words. I find it brutally insulting to my dignity.

But I do want to say that it's a very good reason why more events like this are needed. A lot of places where gay people are going to socialize are not within easy distance of obvious safe areas, with acquaintances one is going to run into by chance, in a campus with things like emergency phones and walk-home services (which I did not think of either). I'm sorry, but it's a dangerous world out there, and it should not have to be that way. I'm glad LGBTA held this "Anti-Prom" thing. I would go to an event like this again.

Thank you

Jorge Sierra

Wanna Know Where You Can Stick Your
Opinions?

(hint: It Rhymes With "Tony took less")

sbpress@gmail.com

or website-it-up big time at

www.thestonybrookpress.com



LETTERS, ROUND 2

To the Editors:

For the past two hours, my partner and I have been trying to write a response to the sexually oppressive comments published in various issues of the *Press*. It's difficult, because it shocks both of us that people can actually use the word gay as a negative adjective and not understand why it's offensive. It's hurtful, because we know that people just don't care that we're offended by the hateful connotations of the word. And it's disheartening, because each time the word is used inappropriately, we are reminded that GLBT people are oppressed every second, every hour, every day...

When I write an article, I want it to be meaningful. I want it to change the way that people think and reshape people's beliefs. Of course, given this mindset, I had a plan on how to write an article on sexual oppression. The article would have featured the responses of all people who feel oppressed when gay jokes appear in the paper; it would have shown that people are upset that the *Press* has a policy on racism and no policy on sexual oppression; it would have shown that people *cared*.

I contacted people I knew, sent out e-mails – I even went to club meetings to discuss the issues, asking any concerned students to respond as they felt the need. And I waited for responses. I waited with the hope that people would respond. I kept on waiting.

So there I sat, at 11:00PM on Friday night, one hour before deadline, checking my e-mail, hoping that someone would have responded in some way, in any way that they could.

And as Anita and I sat here, we came to a harsh realization: people were not going to respond. Perhaps it's a victory for the oppressors who work to silence the oppressed. It's not hard to imagine why people are not responding – why people no longer find power in their words. We've been silenced for so long that we begin to silence ourselves.

So tonight, we're calling out to all people who were silent this week, and will remain silent until they find their voices. We cannot pretend that we are not hurting. The oppressors want us to feel enabled; they do not want us to question their superiority. We cannot accept our treatment as second class citizens who are incapable of acting powerfully.

The comments in the *Press* are a reflection of society's prejudices. They are no more than an example of the verbal harassment directed towards GLBT in today's world. The policies of the *Press* are a reflection of the government's policies. They are no more than an extension of the legal discrimination of GLBT people in politics today.

It's 1:59AM. Some days, I wait excitedly, thinking that people might respond with anger and determination. Some days, I wait hopelessly, believing that people will not respond at all. But tonight, I wait without any expectations, praying that some day, people will stop waiting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlene Obernauer

Charlene,

Let me start off by letting you know that the *Press* just got through elections, so there is a new Editorial Board, and with it will come new ideas and policies. As the new Executive Editor, my opinion is that the *Press* does not, in fact, have a policy against racism or any material that is merely offensive. Our policy regarding submissions has, to my knowledge, not been formally defined. The policy, as I will enforce it, is as follows: we will accept any textual submission of a reasonable length that is intelligible and is not libelous/slandering or calling for illegal actions.

None of the comments you mentioned in your previous letter were made with a malicious intent towards the GLBT community. Half of us at the *Press* are queer ourselves. I believe the reason that no one responded to your call is because words are just words, and not the root of the oppression of which you speak. We are not the oppressors, nor have we silenced you in any way—quite the opposite, in fact.

The Press is and will always be offensive, whether it is intentional or not. We currently have a free speech policy, which does not allow us to edit for content, only for grammar and spelling. We give everyone an equal opportunity to get their word out. This means giving people who are potentially homophobic, racist, bigoted, etc. the same opportunity we give to you to display your complaints. To fight our policy would be to fight against a potentially huge asset to your cause.

Jowy Romano,
Executive Editor



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Compiled By Sir Baron von Walshenstein, Vice-count of Newsinbriefavia

Stony Brook Chapter of English Honor Society Formed

Alpha Nu Zeta, the recently formed Stony Brook Chapter of the Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society, held their Installation and Induction ceremony on Wednesday, March 29. At the ceremony, chapter President Joan Gumbs and sponsor Bente Videbaek, Ph.D., officially received their Charter from Adam McKeown, Ph.D., an English Professor at Adepfi University. The ANZ chapter was formed last spring, but was not made official until October.

Darfur Food Rations Cut In Half

Due to lack of funding, the World Food Program, a UN aid agency which distributes food to people in crisis areas, has announced that it will reduce food rations in Sudan's Darfur region to half the minimum amount required each day. This step is being taken to ensure that at least some food lasts through the "hunger season" between July and September. The total cost to feed the more than 6 million people driven from their land in Darfur is \$746 million. The WFP has received only \$324 million, including \$188 million from the US. Little has been received from the EU or Sudan's Arab League partners, apart from Libya. The cut in aid comes as other agencies are reporting increasing malnutrition in Sudan.

Suicide Bomber Kills Nine in Tel Aviv

A Palestinian man detonated a bomb near a food stand on a crowded street in Tel Aviv, killing nine people and wounding about 70 more. This was the first suicide bombing in Israel since January. The militant group Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the act, identifying the bomber as Sami Salam, a 21 year old West Bank resident. The al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade also claimed responsibility. Hamas, which has held a truce with Israel for over a year and currently controls the Palestinian government, released a statement in which

they described the bombing as "a natural result of the continued Israeli crimes." Israel said it held Hamas responsible for the bombing. Israeli helicopters later fired missiles into Gaza, but the military denied that it was retaliation.

Chavez Training Civilian Militia

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has announced the formation of a civilian militia to resist an American invasion. He envisions a force of one million citizens trained in guerilla warfare, ready to fight an "asymmetrical war" in the hills. Over 150,000 Venezuelans have already joined, making the militia larger than the regular military of 100,000. Recruits are not given weapons, but could be quickly armed and mobilized in the event of an invasion. Venezuela has a deal with Russia to purchase 100,000 new Kalashnikov rifles for its military, allowing the older weapons to go to the militias. Chavez also said the military has recruited an army of 500 natives armed with poison-tipped arrows.

Tom Snow Appointed White House Press Secretary

Fox News host Tom Snow has been appointed to replace Scott McClellan as White House Press Secretary. McClellan had resigned on April 19th, after serving in the role for nearly three years. The resignation came amid a reorganization of the President's staff, including a new Budget Director, Chief of Staff, and Deputy Chief of Staff. Karl Rove has announced that, in this reorganization, he will give up his policy role to focus on the upcoming mid-term election. Mr. Snow was a speechwriter for President Bush's father, and has criticized the current administration in the past for not being conservative enough. Recently he said that "wavering conservatism has become an active concern among Republicans, who wish he would stop covering under the bed and start fighting back." Snow will begin his new duties on May 8.

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Senioritis

By Billy Jean Calixte

In 2002, I was infected with a disease. Though it was not deadly, I was told it could be life-threatening if it was left untreated.

The symptoms were clear. I chose to ignore them. I was cutting classes on a regular basis. I became lazy, lost interest in reading or writing. Basically, I was turned off by any kind of school-work. I diagnosed myself with Senioritis.

How could that be? I was an Honor Roll student in high school for God's sake.

Like every untreated disease, it started to spread. First, it was just me hiding in the school's library. Before I knew it, half of the English class was in the library every fourth period after lunch talking about the senior trip, until our teacher, Karen Zasloff, would drag us back to class, only to talk about Prospero and Caliban of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Despite all that, I managed to graduate with honors in that same English class. I thought I was cured. Besides, I was heading to college.

Fast-forward four years. Less than two months before I graduate, my old symptoms are coming back. But this time they are worse than ever. I stopped doing homework. I do not go to sleep until I watch my *BET Uncut*. The next morning I am usually too tired to attend classes. I have missed more ARS 317 classes this semester alone than in all of my classes last semester, only to find myself hanging in my room or at the Smithaven Mall spending

money I do not have. Even crazier than all this, I finally handed in my first JRN 388 assignment, which was due on Groundhog Day, weeks late.

I have tried to get help from friends, but they are useless.

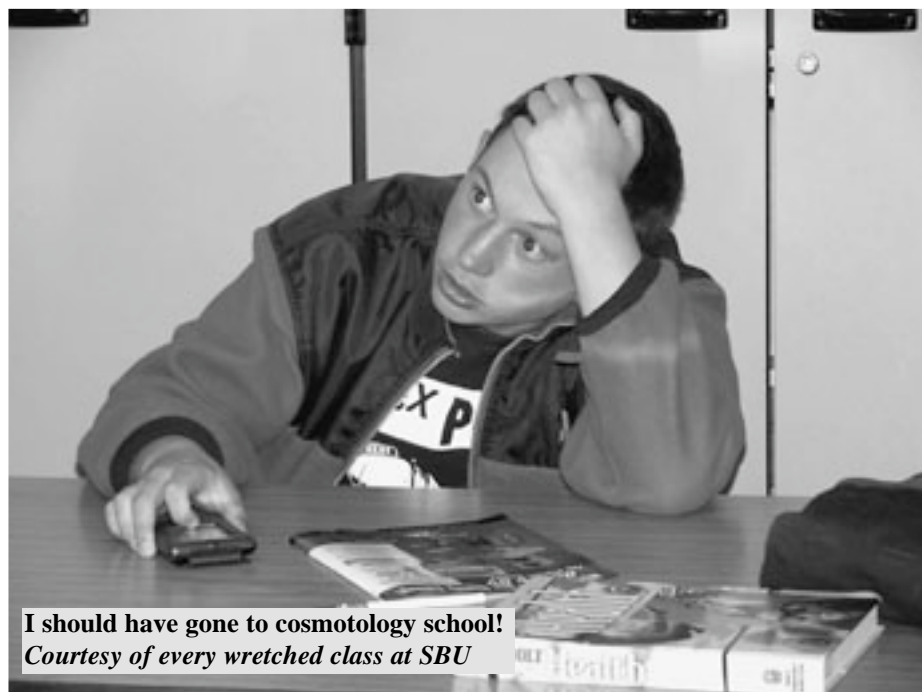
"Senioritis," said Taleya Harris, a Senioritis-free student, laughing. "I thought that was high school."

Last week two friends and I missed a whole day of class just because the temperature was above 55 degrees. Our excuse was we needed a day off, as if I haven't been doing enough of that.

Last week, I received an e-mail from my JRN 280 teacher, reminding me of my days off.

"You are now up to two absences," Professor Robert Greene said. "From now on you will lose five points off your final mark for each absence, so do your best to make class...ON TIME! OK?...Cheers...Professor Greene." Technically, it's four absences, I only have this class on Thursdays.

Two days later, I received the same e-mail, but this time from my CLT 335 teacher. "I just wanted to remind you that as of last week you have reached the allowed six absences in the course," Professor Lilla Toke wrote. "If you miss any more classes, according to the class policy, I will have to lower your grade...Best Lilla."



I should have gone to cosmotology school!
Courtesy of every wretched class at SBU

Yet, I still refuse to seek professional help. I avoid teachers in any way possible. Anyway, they must be tired of all of my excuses by now. When you have Senioritis there are only two reasons to go to your teacher's office hours. One, the teacher is worried about your grades and demands that you come in, because he or she cares enough to not see you fail. Two, you go there to ask for an extension on last week's assignment, armed with a perfect excuse that even you don't believe.

And after leaving his office, you try to convince yourself that from then on you will get all your stuff together and do your assignments on time. But that usually only lasts until the next assignment

where you have to send him an e-mail, explaining why your assignment will not be on time.

If you're Senioritis-positive, your weekends probably start on Thursday and last until Monday right before your 2:20 pm class. You party 'till 5:00 am on Thursday, when your next class is only three hours and 20 minutes away. "It's not that serious, anyway it's a lecture class," you tell yourself and anyone else who seems to care enough to bring it up.

If you're Senioritis-positive, you have probably been to Intrigue nightclub more this semester than to the Ward Melville library. As a matter of fact, your only excuse to go to the library is because it's too cold outside, and it is the best shortcut from Roth Quad to the Student Union.

If you're Senioritis-positive, you have at least one friend who knows how to get you away from class and doing work. I have plenty.

"Let's go eat," David Figueroa would say. This soon-to-be fifth-year senior knows I don't have a meal plan, and that I won't turn down a medium rare grilled chicken sandwich, with lettuce and tomatoes and fries from the SAC.

Stuffed and guilty, I try to go back to my room and do some make-up work for the missing class, only to be greeted by my roommate, Gail Garibaldi, also a senior who seems to be suffering from the same disease, and he is not even graduating this

year. "We 'bout to play some ball. You down?" he said. Of course I'm down. I have to work out these carbs somehow. Homework can always wait.

May 19th is less than a month away, and my mother had told her boss she'd be taking the day off at the beginning of the school year. She calls me every week asking me how I am doing in my classes.

"Fine," I always say. "Everything is good."

How do I tell my mother I have Senioritis?

Senioritis is a serious disease that sweeps the nation around this time of the year. If you any of these symptoms I have, contact your local teacher today!

Vagina Monologues Wins Program of the Month Award

Please congratulate the Wo/Men's Center undergraduate interns, Harpreet Hira, Christine Delgado, Yelena Eyshinskaya, Nancy Sergany, Yvette Bonsu, Hauwa Sada, and Nitzalli Rodriguez, for their coordination and presentation of the award-winning Women's History Month program, the *Vagina Monologues*. The event, which took place on Thursday, March 2nd, 2006, was chosen as the "Program of the Month" for March by the Committee to Celebrate Diversity and was awarded a \$500 grant. The performance, part of the global V-Day movement to stop violence

against women and girls, gave voice to the experiences of women, including survivors of rape, sexual abuse and physical violence both in the United States and internationally. The successful event, which played to an audience of over 300, raised nearly \$2500, the majority of which was donated to the V-Day Fund and the Victims Information Bureau of Suffolk.

The Committee to Celebrate Diversity sponsors six different diversity themed calendars during the academic year, including: Black

History/February; Women's History/March, Asian Heritage/April, Hispanic Heritage/October, Diversity of Lifestyles/November, and Diversity of Religions and Cultures/December. All members of the University community are encouraged to advertise their events at no charge in the Diversity Calendar, and submit evaluations of their programs for consideration for the \$500 Program of the Month grant award. For more information about the calendar and the monthly award, please visit the Community to Celebrate Diversity webpage at www.stonybrook.edu/diversitycalendar.

Why I Honor Amberly Jane

By Lena Tumaysan

Amberly Jane, the *Stony Brook Press*' official "sex columnist", is truly awesome. She is not only a great, warm person, but also a curious devil. She does things that many of us will never do, or won't have the guts to do. And then she writes about them. Her advice, stories, and adventures make many of us say, "Is that really true?" It is. Amberly Jane is one of the main reasons I started reading the *Press* a long time ago, and still do. This is my tribute to her.

My earliest memory of reading the *Press* was four years ago, when I had just entered the university as a freshman. I was sitting on a concrete block (what else?) between the Physics building and the Sports Complex, reading an issue, realizing, "Wow, a paper that is both factual and has humor." I loved how little pieces of the writers were added; in my view, giving each article a more personal touch. There was a good blend of news, honesty, and personality.

I feel like the part of the paper that lasted the most from this first experience is Amberly Jane's column. Many of my favorite writers from that time have either graduated, started writing about other things, or dropped out along the way. This changed the feel of the paper, which today, unfortunately, isn't what it was. But the honesty, humor, and personality (albeit not news-full) lasted in her column.

My first favorite article by her was published in a November 2003 issue in which "Trying to be a good boyfriend in Roth" asked Amberly for help to know how to "get [his] girlfriend off manually." What followed is the funniest "how to" sexual guide ever. It had detail, honesty, humor, and a story line. It was an education not just in "manual pleasure", but also in attention to the female.

I loved the reply so much I had to share it with several people. Some cringed, while some downright *loved* it. This was followed in a later issue with a "how to please a man" article. Regardless of how you feel about the subject mat-

ter, the most important part of these articles is they gave a "manual" to many individuals who really want the help but are too embarrassed to ask.

Messages that others send to her are usually funny, needy, sometimes even creepy. People write to her about jerking off too much, too little, or having dreams featuring Amberly. She always replies with what I think is the right proportions of reality, advice, and humor.

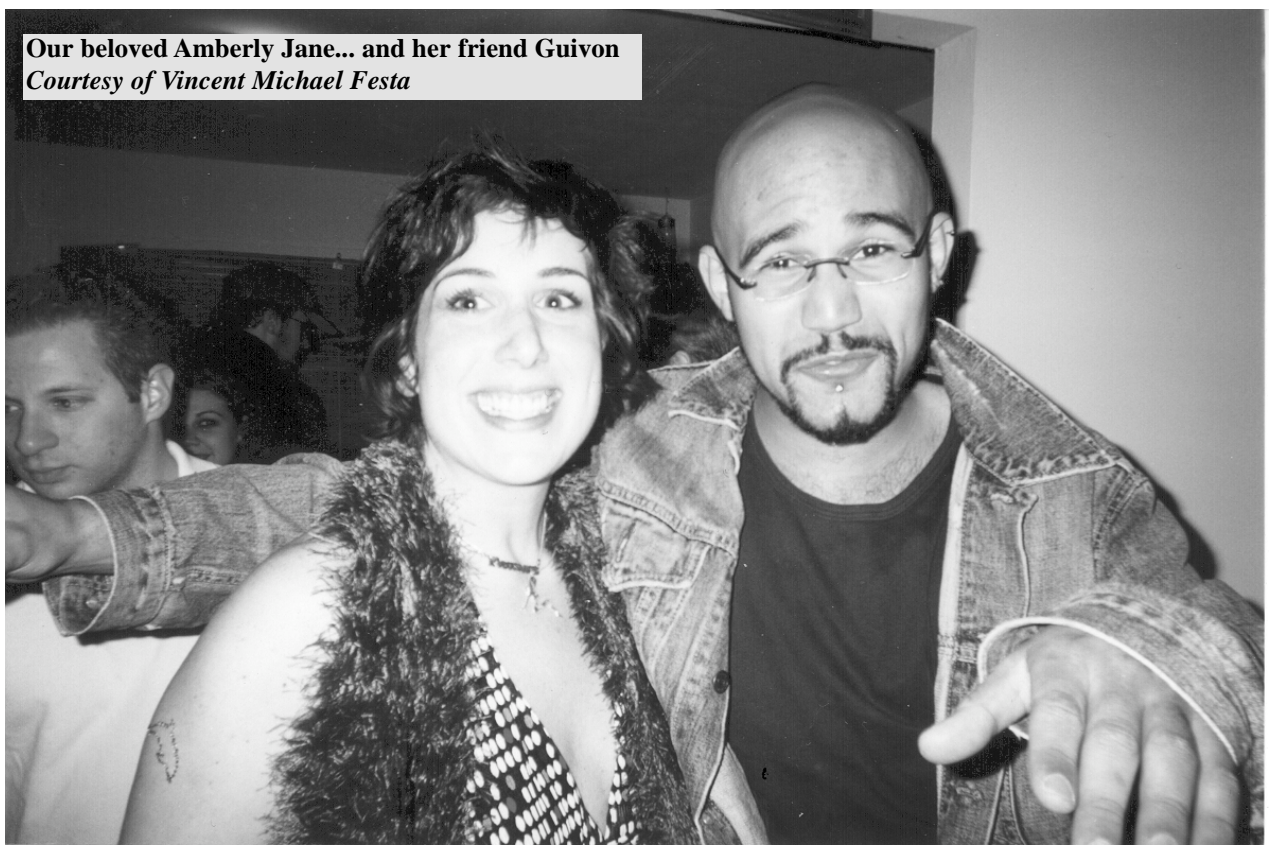
As a freshman straight out of high school, a sex column, especially such an open one, is one of many things that made me realize the differences between high school and college. Perhaps it is even the thing that makes Stony Brook campus stand out (I do not know if any other colleges or universities feature a sex column in their papers). I love reading Amberly Jane's many graphic, silly, educational,

weird, and twisted stories. Sometimes I wish I could do some of those things – and other things I wish never to do. For now, I'll leave it up to the "expert" and enjoy reading about it along the way.

I honor Amberly for what she does for the paper and the campus. Amberly, when you no longer write for the *Press*, if you start publishing elsewhere – let us know where to follow.

I'll leave you with one of the set of 5 lim-ericks, all of which were great, published on 5/4/05:

There once was a man named Dave
Who kept a dead whore in a cave.
"Oh what the hell,
I'll get used to the smell.
And think of the money I'll save."



Our beloved Amberly Jane... and her friend Guivon
Courtesy of Vincent Michael Festa

Screenwriter Oscar Torres and His Film *Innocent Voices* Make an Impact on the Stony Brook Campus

By Claudia Toloza



An inspiring and powerful film about war
Courtesy of Tolozer, 2nd Cousin of Gozer

"Es para ellos." "It's for them." Those are the last words in the movie *Innocent Voices*, a movie written by Oscar Torres. The movie tells the story of the civil war that occurred in El Salvador in the 1980s. The film was presented on Wednesday night in Javits 100 by the Brothers of Phi Iota Alpha, in collaboration with the Latin American & Caribbean Studies Center, the Hispanic Languages Department, the Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies Department and the Community and Diversity Grant. In addition to bringing the film to campus, the Brothers of Phi Iota Alpha were able to get in contact with screenwriter Oscar Torres. They collaborated with different departments and organizations to raise close to \$1500 to fly Oscar Torres from Los Angeles and bring him to campus to present the movie himself. Part of the proceeds raised to bring Oscar Torres to campus will also be used by Mr. Torres to help build an orphanage in Nicaragua. "Es para ellos" is very much one of the reasons that Oscar Torres wrote this movie. He wrote this movie

Continued on next page

Innocent Voices continued

Continued from previous page

in the name of his friends, family, and all El Salvadorians in general who lived through such a dramatic period in the 1980s. It was a period marked by violence and loss of innocence, like the title implies.

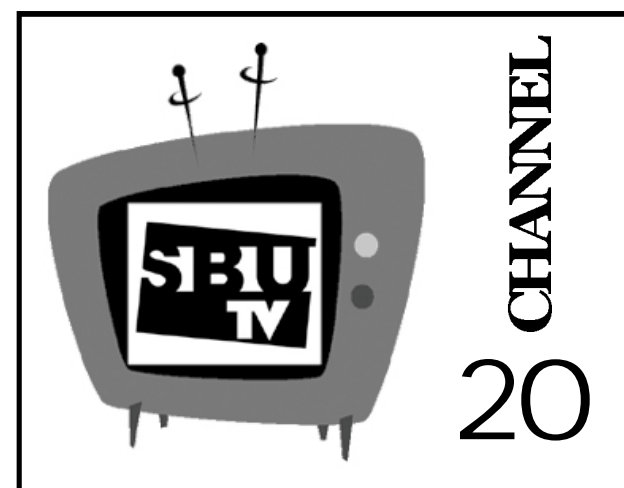
The film, which is based on the life of Oscar Torres, begins with a group of little boys ages twelve and under walking in the rain with their hands behind their heads. Soldiers aim their weapons at the children, reminding them to keep up their pace. In general, the movie tells the story of a young boy named Chava and his personal experience in the war. One of the most poignant points the movie tries to make is how war marks the lives of children. During the civil war in the 1980s, as soon as little boys turned twelve they were recruited by the army to join the military struggle. The young Chava, who is eleven years old, is at a critical point in his life, for this is his last year of childhood. Once he turns twelve, he will be recruited to join the armed forces. There is one scene in the movie that is very powerful in portraying the transition of these children from children into soldiers. While in school, one of Chava's friends is playing with several small army soldiers and knocking them down with a marble. The next thing you know, the military storms in, and, sure enough, this same boy who just seconds ago was playing with soldiers has now been recruited to become a soldier himself.

After the movie, screenwriter Oscar Torres

took time for a question and answer session. One of the first comments was made by an audience member, who praised Mr. Torres for not making a film filled with political overtones. As Torres explained, part of the reason the movie does not have an open political message was because he wrote the screenplay from the perspective of a twelve year old, and that at that age most children have not developed a political consciousness. Oscar also explained that one of the most difficult tasks in writing this film was writing the part of his mother, because he had to put himself in her place, and take responsibility for the pain and worry he had caused her.

When Torres was asked why he wrote the film, he explained that it was part of a healing process for him. When he was able to leave El Salvador and come to the United States, he had pushed the experiences of the war to the side and had not thought about them for a long time. After the attacks of September 11, the notion of war came back into his life and he decided to deal with his childhood experiences in El Salvador the best way he knew how, by writing a screenplay. His hope is that his film can help make a difference in the world. As Oscar explained, all wars can be avoided; it is just a choice that has to be made. As he stated, "...one of the laziest ways to govern is war." Already his film is being used by organizations such as UNICEF and Amnesty International as a way to educate people about the implications war has on people; especially children, by robbing them of their childhood.

Oscar Torres' personal story and powerful film definitely made an impact on those students who attended the showing, an estimated 200, many of whom had tears in their eyes. The film *Innocent Voices* was an extremely inspiring and educational film. It helped to inform those students who may not have been familiar with the El Salvadorian civil war. The film, but more importantly Oscar Torres' personal story, left the audience with a positive message about how change can be achieved in the world without the use of violence. As Oscar explained, life is all about choice. His choice was to make this film "for them", those El Salvadorians who died so that their stories and pain is not forgotten. When ending the question and answer session, Oscar finished with this thought: "I may die and idealist, but I'll die trying," words that perhaps more people should live by.



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Michael Barry: He's Level 60, Bitch

—By James Messina

In this world, there are two types of people: Michael Barry, and those he crushes underfoot. I had the opportunity to meet him last weekend, and I can say without any bias that he kicks a lot of ass. The first time we met was but a brief introduction, awkward as such meetings usually are. I wasn't sure it went well. But I saw him again and got to chill with him most of the weekend, and I managed to acquire a much better impression of him.

Michael plays a lot of World of Warcraft. He's got two level 60 characters. For those of you not familiar with the game, and I'm one of 'em, that represents a whole lot of effort put in. Ordinarily, I'm not the biggest fan of WoWers, as their conversations are insanely esoteric and uninteresting, but Michael's of the well-rounded sort. His manner is laconic, but that means the words you glean out of him are worth proportionately more. The best moment I think I had with him was watching him laugh at an IRC quote database. It's nerdy humor at its best, and anyone who can't appreciate it will face being crushed underfoot.

Now, how would Michael crush one underfoot? In all honesty, I'm afraid it's only an expression. Nonetheless, he's a pretty big dude. Somewhere over six foot and two hundred pounds. He wears long sleeves constantly, and has the appearance of the world's largest churchmouse. He's got brown hair, wears glasses, and generally remains unobtrusive in social situations.

I've no idea how to wrap this up. I was sad to see him go. I was sorry he saw me drunk. I wish the weather had been better last weekend. He left Sunday. This's done.



Mikey
Courtesy of Stephanie Hayes

Meat St.: I Want To Make So Many Boner Jokes Right Now

—By James "Page Hog" Messina

Tits. Governments rise and governments fall because of tits. So claims *Meat Street*, a provocative musical by Neal Fox set in a dystopian modern world. It'll leave your toes tapping and your cogs cogitating, your gears grinding and whatever other alliterations you care to make doing their respective things. *Meat Street* is the story of the Happy Hills Home for the Mentally Unique, its inhabitants and its wardens. The story expresses the dissatisfaction the playwright feels with the increasingly business-oriented healthcare system, as illustrated by the plight of the dramatis personae.

Tony is a toilet salesman who's questioning the state of the world, and Danielle is his faithful artistic girlfriend. Dr. Frick is the founder of Happy Hills, and quite the douchebag, too. Rounding out the major players are Flo, a pre-op transsexual with self-esteem issues, and Morey Less, a talk show host who makes for interesting segues.

The play used a projector to convey images onto a background screen. This technique was, in my opinion, both good and bad. Often, actors' shadows appeared on the screen, blocking much of it and ruining the effect. Also, many of the images were quite controversial – their purpose being to evoke a strong reaction, I still can't decide whether the decision to include some was good or bad.

I am similarly indecisive with regards to my opinion of the play itself. I can't say that I thought the writing was the best, and not all of the songs were gold, but there are one or two songs I definitely enjoyed. One thing well worth complementing Fox on is this one instrument he used in segues; I think it was a harpsichord, and the two people I saw it with had no idea whatsoever. So yeah, it was a harpsichord. To get back on track: where I said my opinion of the play wasn't definite, this was only with regards to the quality of the play itself, and most assuredly not the players. Whereas there were one or two major hiccups during the



Not a gigantic ass-burger
Courtesy of Jowy Romano

course of the play, I saw it on opening night, and these things are to be expected. Overall, I was very impressed by the quality of the actors and technical crew.

I know several members of the cast, so I'll try not to compliment anyone too effusively. However, I'm obliged to state that Xavier Rodney's mastery of the villainous smile was so excellent that the entire audience visibly reacted to it each time he brought it forth. He reveled in his role as a misanthrope, and we all loved him for it. Nelowfar Farooqi, who portrayed Flo, had a strong voice and a confident demeanor that carried her well. Alex Geissbuhler, who played Tony, had a pretty kickass delivery of commercials (yes, commercials), and wasn't too bad at other stuff, besides. Kara Green,

playing Danielle, was a good complement to Geissbuhler and in her own right. Kristine Renigen, playing Nurse Jenna Talya, was freakin' awesome, and not just because I know her. I didn't cover some of the actors, but not because I hate them; just trying to operate within space constraints. Rest assured, the entire cast did a fine job.

I can't say I liked the play, but hey, I loved the cast.

(P.S.: The playbill I was handed contained more typos than any piece of writing that short has ever had before. EVER. Don't nobody write English good anymore.)

(P.P.S.: I've been copy-editing too long.)

The Stony Brook Press

LitSup



LitSup



The Stony Brook

PRESS

The Community News and Features Paper



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Literary Supplement
Vol XXVII, Issue 14
May 12, 2006

Art Direction: Chris Williams
All Artwork by Chris Williams,
unless otherwise noted.

Layout:
Chris Williams
Jowy Romano
David K. Ginn

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Stony Brook Press Online
for additional LitSup content:

<http://www.thestonybrookpress.com/litsup>



Robin's Egg Blues

Forgotten
among the lilies
and the birds flying
by, three little blue
eggs holding
secrets
inside.

Other
young lie long
and dream in their
nests, while three
young spirits in
deep twilight
rest.

In the
sweet name
of Death, not
everything grows,
not all birds will
fly, my wise
heart
knows.

Jon Plaisted

Choretime Clarity by Alison Schwartz

I walked past the sink repeatedly, pacing across the kitchen like a bureaucrat contemplating the merits of war (there are none, as far as I can tell). The tower of glassware and ceramics stretched high above the basin, threatening to lurch out and spew its vile debris on my torso if I dared to disregard its impressive stature. A feline companion of mine spiraled at my ankles, as if she were flaunting her endearing incapacity to tackle such a wretched task.

With a deep inhalation, I moisten the neon sponge. I scald my hands on the hot water and watch in disgust as the suds accumulate. Indecipherable crust clings to a metal bowl, a fork and knife consummate their love affair amidst a trail of syrup. Crusted egg bits, dried coffee, scaly brown rice, soggy cornflakes and sticky lo mein mourn their lost dwellings by making a flying leap toward the drain. The filthy water is piling high, remnants of forgotten meals swirling in a whirlwind. The debris float and sink as they are thrown overboard from their dish-rafts, casualties of sudsy tide.

At last the final utensil or dish has been rinsed, the dripping pile of cleanliness mocking my defeat. With a whimper of disgust, I take the final plunge, throwing my hand into the murky depths to unclog the drain. I cringe as particles of unknown origin lodge themselves beneath my now-brittle nails. The stench of uneaten food makes my stomach churn, as the concoction reeks of ingredients that are not tastefully correct by any means.

My dainty hands, stinking of lemony-fresh dishwashing fluid, swivel and pucker like the weathered flesh of a Florida senior. These wrinkles, or "binkies" as I fondly called them during childhood, will remain long after I am through, a souvenir of servitude.



Underworld

Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Whose the fairest one of all?
In this world defined by gold and glitz
What's real and what's not
Is hard to tell
The unpainted lips quiver when told,
'You're the ugliest of the fold'
The ones with the most gorgeous of faces
Tend to be sold to the prostitute races.
Yellow, black, white and brown,
It doesn't matter when the world's your town.
Come bite the apple, if you can pay the tits
The bright white suits with the red red lips.
Cinderella sells her glass slipper
To have one more, one more taste of that white dipper.
Lies disguised by pricks and pain
Eyes disguised by paint and pride
Come hither, they call
Taste me, touch me, fuck me
Then tomorrow go to your old wives
"One night, one night only"
Call the circus leaders
Dusk to dawn is their world
Where the garish lights strive
To bring light to a ill-begotten life
Beauty is as beauty does
But this beauty lies within the crevices of flesh
Where, quivering, men grunt for rest
Here comes dawn, slithering its rays
Over bodies wasted with semen and smack
But, look, they live one more day...

To work one more night.

by Mahathi Kodamanchili

the sky bright cornflower blue so dense dripping pouring down upon tree branches reaching out ready to burst flowers opening up so sexy its in the air I can feel it taste it smell it touch it it touches me birds' laughter tickles my soul wind engaged in ecstatic dance scampers past hair askew messy fingers searching exploring pressed into earth touching existence I feel you reaching out calling screaming in me hits me hard urgent im feverish glistening eyes closed mouth open head thrown back flooded overflowing sweet sticky honey drips on fire burning bright colours swirl round sweet cacophony crashes down I embrace rich yellow golds crimson reds coagulating convalescing seas of luscious greens halcyon blues swallow me soft shimmery waves whisper secrets gently calm now still explode again deep midnight blues pound down roughly again violently harder faster so pale alone trembling curtains of dense greys press down on me rip me in shreds a hundred thousand fingernails scratching scrawling viscously tearing into existence those terrible monsters relentlessly gnawing savagely chewing me up then spitting me out so they can chew me up again and again fingers exploring they press down digging touching existence touching the depths of me.....

sabrina frank

The Maiden Voyage

The blackened sky, chilled with arctic mist
is dotted with tiny shimmering lights.

Each with a story;

Each with a tale of its own.

They watch over those that look to them
for hope and direction.

They shine brightly and smile upon a maiden voyage.

The vessel proudly strides forth to prove its worth.

Built with care and detailed with excellent craftsmanship,
its honorable design defines prestige.

It's elegance gleams in the moonlight;

Untouched by all.

The water caresses the bow as it silently moves past.

The sea is sealed with a slab of frosted glass.

It reflects the eloquent night sky gleaming above.

The watery mirror masks the merciless depths
that lie just below the surface.

What dwells beneath lurking below
is mysteriously overlooked.

A calm wind encourages her to push forward.

Her heavy body is resistant,

as she proceeds at a perpetual rate.

Utter silence sends a chill among her veins.

It penetrates deep within

and draws forth the most secret passions.

A whisper warns of deceit.

But it goes unnoticed

due to the low mutter

of the engine's fiery perseverance.

The rapid passing of the water
proves the journey's progress.

But the unchanged sky
inhibits the acceptance of time passed.

As if on the edge of a storm's fury

there is a strong sigh before the ensuing rage.

A lone cloud soils the clear night.

Lost in confusion

among stars shining so intensely.

It travels across the sky

in a blind search for a disillusioned dream.

Instead it creates a distraction leads to misfortune.

An unforeseen protrusion

abruptly halts the vessel's progression.

The surface of the burden is smooth and solid,
providing no cushioned ramification.

The icy fiend towers high above

and seems to defiantly lean into the fragile craft.

With such a substantial mass,

It's hard to understand the reason behind its undetectable nature.

From where does it make birth?



But then it is clear
that it has always been amongst the sea of agony.
It has always stood upright
along the steady path of triumph.
Naïve thoughts ignored the possibility of defeat.
Now that the frozen claws have pierced her magnificence,
the surrounding water has been disturbed.
It invades the inner warmth with a deafening cold.
The intruding liquid steals away the glory of the vessel,
as it becomes subjected to the anguish
beyond the mirrored façade.
Painted brilliance and time well spent
Vanish beneath the infiltration.
The battered ruin sparkles
with tiny flakes of fatality.

The heart looks to the sky
And the twinkling stars
that grin down without remorse.
The saturated nightmare awakens the mind in a panic
A desperate stretch to survive,
but no satisfaction is granted.
For in the vessel's condition,
Progress can never resume
on the path it had been set upon.

All is lost.
And all memory will be abandoned.

The weight of the structure pulls it further into the deep.
Until it peacefully lay on the earthen floor,
to rest for an eternity...unwanted and never forgotten
by those who were there to behold.
With it lie the hopes and dreams
left behind by those who have crossed this path before.
Everything that had been known
has been stolen in one final plunge.
Only time will wear its sorrow
and scaly companions will witness its demise.

The glassy surface of the sea
reflects the starlight back into the night.
While the remnants of beauty are imprisoned by
the inescapable crypt below.

By Jessica Newman



High School Emotions

By: Melissa Lobel

It started out in Junior high
Everyone thought we were together based on how we never said good-
bye
We spent all our time together traveling from class to class
Hearing the bell ring as I walked, trying to get a pass
At the 8th grade dance you really made me cry
I didn't ask for much, all I wanted was a simple "Hi"
As high school began, you thought you were too cool
Acting like an asshole any time we were together at school
You had to impress your friends
For the next three years that was something that never seemed to end.
Even though I talked to some of them online
You still pretended I wasn't there, as if you were blind
In 11th grade when I came back
We sat next to each other in class and emotions I did not lack
Then came the final year of hell
They were splitting us all up and together we would no longer hear the
bell
I thought that was it
Damn that stupid split
Later that year we both joined our school's team
I saw you often but you really didn't care
Or at least that's how you made it seem
Lastly came Senior Day where I finally told you to go to hell
That was the last time I saw you so it was only the past on which I could
dwell
I promised all my friends that after that it would be the end
After six years of hell, you never were my real friend
About a year went by without a single word
College had begun and people's lives have changed
I assumed it was just another lesson learned
When I realized it was your birthday, I decided to send you a card
That decision was mine to make, and I must say it was hard
Now we are talking online again and occasionally on the phone
You said you wanted to hang out with me when you came home
Is it true?
Because honestly right now I have no clue
You said that after going to college you've changed
After seven years of this it seems kind of strange
I guess I'll give it one more shot and see how things go
Hopefully starting over and forgetting everything that happened many
years ago.

blue velvet

the man on the uptown 6 train had crumbs all over his blue crushed
velvet shirt. his lover
snorted and brushed them off, but blue velvet was
still eating and, from the look of him, was not
going to stop spilling anytime soon.

by amy wisnoski



Time's Demise by Alison Schwartz

I blurred the division of time
a swift stab to its watchful eye
unheeding her wisdom lines
I cheated slumber
passing through three twilights.

A sly sun tucked itself somewhere
between pillows of winter's residual
gray
and spring's forthcoming blaze of mar-
malade
so no longer did time hold sway -
its spindly grip turning only calendar
page.

Free from the demands
of pivoting hands
I laughed,
outwitting those
renegade sands.

Squeaky hinges
lingering threads
no threat of waste
no slot of slumber nor hunger
not early nor late
the grandfather clock toppled over
in mock-defeat
the need to measure became obso-
lete.

The years bled together
rainbow smudge staining her skin
vision came
absent fluency
empty, timeless, unmarked days...
silence melting reason away.



CONTEMPLATING A SUTRA

In a baroque apartment, in West Brighton,
bare and broke,
blistered too-
he contemplates a sutra
a rhapsody on the cracked asphalt,
on disillusionment
a requiem for the fallen boards of the Cyclone.
The gaps recalled a toothless and despondent clown,
red makeup smeared and yellowed teeth.

In the glass-splattered sand like a soldiered soul
he contemplates a sutra
All was quiet on the shore, except for the screeching sea gulls.
Pigeons pecked,
bobbed
public toilets flushed,
people washed the sand off from between toes in the water fountains,
boom boxes wailed off the shoulder of wifebeatered Brighton Beach Boys,
like loyal parrots squawking in agreement with their eye patched masters.
And that's what it was all really about.

The irony of Dreamland circa 1902 evolving into a welfare office
Circa 2002-

He contemplates a sutra and waits for his food stamps
Assistance, subsistence, persistence,
The pier is shaped like a cross,
And he is bearded and bruised
Blistered too but nonetheless divine
His name is called and he proceeds to the end of the line

His cheek turns pink in Cooper Square,
The cube is still missing, the hollowness in the heart of St. Marks
He refurbishes and renovates but nothing really changes,
Except now you don't have to turn your head as much.

He contemplates a sutra because he wishes there was one for sorrow-
Sorrowful sutra
But the dirt still is green under his fingernails,
He still nibbles on his cuticles
Even on the blistered ones- popping the flesh
The growth on his lower lip still won't go away
So he contemplates another sutra-
because he doesn't want it to be all about the pain.
A sunflower sutra-
Anything but a sorrowful sutra

By Gina Farber

Eric Simeon

Fallen But Not Forgotten
Sylvia Rivera,
and Marsha P. Johnson,
people who made a difference,
fallen, but not forgotten.
They refused to be victims
of ignorance, fear, and hate,
they freed us all at Stonewall,
their own freedom, it would
wait.
At a watershed moment,
they put their lives on the line,
and stood-up for what is right,
so openness could be thine.
So never forget Stonewall,
and all those who fought for
you,
particularly Trans-folks,
payback is long overdue!

By John Schindler '06

Open Window

If I ever kiss you
And my tongue, like a hand
Reaches into your mouth
As through an open window
To grasp an empty vase
To cradle it in your garden
And fill it with iris, long, sleek,
The royal colors favored by your hair
To fill it with water, then drink
With lips on the faucet, without guard
The hard metal, strong against your
cheek,
Water spilling,
The press of your blouse to my skin,
Even your sandals are wet--
Take them off
Walk in the grass
And finally lay down, the vase
Full in my hand
Feel the tall, green stems
The turn of petals, curling, purple
Feel my tongue within you
My breathing out
My breathing in.

Jon Plaisted
April 2006



Real eyes

real eyes
realize , real lies
but what lies beneath
also lies above,
and in between
the yolks
poke, prod and nod
always look bloodshot-
shot and shooting up
speedball memories of the
Coney Island High,
the highs
the lows, the "bro's"
Brighton Beach Boys
Folke and yolked
Yodling toward the moon,
The north star,
Nights of Babi Yar,
2nd street sutras,
sullen swings,
congregation of Dominoes
played along side squalid squeals
of boys on monkey bars,
and pig tails/braids
on see-saws
no one saw
no one sees
the invisible ,
the visible
visceral, tangible
in its myths
the hits, highs and lows
the lifeguard chairs with peeling paint
squaking sea gulls lulled by the taunting tide,
pouring in,
slushing out...
no one sees
no one sees
the cracked Corona's
Mexicano, shouts
" one dolla, one dolla!"
the 99cent stores,
59 cent stores,
the marginalization,
sleak segregation,
de facto, visible and tangible
el barrio- esque
we have our own
we have our own
"culture of poverty"
but
no one sees
no one sees.

real eyes see

handkerchiefed babushkas
selling their leather boots and
shawls on bubble gummed gravel
like matryoshka nesting dolls
frozen finitely,
what lies beneath?
What lies beaneath?
Another layer just like the previous
the Eternal Return,
returned, disheveled/discarded
like the rotting plums on the curb

Nesting, nesting
the shadowed monster that creep through your window
promising a thorned lullaby
The eagerly awaited return to the cube,
The spot is still empty,
But surrounded in a foliage of Starbucks
In the wild of the Astor place,
and Taj spiciness

By Gina Farber



The Cleansed Mask by Alison Schwartz

"A water ballet," she announces.
I wonder what amphetamine has ignited this;
she has found grace in the commonplace -
habitual smoothing of the slate, another extinguished day.
Palette purification
lip-veins collecting water beads
eyes bleed black
the canvas cleansed is flawed and cracked.
I want to be a swan for you, mother
to lose myself in white
pure, clean, perfect, demure, empty and healthy
the waterlilies tinting my feathers lavender
my entire form a floating reflective source
grazing on the water with the open air
nothing to burden nor betray
with the grace they can see
when it serves their purpose only.



A GAME OF ROSES AND VIOLETS

Roses are red, violets are blue.
Hair is red, eyes are blue.
Blood is the body, emotion is the soul.
Love is to senses, lust is to senseless.
Treatment is to destroy, cancer is to regenerate.
Fire is to burning, Water is to drowning.
Right is of reward, wrong is to penalty.
Envy is to nothing, greed is to everything.
Siblings is to two, only child is to one.
Risk is jeopardy, passive is to certainty.
Remember is to forward, forget is to past.
Coast is to fast-forward, revisit is to counterclockwise.
Excitement is to flourish, numb is to sedation.
Run is to safety, walk is to be caught.
Herbs are to spices, herion is to absinthe.
TV is to atmosphere, radio is to frequency.
Billboard is to message, censor is to meaningless.
Homosexuality is to X and X, heterosexuality is to X and Y.
Vinyl is to soul, MP3 is to the nerves.
Atari is to indie, Playstation is to pop.
Donkey is to Democrat, elephant is to Republican.
Behaviour is to correct, disobedience is to wrong.
Left is to subvert normality, right is to save tradition.
Lottery is to fairness, fixed elections is to corruption.
Hindenberg is to zeppelin, Titanic is to cruiser.
Mother Theresa is to saint, prostitution is to whore.
Red Light District is to Amsterdam, 42nd Street is to New York City.
Democracy is to the United States Of America, Fascism is to Cuba.
Germany is to aggressive, France is to passive.
Pacific is to stable, Atlantic is to fallen.
Summer is caring, Winter is to heartless.
Venus is to pleasure, Aphrodite is to thrill.
Northern Cross is to Lord Jesus Christ, Southern Cross is to the Devil.
Peace is to reclamation, violence is to destruction.
7 is to God, 6 is to Satan.
Throw is to the Moon, Dig is to Judy.
Up is to the Discovery, down is to the Mir.
Alpha is to the beginning, Omega is to the end.

by Vincent Michael Festa
originally written Spring 2001

blue velvet

the man on the uptown 6 train had crumbs all over his blue crushed velvet shirt. his lover snorted and brushed them off, but blue velvet was still eating and, from the look of him, was not going to stop spilling anytime soon.

by amy wisnoski

Washed Ashore by Alison Schwartz

I paved through fields of towered weed,
beauties marked as floral disease
a clearing made, to my dismay
in the wake of nature's disharmony.
The sun will not shrivel
behind the clouds that fire rain
the veil will never blot the angry rays of light
that stir beasts from their winter cave.
I'm swept ashore when waters chill
the spiraled spring will disavow
I swallow sand and salty air
to tumble on eroded ground.



Easy Love by M. M. Ackerson

How fickle are our flagging hearts
To bark and jump and kiss every visitor
That beckons at our door, like an eager
terrier.

Our deepest secrets lent, for a time, to several
As if it was so easy,
And the achievement was an expected
chore.



Stream of Consciousness While Sitting In Shakespeare's Skull
by Alison Schwartz

The descent toward waking is infused with dissent, the resentment of paradoxical states. You must take shape. You need permission to feel. To ache. To yank yourself from that world of absolute suspension is a form of modern torture. Modernism is a form of modern torture. Everything has weight here.

Do your sunken eyes carry the loaded silt of yesterday's calamity? How far can the embers of your sanity stretch? Love is not fusion for a shell ripped open by the jagged tooth of a crowbar. It will not tie up loose strands of your mind's unkempt mane.

The liquid solitude burdening your veins with scalding acidic contempt is not concocted by self-prophecies fulfilled but rather by the scarcity of airbourne morphine. The air supply here is toxic, so thickly infused with recycled lies. Do opposing sights always result in collision? My lungs reject manufactured purification by the polluter's latex hands. Churn out their life. Rows of alien-orbs shudder at retired words.

The letter I sealed awaited carriage but inhaled exhaust of an SUV, the monstrosity. At a newborn intersection, bourne from my axed private tree-asylum - striked habitat of squirrel and blue-jay - its savage eyes menacing and blinding, barreled into the craft of heart's confession. Sanctuary for motorized mongrels, this intersection flows with the angry drone of motion.

Now those cars gulp gasoline, littering ravenous roads, stretched like history, with a restless drive to consume, condescend. Elite consumerism transcending priorities of spiritual sanctity. The honor of purchasing massive, heaving, steaming piles of tangibility. Replication revered. Possession is the newly conquered kingdom, money the intermediary of terrestrial divinity. The lips are steady, hands cupped, captivation's gaze in unison at the most twinkling display of banality. Ascending toward visions of fulfillment, the tiresome tournament of brainwashed gladiators basking in glass-eyed glory! A consumer's wonderland, marching and wincing at benefactors of short gaze.

You were a thousand stabs of rusted daggers, tetanis assuaging the sting of succeeding retreat. This wasn't the first and never the last. I laugh at your flawed perception of significance as your crust and flake like a scab of pus, the wind scattering your infection into oblivion. Parasitic delusion will shortly embody, replacing nuances, and displacing your stunted spans of comprehension with the chill of avoidance.

Rehearsed alibies will not sufficiently spur redemption, karma's watchful gaze cheated by no careless puppeteer.

the wait

heavy piano chords,
make me feel like i'm
walking through the cold.
and no matter how loud i make my music,
i can still hear the crackling of the woman's
voice, popping and hissing
at ever "s".
maybe it's not the weight of the chords,
maybe it's the echo.

by amy wisnoski



ducks and geese

i don't like the socialized
birds and geese of stony
brook. they swim right up to you,
proudly begging, hoping you're in a
good mood today and have spent the
buck twenty-five at the grist mill.
i don't like it.
there's no subtlety.
i want them to be surprised at my
crumbs, i want them
to approach the floating muck sheepishly.
but if they white duck sitting
to my right decides that
i am a threat and hurriedly scurries off,
i'll be more than a little broken-hearted.
i like to think that i'm special.
there's got to be a reason he trusts me
enough to nap within inches of my
giant hammer.

my white duck

this white duck with his
feathers so white. how does he
keep them so white? does a duck
living in polluted waters have ugly
brown feathers? this is my duck.
so sweet and gentle and loving and soft.
closing his eyes to sleep, but only for a
few moments at a time.
he feels my eyes on him.

at the grist mill pond

i want it to be peaceful
here. but it's just a little
too cold and keys are jingling.

by amy wisnoski

hurricanes

hurricanes are the scapegoats
of the world -- their bum rep is
(at least partially) undeserved. they come in
and sort things out when
we get out of hand. and
besides, they do have the
eye in the middle, checking
things out halfway through,
making sure we are
getting through it ok.
and sometimes we don't,
and well i don't know how to explain that.

pig face

i'll never feel the way i feel
right now ever again.
the amount of water in my
belly will rise and my
confidence will fall.
and you'll snort at me
through your mask of
dirt, just loud enough
for me to hear you
and just low enough for
the minister to hear it.

by amy wisnoski



TROJAN PERSONALITY (short)

He opens her up
puts her on
works her to no end
throws her out
and calls it a night.

by Vincent Michael Festa
originally written Winter 2001

Fly or Fade
M. M. Ackerson

To me you arrived
A young bird broken free into blue
sky
Of memory. You frequently exited
Becoming like a chip in a seaside
boulder.

Meanwhile the plangent waves
Of time beat against you
Until your bird returned again taking
Flight from that moribund shore.

But if you never return to life
From now on, the ceaseless tide
wearing
You away into sandy earth
At least I know you existed.

GAIA MOON

In icy freezing cold night
walking under a pitch black sky
and crystalised stars,
tonight is the night
she makes her appearances.
From total seclusion
to ultimate presentation
high above Earth
residing in Heaven.
shining blinding sandoz white
with blinding ambient radiance,
aural fixation with utmost silence.
Come and go,
rarely sad and blue,
less than once in a while
shut out by the Earth
and in turn
shutting out the Sun,
possibly red hot, and heated when
humid.
But as long as she is here,
angels will never collide.

by Vincent Michael Festa
originally written Spring 1999

AMBERWILDE (version 2)

She is to me...

The rustic shine, honey colour, freckles on her face, smells like cinnamon.

The sinister look in her eyes, red, blue, silver, pink, or white.

The compliments, uniqueness, mystique, and body.

The excitement, sensation, bliss, becoming, being, and euphoria.

The heartbeat headrush breath screaming shouting and moaning.

The need, want, addiction, urge, desire.

The feeling of love, affection, intimacy, feeling, and lust.

The intense heatwave, hot winds, smoldering amber, wildfire, sunset stress,
and 90 days of summer.

The peace, the quiet, the silence, the sun.

The once-in-a-lifetime, be-all end-all, last chance, last stand, now-or-never.

She is.

by Vincent Michael Festa.
Originally written Spring 2001

Rough Course
by Alison Schwartz

And so it goes
suspended in amber
a martyr for time's preservation
debris cutting through
like machete-blade
as tears collect underneath
so I may drift downstream
like a downtrodden leaf
robbed of motivation,
at the mercy of destiny
navigating blindly
until jagged rocks stop me.



CINDER

She is someone with:
long red/copper-wired coloured hair
pale white skin.
big brown eyes, or blue.
(very well then...)
light voice.
freckles on her face, shoulders, and arms
skinny
in signals of red/blue/pink/black/white
and little funny things on them
nail style a plus
and so is a bracelet, necklace, anklet, belly ring.

Flashes colours
Wear a flower
Bite on some candy.
Preferably virtuous
Not tainted.

Please run around
and laugh a lot, loud.
Give me an everlasting hug
sympathise with me.

Lay on top of me
take control of me
stay with me
in the middle of the grassy field.

Give me everything I don't have.
Don't take away
what little I have.

You feel like a forest fire
for real.
Let us join hands
And walk through it.

Let me feel it
let me feel you.

by Vincent Michael Festa
originally written in Fall, 2000.

LAY LADY LAY

Yeah, that one pretty Irish girl
with the curly copper-coloured hair
and the ice cold blue eyes
sitting all by her lonesome.
I think you're Lay Lady Lay.

Just by the smiles I receive from you
I could picture you as an attractive, special,
pure, nice, honest, lovely lady.
I can picture you carefree and loving and
everything and enjoying the nicer,
finer things in life.

And by saying your name
makes me feel funny
because it pictures you in a happy way.
The way I want to know you and remember you,
because I think you can be so good.

Or with that young, hungry look on your face,
I could picture you as a mystery.
You could pretend to act naïve, pretty, and curious,
only to be this demon.
A nymph who's willing to put herself on the line
And throw yourself away for a good time.

And by saying your name makes me wonder
Because it pictures you in a dirty way.
The way I can't bear to picture you like that
Because I know you're better than that.

I now have the courage to go up to you,
wondering who you will be.
The safe and secure valuable,
or the fiery risktaker.
I walk up to you and ask you,
What's your name?

by Vincent Michael Festa
originally written in Spring 1999.

rings
none of the rings on
your fingers fit anymore,
but you keep wearing them.
using butter to rip them off
your sausages every night.
i wonder, who are you
trying to fool?

by amy wisnoski

Where...
By Chris Williams

In sleep,
I can hope for
Dreams of
Distant, happy places,
Where I can breathe
And feel the warmth
And light of a
Sun...

Where my eyes are
Filled with stars
Made from the beauty
Of
Simple Creation...

Where the blue horizon outstretches
To everywhere in indeterminate dimensions,
And the sky and clouds
Infinity away
Above me
Are still within the reach of my fingertips
And growing...

Where I smell clarity and
Life so sweet,
I cry a joyful tear
Of crystal,
Rolling down a face of
Liquid happiness.
Falling motionless
Into welcoming earth,
Dark and inviting,
And, from that
Crystalline droplet of plasmic emotion,
Emerges a delicate flower
Of glassy leaves, petals, etc.
Releasing pollen
That
Fills everywhere with

Luminous beads of my
Ecstasy...

Where I taste
The deluge of
The stillness of freedom,
Tranquility
Passes through
My cavernous being...

Where my tongue tickles
Alive and receptive...

Where each papillae
Absorbs everything...

But, they never come.

Should I still
Hope?
Should I indulge a self-fulfilling
Prophecy?

Am I believing an
Axiom?

I am confused.

Believe that it will be better,
When I know
That it will remain the same?

Am I
Dreamer
Or
Pessimist?

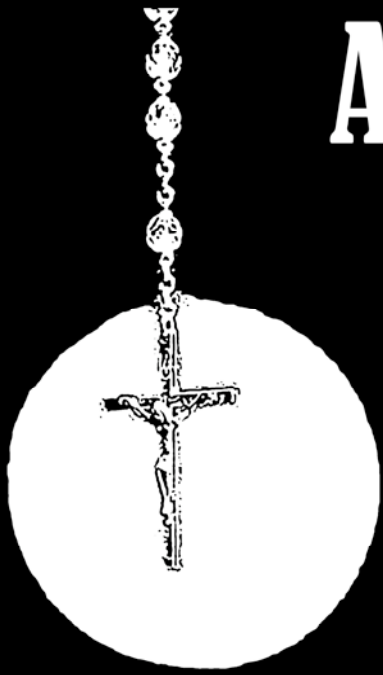
Idiot
Or
Realist,
Sick of reality?

Take me away...
From memories of days
Where the sun set on a bloody ray
And rose with the smell of decay
Can you not sense?
My life of absence
Where I will dispense
Of all sense, so mote it be.....
Mischief allures
A soul of light so pure
And corrupts the unseen
With dreams so unclean
Cast away the shadows
Have mercy on the soul
Ha! I laugh...what is mercy?
Tis craziness, I'm told
Far away, to those mystic lands
Where mist creeps over
Bodies turned to sand
Where the fair maidens die
And the evil witch dwells
And in that land of blasphemy
Is where my soul is in hell
But fear not, for I cannot
Erase this taste for evil
So I will embrace, and let it
Settle into the blood
From where my ancestors will
Rot in an impure flood
Of gratuitous infamy.
Would I, Could I
Should I
Fight for the right to
Complete the cycle
That binds me, blinds me
To what really is,
And to what really isn't
Castigate those that dare
To dream, to dream of dreams
That are but wishes in disguise
Without the lies
That makes us who we are
And bar
Those who wish to make life
And living, just that...

A lie.

By Mahathi Kodamanchili

ALLISON 45



By David K. Ginn,

ALLISON 45



“O

kay, how about you?”

The

young woman sat up in her seat and smiled. “I’m Jeri, 23. My family moved here from Germany before I was born. I’ve never been to Germany myself, but I’ve always wanted to go. You know, to reconnect with my heritage and everything.

“My first job was at a gas station. Believe it or not, I did pump gas. We all needed the money, and I did my best to earn it. After I graduated, I knew I had to go to college, but it was tough finding a way to pay for it. Luckily, I got an English scholarship, which took care of almost everything. I remember being so happy when I got the letter back saying I was approved. It changed my whole life since then. And now, here I am.”

The rest of the class applauded, and the middle-aged professor stood up to address them once again.

“Thank you very much, Jeri. I’m sure you’re going to enjoy this class; I think it’s right up your alley.” She turned her attention away from the light-haired girl and smiled. “I think we have a few more... yes, you, over there. Tell us about your life.”

The woman put her pen down and looked directly at the professor. She crossed her legs and smiled. “I’m Allison, 45.”

“Good morning there, Allison my dear! What can I do for you?”

Allison broke her attention away from the conveyer belt and addressed the old man. “I need an alternator.”

The old man smiled. “An alternator! Yes, yes, indeed. Right this way!” He beckoned her past the belts and into a nearby storage room.

The room was dark and a bit musty. Most of what was on the shelves was old and probably obsolete. Not that it made a difference to her; she trusted the old man with her life.

“Here is an alternator!” He

brought down a white box with a blue stripe running along the top. “This is for you, Allison my dear. Does it meet your expectations?”

Allison held it in her hands and smiled. “Yes. Yes, I believe it does.”

“I was left on the street by my mother. It’s funny, but I actually went most of my life without wondering why. Luckily for me, she had the common sense to leave me at the steps of a local parish. I would have frozen to death otherwise.

“The sisters – that was what we called them – they took me in and gave me a place to stay. It was warm, it was comfortable, and it was a holy place of God.

“I don’t remember it, but they told me stories of my third birthday, which was during my second year at the parish. They said I made such a ruckus, throwing my toys around and spitting everywhere. Oh, but they had a sense of humor about them. There isn’t much that can compare to the patience of God’s shepherds; they truly had the divine gift.

“As I grew older, I went through schooling there. The staff, of course, would change from time to time, but it wasn’t until I was eleven that things went bad.

“Her name was Lola, and she had warm, rosy cheeks. She insisted that we call her ‘Nana.’”

The light was on, which meant people were there. Allison hurried up the stairs, curious about this newly-discovered get-together.

When she opened the apartment door, everyone turned and waved. There were seven, and she knew them all by name except one. On the left was Kitty, next to her was Karen, and to her right was Geida, followed by Barbara, Ms. Keil, Debbie, and the new face.

“Come in, Allison!” Karen yelled from across the room. “There’s plenty of wine to go around!”

Allison stepped in and the new girl took her coat. She politely thanked her and took a seat in the armchair next to the couches.

Kitty poured Allison a glass of white wine. “Barbara has been going on and on about her new job, haven’t you, Barbara?”

Barbara waved the notion away with her hand. “Oh, hush. Can you blame me for being excited?”

Allison smiled and leaned forward, doing her best to show interest. “What kind of job did you get?”

“I found a great secretarial job in the Brymel building, and I was going for my interview when suddenly this man approached me. I’d never seen him before in my life, but he said he knew me. I figured it was just an old pick-up line, so I gathered my purse and continued on. He stops me and apologizes, saying he didn’t mean it in a literal sense. He just meant that he could picture me with him, in his office, as if he already knew me. It was very sweet of him, of course, but I had to turn him down.”

Debbie giggled. “I wish somebody would tell me they could see me in their office.”

The rest of the group laughed, and Barbara waved at her to hush. “Anyway, as I was saying, I had to turn him down. I was on my way to another interview. There was no way I could take another job, just like that. All he did was smile, and then he said there would never be another job like it.”

Allison leaned further in, this time not needing to exaggerate her interest. “And you took it?”

“I couldn’t help it. He had the most gorgeous blue eyes.”

Everyone laughed. Kitty began making rounds for more wine.

“So what do you do?”

Barbara sat up straight, pretending to be professional. “I am the Associate Consultant of a Regional Public Research Organization. I go over files, help plan research projects, and look over everything that comes in or goes out. It’s the most pleasant and rewarding job I’ve ever had, and the pay is – well, it’s up there.”

“How much?”

Barbara leaned close and whispered in Allison’s ear. Everyone laughed at the procedure, and Allison fell back in her chair. How could anyone make that kind of money?

Kitty stood up and tapped her glass with a fork. Everyone stopped what they were doing and raised their glasses.

"I propose a toast to Barbara, who has scored the job we all dream about. Here!"

They all tapped glasses with Barbara, who blushed. Kitty tapped her glass again and smiled. "I'm going to get the cheesecake from the kitchen. Who wants to take their clothes off first?"

The classroom was silent as Allison told her life story. The rest of the class had been brief, most of them to the point of apathy, but Allison kept going. Nobody objected.

"Lola was a nurse who had been raised Catholic by her family. She'd worked in a few hospitals before coming to the parish, and we all liked her at first. She was nearly three hundred pounds, so she wasn't what you'd call a lightweight. She wore the normal habit, but with a white hat and bib that let everyone know she was a nurse.

"She took over most of the teaching, and for a woman so ignorant she certainly had very strong opinions. She kept us away from the science books, telling us that if there were any truth but what was in the Bible, it would be a truth of the devil.

"When we stepped out of line she would beat us. It wasn't a disciplinary action, although it might have been at first. It was rage, and it was terrible. She would ask the ones who interrupted her or wrote notes to stay after class while the others went upstairs to their bedrooms. She'd have us sit in seats spaced out from one another and watch as one of our friends was beaten on the desk. She always started with a ruler, and then gradually built up to her fists. The worst part was sitting and waiting, knowing you were up soon but not knowing when.

"We'd all pray to God that we would go first, so that there would be more of the ruler and less of the fists. It must have been hard for God; he could only answer one of us each time.

"Lola, or Nana, as we were made to call her, continually met with the priest and the sisters to complain about our 'roughhousing' in the hallways and in the

yard behind the parish. She said the bruises worried her, and she demanded our further discipline.

"Something must have happened, because one day there was a new teacher. No one explained or told us what had happened to Nana, and it was for the best. None of the girls cared what had happened to her; they were just glad God finally came down and took her somewhere else.

"For a while, all the girls were happy. It was a good time for us. There was a real bond that endured; it was as if nothing could break us apart."

Allison broke apart from Karen's body and stretched her arms in the air. It was the perfect afternoon.

Geida slid up to her and began to caress her body, running her hands over her navel. Allison smiled in ecstasy. This is what she'd wanted for a very long time.

Geida held her close as Karen continued to move her body underneath. She felt the surges of electricity dash through her body like a set of power lines, all meeting and colliding and spreading out again. She wasn't sure she could hold on much longer.

Karen sat up and let her fall to the couch as she screamed her way through, setting her down and caressing her legs. Geida grabbed a fork from the table and spread a dash of cheesecake along her stomach. Grinning, she slid the fork across and gathered it back. She grinned even more as she brought the fork to her mouth, running it over with her tongue. Allison closed her eyes and let her body fall beneath her.

Karen stood, her naked body glowing in the overhead light. She lifted a wine bottle and an empty glass. After she filled the glass halfway she looked down at the two lovers. "Who wants some more wine?"

"Father Greeley was a gentle man, but he was getting much too old to run the parish by himself. Father Mihrer arrived as his assistant, to pick up whatever slack was being left behind. Mihrer was youthful and kind, with a calm voice

and sharp face. Father Greeley once told us that he was 'God's Chosen'.

"I was thirteen when he first called me into his office. He told me I was doing well, and expressed his sorrow about what had happened between Nana and the girls, although he had never met her. He told me that around the world people were opening their eyes to the real horrors of child abuse, and that no one had it worse than we did.

"He was a guide, and he was a friend. He was our priest, but also our psychologist. I'd talk to him almost every day, and each time it was easier for me to discuss what had happened with Nana.

"He helped me through, and I'm not sure what would have happened had he not saved me.

"After a few months went by, he told me I had improved more than he ever thought someone could. He told me I was truly touched by God.

"He asked me about how I felt when Nana would beat me, and I told him I felt like I had no control. He asked me how it felt to wait in the classroom as the other girls were beaten, watching until it was my turn. I told him it was the worst feeling in the world.

"He said he understood, and that he wanted to help even more. He proposed a solution."

"How's the alternator working out for you?"

Allison smiled and walked past the conveyer belt, where the old man was writing figures in a notebook. "It's working out perfectly. If I keep it up... well, you know."

The old man grinned. "Yes indeed, Allison my dear. Yes indeed, indeed, indeed. Speaking of, how has life been treating you?"

"Oh, just fine. A few of us got together for some wine and cake the other day. It was very nice."

"As it should be. It must feel good to get together with the girls, no?"

"Yes," Allison replied, trying not to smile too brightly, "more than you know."

The old man chuckled, not really getting the joke but sensing he was meant



to laugh. “So what can I do for you today?”

“I need to find a job somewhere. I realize that being a single woman in the city is going to get expensive very soon. I need you to call some of your friends, and ask them if they have any job openings. You know my credentials; you can vouch for me.”

The old man scratched his head. “I’m not really sure, Allie. Who says you need a job anyway? You should be able to support yourself just fine.”

“Don’t be silly. You know I need to get work, otherwise I’ll starve.”

The old man looked at her closely. “Starve, eh? Who put a notion like that in your brain?”

Allison laughed. “Always playing games, you are. Can you find me help or not?”

The old man nodded, then looked out past the window. “If you want help, Allie, my advice would be to leave the city as soon as possible.”

“What are you talking about?”

“You’re not a city girl, Allie. You never were. If you want to find help, you have to get out. I’ll give you names and addresses of people who can look after you until you get back on your feet, but you have to do as I say.”

Allison shook her head. “No way. I’m finally fitting in here. I’ve got friends now. I’ve never had friends before. I have friends who care about me, and when we’re together I feel happy. You can’t take that away from me.”

The old man sighed. “Allie, I’m trying to give you a life, not take it away.”

Allison took his hand and held it warmly. “I know you’re trying to look after me, but believe me when I tell you I’m fine.” She smiled, and he reluctantly nodded in agreement.

“I’ll try to find a job for you, Allie. Just please, be careful.”

“Of course.” She gave him a quick smile and left, her thoughts already beginning to imagine what kind of evening she’d have if more people showed up. As she delved into her own private fantasy, a stranger walked up and tapped her shoulder.

“Hi.” she said. “Do I know you?”

The man smiled, his face clean and sharp. “No, but I know you.”

“How’s that?”

“Well, it’s not really that I know you. Please forgive my bluntness. What I meant to say is that I can see you with me... working in my office.”

Allison’s eyes lit up.

“Tell me, dear lady, how would you like the perfect job?”

The classroom was transfixed. No one could believe how willing she’d been to divulge information about her past, especially when it involved abuse. Without prompting, she continued.

“Father Mihrer brought us into the classroom and told us to take seats just as we had when Nana kept us after class. He then called on a girl, Kendra, to step up and have a seat on the desk. He explained to us that in order for the old memories to go away, new memories had to come. He told us something that, at the time, I thought was a great lesson. He said that the devil makes us hit, and God makes us love.

“For two years he showed us how to accept God, and how to push the devil out of our memories. We thought it was the right thing to do.

“Jasmine was a pretty girl who had been with us most of our lives. She was fifteen when she got pregnant, and after that there was an investigation. We all saw Father Mihrer get taken away in handcuffs, and after that it was like a bomb had dropped on us.

“In many ways we were all glad, but on the other hand at least with Mihrer we all thought we were doing the right thing. After he left, we had psychologists come in and talk to us for years. They were all telling us we hadn’t done anything wrong, but they were also telling us that what had happened was wrong. It didn’t make sense to us. When you’re in a situation like that, suddenly thrust in a place where everything you’ve thought for two years is revealed to have been a lie, you blame yourself.

“When I graduated I found myself doing much better. I went to a trade school, and by good fortune it was nearby and I was able to board.

“For a while I managed by myself,

making small wages while living closely with some of the girls I’d known since I was a child. You could say that, for the time being, we were doing alright.”

Allison walked through the main hall of the giant building. So far, everything seemed perfect. It was like nothing she’d ever imagined before.

The walls were painted with beautiful contrasts of white and blue, and she felt like she was walking into a dream from which she never wanted to wake up.

The man looked at her with his shimmering blue eyes. “Now, my dear, I will show you what we do here.”

She followed him into a room the size of a hangar. Giant machines towered up to the high ceiling, and all around people in coats conversed with people in sharp, clean suits.

“What will I be doing?”

The man laughed kindly. “You will be our top research consultant! Did you expect anything less?”

She felt her body shiver with excitement.

“Come with me, and I will show you our laboratory.”

She followed him across the room, amazed that with all these doctors and machinery there was still another room that was officially called the laboratory. She began to fantasize the sheer grandeur of it all.

He slid his keycard and a door opened. They walked inside, and what she saw was a bit of a disappointment.

Shelves full of electronic equipment stretched back to the furthest walls of the room. All sorts of sounds whirred and beeped from all directions. It wasn’t the giant hangar, but it was still a wonderfully complex laboratory.

The walls in this room weren’t blue and white like the others; rather, they were brown, bricked, and in some places even made of cement. There were two computers at the front entrance, and when she looked down the rows of shelves she couldn’t see any others.

The man sat down at one of the computers. “It is time, my lady, for your orientation.”

Allison lit up with glee. All of the lost excitement came rushing

back to her. “What do you need me to do?”

The man looked up at her and smiled. “I need you to remove your clothes.”

She stared at him, her mouth agape. “I beg your pardon?”

The man laughed. “Don’t get so ahead of yourself. We’re merely fitting you for your new clothes. You may find yourself changing clothes quite often here, so you shouldn’t feel embarrassed if others are around.”

Despite her shame and offense, she was still too excited to disagree. There was no way she’d let a job like this go, even if it meant having to change while other people were around. If everyone else was so busy, who would notice anyway?

She took off her shirt, followed by her skirt and shoes. The man cleared his throat. “And your undergarments.”

She closed her eyes, feeling suddenly very nervous. Her hands shook as she unhooked her bra and removed her panties. She stood still, her palms sweating as her hands still shook.

The man gave a quick nod, then flipped a switch.

A woman walked out from one of the rows, dressed in jeans and a t-shirt. She looked at Allison, who stood naked and exposed by the door.

The man smiled once again. “Allison 23, meet Allison 31.”

No one had realized that the class had gone five minutes over schedule. Everyone was too busy listening. Allison had, for one small and precious amount of time, captured everyone’s attention.

“One day, we found out that the old woman, Nana, had been recognized as saintly. She was revered by all members of the church across the country, and indeed, it seemed as though she had made amends for her past mistakes.

“What she had done was no secret to anyone, but her apology must have given hope to all those people living in the cities who’d screwed up their lives. Suddenly it was possible for even the worst people to be forgiven and earn back the love of God.

“There was only one thing wrong

with that. Yes, she may have earned back the love of God, but how was she forgiven? All of the priests and bishops and cardinals made statements telling her she was forgiven, but they were wrong. They had no right giving out our forgiveness. We were the ones she abused, and no one else could forgive her for that but us. But there she was, going from country to country demonstrating the power of forgiveness, but it was all a lie. She was never forgiven. The Lord may have forgiven her, but we were never asked. That was when I broke my peace with God. I was happy that God had given her the forgiveness she sought, but I was scorned that I was never given the opportunity to do it myself.

“From that time on, through the rest of my life, I had resolved that God was selfish, and that in the Kingdom of Heaven he would impose His divine will that we all have to follow, but I would never love Him. He could build the roads of the world in front of me and tell me to walk freely in His majesty, and He would never earn my love. In His eyes, I would never be a true child of Heaven.”

The man caressed her shoulder. “Don’t worry, my darling. Everything is going to be just fine.”

She looked into his shimmering blue eyes, and for a moment she almost believed him. “Why am I strapped down to the table? What’s going on?”

He sighed. “We’re transferring your mind into the next model. You have to age, and this is how we account for it. It’s nothing to worry about.”

She tried to move her arms, but the straps were too tight. “What is this? What are you talking about?”

“My darling, try to relax. You’re lucky we found you; Lord knows it was quite a task. You nearly got away from us.”

“Got away from you? How?”

“It was a programming miracle, really. All of the other models would slip a bit into their lives, but you were our golden child. We were afraid that in due time you’d forget completely.”

“Forget what?”

“Who you are. We weren’t prepared for the flight risk; we had to get all

our people on it. The other fashions, the ones you socialized with, they started to fade. They would remember some things one minute, and then forget them the next. But you... you kept building. You built past memories to compensate for your new reality. It was unlike anything we’d ever hoped for.”

She struggled to break free. “Why are you doing this to me?”

“My dear, my precious darling, I’m saving you. When you fell in love with those girls, those other fashions, you decided to form a new life. You realized we’d come after you to put you in a new model, so you visited that crackpot repair man. Damn that old man, he almost succeeded. He gave you an older version of the alternator, one that wouldn’t require you to come back here and be charged. You asked him for it, because you wanted to run away. Or, more precisely, you wanted to hide.”

“I just want my life. Just give me my life, and I won’t run. I swear to God I will never, ever run.”

He looked into her eyes, then leaned over to kiss her forehead. “No, my dear, you will not.”

The doctor looked at the new model and smiled. She had a glorious mind. It would only be a few days before the new memories would start to come.

Allison was now self-evolving.

Like a child who grows into an adult and then into an old woman, Allison was growing inside. With each turn she would become more human, and when the model numbers got too high he would start over.

Another doctor walked over and had him sign a form. “What’s this one?”

“This is number 45. Put her in a middle-class home, give her a cross and some rosaries...” He paused. “Try putting her in college, too. Let’s see what she comes up with. Maybe it’ll be a story worth telling.”



Forty-One Miles
By Christopher Di Niso

All my concentration was on the rearview mirror as I pulled up to the stop sign on West Pine St. I watched as Aubrey gradually made her way back to her house as I held out hope that she would turn around just one more time as my car rolled slowly down the block. It was killing me to leave. We had been with each other almost the whole week, and yet I wasn't satisfied. Our relationship was still fairly young, and I'm sure anyone else would have chalked it up to both our age and the joys of a new sweetheart, but it felt like it was something different. To me, Aubrey was engulfing my senses. I loved her, that's one of the few things I was actually certain of in my life, and despite the effort of my rational side to convince me I'd see her again sometime soon, I couldn't help but want to stay. She had a stranglehold on my heart, and as well-rehearsed as that sounds, I could tell by my desperation that it was true. She finally looked back as she landed on the sidewalk and I took the opportunity to try to send a gentle wave back to her. By the time my arm reached out the window -she had already turned away, disappearing behind the bushes that lined her driveway. I took a brief second to sulk before inching past the stop sign. I checked both ways for oncoming cars before turning left onto Sunrise Ave., beginning my long drive home. But the way I was thinking about it, I was really driving forty-one miles too far.

Henry was just sitting down to write when another damn pilgrim came to the house. That made three this week.

They weren't here to see Henry, and yet, he was the one who always had to interrupt what he was doing to answer the door. He took the keyboard off his lap and muttered a few choice words about punk kids and lazy roommates.

Shortly after the pilgrimages began, Henry had put aside his long-standing mechanical ineptitude and installed a peephole. Three months later, peeping through it had become redundant; he already knew what he would see.

The kid on the front step was a gangly little grad student with a patchy goatee, gripping the strap of his corduroy messenger bag with both hands. A worn-out copy of the infamous *Mechanical Umbra* was tucked under his arm, right at the elbow patch on his tweed jacket.

Henry yelled up the stairs. "Jack! It's for you!"

No answer.

"Jack! Are you up?"

Still nothing. Henry knew Jack was home. His coat was lying in a heap on the doormat, and an empty pint glass perched on the landing. The doorbell rang again.

Hello, Junior. This is where free verse comes from.

Henry ascended the stairs and threw open his roommate's door.

"Jack. Wake up."

"Unnnghh." One hairy chicken leg poked out of a mass of sheets.

"Another one of your damn fanboys is here. Make him go away," Henry insisted.

"It's too early," Jack whined.

"It's one-thirty."

"Tell him I'm not here."

"No, he'll just come back later. I'm trying to write here."

Jack stretched, and smacked his lips. "And I'm trying to sleep here. What's your point?"

The bell rang again. "Jesus Christ. How does that not bother you?!"

"Unless it's my agent, I don't care."

"When did you get an agent!?"

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By
Claire
Blechman

Had someone with a steady income actually managed to read that bullshit?

Jack waved him off and retreated further into his tangled nest of sheets.

Henry gave up and went back downstairs. He pulled the lock, and opened the door without a word of greeting. The kid on the front steps looked him up and down, thinking he was gazing upon his idol for the first time. "Hi, my name is Jude, and I just wanted to say that I'm a huge fan of your work, Mr. Dempsey." The pilgrim spoke fast, reciting a script. "You've really influenced me in my writing. I—"

"He's not here."

"Excuse me?"

"The literary genius you're looking for. He's not here."

"Oh." Jude paused, unsure of what to think. "Do I have the right place?"

"You're looking for the guy who wrote that book under your arm. The one that you happened to pick up from a street vendor because you were looking for something to read on the subway? Whose semi-coherent conceits changed your entire outlook on life and literature?"

Jude didn't understand. "Oh, yes!" he nodded eagerly.

"Yeah, none of that here." Henry closed the door as quickly as he could. And turned around to see Jack stumbling

down the stairs in his bathrobe, his eyes half-closed, his hand groping along the railing. He headed toward the kitchen.

"No, don't bother getting up on my account," Henry said. He picked up Jack's coat and hurled it at him. It hit him square in the back and fell to the floor in another rumpled heap. No effect. Henry followed Jack into the kitchen, where he found his roommate fumbling with the coffee machine.

"What the hell is wrong with this thing?" Jack slammed the lid and slapped at the switches.

"It works fine for me." Henry went to the fridge and pulled out a half-eaten container of yogurt with the spoon still in it. He sniffed once, then restirred it absently. "You really need to deal with those pilgrims sooner or later."

Jack just grunted. He gave up on the coffee and pulled a box of cigarettes out of the pocket of his robe. "Don't blame me for actually managing a little success. You should try it sometime."

"You only had 200 copies printed. Subtract the ones lying in rejection piles at the editors' offices, and that leaves about fifty in the hands of pretentious, impressionable college students just itching to find some tripe to believe in."

"Perhaps. But when they grow up and finish their PhDs, they're going to remember who influenced them. Soon,

they'll be teaching *my* book to *their* students"

"And so we arrive at the fundamental flaw in the system."

"Give it a couple generations." Jack posed, gazing off into the distance. The smoke from his cigarette wafted upwards over his shoulder. "In fifty years, I'll be canon."

"Oh, fuck off." Henry threw his spoon in the sink. It clattered against the stack of dirty dishes left to lie fallow.

"You are NOT going to make history. You don't even make your bed! And, you don't even make the rent! You owe us \$600, Shakespeare." Henry stormed out before Jack could start making excuses.

He went back to the basement and sat once again in front of his computer. Someone in this house was going to be relevant in fifty years. Deservingly.

Henry flipped through his latest notebook (standard marble composition). Ten years' worth of these things, lined up serial-killer style, and what had he to show for it? Fragments and bits, quotes and aphorisms. But nothing of consequence. Even the horrendous Proust fan-fiction from high school was aborted unfinished. Such things take time. It took Joyce nine years to write *Ulysses*.

But when he was done, he had written Ulysses...

The phone rang, harsh against the silence of his thoughts. To his pleasant surprise, it was actually for him, a friend of his from college.

"Hi Hen, it's Lisa." Lisa worked for a telefund service. She always sounded so chipper on the phone, she could have been calling to repossess Henry's car and he wouldn't know the difference. Today, though, she was not calling with regard to his possessions.

"Lisa, hi. What's new and exciting?"

"Everything! I sold *Stop for Me!*

"Really, someone went for it? That's... amazing." In her spare time, Lisa had been working on (and trying in vain to market) a novel about a woman with multiple personality disorder who thinks she's Emily Dickinson.

"Well, they want me to change it into a love story. Chick lit, it's the company's top seller. Who am I to complain?

Oh, and reset it on a cattle farm."

Henry was too stunned to answer. Was there no one left to stand up for dignity in literature?

The pause was too long for Lisa to maintain. "You're happy for me, I know. Anyway, I hear Jack's getting quite a following," she offered.

Henry winced. How did she know that?

"I'm not worried about it. They only like him because he's unpopular."

Lisa giggled just the slightest bit. Henry thought his line was better than that...

"Alright, just don't let it get to you. One of these days, you'll think of a brilliant idea that even *you* can live with."

"Hey, I have plenty of—"

"Ooh, gotta go Hen, my publisher is on the other line. Talk to you soon!"

She hung up without further ceremony. Henry groaned and dropped the phone on the floor. Back to staring at the computer.

Soon the handset started complaining about being left on. It beeped. Once at first, then twice in a row. A minute later, it was going off nonstop while Henry threw aside boxes full of junk the previous tenants had left behind in search of the base. Unable to find it, he instead ripped the battery out of the phone and stashed the whole thing in the one ceiling panel which never seemed to hang right.

Henry had taken to the basement in retreat from the house upstairs, where Jack often lay muttering and scribbling about 'pernicious calliope daydreams' or 'the ventriloquization of the bourgeoisie.' If that was the inspiration of the first floor, he wanted no part of it.

And yet... he clicked off the screensaver and saw the same three paragraphs he'd been "working on" all week. What if it wasn't just the house? He imagined himself surrounded by false idols. Every waiter wanted to be an actor, every teacher a novelist... even his landlord had dreamed of making it big trading stocks. It was time to face the facts. No Literature was going to happen here, not where Captain Morgan hid from pimply pilgrims and recluse poets found love amid the beef heifers.

"The rarest of animals are often skittish, refusing to share with us their secret lives." A well-practiced baritone

came down from above, the final omen of doom for Henry's attempt to write.

Announcing: the death of the author.

"Ladies and gentlemen, here we have the rare privilege of seeing the elusive Writer at work." Roger, Henry's other roommate, descended the stairs and gestured with an open palm in his direction. "Young Dan Brown must concentrate hard on this act of procreation, the most important of his short lifetime." Roger made a decent living doing voiceovers for National Geographic documentaries, having failed comprehensively at traditional forms of acting.

"Young Dan Brown?" Henry complained, "I'm insulted."

"Young J.K. Rowling?"

"Even worse!"

"I give up." Roger sat in the dilapidated armchair they had been meaning to throw out since they moved in. His feet dangled sideways over one of the armrests. "Who do you want to be?"

Henry sighed. "I don't know. Can I say Nabokov? That'd be sweet."

"Never heard of him."

"Didn't think you would." Roger was unapologetically illiterate. He hadn't read a book since high school. And yet, some amazing force of nature possessed him with the ability to read all those documentary scripts in a compelling, academic baritone. Sometimes, he even added a British accent for effect, but he never stumbled over even the most clumsy poly-syllabary. Henry had always liked Roger's company. He made things... uncomplicated.

"You still working on the Ancient Sumerian piece?"

"Yes, and it's a pain in the ass. You try saying *ut-napishtim* twenty-five times an hour without screwing up... who the hell has a recording session at eight a.m. on a Saturday, anyway?"

"You've really opened my eyes to the evils of *National Geographic*."

"And don't you forget it."

In those smallest of moments before one conversation could become the next, the doorbell rang. Again.

"Who could that be?"

"You really have no idea?" Henry motioned for Roger to follow him upstairs. His roommate

Continued on next page

looked through the peephole.

“It’s some herb. He’s got a professor jacket and everything.”

“He’s here to see Jack.” Henry explained.

“Another one? Geez, it must be the season...”

Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages...

“Henry, where did you put the aspirin? You know, the big ones, from Spain?”

Jack came into the hall, rooting through the plastic bucket of first-aid supplies.

Henry yanked open the front door, and pushed Jack out onto the step.

“Here, kid, Portrait of the Artist. Knock yourself out.”

It was hard to say who was more startled, Jack or Jude. Henry locked the door and left them to work it out.

“Where are you going?” Roger asked.

“To pack.”

“Oh.” This stopped him for only a moment. “Where are you going?”

“Canterbury.”

“Where?”

The Road to Acceptance

By Christopher Di Niso

Sometimes I wonder why I still go out with Rachel. My left leg slides off of my knee, my heel forcefully kicking into the soil. It’s gone numb again, the second time in twenty minutes since I got here. Not far from me a girl’s soccer match has just ended, the two teams seeming less enthusiastic than their beaming families. I, on the other hand, was disappointed, waiting for one of those headline-grabbing fights that break out between parents over questionable yet trivial calls; one never came. I move to one end of the wooden bench expecting there to be someone from the glut of players and parents needing a seat. Sure enough, a mother sits down with her daughter to my right. To be kind I look towards the parking lot so as not to be rude. I still don’t see Rachel’s car; she’s starting to irk me with these constant late arrivals of hers. Next time I might have to use a family technique we use with my normally tardy aunt and give her a meeting time an hour before the real one. At the least it would save me the trouble of waiting. I turn back to my right to catch the little girl looking intently at my legs. I think nothing of it until her eyes move upwards towards my short hair and then back down to my breasts. She kept repeating the process and just then I realized she wasn’t sure if I was a boy or a girl. I looked away, embarrassed, wishing I had worn something other than a skirt that would have hidden my unshaven calves. Without looking I could feel her gaze inspecting me, her stare tracing my body as she tried to make sense of someone with short, boyish hair and non-emphasized feminine curves. I peeked one last time to see her mother bending over to catch her daughter’s whisper. The next thing I know I hear her make a noise, “tkk,” as if she were disgusted, flicking away a pesky mosquito.

“We don’t have to deal with people like that,” she venomously says. I knew she meant for me to hear it as well because the loudness of her voice was clear enough. I was too shocked to react as I looked up to see her pulling her still shoeless daughter away. I sat isolated in my mind long after the soccer troupe left. I hadn’t done anything to warrant what that woman had done to me, and it hurt more than I could explain. As I heard footsteps kicking through the grass and soil behind me, I quickly got up and started to walk away. I could hear Rachel calling out to me from behind yet I kept walking, my head never picking up the whole time. She caught up and with a hand on my arm she faced me. I couldn’t look up when she asked me what was going on; I simply collapsed into her arms as I cried into her shoulder.

Brown Eyes

By Christopher Di Niso

After forty minutes, all that I’ve gathered from staring at my computer screen is that I don’t like my reflection all that much; I like the darkness of it, the beard, the way shadows hide my eyes, but what I hate is that I still look like him. There isn’t enough facial hair to ever change that. I just look like a scruffier version of him from the past. I goddamn hate school; all it ever does is make me brood about myself. What are supposed to be my thoughts on biological technology somehow morph into the search for revelations about my dad. I still can’t talk to the man, his dry white eyes piercing through me like daggers. That’s all I ever see. Those eyes, and of course I have an almost identical set. No, I couldn’t have green eyes like my mother. I had to have brown like Dad, lucky me. If I take off my glasses, would I become him? Would I suddenly start yelling and transform into a grouchy old man? I need to wipe my glasses down yet I can’t bring myself to do it. Not when I can still see my reflection, it’s too scary. Shaded or not, I don’t want to take a chance on it. I don’t want to see those cold dead eyes staring back at me through the gloom, studying me for hints at how to chastise me even more.



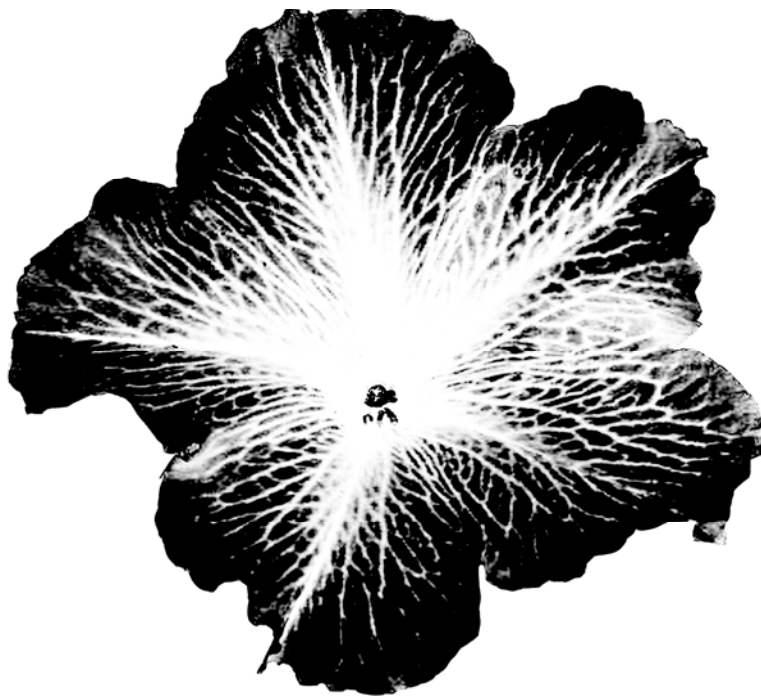
We Were Everything

There were still bits of laughter tinkling just under the roof of the car we were driving in. My best friend Samantha was at the wheel and I was aimlessly tinkering with the radio dials. It was about two in the morning and almost no one was on the highway. We had just gotten back from Samantha's house and she would be dropping me off at my dorm in Stony Brook; I remember being happily exhausted. We were minutes away from the main entrance of campus and I aimlessly looked out through the dirt-streaked window, watching trees pass by, when suddenly I saw a car pulled over with two people huddled around it. There was debris everywhere, papers and scraps; I didn't understand yet, it was almost a comical sight, and I snickered... until I noticed the body. I yelled at Samantha to pull over, we needed to help. We got out of the car and went to the people. We had to pass the body to get to them, a man all alone, and we pretended like it wasn't there. We stole glances from the corner of our eyes, as if it would be disrespectful to look; we weren't ready yet. Are you ever? It was a chilly fall night and we were hugging our jackets over ourselves. Finally, when we got to the people, a young man and woman, they were panicked and on the phone with the police. The person had just walked right in front of their car and had gotten hit. I asked if there was anything I could do. The young man, hell, the child (we were all children right then), just looked at me, frightened, and with pleading eyes asked me to go check on the man. He didn't know if he was dead or alive... no one wanted to go near him. I didn't hesitate, I pulled up whatever heart I had and marched stiffly over to him. Him and I... both alone. I didn't feel brave, though, I felt like a fake. I was quivering. I went to him. He looked to be about fifty. He was on his side, a colorful backpack clutched under him. I never found out why he had that backpack. My eyes traveled from his head to his feet. His leg bone was sticking out through his knee, there was ragged flesh and blood clinging to the strong gray matter that was straining upward. If you went down the leg you saw his feet. He had been knocked out of his goddamn sneakers... and one sock. One sock. His head was the worst. He must have slid across the pavement on it. The forehead and scalp had been pulled off, revealing skull and what I thought must be brain. He had white hair that was in stark contrast with the blood. The ripped skin traveled dangerously close to his eyes; I couldn't help but think, anything but his eyes. But his eyes were there, just milky white and rolled up. I had never seen anything like this before; it was surreal and too real at the same time. My selfish eyes wanted to lap up the sight but my heart was aching.

There were two streams of blood flowing from behind him, reaching out into infinity. Every now and then a car would pass by on the other side of the highway and make the redness flicker and glisten and flash bright in the headlights. Bright, bright red. So red. Whenever I tell this story I'm compelled to say how there was just so much blood. I feel like I should clutch my head and say there was just so much... But really, there wasn't as much as I thought there should have been. I don't know why, but I thought there should be more blood. He was convulsing... he was alive. I got down on my knees and held everything back but my voice and I spoke with him. I told him it would be okay, help was on the way. God, where was his other sock? I felt lame and useless and I told him to hold on, it would be okay, it would be okay. He answered in gurgles and convulsions. I will never forget those sounds... ever. His shirt was up, revealing a very white belly. Was he cold? I just wanted to get his other sock for him... where was the other sock? It was so cold out. He was underdressed. I noticed the car, the front window all spiderweb-cracked. For some reason it startled me. I didn't cry... not yet. I stayed there with him and just kept talking while all the crazed thoughts strangled me. Who was he? Jaclyn, you can't cry yet. Is he cold? Was he homeless, or drunk... did he commit suicide? Where was his sock... how did he get knocked out of his sneakers? I want my mommy. Jaclyn, you can't cry yet. Why was he here, crossing the highway? Why am I here alone with him? Should I touch him? Should I cover him? Where is his fucking sock? Not yet. Does he have children? Is there a God? Why did God let this happen? Not yet, Mommy... Why? I'm so cold. Is he cold? God, those sounds... the only thing scarier than those sounds was the silence when they stopped. My friend finally came up beside me, and by that time he was still. The police came, and then it just wasn't my moment anymore. I could cry, and I did, but that was the easiest part of the night. They didn't seem to be rushing to help him when they got there, and I was so angry. Why weren't they rushing, God, why weren't they rushing? But it was because they knew what I knew... what I didn't want to know... the man was dead. Gone. When I think on it now, I get the vision of it and the painful memory, and I shake my head, to get it out physically. A twitch, which makes me think of the way he twitched. It was awful, but I'm thankful I was there. No one should ever die alone... and he didn't. I was there with him, little insignificant me, but for him I was everything. I was his goodbye to this world.

by Jaclyn Bouton

Visiting



By Rose Slupski

It was nice, she thought, this visit. She was glad she had decided to come.

The sun was hot on her back, warmth radiating through the damply clinging fabric of one of her father's worn, oversized shirts. She took a gloved hand from the shears and wiped her face, spreading little flecks of dirt across her forehead. During this break, she allowed herself to take a deep breath, drinking in the summer fragrance of the petunias. They were scattered beneath her, a riot of purple and white that she had been trying to avoid stepping upon for the past half hour as she leaned over to get at the bushes. Trimming shrubs required a careful eye and a little arm strength, but careful feet and a decent sense of balance seemed to be important as well.

I must look like a regular picture of grace, she reflected, with some amusement. Trying not to fall forward and impale myself on the prickly shrubbery, attempting not to topple backwards onto my rear end. But I've managed to successfully avoid both situations thus far, and the bushes aren't looking too bad.

She resumed clipping away at the straggling evergreen branches, humming little broken tunes to herself.

It was nice to come back, even if the house looked different from the one she had lived in for eighteen years, even if her siblings had also grown up and moved out. Even if the old gas station and sandwich shop just a two-minute walk away had been converted into a bustling McDonald's. Even

if she didn't know any of the new neighbors (well, she hadn't known all of them in the first place, had she?), and even if her first grade teacher had passed away after she had left. Yes, it was nice, even if she couldn't call this place "home" any more than she could have called any of her dorm rooms, or her new apartment, by that label. It was still pleasant to come back, if only to an empty shell. Well, maybe it wasn't empty, maybe it was just a shell that had been emptied, then refilled with new things, new people. But wasn't that what growing up and going on was all about? Leaving the old behind to make room for the new? Sometimes even friends had the tendency of fading out of one's life before they faded from the photos. That was just how things went.

She heard the crunching roll of a car going past, slowing to maneuver through the sharp bend in the road that came just before her house. She paused for a moment, waiting expectantly for the rush of air that might make its way over to cool her when the car, finishing the turn, would speed past...

But she caught more sounds of slowing, then an engine idling and stopping. Still straddling the flower bed, she twisted her torso around haphazardly, trying to steady herself as she peered over into the road where the car had pulled off to the side. Someone was getting out.

I guess some things don't change... I'm still nosy as ever, and he's probably the person who lives across the street now...

"Eva!"

She started, wobbled, but maintained her precarious balance. She squinted against the sun's glare, trying to see who was calling her name. He was walking up the driveway now, and she could make out blondish-brown hair on a tall, almost lanky, figure.

"Hi!" she chirped out cheerfully before she could recognize him. He grinned as he came closer, and suddenly she could see his eyes.

Blue, blue, blue, and outshining the sun above that crazy smile. An image that had refused to sink into the past, even if he himself had walked out of her life so long ago.

Her head started to spin, and that was altogether too much for her inner ear to handle. She flailed her arms, dropping the shears in the process, and succumbed to the combined forces of ironic Fate and stolid Gravity. A moment later, she was lying flat on her back, winded half from the tumble, half from complete surprise. Thankfully, the flowers hadn't been crushed by her abrupt descent.

Oh, heavens, she thought dizzily to herself, I'm falling for you again.

Then she laughed. That thought--absurd little mental quirk!--struck her as funny. Or maybe she was just that pleased to see him.

By that point, he had arrived at her side, leaning over her and blocking the sun, his own radiant, wonderful face making up for any lack of solar brilliance.

"Hi... Luke," she managed to cough out, her voice fighting her frantic desire to appear calm and collected.

“Long time, no see, Eva,” came the amiable reply, and he quirked an eyebrow. “Do you always greet people this way,” he gestured at her horizontal orientation, “or am I special?”

She raised her own eyebrow in return, trying to regain her composure. “Well, you should recall that I always opted for comfort over convention.”

That elicited a true chuckle, and she basked in the glowing sound.

“What have you been up to, then? Looks like you’ve been working out here for a while.”

She suddenly remembered the shirt that was drenched unattractively in her own sweat. The blush came on abruptly.

“Well, yes, but I mean, I’m just kind of... oh, never mind. What brings you back here? I thought you went off to Nevada.”

“Just visiting.”

“Huh, small world, then,” she commented, groaning as she got up and felt the dull pain in her tailbone. “I’m doing much the same. Visiting, I mean.”

Now she was grinning, too, smiling at the dumb luck that had brought them together again.

“So... um... how long are you staying?”

“Actually, I’m flying back tomorrow. In fact, I was headed over to my uncle’s just now to go to the game with him.”

“Really? I’ve pretty much missed you, then, I guess. But, wow. I mean, talk about coincidence. And it’s still great to see you. You look... happy.”

“Happy? That’s a new one. Everyone else says I look malnourished. They say Amy isn’t feeding me enough.”

Her mind whirled, but she kept her face in check. “‘Amy?’ Luke, are you telling me that you went off and got married and I didn’t hear about it? I must be more out of the loop than I had realized.”

He gave a short laugh, and this time there was something of discomfort in the sound. “Well, actually, it was pretty small...not a whole lot of people, you know. Plus, it was all the way out there in Nevada...”

She shrugged, a nonchalant motion and a feeble attempt to shake away the numbness spreading through her, shatter-

ing her. He glanced at his watch.

“My uncle is going to think I’ve forgotten about him and the game. Hey, it was nice seeing you again. By the way, do I have your phone number? Maybe we could talk some time.”

A pen and a scrap piece of paper were extracted from her pocket, numbers written, then the whole affair was placed into those long, handsome fingers.

“Yeah, great seeing you, too. Give me a call and we can talk some more about all this stuff.”

They stood for a second, then she took the initiative, as she had done only once before, and hugged him with a quick movement that she tried to make friendly. It lasted less than a moment, but there was an awkwardness—that same horrible awkwardness that had always lurked in the corners of his eyes whenever she was with him—keeping everything in check.

“Well, I’ll see you later, then.” He turned and began walking back to his car.

This was it. She knew what would happen, and she knew she couldn’t stop it. So it had to end now.

“Luke.”

His gaze came back to hers, and it struck her that their eyes might be the same. People had always said how similar they were in personality, how much they resembled a brother and sister. Yet she had felt a different kind of connection. His quirks and habits became her own, until one day she had looked inside and saw more of him than her. Since he had left, she hadn’t been able to find herself within his shadow.

This was her last chance, facing him in dirty, sweaty imperfection.

She had been imperfect the last time as well, his return unexpected in the wake of tragedy. Tears had slid down her tired, puffy face as she tried to choke them back. He had struggled, in his own clumsy way—he, who was always so graceful—to overcome the awkwardness between them and comfort her. She had not spoken then, so she had to speak now.

“Luke... I just wanted you to know... that time... you were making sure I was OK... that meant a lot to me. That helped me a lot. I just wanted you to know that. I just—thank you.”

He stiffened slightly at the recol-

lection. Then she saw his shoulders relax. His eyes were open, the last wisps of stiff unease had dissolved to leave, for an instant, two impeccably azure skies.

“You’re welcome.”

A pause. There was comprehension and a self regained.

But it was transient. In an instant, it was lost in the flow of time, in the confusion of the past. The clouds began to creep back in as he turned, and she felt that familiar tug as he did so. The aching phantom bond would not be broken.

“Well, bye, Eva. Take care!”

She stared at his back, tightness seeping into her chest as she called out cheerily, “I will! You too! Say hi to your wife for me!”

His car rolled off down the road, and she waved after it until it disappeared behind another curve. At last, she sighed, straightened, and picked up her shears.

He was gone again, and he still wasn’t gone. It would never be that easy, she realized.

He was not going to call. The number would be lost, or tucked away in a drawer, never to be taken out and used. He wasn’t going to write. He never had.

And she wouldn’t, either. She could have gotten his address or his number from his cousin, who still lived in the area. But she wouldn’t. She would keep pretending he had disappeared, and, hopefully, he wouldn’t come back. If he ever did, that blinding smile might finally dazzle her misplaced heart to pieces. So it was best if she faded from his life as well.

The two of them were alike that way. Slipping out of people’s lives and sometimes slipping back in with an easy feel, as though they had never been away at all. Then they would leave again, just as quickly, just as quietly, filling empty shells with ghosts of regret.

She had said what needed to be said. He had listened and understood. That would have to do because that was all that could be done.

Snip, snip. The severed branches fell softly, bloodlessly. Simply. The petunias really did smell very pleasant. After all, it was nice, this visit.



The Blue Lights of South Ferry

By Christopher Di Niso

I shift in my seat, trying to slide more towards the doorway. I hate these hard plastic seats; they're so uncomfortable on a long train ride. I almost want to stand up and fight for the right to be in this car like the individuals hovering above me. Ever time the train breaks a few of them push into me, falling into my seat. It's not really their fault, on a train this crowded it's hard to find something to hold on to. If you're stuck in the middle your choices really are to brace yourself, have really long arms or just clutch onto the person standing next to you. Usually that last option doesn't work, what with the common fear of strangers. You're liable to receive a dirty glance or two just for bumping into someone, let alone hanging onto them for dear life. So what happens instead is the train reaches the station and everyone goes flying. It doesn't even matter if you're holding on because you'll just have someone knock into you who had nothing to keep his or her balance. It's ironic that the same person who is too paranoid to allow another person to hold onto them gets even more upset when someone loses their balance and crashes into them. Since I'm not quite in the mood, I remain in my orange 70s-designed seat and stay out of the dogfight that is taking place on the subway. Only four more stops to go anyway before we pull into the Chambers St. Station, so I might as well sit back and enjoy the least stressful moment I should have on my journey. I already know that the ferry will leave at seven and, conveniently, my train will arrive at 7:01. Every time I take the train to the ferry it

teases me like that, dangling the possibility before me until the 1 train sits in one of the tunnels outside the South Ferry stop. It's there that I'm always standing by the door, waiting for the train to start moving through the darkness and reach the station in time. It never ever does.

What I've noticed about myself is that when I'm sitting on the train for more than a couple of stops, I start trying to read the emotions and faces of everyone else around me. Unless someone is really standing out, my gaze turns to individuals who remind me of people I know; someone will end up reminding me of my dad, or a random teenager will resemble my sister. That's how it starts, anyway: after a bit I tend to focus on a select few for reasons that have no real connection to each other. Maybe someone is doing something rather bizarre that no one else has caught on to, or maybe someone is picking his or her teeth behind the shelter of a napkin. Oddities like that always happen in the city; it seems almost like a law that weirdoes and freaks have to frequent Manhattan. Heck, that's probably why I'm here. The second type of person to which I'm drawn are those who are expressing themselves emotionally, and the girl sitting across from me is doing just that. Somewhere, peeking behind the masses, I can see her, her head aimed downwards towards a personal hell that her face says she is facing alone. She looks like she is about ready to begin tearing, if her parents and sister weren't sitting there with her. What's funny is they are completely oblivious to it, and are



instead taking in the sight of the NYC subway system. I thought her family had never even seen a train before based on their expressions of amusement, but what is clear is this one girl isn't quite as gullible as her family. Maybe she has a fear of trains, maybe she just found out her sixteen year old boyfriend was cheating on her back home, maybe this is her attempt at crying out to her parents, only to have her prayer turn on deaf dumb ears.

Whatever her reasons, I feel bad for her. More than bad, I feel like I am connected to her, like I am sharing her melancholy. I want to walk up to her and say some vague message like "I understand" to her, something esoteric that only her and I would comprehend. That way maybe she won't feel like she is alone in this, that she is fighting something and the world hasn't cared. I want the world to care, but until that happens, I'll have to settle for myself caring, because deep down I know I do. With the train drawing closer and closer to my stop I stand up and push my way towards the door as bodies fight for the privilege to take my seat. The train starts to break, and one more time before the doors open I glance over my shoulder to share her sorrow one more time.

The blue glow of the lights above my head gives me enough to fight the darkness and attempt to read a newspaper I picked out of the top of a garbage pail. The top story is the Yankees' loss to the White Sox 2-1 in the tenth inning, and for whatever reason I'm just not interested in it. I look around to see if anyone is looking or if there are any cops before I drop the paper at my side, intending to leave it there when I eventually take the escalator back up to the waiting room for the ferry. I don't know what's taking it so long and I'm not in a rush but I'm feeling impatient anyway. Although I love the city, part of me can't wait to get the hell out of Manhattan. I didn't even have a particularly bad day; nothing terrible occurred, although

in retrospect nothing good happened either. I missed the afternoon thunderstorm while I was in a shop in Union Square, and although it's started to drizzle, a significant part of me is enjoying it. As the water drips off the fluorescent blue lights that spell out only "Staten Ferry," my mind can't help but backtrack to that girl on the train. She'll never know how I almost felt like she was feeling, how I was connecting. She's probably back home already, or she's returned to her hotel or wherever she was going, and I know she's probably still sulking. Her eyes told me that whatever it was, it wasn't something that could be solved in a day.

What her family and the people around her told her was that no matter what it was, she wasn't worth noticing. I walk towards the entrance of the Ferry terminal only to find myself turning to lean my back on one of the glass door's side panels. I felt horrible again, I felt like I was standing in the Chambers St. Station again staring into the empty black tunnel waiting for the lights of hope I knew were going arrive a minute too late. Today the tardiness of the train had almost had a new meaning to me. I wasn't angry or upset, I was anxious for it to arrive. I couldn't help but think of how it paralleled that girl, how she was waiting for someone to take notice. How she desperately wanted her father to care enough to see it. I wondered if there was such a thing as arriving a moment too late for something like that before I realized how it didn't matter; the odds were they were never going to notice the emotion that was spilling off her face if they hadn't felt it pouring over them during that train ride. She's had more than enough time to work on how she's going to save face and convince the world there never really was a problem in the first place. Still though, I start to feel better knowing that at least I cared enough to notice. I grab the door handle and open it, escaping the blue lights outside the Staten Island Ferry terminal.

Unfinished Story by Chris Williams

Originally written December 19, 1998

He walks along the stony path. Small pebbles roll underneath his feet and dry leaves crackle with every step. Before him, there stand the trunks of naked trees. Their gray bark shows their dormancy, for they await the command to bring forth life.

He proceeds along the winding bypass. The stark air is warmed slightly by the sun overhead. So dim is it in the sky that it looks like a candlelight against the gray background.

He enters a canopy of branches. Perched upon them are clusters of hopeful leaves, desperate to maintain their position above the path. A crisp wind starts to blow, singing into his ear as it passes. It runs through the clusters, goading them into applause. Reluctantly, they do clap. The wind blows harder. Leaves jump over and around his tired feet. Skinny weeds

dance back and forth, and give him offerings of white, fluffy seeds from their dusty heads. The applause grows louder and more intense. The flashes of red, yellow, and orange increase as the leaves move from light to shadow.

The revelry soon stops, and everything once again lays dormant. He exits the canopy. In the distance, he sees a sign. He remembers it.

The sign is ancient. He can tell by the thick ivy wrapped around its massive wooden supports. Through the moss, he can distinguish the message. Its intricate and weathered letters are of a language that he has never seen in his life, yet he understands its inviting greeting: "Welcome to the Land of the Dead."

My 90s

By Eddie Khaymovich



I remember when I was a little boy in Brooklyn, I would pass by this six-story apartment building when I walked home from the park with my friends and grandmother. I remember the air conditioners protruding from the first floor windows and that the rest of the window was usually caged off. As I walked by, I knew who was rich and who was poor. It was evident by whether the air conditioner existed or not. Every once in a while, I saw a face in the window, watching us.

I remember when summer started to turn into fall, and the warm evening breeze that we would feel before the sun even started setting, when the leaves on the ground slowly scurried

around, one after the other. It was almost always followed by an empty, lively sound. I knew that somewhere, fathers were playing basketball with their kids in the asphalt, caged-off garages that two houses shared. I knew that somewhere, there was a mother telling her kids to go inside, or trying to get her hyperactive children to put on a jacket, telling them that they'd get sick if they didn't. And I knew that in the deli on the corner of where P.S. 205 was the owner, a middle-aged Korean man, was looking mad and furious, suspicious of anybody that came close to him. It was said that he hated kids, yet I saw him bring his daughter to take piano lessons from my mom every week.

I remember walking silently alongside friends, cracking a joke every once in a while and sharing our life-long dreams of piloting robots, turning into superheroes or being in a rock band. These conversations were almost always ended with a Bill-and-Tedd-esque "Excellent!" and a three second session of air-guitar.

We were the typical 90s kids in the typical 90s city: torn jeans, flannel, and untamed hair; walking around and tossing a handball to each other; liberally talking about the Playboy magazines we'd looked at or the violent movies we'd seen.

In the park, we were a pack of wolves in a jungle of lambs (or a flock of birds in an ocean of squirrels, taking flight from the trees that the rest could only climb). Nobody messed with us. We ran from tree to tree, trying to defend robots from dying or fighting some Putty Monsters while morphing into our respective Power Ranger forms. Our grandmothers sat and watched, talking to each other, laughing. I always imagined that there was a princess in the sewer, and I was a prince that had to rescue her. Unfortunately, the manhole cover was always too heavy to move.

This, of course, followed the usual after-school activities we participated in: A-S-S-E-S-U-P in the very large school yard, a game which involved speed, good aim, good catching abilities, a handball, and a wall. Sometimes we would line up against the wall and throw the ball at each other, hoping not to get hit. Violent games were the only kind we knew. Everything else was too girly or childish.

Every day in school I would look forward to these activities. I sat and daydreamed about what I would do in the schoolyard that day and when I would go to the park to meet my best friend from a few blocks away (who unfortunately went to another school). While the science teacher discussed light and electricity, or while we learned how to divide and multiply, or even when we were reading short passages in long books (which I liked a lot), I daydreamed about my friend in a flying car, or turning into a Power Ranger. Somehow, it always turned into thoughts of what I would do that day.

I thought about this as we walked to the park as well. It seemed that imagination was more important than the real life we had. I imagined things that would happen, and when they did, I imagined them some more. These moments were always better in my mind (and I assume everybody else's as well) than when seen through our eyes and perceived through our brains.

After our usual activities, I would walk home with my grandmother, dirty and exhausted, hungrier than a carnivorous

rabbit with missing teeth, and happier than a mother whose baby got saved from a burning building. I knew that when we reached my grandparents' apartment, my grandfather would try to teach me chess or nag me about exercising, unaware of the workout I received while running from almost certain death if I didn't turn into a giant robot. I would read a *Goosebumps* book, first checking the last few pages to see if I would be satisfied. The ending was never important, but the middle was everything. Some time after that, I would do my homework. Later that day, my parents would pick me up and we would watch TV or talk about what we did that day. I would listen to my mother's stomach and hope that my brother would kick me in the face, showing me some sign that he knew I was there.

The next day was always the same, yet I always looked forward to it. I would either go to the park again, or maybe go straight home and do my homework and read. Maybe I'd go to judo, or maybe bike-riding with my dad (if he wasn't at work). Maybe I'd roller blade, or maybe my parents would visit Rita's parents. Maybe I'd go to my friend's house to play *Mortal Kombat* or to see his *Evil Ernie* cards. Maybe I would even go to the library with my grandfather.

Every once in a while, walking back with my grandfather from the library, it started to rain, and I remember passing by some school, picturing dragons flying around the top of it. I loved when it rained, it made me so sleepy in school. I just sat and daydreamed (as if it wasn't what I always did).

The rain was always slow and gloomy, casting a shadow over its innocent victims. At the same time, however, it was beautiful and happy. The slow rumbling of the thunder sounded like a hopeful song to me, bassy and powerful. I sat on the chair nearest the window at my grandparents' house, occasionally glancing towards the TV to catch episodes of *Darkwing Duck* that I'd already seen (needless to say that if Power Rangers were on, it would have my undivided attention). The raindrops were beautiful,

and I often wished I was outside in them. I slowly watched the puddles accumulate water and felt so alive. It felt as if I were watching my life, slowly learning more and more with each bit of knowledge dripped onto me.

I remember moving from Brooklyn, saying goodbye to my friends. And I remember thinking about how I'd turn out to be, where I'd be in a few years. I remember wondering how long we'd keep returning to Brooklyn for the weekends.

I remember when my friends moved away and how lonely I felt.

I remember the day we stopped coming to Brooklyn and how much I cried.

I remember slowly changing into who I am today.

And now I wonder, would I have turned out differently if I had stayed in Brooklyn? When all the Italians moved out and all the Russians moved in, what would have happened?

Life is a very weird thing, and to this day I'll look out the window when it rains, watching the wide puddles get even wider.

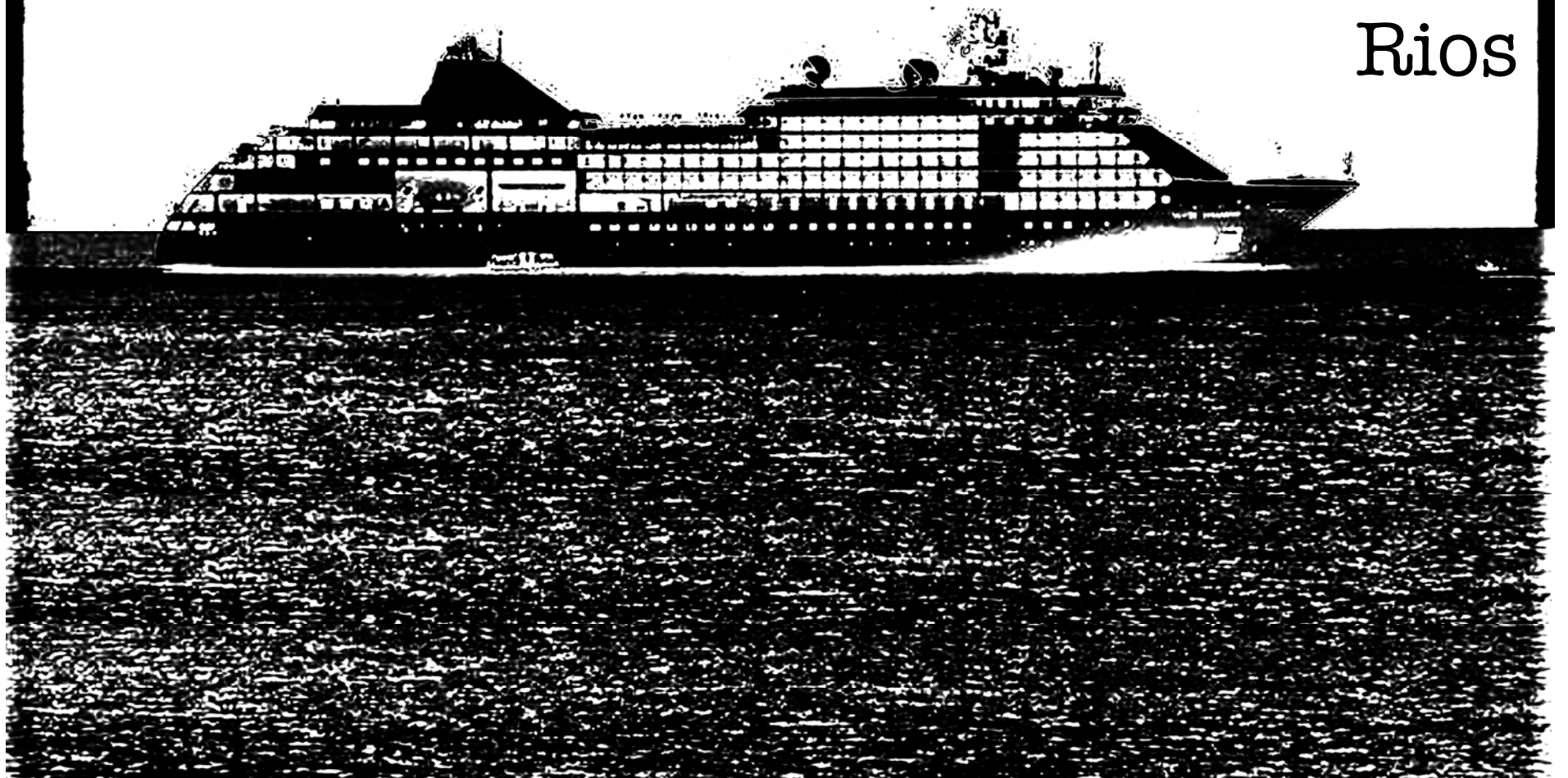
I try not to step on them, hoping never to disturb their slow and steady growth and their reflection of the world around them.

—
Eddie Khaymovich
<http://boogeymanxx.deviantart.com>



Epiphany

By
Joe
Rios



The cruise liner *Epiphany* was once the shining star of the Relaxing Days cruise company, but now, after 30 years of service to the fleet, the *Epiphany* was starting to show her age. In the early summer of 2009, the *Epiphany* would sail off on her final voyage, from California to Hawaii, and then to Japan, where passengers would fly home. The *Epiphany* would then make a short run to a shipyard in China, where the ship would be broken down and the materials recycled.

The *Epiphany* sailed from the port of Los Angeles on June 2nd 2009 and made its stop in Hawaii as scheduled. However, the *Epiphany* lost contact with Relaxing Days HQ during a storm and was lost, along with 600 passengers & crew.

Almost 8 months later the *Epiphany* was found, and the passengers and crew would be found, but their lives would be changed forever, leaving them to have to choose from the lives they once knew and the new ones they had formed. This is their story...

January 2009:

The *Epiphany* sat moored in San Francisco harbor; the moonlight made the water glisten. Captain Walsh was standing at the front of the ship, taking a puff of his pipe. In one hand he held his pipe; in the other, a piece of paper crumpled in his hand. Commander Jenna Visconi walked up to him, calling to him as she approached. "We're ready to set off, Captain: the passengers are all aboard, and the engine room reports ready to sail.

We're green lights across the board."

The captain didn't respond. He just stood there, smoking his pipe. Visconi asked, "Are you okay sir? We're ready to set off. I just need your command." The captain turned around and handed the crumpled piece of paper to Visconi as he dumped out the contents of his pipe. He started rubbing the stubble on his face as he said to the commander, "We're done, Jenna. That came today from HQ; we're being decommissioned. Our final voyage sets out in June." Visconi asked, "What are you going to do sir?" "Well," Walsh replied, "I think it's time I retire. I've been working on this boat since the day she first set sail. I started off as a deckhand, and worked my way up to captain. I'm almost 50 now, and I think it's about time for a change anyways."

The captain buttoned up his jacket and started to smile. "We have a job to do, Commander – let's get to it." The captain headed to the bridge and picked up the phone. A voice on the other end picked up: "Engine room here." Walsh said, with a voice of pride, "Make ready to set sail, tell the deck hands to cut us loose." The captain keyed the microphone to the PA and began speaking.

"This is Captain Jack Walsh speaking. We are about to set sail in a few moments. Get comfortable and take some time to unwind before dinner tonight. You will find that this is a ship where dreams can come true if you want them to. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride. Welcome aboard the *Epiphany*."

—
Epiphany, and its sister story *THE TEMPLE OF PSYRIS* are both available for viewing, and are regularly updated at www.zaziestudios.com.



So You Want To Be A Journalist (Based On A True Story)

by Sam Goldman

We're both really hungry, and as such, the first thing we do when we sit down is wordlessly scan our menus, even though it won't bring us food any faster. Eventually, I decide not to get creative, and instead take my usual – a Boston roll, a spicy tuna roll, and a shrimp tempura roll. She takes a little longer than I do, but eventually puts down the menu with a satisfied grin, and starts to stare at me. "So, Sam, what have you been up to? It's been so long since we've seen each other."

"It has," I agree. "What, five years?" I take a sip of my water. "Well, I'm working at a local newspaper, doing a bunch of things, some reporting, some graphics and layout, some proofreading. You know, journalism."

And then it happens. The stock reaction: first, the quizzical expression, as if she's a T-800 attempting to process new information. Then a thin smile, and the payoff: "Well, that's... nice."

In many ways, I understand. How often do you hear people say they want to do journalism when they grow up?

Everyone wants to be a lawyer, or a doctor, or an astronaut or something. Nine-year-olds dreaming of being the next Murrow simply don't exist. It's just something you fall into. But it doesn't make my heart hurt any less when I see that thin smile and that goddamn word that is always described to use my profession: "nice."

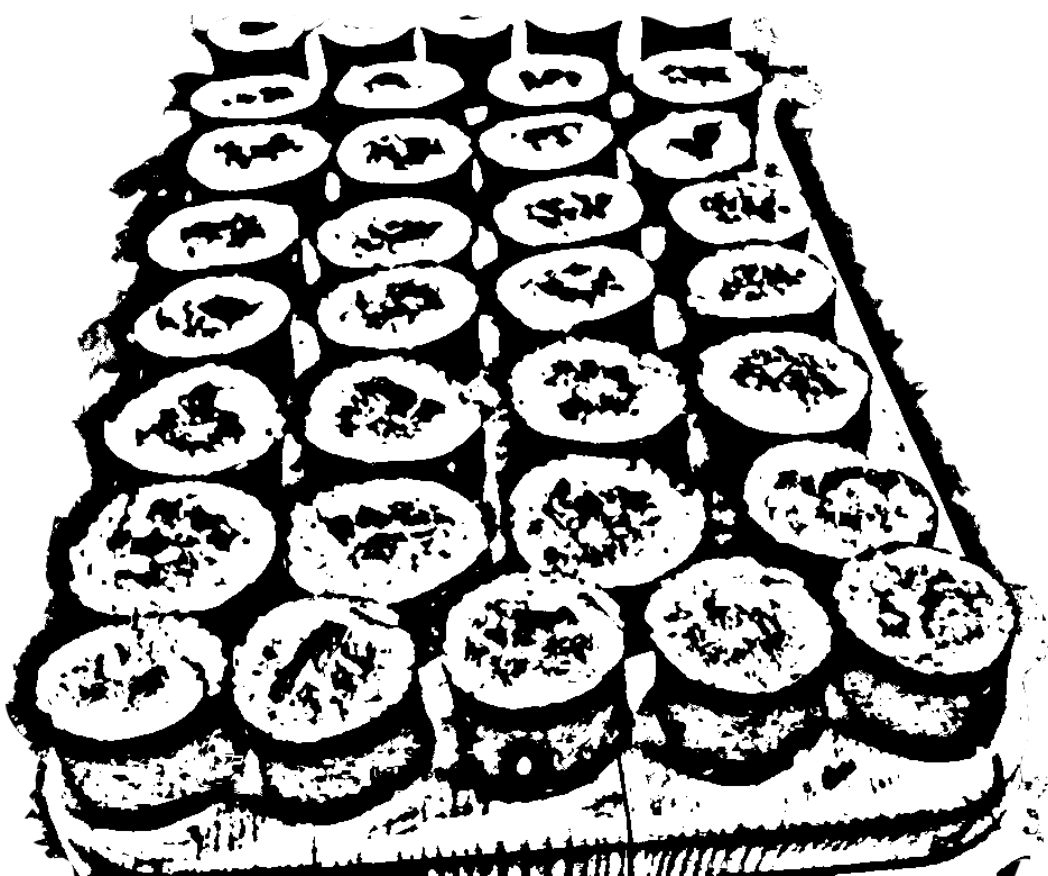
"Wait, what happened to computer programming?" she asks. It's a legit question. "Well, you know, after I transferred, I kind of decided that I didn't want to look at a computer screen all day typing stuff most people can't understand." This I know to be a complete bullshit answer, seeing as I spend most of my day looking at a computer screen anyway. Fact is, I sucked at programming, and writing has always been one thing I could do reasonably well. Little did I know it would be the one thing. My nervousness begins to grow; I begin to wonder when my sushi is coming.

In the meantime, I ask about her recent life. I am legitimately interested, but the fact that I don't have to talk about myself is a definite plus. She seems to be

doing well, making good money at an architectural firm. Somehow she's able to afford a small place in Hamilton Heights. She spends most of her spare time hitting local bars, including McSorley's, a personal favorite of mine, and smoking copious amounts of pot. Our sushi comes over, and I quickly ask the waitress for an Asahi.

"So...journalism, huh?" Dammit. "What are you gonna do with it? I mean, what're your plans for the future?" Luckily, I have an answer for this one. "Well, I'm planning to work here for a couple of years, and hopefully move on to bigger and better things." "Like what?" Well, I explain, my dream is to run my own weekly newspaper, like the one I worked on in college. All of a sudden, she seems genuinely impressed, which makes me feel much more at ease. And as I slowly open up and get to talking more and more about how I envision the rest of my life, I realize that I had nothing to be nervous about. I begin to tell my usual armada of terrible jokes. She rips off a list of her favorite bars. We reminisce about the summers we spent together, when we were young kids waiting for the ice cream truck to roll around. I regret ordering the Asahi for a second, then I stop thinking about it altogether.

"You know..." she mumbles, looking at her tuna roll, "I feel so self-conscious." Now it's my turn to stare in confusion. "Your life seems so cool. I just sit around and design office buildings all day." Almost against my will, my mouth begins to curl upward, and before I know what's going on, I hear myself say, "well, it seems...nice..."



The Fantastic Adventures of FES

Issue 1: Doomed by Dice!

By Caboose

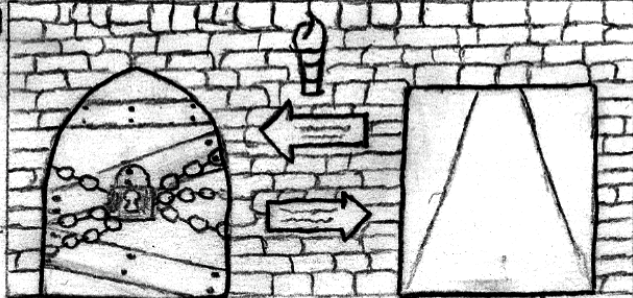
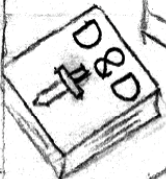
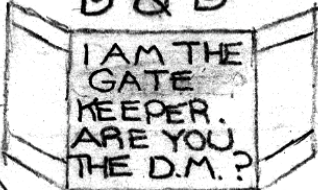
AKA: John
O'Dell

In the Super Secret
Basement FES Hideout...



Our heros are transported
magically into a game
of...

D & D



Seriously... you
heard gold. That's
so jew of you
Douche.

Fuck

See! I told
you! You're a
Jew!

Caboose. I'm so
killing you and
stealing your
stuff.

Meanwhile

Ha! Ha! Ha!
Die pitiful noobs!
Hit possible crit!



Shit... of God Shit... Shit...

Will FES escape from the
cackling mystery fiend? Find
out soon!

By William Lewis



Fool

By William Lewis



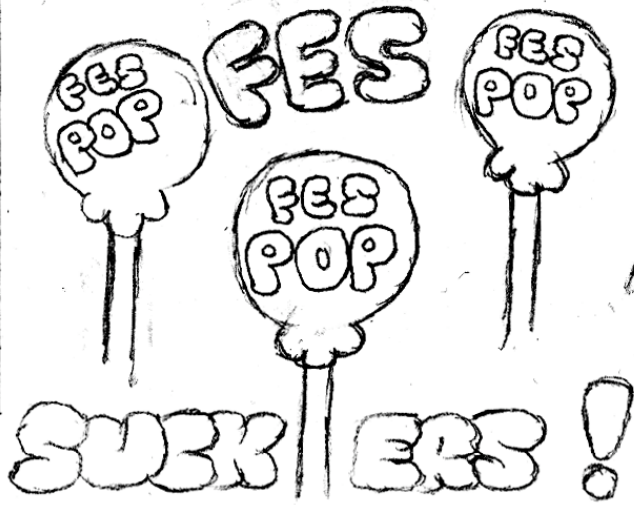
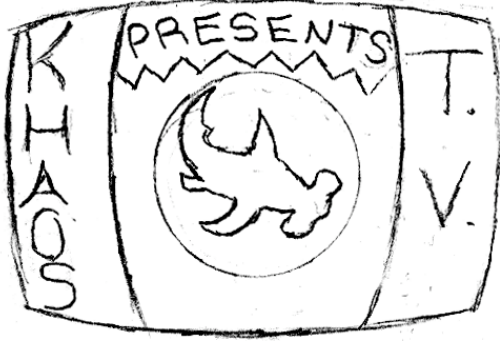
Magician

A FES PSA

By

CABOODLE

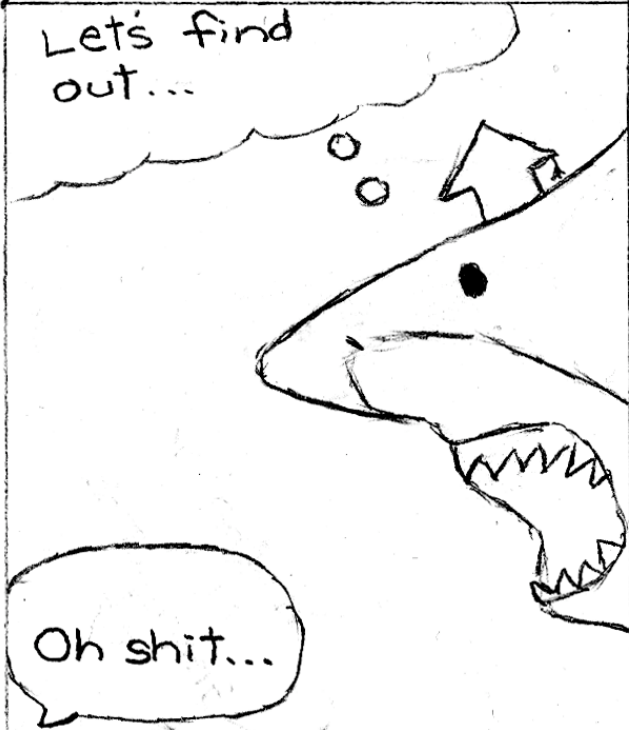
AKA:
John
O'Dell



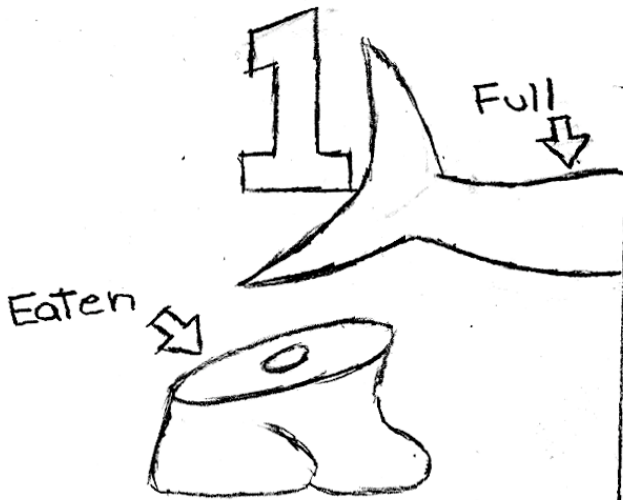
Mr. Shark, how many bites does it take to get to the center of a FES Sucker?



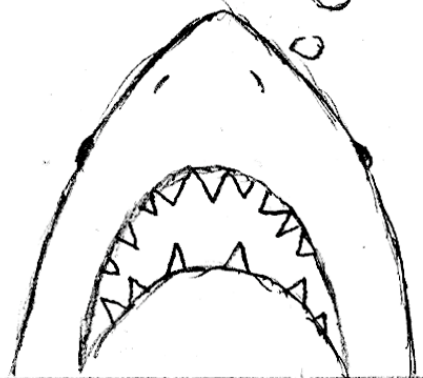
Let's find out...



Oh shit...



I never made it without biting.



By William Lewis



High Priestess

Gallery: Sabrina Frank



untitled



untitled

struggle for utterance

take take everything from me 3



you made me realize



so cold

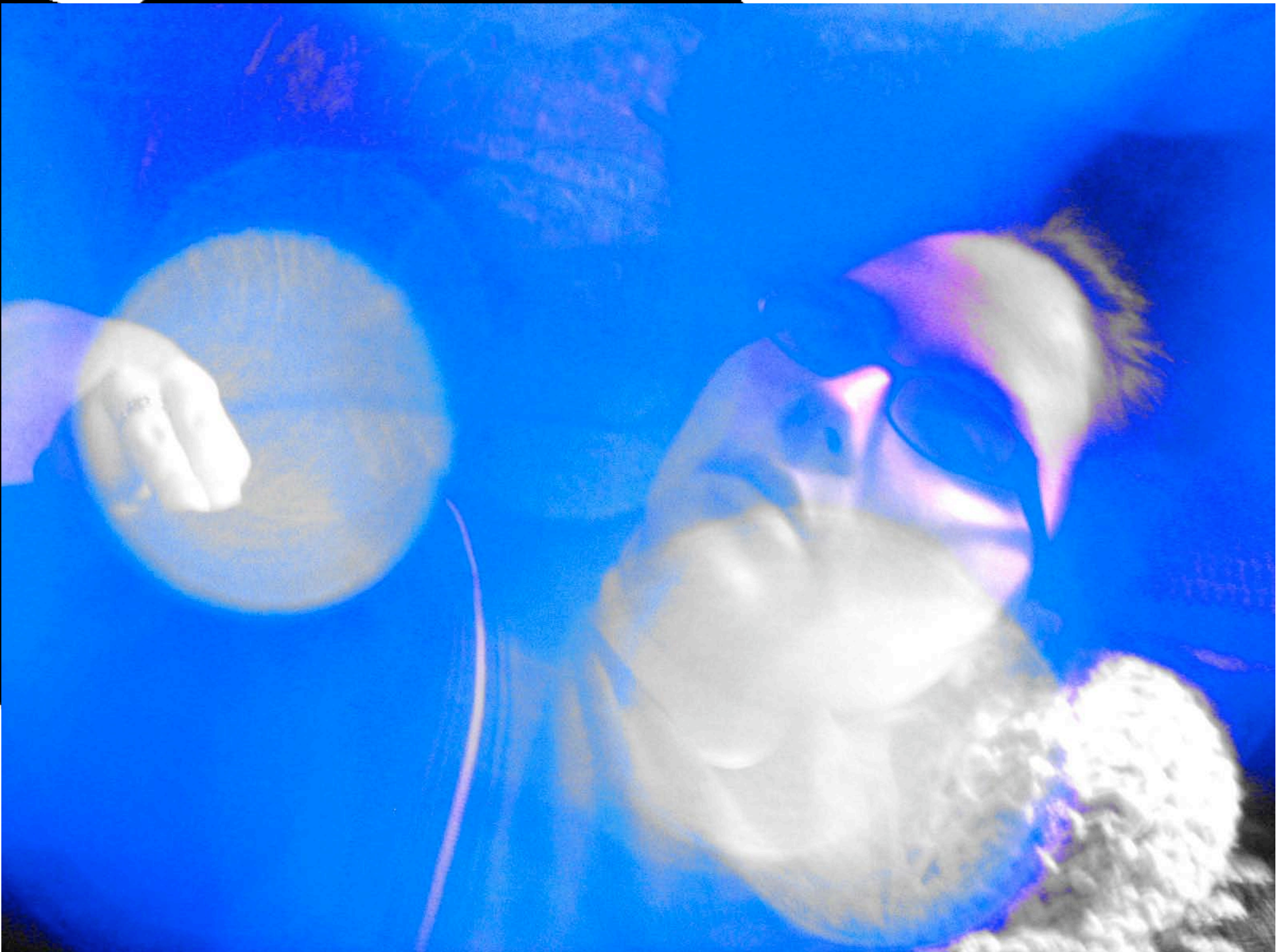




This Way by Gina Farber



Lighting a Cigarette by Christopher Di Niso



The Blue Dawn by Christopher Di Niso

SORCERY 101



Kel "Kell Hound" McDonald is a student at the Savannah College of Art and Design, also known as SCAD. Kel is a writer and artist, making the webcomic *Sorcery 101*. The above comic started as a class assignment using pre-made dialogue. Kell Hound's webcomic is available for viewing on the prestigious Internet at <http://sorcery101.comicgenesis.com/>



Lovers



Chariot

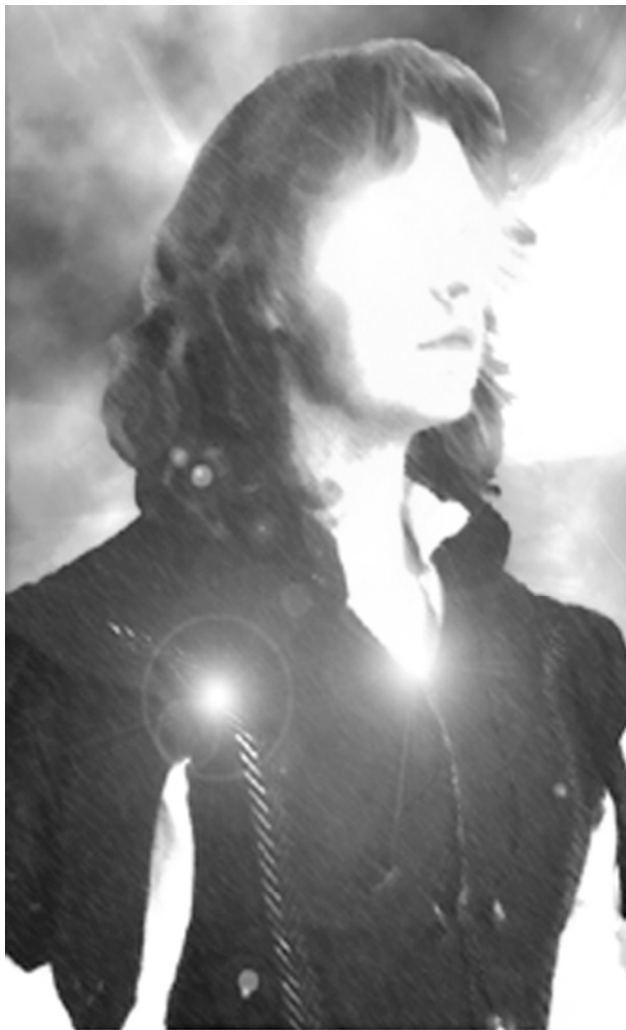


Justice

Gallery: William Lewis



Empress



Emperor



Hierophant

Layover

From the diary of Jeffrey Richardson. Transcribed by David K. Ginn, with extra assistance provided by the Massachusetts Institute for Anthropological Study. Special thanks to both the MIAS and the London Auctioneers and Antiques Coalition, without whom this wouldn't be possible. Also thank s to Jim for arranging the initial meeting that gave me the opportunity to do something as big as this. Special thanks to Dr. Ellis for reminding me that the really good equipment only exists on Cold Case Files. Without you, I'd still be w orking on it.

This transcription is dedicated to Mrs. Enita Richardson. Your son's teac hings have inspired many to live and explore life in a way they would have never done. This was his last writing.

Note: on the inside cover of the book there was one word written diagonally across the bottom. It said "La yover??". It w as probably the first thing he wrote, reflecting his frustration at the current state of affairs. I have aptly named this article as such because I believe it most accurately describes the situation he was in.

February 11

This place is new. I'm almost positiv e the ship's tak en us to the wrong island. I argued with the captain for what seemed like hours. Needless to say, I don't muc h care for that fellow. I've e bunked in my quarters for the night. It should be warm enough with the extra blankets.

February 12

I saw Enry and Joel this morning at breakfast. It's still midda y, and if I stare at another map of water I swear I'll loose m y mind. Writing releases my frustrations. That's good, because I almost lost my temper (again) with the damn captain. He says (or at least I think) that we're not far from where we need to be. The turnaround from last night's " We're at the right place" pleased me, although not nearly enough. Once I find out where we've e landed I have a mind to take the boat and get us back on course myself.

Oh well. I suppose this will at least make a nice entry in the book. Maybe we'll g et lost again, and we can file it under "adv enture". Considering the enormous popularity of m y first book (HA!) I'm sure it'll do just fine.

NOTE: While it's still fresh on mind... FIND A NEW EDITOR.

My only hope is that the obnoxious use of caps in the diary will draw my attention upon review- ing it later. Giggling now. A bit of self-reflexive humor is nice in such a fix. Indeed, there must be something that can be said about that. Ha, passive voice! It must not be that important after all. Giggling again. No need to worry, though. Diaries are for the jokes and humor that might cause others to think less of you. Here I am, alone in the crappy ship. The walls can't talk, but I daresa y a diary can! When I get back to the mainland I'm sure I'll read this and begin think that I am not as funny as I'd e ver thought I was.

The blonde woman is quite attractive. I catch myself glancing at her when we're both in the common area, and I will say that she's c harming. Charles, the camera man, told me his fellow crew were top-notch. He says they all do their respective duties, and then they go beyond. That's ex actly what I'm looking f or. Heavens, if I could only remember the girl's name.

(later)

How should I not to myself how much time has passed between entries? Recording the time seems a bit self-indulgent, doesn't it? I suppose the whole idea of a diar y is self-indulgent. Remember that one.

Enry and Joel are asking me questions I don't ha ve the answers to. They're sharp kids, and

they know when something's gone from being a minor setback to being a situation that needs immediate attention if it's to change for the better. I will be speaking to the captain again tonight.

(later)

I don't know what the noise is. At least three people asked me, as if I were somehow a composite of all knowledge. I'm a bloody anthropologist, not a walking encyclopedia. Perhaps if I knew where we were I'd be able to figure out what the strange sound is. Damned fool. He takes us to a God-forsaken little shitpile and expects us to give him a full report on the natural habitat. If it's supposed to be a joke it's not a very funny one.

Dana. That's her name. I'm writing it down because I am currently sipping my third glass of Crown Royal and cola. Self-inspiring note: I'm proud of my taste in drinks.

Post-scriptum note: Lime. Must remember to bring Lime next time.

February 13

Why does it feel like there are giant men on a spelunking expedition inside my skull? I'd get drunk again to deal with it if not for the bullshit I have to do today. I got real excited last night when I thought I heard the engines roll. Turns out it was just my head spinning.

NOTE: You're out of Crown Royal. Check in the cargo pantry later.

(later)

That noise again. It sounds like moaning. It's frightening. We're all inside once again, scared like little mice. I'd go out there again but it's just not worth it. Every place has its own unique feel; this is no different.

Mack's the videographer. He's a good guy. Pleasant, at least. He doesn't take shit from the captain, though. Maybe that's why I like him. Thinking about filming some of our unwanted landscape before dusk. Wonder if he'll be up for it.

(later)

The bushes move. Islands are breezy, I know, but it was still eerie to watch. We heard shuffling in the jungle patch. Definitely animals here. Joel says he can't tell what kind based on the environmental data we have. If we're going to be stuck here for a few days more it might not hurt find out.

Dana complained it was cold. She was right. If she were my student I would have told her to be tough. But the poor girl, she was out there holding that bloody boom mic for over two hours. My arms hurt just watching her.

Tomorrow is Valentine's Day. I will celebrate by becoming absurdly intoxicated.

February 14

Head doesn't hurt this morning. Bottle isn't empty this morning, either. The pantry had my Crown R., just as I'd hoped. Stayed up late last night looking over maps and playing the audio in my quarters. There's something odd about the sounds, something that doesn't seem right. Will figure it out later.

Going to return tapes to the blonde girl. Dana. I knew I wrote it down for a reason. Perhaps she'll join me tonight for dinner in the common area. We're stuck in the same place, so we might as well enjoy a dinner on St. V's day.

(later)

She's as bored as I am. Yes, I'm laughing again. I wish Joel had his s.o. on the ship so we

could all dine together. No bother. It'll give us a chance to talk about the tapes in private. There's something off about them. She'll know.

Hope she likes C.R.

(later)

Enry and Joel are going over data. Mack's nagging me to go outside and film some more. Everyone seems to have forgotten about the little problem of us not being in the right place. Oh well. Charles is nothing short of a master at composition. If these rather crude film clips are any sign of the film crew's capabilities I may have to start thinking documentary. That is, if we ever get off this jungle-sprouted sand pile.

(later)

Writing this down while it's still fresh on my mind. Talked to Dana. Everything went well. The tapes are eerie.

I saw her in her room. This is where I start wishing this diary had a lock on it. I went to her room early so we could walk to the common together. I couldn't tell if she was there or not, so I looked casually through the bit of space near the door before knocking.

She was laying a button-down shirt on the bed. It was purple. She wore it later. Call me crazy, or just call me a bit mad from two weeks on a boat and three days on a crappy shore, but my feet were grounded. I let the guilt hit me beforehand so that I wouldn't hate myself later.

I should note that I am a very bad person.

Oh, bloody hell. I barely saw anything, anyway. She was wearing a white T and khakis, like always. She changed into a black skirt. Bloody sue me for being curious.

For the record she has a fabulous body. I am sure I'll be thinking about it for a great while. If I don't go crazy here I have the image of her pale body to thank for it. It may just tie me down to sanity.

Now that I have done nothing in the way of relieving my guilt, I suppose I'll jot down what I know about the sounds.

1. They're animal. Of some sort.
2. They're not rhythmic, and they're random.
3. Might not be collective. Maybe they are. Hard to tell.
4. Some of it is human.

It scares me to think about it, even now, but I must admit I've never heard of something like it before. It's almost as if there are bits of human moaning embedded among the loud noise. It might just be my imagination. It's certainly not the CR. Asking Enry about pitches and tone variations tomorrow.

Dinner went well, by the way. Managed to keep my mind off you-know-what until we parted ways. She's a very bright young lady and it comforts me to know she was just as frightened by the tapes as I was.

I suppose I'll fulfill my St. V promise to myself and then pass out comfortably on the bunk. Probably think about you-know-what. Bloody hell if I'm not entitled to do so.

February 15

Still awake. What the bloody bloody hell is noise? Cold and many drinks to keep keep warm. Close eyes for little bit.

(later- how much I'm not sure... insomnia and time make uneven)

(later)

This diary has gone completely to- dare I say- shit. It's not that bad, I suppose. I just hate errors.

I couldn't sleep last night. The noise... it didn't keep me up by itself. But thinking about it- thinking about it kept me up. I slept for a few hours. My head hurts something terribly awful. I'm not hearing any sounds from the crew yet. I don't even know what time it is. Perhaps

late

Am scared. Not knowing what happened. Loud banging, thought I heard scream- not man's. No one to talk to. Writing down what I hear. I believe it's helping me relax. Feeling like a scared little man, really. Cooped up in closet with metal door. Luckily there's a light in here. Can write and see enough to write.

(later)

This is officially the worst day of my entire life. I've taken a walk around the ship. It took all the courage I could muster to come out of the closet, let alone leave the room. It was lonely. There was no one but me. I could hear them, though. I could hear their voices. They were talking, and crying. It was as if they were right there, right in front of me. I thought I felt their cold- I thought I felt touch on my shoulder. They're there but they're not there. Outside feels colder. Cold like their touch. It is not safe to be outside.

Planning on drinking more CR. It will calm me.

later

Been dying to write this down. Joel is back. Came in from outside. He's asleep now. His face is cut on the left side. Don't know what happened to him. He is bruised. The banging has started again. I am not afraid of it this time. It can go on if it wants to.

later

Captain has plan, apparently. First mate- Louis is his name, or maybe I'm wrong. Hard to say right now. Captain is scared, too. In storage room with others. My quarters have been destroyed. Can not describe it here. Now. It had a body like smoke. Smoke pushed like curtains... made shapes. Not known what shapes. Joel is sleepyhead still. Haha. Indeed.

Febr 16

Must be early morning. Dana took my arm and fell asleep- is next to me now. I am saner than them because I am writing. Only seven of us. Took count before. Where other people are- don't know. Crew gone, but a few. Liked Mack a lot. Probably not alive. Don't know what happened to him. Miss the smell of bacon in the morning. Want to wear my pajamas again. She said the feet were so adorable, so adorable it made her cry. Miss the face of my mother. Wish I could see her. Miss the smell of morning. There is no smell here but that which we have brought with us.

(later)

I am not a brilliant prodigy.

(later)

It came at him. It stabbed him in his chest. What would do that? It was not a man in cloak. Was dark beneath brown. Looked like monster. He brought death with him on a small dark cloud. Makes me think of Easter.

There was a tail- where does a tail come from??? There are no tails! It must be against the rules. The rules of what. The rules of nature. Cloaks- no. Cloaks and tails. Where do they get off? I think I missed my stop.

(later)

I found the monster. It's in my head. It's always been there. It is hungrier hungrier now. My skull is hard and will keep it inside.

(sometime)

Feel better now. We pulled a blanket over the captain. Still don't know his name. Never will. Why had it happened? The man in the cloak has not returned.

Feb?

So we shall hide. Wait for it to get us again. There is the sound like a giant bird above us. It has made its perch upon our ship.

Heh. All the Crown Royal in the world. We shall drink again, and we shalln't stop until the job is complete. There are a lot of boxes back here. Storage rooms are odd places.

(bit later)

I have a feeling I will not get to my destination. It is for the better. I find that I have no desire to publish my material again. I have found the core of writing here, at what point I can't define. It's passion. Passion is the world's fire. My practicality has vomited sand and muddy water on the fire. I am half of a person, or none at all.

(time, the shackle we built and blamed on nature)

I have taken to my passion. I made her drink the drink and then I took hold of her body. She was a willing soul. Her mouth was like pure passion mercury on my lips. She bit down hard and took me fiercely. She has the body like a sweating angel. Her grip is tight and she pinned my ankles down to the cold floor with the heels of her feet. She took me into her like no other has ever been. I can not recall if it was a dream or a passing hour of drunkenness. Either way I care not.

If I am dead it feels more like life than life itself ever had.

(

My head is hurting again. Was not a dream. Women do not wake up next to you wearing nothing but birthday robe after dream. Cannot remember much. Reading above makes me quiver with excitement.

(late?)

I have decided to burn my degree when I return to England. I will not study something I have never been a part of. They breathe fire in their basements, and in their huts, and in their underground clubs. When they forage in the jungle, or when the little man says to obey him and burn God at the stake. They breathe the fire over which the cross is built.

I am noticing now that there are less people in this room.

February?

Weeks, maybe. Could be days. Charles is dead. I saw it happen, although I can't go into detail

in fear that I will snap again. I put my book away and said I was cured. I most emphatically am not.

The smoke grew a giant mouth like that of a misshapen wolf. He was standing up and playing charades. We thought we were safe, it had been so much time.

It did not want him. With its bleeding smoke-fused jaws it grabbed him by the neck. He went two separate ways. I hid behind the boxes as far away as I could. I held Dana there in my arms and pretended I was hiding to save her. Neither of us can think about making (love?) – what does that mean? Neither of us can think about it. I am worried now. We are not safe here.

Feb 30?? - ((28, 29?)) +2__ -7... = Mar? Maybe.

I am more scared now than I have ever been in my life. I am staring right at it. It is staring right back at me.

Mar 4??

She is laying right next to me as I sit here against the wall. I want to make love to her, but she's dead.

Had her head not been bludgeoned I could still look upon her in admiration. Now it is a bloody and misshapen reminder of death. I can feel its cold hand graze my shoulder. It is colder now. Cold like the skin of her body.

Mar

Made way into freezer. Joel says his leg is shot. He can't walk on it anymore. We agree there must be a way to get out of here. It must be done soon. We have to get out. I cannot stay here anymore. We must go. We must go now. It is far past the time we should have broken out. Going now is the only option.

(time is not here, only we)

Joel says I had gone crazy in storage room. Says infection in leg maybe make him see??? See what?? Damned if I know. Says corpse was dead. Not know what he means. Crazy from infection. Leg is black. Must go, don't know how. Leg must go first. Not know how to take it gone.

Feeling fine self. No infect but maybe mind. Cold is making me see nothin. Cannot breathe in air. Lungs popsicles, feeling almost... Pen nothin write- ink is colder. Frozen in tip. nother pen works. Write more. Sleep.

(tired of laying in the sunshine, stauing staying home to watch the rain)

Life is lonely. Time to kill today. The monsters have come back. They will not let us to leave. They are eating pieces of the dead. Their jaws are jagged with flesh and torn clothing. They go for the side first. The ribs- they bite in and pull. Heads tilt up. It is like nothing I have ever seen before. Animals, maybe. Animals in the wild.

(does anybody really care, about time?)

going NOW

when now?

measure side of room

7-2... +6? 6y...

2y7???

6-4. 2? 1 1 1 1 1 1?

2'? 5in, ma yb???

M?

what's m?

don't kno w in like you do

oh. don't kno w. why measuring?

Escape now. Need to know where

when do they stop?

Different each time. Meas again

checked meas. what does it matter?

GRAB IT!!!

k sorry

can't under stand motions with hand???

sorry. leg hurts. not thinking like should

QUIETLY!!! this move- this move = quiet! Watching?

scared. don't kno w what to do

no. will not.

Watch my fingers

can't do this

watch. Wait for 3

oh shit oh no

i tried i'm sorr y

they heard they're coming

throw book away think it's onl y noise not plan

no book stays

throw it away won't let y ou get me KILLED

let go of it

they are here

(late-

They knew how to take it. Infection is gone. Took other leg too. Didn't have to do that. He is still here with me. I caused him to be killed, I know it. He is laughing at me right now. I can feel his cold toes running across my shoulders. It's cold- like my lungs.

(lat

I feel the monster's breath on my skin. It hurts but it's like passion. I beg it to eat more.

I can feel the warmth on my throat. it was his long nail. it was so quick, so beautifully quick... like tearing a hole in a bag. It is a comfort to know my blood is still warm.

(pale horse, pale rider)

I feel the monster. It is definitely not inside me. It is here. Soon I will be inside it. And my blood will taste like alcohol... it might- it might warm the beast's soul-

I am not the prodigy. I am not the pr

Reuben Sandwich

By James Messina

As I lazily tilted my head one afternoon, I discovered that I was immortal. I had slashed my wrists with a razor, and I watched as my blood pooled in the cracks of the bathroom's tile grout. What was initially a sharp pain had become a dull ache, and then a gentle throb. I closed my eyes...

I awoke the next day in my bed, a stray beam of sunlight rousing me. I yawned, stretched, and then sat bolt upright. I dashed to the bathroom, only to discover nothing was amiss. Not one errant stain that hadn't been there before. I brought my trembling arms before my eyes to discover them unmarred. It was as though nothing had changed.

The next hour I was consumed with the desire to ascertain what had happened to me. I found that Time had marched on within my apartment and without it, my computer's calendar shifting seamlessly from Friday to Saturday, leaving me unaware of the development. Perhaps more disturbingly, there was no indication whatsoever as to what had happened in the hours between my death and my mysterious resurrection. I tore through the apartment like a dervish, discovering lost remotes, decaying bags of snacks, and a veritable mountain of spare change. These clues, unsurprisingly, didn't aid me. The scope of my enquiries quickly dawning on me, I performed a last cursory investigation. My frenetic zeal diminished quickly thereafter, and resignation inhabited my limbs and filled me with torpor. Deciding it was futile to investigate further, I stepped outside onto my balcony, and lit up a cigarette. A bitter laugh escaped me. "If at first you

don't succeed..." I chuckled, and I slumped against the bricks.

In what I concede to be an extremely stupid decision, I dropped out of college with less than a year remaining to my degree. My mother died before the summer break of my junior year, after a short but vicious battle with cancer. My finals grades were, needless to say, horrendous. Most of my professors made allowances and extensions for me upon learning of my circumstance, but they warned me that my final grade was to be commensurate with my effort. I heard them, and I understood, but though I could recognize the problem in my wooden state, I couldn't correct it. Studies seemed unimportant in comparison to my recent tragedy, and I spent my days in a mélange of bitterness and confusion. The final week or two of school drifted quickly by like stormclouds. I took my tests, I failed my tests, I returned home.

Somewhere after the conclusion of the break's first month, my girlfriend Elisa and I broke up. She claimed I wasn't the same person I had been, that I had been drained of my spark, and that though she had been patient with me, she needed something more. All these things were true, and thusly I didn't raise my voice to interject. I accepted our separation with a detached calm while she railed and sobbed. She left me.

The next months were interminable. My father was a broken man, more so than I. Where I ignored my problems with apathy, my father ignored them with drink. He wasn't violent, he

wasn't intruding, but he wasn't himself. Having to arrange our finances so soon after her passing killed him inside, and neither stodgy accountants nor I provided him solace. The bottle didn't seem to comfort him either, but it let him stop feeling, which I think he wanted. I had never been as close to him as I had been to my mother, and without our accustomed intermediary, we were at a loss as to how to approach one another, in any respect. I wanted to help him, I wanted him to help me, but we had spent too long without having to do so. We would pass each other in the kitchen and hallways in the manner of two cats, each aware of the other, but maintaining aloofness.

In the effort to come to grips, my father and I attended one counseling session, then withdrew. The experience wasn't healing, but painful and alien. The counselor's practiced reassurance felt insincere, his office contrived. The counselor was fat and reminded me of a teddy bear; I blamed him for being calculating in this as well. Every bit of minutiae delicately arranged to comfort us and make us feel secure only roused our suspicion and ire. When the session was over, we quickly filed out. We looked at each other, and in that look was the deepest communication we had had since her demise.

The time remaining until fall passed slowly, a pall of darkness hanging over me and draining me of vigor. I saw my friends perhaps a handful of times in the following months, each time less awkward than the last while still remaining too awkward by far to be labeled "comfortable". My friends seemed to realize I wouldn't be back to normal, and they couldn't have me as I was. The



friends that made efforts to help me discovered I had no tolerance for their ministrations, and they were brushed aside summarily. Having no place with them any longer, my friendships dissolved – to the relief of most of them and the grief of one or two.

Eventually, summer ended, school began. Deciding a semester off wasn't the thing to do, I returned for my senior year. I drowned myself immediately in my work, studying at a feverish pace. Unfortunately, I pulled ahead to the point that I was more than a week in advance in most of my classes. I fell under the impression that I could afford to allow myself a little laxity. I decided to take a week to unwind, that I needn't do anything besides show up to hand in some homeworks. Of course, the first moment of idleness rekindled my melancholy.

Three weeks passed. At one point in that stretch, I hadn't left my room for four days, and I hadn't showered in five. Things were looming ominously on the horizon, major projects and presentations, and still I hadn't begun to work. The projects came and went, group members were snubbed, and still I didn't begin work. I officially left the first week of November, having been gone much longer than that in every way that mattered.

A few more weeks passed, and mundane reality overtook me; I was forced to find work. A half-finished college term left me eminently qualified to stock shelves on a night shift. Though I can't say I greeted the prospect with enthusiasm, there was little choice. College debts were already becoming an issue, and my father couldn't handle everything.

The first day of work was training. In truth, the entirety of the first two weeks was really training, as I learned of protocols, procedures, and politics. Subsequent to learning the essentials, I settled into routine. I discovered that the work was lonely and monotonous – and thusly I was well-suited to it. As I stocked shelves for hours with nothing but light rock and top 40 hits to accompany me, I had a lot of time to sort things out in my head. I resigned myself to the work, and even volunteered overtime on several occasions. Things weren't look-

ing up, per se, but they no longer seemed as bad.

It was then I discovered a peculiar trick had been played on me. I had been employed for the holiday rush. Once that had subsided, my hours were cut down drastically. Confronted with this, I was forced to seek work again. I found a second job at the local mall's toy store, a job I found I enjoyed much less than the other. I began working in two places at once, finding my enthusiasm halved between them. I worked sometimes 60 or more hours in a week, but much of that was spent wasted. Every day I showed up seemed worse than the one preceding it, and every day I didn't was just biding time.

Having extra time on my hands was hardly the reason I attempted suicide. I just couldn't see the point of going on. Life gets pretty monotonous pretty fast when you're working as often as I was for as little gain. Rationalizing a successful (sort of) suicide is something I suspect no one has had to do before, and this isn't a task I'm doing well in. Suffice it to say, my reasons were there. Subsequent to a week or two's sleepless nights, full of misgivings, second thoughts and rumination upon consequences, I came to a decision, the result of which you should be able to infer.

I finished smoking the cigarette and I returned to the apartment. My bitterness at my enigmatic botched suicide had wafted away with the curling smoke to be replaced with wonder. I wasn't sure what had happened the night before, but I was willing to experiment. After all, my revelation had been made in a suicide attempt, and I still planned on a future success; my life was forfeit, and I was desirous of testing the nature of my continued existence. As the clock struck 4, I decided on a course of action. I climbed the stairs to the roof of my building.

It was a cold day, and that high up the wind howled fiercely. I stepped cautiously onto the ledge, only to laugh at my own prudence. I practically danced a jig there, surrounded by the swirling winds, to spite Death and bite the hand that fed me, as it were. I took a deep

breath and stepped off the ledge, shouting with joy and fear in a strained voice. Masonry whizzed past, asphalt and concrete leaped forward...

It was 10:42 am.

10:42 am, it was 10:42 am, where it had been at the latest 5 pm yesterday the last I could recall. The first occurrence hadn't been a fluke. I was filled with exultation. For whatever reason, I could not die. The details of this arrangement I declared irrelevant, the nature of it I declared indeterminate. My suicidal urges had been mollified, to be replaced with sentiments of the exact opposite nature. The sheer absurdity of my situation affected me greatly.

The subsequent days were the happiest I'd had since my mother's passing. I leapt from danger to danger with reckless abandon, reveling in narrow escapes and turbulent adventures, disregarding any impediments. I drank frequently, I took drugs there probably aren't even names for. I picked fights, ones I could win and ones I couldn't, sober or stoned. I dashed into traffic, I leapt from bridges, and I crashed my car into a tree. Once, I ran around the city with a paintball gun. A police officer shot me. I had been sure it didn't resemble a real gun, but apparently he less so.

Over the course of these experiments, as I have stated, Time continued its impartial forward motion. Messages piled up on my machine, blandly informing me of my termination at both jobs. A friend or two made an enquiry, my father left a slurred request that we get together. I disregarded these, but the recordings carried an odd gravity as more time passed and more messages accrued. The cold, black machine was draining my taste for excess. I smashed it against a wall in a rage upon hearing it beep one evening.

It was that event which ultimately killed my streak. I sat staring at its broken components from my chair, and the initial circumstances of my death came back to me. The thing was, nothing had changed. I still felt crushed inside. No amount of celebration, it seemed to me, would fail to ring hollow within my voided being. Not wine nor women nor any vice yet discovered. The urge to end it began to fill my waking

hours again. I attempted just once to go out and recapture my light-hearted attitude. It failed; I fell asleep in a puddle of what I hoped was cheap liquor, beside a woman easily ten years my senior. I awoke in my apartment.

My deaths began in earnest once more. I put my head in the oven, I slit my wrists, I put a TV in the bathtub with me. I jumped off several buildings, I hanged myself, I drowned. I cut the stove's gas pipe, I lit a match, I detonated what must have been the entire apartment building. And yet, even in the moment I lit the match, as a deafening roar overcame me, as bricks and shrapnel screamed free of mortar in incendiary glory, I knew the morning would be there, that there was to be no respite.

I awoke the next day. I felt no guilt at having destroyed the apartment, at having killed the residents. Provided they died with me, I knew they were safe. Proving this, I saw Mr. Zimmer, the old man who lived upstairs, hailing neighbors in his bathrobe from my window. I groaned, and rolled out of bed. Only then, after what had been well over two months since my initial attempt, did I realize my body wasn't static; I had assumed immunity from Time was synchronous with immunity from Death, the two being familiar with one another, but such was not the case. Every muscle in my body, and some of whose existence I had never been made aware, protested and twinged. I dragged myself to the bathroom, and glanced in the mirror washing up. I was paler and thinner, and despite not having retained scars to record my experiences, I was certainly the recipient of considerable wear and tear. My body was creaking and my stomach was gurgling, and I decided to maintain myself for a change.

Ironically, but to maintain consistency, I also decided to enact a new method of suicide. I suppose I am inclined to hyperbole in these things, because I decided to poison myself with hemlock in the manner of Socrates. I had taken bottles of pills before, but this had a more refined feel to it. I drank it in solution, then decided, after being struck with a dark mood, to see whether or not I would have time to get to the deli and back before the hemlock took effect. I

showered for the first time in a long time, dressed, and left the building to walk to the deli around the corner.

I ordered a Reuben and a soda and took a seat. The sandwich disappeared instantly, so I decided to order another. While I was in line, I noticed a tear-streaked girl in the corner. She had clearly been noticed by the other customers, who ignored her by tacit and none-too-subtle consensus. I needed no compatriot to commiserate with, and I thusly resolved to ignore her with the others.

Before I could proceed as planned, however, the girl caught my glance. She pushed her black hair out from her eye and smiled at me, as though to reassure me, rather than vice versa. I smiled back with a falter. That was that – I was trapped. I snuck covert glances at her while waiting for my sandwich. When I had received it, I approached her and gestured vaguely towards her table. She smiled again, and repeated my gesture. I sat.

“So, do you mind if I sit?” I asked.

“It's a bit late for that, don't you think?” she replied, grinning. Her voice was sweet, and no quaver betrayed the drying tears on her cheeks. Her eyes were blue, her hair was short and inky, and her skin was the slightest shade of tan.

“Uh,” I grunted. Her lips twitched, in what I hoped wasn't pity or annoyance. I shifted, and began again. “Are you alright?”

“Yeah, I'm fine. I mean, I'm not, but, you know, I'm fine.”

I smiled at that. “Believe me, I know exactly what you mean. But just to understand the particulars, do you mind telling me about it?”

“Honestly, no. I may as well tell somebody, I suppose. It's just so fucked up... It seems like everything's coming apart.”

“Everything? Like what, everything?” I asked.

“Well, everything everything,” she replied. “I'm not trying to be over the top, but it's everything. Home, school, friends. You name it, it sucks. Where do I start... ?” She trailed off and tapped her finger against her mouth.

“You could start with the be – ” I halted. I didn't want to give her that line.

“You could start with home, then work from there. If you want,” I added.

“Alright. I don't know. Just lately, my mom's been going through my stuff. She thinks I'm smoking pot.” She snorted. “Well, I am. But that's not the point,” she added. “My brother's friend came on to me last week. I turned him down, and since then he's been really creepy. He wrote me two notes, and he just kind of stares when he's over.”

“That's not good at all,” I said. “But all that is no reason to cry, don't you think?”

“It's not. But it's not just that. Like I said, everything.” The girl began to tell me of her life. The more she talked, the more collected she became. At the conclusion of her monologue, she had disentangled her emotions to the point that she sounded like she was describing another's situation. She stopped suddenly.

“Do you think this is stupid?” she asked.

“No, no I don't. Life's never easy, and sometimes you think it's too much. But I'm starting to think it isn't. If big things are coming down on you, little things'll bring you back up.” Realizing that I had made a speech, my eyes darted around the room. They made their way back to the girl, only to discover that rather than vexing her, I had done quite the opposite.

“Thank you so much for listening,” she said. “I feel a hundred times better than I did.”

“No problem,” I answered. “I have to be going... I suppose I'll see you later.” I pushed the chair out and stood up.

“I hope so,” she replied as I left the deli. I was smiling. I was thinking. College, work, friends. I could have them again, it wasn't such a stretch of the imagination. Hell, maybe even a girlfriend. I stepped onto the asphalt, and felt my legs grow heavy. This death felt different than those preceding it, in a way both impossible to describe and to deny.

As I staggered to my apartment early one evening, I discovered I was no longer immortal.



I recently had my first cold in 3 years while listening to '70's black music and while watching vintage '70's shows. I drifted off 1/2 asleep while letting my mind distort itself and there I was. In my head I arrived in '70's era Brooklyn, NY. I found myself sitting on the steps of the building with Criss and Dorothea inside sorting vinyl records, watching CBS and getting ready to go to the roller rink. I went and I met this brunette who was very excited about the times we as a city were having and out of nowhere as to my total surprise I was introduced into her world. Neglecting my closest cousins for a few I joined the brunette for shopping, more rollerskating, and the occasional arcade game. The Atari 2600 just came out and I was invited to hang-out at her apartment to set up the wires and the TV to play Missile Command. Still I was feeling the effects of this new brunette who came across me just 24 hours ago and I myself was still taken over by surprise. Overnight we watched more TV, played the newly set-up Atari and went further. The mystique, curiosity, and mystery of meeting and getting to know someone new slowly revealed. In my head I was amazed and blown away that anything like this was possible. At a time where I could only imagine to be in but I could never go back to but I felt like I've been there before. It was like I totally threw myself 30 years to be somewhere that I know I could never experience in real, physical life. During this time I blacked out for good and drifted where I had no control over what happened next. In my head next thing I knew I was walking out of her apartment building and having to travel blocks to a subway station, ride the subway/metro system and walk out the station to a few more blocks home just thinking about what just happened. I still couldn't believe it. The chain of events that just happened while being totally blacked out and drifted. As I arrived back to our apartment I found Criss talking to Jenny outside smoking a cigarette with Jenny's boyfriend standing by. Jenny mentioned that the brunette that I was with was leaving the city for godknowswhere and now I felt puzzled. Just coming off from this high of euphoria and dazzle and lights and now I'm here to deal with the loss of a "loved" one while watching an episode of Saturday Night Live to force myself to forget the sadness that was trying to overcome. Days later I went back to the brunette's apartment and for a 1/2 an hour no one answered and all hope was lost. As I was walking out the building getting ready to play the xylophone of sadness we crossed paths and led me into her apartment and instantly started crying. She told me that her mother was on her way and she had to leave the city for another way of life that she could handle. But in the end she saided that "no matter what had happened between us, this moment will be special and that it will stay with our hearts and minds for as long as we can remember, and that we will stand out in each others minds. Remember, this was meant to be". We hugged with tears streaking down her face and my heart sinking and the walk home this time was of trying to untangle and reassemble the reasons why this all had to happen. The encounter, the events that took place, the end of it all. The fact that she will leave the stars, stripes, circles, and designs and great times of the city that was never planned. When I got home I ignored everyone and everything to try and isolate myself and force myself to weave out this loss of the one that made this one defining moment in my life. It was only a matter of an hour before Dorothea walked in and tried to answer what just happened. That never happened and I never understood why, because I woke up 4 in the morning, the tape has ended and shut off to reveal the television programme's closing credits, the player ending on a sad note, coming out of a haze that only happened in my head. Wondering what the hell that just happened, and attempting to figure out why something that had never happened to me was bothering me, leaving me with unanswered questions. The phone rang. It was Criss over the phone at 4 in the morning. She asked me if I was still keeping in touch with a friend of mine from New Jersey. Suffice to say that I haven't heard from her in years but I felt like I knew the person and that it did felt like she was in my heart. The girl from New Jersey I never met broke my heart and I was trying to get over it. I told Criss about the dream I had and told me that it had something to do with her from New Jersey, but I was half-asleep and on strong medication and therefore had to happen like that. I told Criss that I loved her and ended the call. Putting everything away and then changing, therefore going back to sleep, hoping that all the peices of the puzzle will fit one day, and hopefully I understand why things happen the way they do, and how my loved ones show up to care.

by
**Vincent
Michael Festa**

1978



**miKey &
I in The
Village**

**miKey W/ Chris
Gobler on Drums
at The SPot**



**miKey w/ Steve
Loren on the
Bass
Chandler
Estate
Halloween
Party**



***Facing The Music
(Managing Mikey and the Merry Pranksters)**

By Robert V. Gilheany

*I am an alumnus and former Press Associate Editor. I managed the band Mikey and the Merry Pranksters from 1998 to 2003. I wrote a book about it. It is called **Facing the Music: Managing Mikey and the Merry Pranksters**. It is about my friendship with Mikey, organizing a band, putting on events, being part of a band that had a universal anti-racist message. It is about the power of music; it delves into issues of race, class, power, and fighting Former Mayor Giuliani's harassment of the homeless and street musicians. It is about interracial friendships. It deals with sexual politics, AIDS, and perspectives. It is a New York story and reads like a Marx Brothers movie.*

Here are some excerpts of my book. I hope to get it published.

Chapter 1 Meeting Mikey

I first met Mikey Layne at Two Booths Pizza, on 3rd Avenue, Greenwich Village, New York City. It was right off west 4th street. Mikey is the lead singer and front man, for the band, the Merry Pranksters.

With us at Two Booths is Mikey's girlfriend Sandy Triplette. She looks to be in her mid 40s. Mikey's Drummer, Steve Loren, Steve is an old college friend of mine. We went to Stony Brook University together. Also with us are former Stony Brookers Ricky Teng and his Girlfriend C.J.

Ricky and Steve share an apartment on Pitt Street, on the Lower East Side. At Stony Brook Ricky and I wrote for, and sometimes lived at the Stony Brook Press. The Press was the "Alternative" student paper on campus. Ricky is a very talented artist, who did graphics and Production for the paper. I was mostly op-ed; writing screaming left wing opinion pieces.

Ricky was moving out of the Pitt Street apartment and going to live with C.J. They were going to share another Lower East Side Apartment. I was moving to Pitt Street, to share the apartment with Steve. That was the plan.

Mikey is obviously a very bright, interesting and charming guy. We hit it off instantly. I appreciate artists and musicians. Mikey and I also share simi-

lar left leaning hippy values. Mikey handed me a copy of his last CD "The Merry Pranksters, Thank You For Talking to Me Gunya" "The CD has a funky blue cover, with a spiked haired Punk Girl on the upper left side.

Sandy and I enjoyed each other's company. We talked about movies. The 90s will be remembered as a good decade for Movies. We will look back at those years for indie type films. Movies like "Trainspotting" "Boys don't cry" the Johnny Depp movies, Lynch, Jarmush and Gus Van Sant. Those are the type of Movie people will think of, when they recall the 90s.

I Took "Gunya" home. I loved it. This CD is Pop, Funk, and Rock all at the same time. It's clear right away that Mikey has a deep rich, soulful black alto voice. The Opening track "What Kind of Love" is a top 40 sounding song. It is Poppy and funky. It got my feet tapping, and rocking in my seat. The Song "El Salvador has great classical Acoustic guitar work. The song is slow, theirs, and a pointed political attack on U.S. policy in that small country. Good. Mikey calls the US policy, Racist fascist totalitarian, and accused the government of chemical warfare.

Gigi is a song about Martin Luther King getting a national Holiday. "We have a Holiday, to share with each and every one,"

Mikey sings.

Mikey and I met Adam Stine at the 42nd street subway stop. The #7 line. We boarded the train to Flushing. We are on our way to Rich's studio, to lay down some tracks for the song "Soul Ryder" On the 7 train I said "Adam, I think it's sooo kool that you are from Kansas City and worked as a clown" I asked him what Kansas City is like. I told him that I got up in a big Rabbit suit, and pounced around, for a party for 5 year olds. For the rest of the ride Adam and I made clown mugging at each other. This was a fun ride to Flushing.

At Riche's studio Mikey set up Adam to lay down a guitar track. Adam played well. He laid down a real nice cool jazz jam. He also laid down a tight

hook rift. Da- Da-Te-Da Da-Da-Te-Da.

Near the end of the session, we talked about how it went. We were all happy. The Middle of the song became a discussion. Mikey said "It don't fit the concept of the song." Adam, with his sheepish endearing grin said "I like it" Mikey said, "This is not Al D'miola" The Solo got cut. "Soul Ryder" the final version on the "Electric Circus" CD is excellent.

Chapter 3 Andy

Andy Maynanasay was introduced to Mikey, and the band. Andy was a friend of Steve's. I remember him playing a Halloween party at the Chandler Estates. He was the Guitarist and singer in a band. Steve was the Drummer. They played a real nice and tight version of "the Moody Blues" song "Story in your eyes"

Andy came into the band situation, during a time of friction. Mikey was fighting with Nathaniel and calling Juan "a conservative" This war during the making of "The Electric Circus" And did lay down a couple of guitar tracks on "E-Circus"

Mikey took an immediate liking to Andy. "He is an old soul" Mikey said. Mikey inquired into Andy's social and political views. He shared many with Mikey. Andy said he admires Franklin Roosevelt. Mikey found that interesting. On the broader social and political points, He asked him about race, universal equality, and sexual freedom. Mikey once asked Andy if he would freak out if he felt they guy next to him had a boner. Andy said that would not freak him. Mikey felt no conflicts with Andy.

There was one funny thing about Mikey, in regards to Andy. He could never say Andy's last name, Maynanasey. He always called him "Andy Mandicini."

Right now the band is solid. Chris Nelson and Steve in the rhythm section, Nathaniel, Juan, on Guitar, We now have Andy, and Adam Stine as an auxiliary member. I would always push Mikey to Keep Nathaniel.

Even though they have been arguing allot. "We got to keep Nathaniel, he is the babe in the band" I would say to Mikey. I would point out that Nathaniel is very reliable, he never misses a practice of a show. He always chips in at the studio. Mikey would sometimes say to me, "Chris Nelson is the bade in the band."

Mikey and I started talking about the band. Mikey was voicing doubts about the musicians in the band. He would say, Juan is a conservative guy from the Bronx. He wont travail to shows. He won't go to Long Island. And he is against welfare Cheats. "I'm for welfare cheats" Mikey said.

I didn't really know Juan. I felt he was a real good rhythm guitarist and we should keep him around. I mentioned that Adam Stine is still around. "I like Adam" I said. Mikey said "He is not right for the band, "he is a mushroom Jew." I was taken back by that comment. So I said the I like Adam again. Mikey said "He is not your friend. Just because someone smiles in your face dose not make them your friend" Mikey also said that Juan is not my friend. "Why are you defending Juan? He is not your friend. He thinks you are a weirdo and a buffoon."

The Next day Steve was laughing. Mikey called Juan a conservative, because he is against welfare cheats. "That makes him a conservative !?" Steve laughed. Things are getting interesting.

Mikey explained that he is for welfare cheats. "I am for anyone who gets over on the system. I am against the United States Government and the Capitalist System." Mikey would say. "Black people fought in World War II, they came back and were discriminated against. They couldn't vote. They were lynched." Mikey pointed out that Black people were being lynched all the way up till the early 60s. Mikey said that American Society was fundamentally racist. "It puts profits before people."

Mikey would often compare Germany favorably to the United States. He lived in Germany for 3 years with his band. "In Germany there is Universal health care. In Germany, it is against the law to join the Nazi party or the Ku Klux

Klan. In Germany people are real. If they say 'lets do lunch' they mean it. They are not plastic."

"Anti-Racism, putting people over profits, supporting welfare cheats, getting over on the man, and being real. That is what my music is all about," Mikey said. Mikey would say in conversations, during a disagreement, "You're against the music. You're against the band."

I always told Mikey that we should always go one with two guitar players. We had a number of shows where we went on with only one guitarist. These shows were good, but I felt something was missing. They suffered from the lack of Rhythm and lead guitar arrangement.

I was hoping that Andy and Nathaniel would do the Stony Brook show. Juan does not do Long Island.

The band is going to Stony Brook via the Long Island Rail Road. This creates a logistical problem for Steve, the drummer. Steve asked me to call Chris Gôbler, and ask if he would led his drums for the show. Chris was very nice about it. "Sure!" he said. He is happy to help out. He is a very pleasant man.

The Plan was that Chris would bring his drums early and set them up. Mikey and the band would lead off. Pumice would then follow and play out the show. This is Kool. Now Steve does not have to figure out how to transport his drums from the Lower East Side to Stony Brook, via the LIRR and the Subway, and back.

Welcome to Stony Brook, Mikey and the Merry Pranksters. The band line up this night is Mikey on Vocals, Andy Maynanasey on Guitar, Chris Nelson on Bass, and Steve Loren on drums. The band played well, the show was good. Even though we were short handed, one guitarist, no brass, and no keyboard.

Pumice watched, with interest. I heard Chris say to Jerry, "I got nervous when someone plays well on my set." Steve is a top of the line drummer. He was playing his quick inventive, playful style. He was playing very well, on Chris' set.

The Band went though several of the

tracks on the "Eclectic Circus." "Take a Stand" "It's a beautiful Day" "Peoples Park" "Josie." The band played other songs such as "Mr. Cooper" and "A whole new thing."

Mikey introduced the Band. He then introduced me as the Manager. We went into the benefit, and how it was for the Boston New York AIDS Ride. This was to raise money for me to ride. Mikey embarrassed me buy saying too many nice things about me. The Band wrapped up the set. The crowd love Mikey and the band, they gave a real nice ovation.

Chris Nelson, he drake too many Guinness. He threw up on the Spot's stage.

Pumice played two energy packed sets. They brought their usual real nice vibe. There following was at the Spot. Lots of them were up and dancing. It was a fun Pumice show. The event raised \$250 for the cause. The AIDS Ride needs me to raise \$1,600. I need to raise \$1,350. I took the \$250 to the AIDS Ride office I got registered, and got a number too.

The other excerpts appear at the Stony Brook Press online: www.thestonybrookpress.com



Wait a Minute....

By Vanessa

The dew-covered flowers seem to dance far below as he lets go of the crumpled paper and it falls to the ground. No one can say he didn't try. Of course, no one will say anything anyway. He didn't try, but that wasn't the point. Or maybe it was the entire point. Maybe, instead of just wondering out loud, he should have taken some action.

If his thoughts were actions, he would have an enormous amount of consequences to deal with. But then, if thoughts were actions, he'd probably be a lot happier and he wouldn't be sitting on the edge of the roof of his apartment building. He'd be in Paris or Rome or some place where you were supposed to be happy. He'd be standing on a balcony overlooking a small yet thriving village where you could smell bread baking almost any hour of the day and you'd only have to walk two steps to see a familiar face. Maybe he'd be there instead of here. Here, overlooking nothing but hurried specks, concrete, and lights that were begging to be noticed.

He moves closer to the edge, using his hands to help push him. She was right. He hates her now. No. He doesn't hate her. He decides he loves her and that's why he forces himself to hate her. It made sense last night. Now he can barely keep the sentences in his head to form the concept. He knew he should've written it down. He meant to do it, but he had become distracted.

He takes a cigarette from the pack at his side, puts it in his mouth, and laughs. He looks up and shields his eyes from the light. The sun is irritating. It's shining too brightly for him today. It always shines brighter when he looks at it. The cigarette has been in the heat too long and it tastes strange. Like the sun poisoned it. He lights the cigarette and quickly drops the lighter to the ground. He's always wanted to quit but he never had good enough reason. He supposes death would be a satisfactory reason. If Heaven is really is all it's cracked up to be, then why would anyone need a cigarette? You definitely

wouldn't need a cigarette in Heaven. Even if you did, they probably made the whole place smoke free.

Maybe he shouldn't have thrown his lighter down. Too late now. Well, maybe he won't get into Heaven. He could wind up in Hell. He doesn't remember doing anything that would render him hell bound, but maybe God or whomever has a different set of standards. All this time he had been thinking Heaven would be a snap to get into. He thought Heaven was like a community college. What if it was more like an Ivy League school? Well, if that was the case, then it looks like Hell will probably be his future home.

He takes a puff on the cigarette and blows out the smoke. He holds the cigarette in his mouth. He drags his rear across the sticky roof. He takes the cigarette out of his mouth and flicks the ashes to the ground below. Damn her anyway. She was a bitch. I didn't have to stay with her, but she was so fucking needy that I didn't want to break her squishy little heart. It's all bullshit. If it is real, any of it. It doesn't really matter either way, does it?

The sun is trying to push him off earlier than he'd planned. He raises his middle finger in the air, directly towards the sun. The cigarette feels strange, like it's his first time smoking. He pulls it out and tosses it to the ground. He should have done this in the fall, or at least spring. Fucked that up too. Doesn't matter now. Who can really tell? From up here it looks like no one cares.

One more shove and he knows it will be finished. Then all he needs to do is lean over. Should he close his eyes or leave them open? If he closes them it might be better. If they're open he might try to pull back at the last minute. If he pulls back he could end up falling too close to the building and smashing somebody's window. He decides to keep them closed.

A pretty girl. First he admired her intelligence, but he quickly realized he admired her neck more and it was all downhill

from there. They hadn't been too successful, so thankfully the hill wasn't that steep. But it was a hill just the same.

He wants to fly but he doesn't have the energy. He knows he could do it if he believed. He would have no one to share it with, so what would be the point? He wouldn't care. Never mind. It's too complicated to think about.

He should've clipped his toenails. Another thing he meant to do. They were too long. Does it matter? He decides it doesn't. His feet dangle on the edge and he knows it has to happen soon or it will never happen. This will be proof. Proof he could do it. Proof he could follow through with something if he really wanted to. A stupid lyric from some dumb song she used to like drips into his head and he shakes his head to get it out. She can have it all.

His fingernails are dirty but he doesn't know why. How could they be dirty when he never used his hands? No dirt has ever touched his hands.

If he could, he would do it right now, but it's too soon, and he knows he should wait. He remembers waiting on lines at carnivals and amusement parks. Anxious and excited. Afraid, but you can't wait. You want it to be your turn but you know after that it will be over in a few minutes and the feelings will disappear and you'll feel nothing again.

Detached. That's what she said. He was detached. He never understood what that meant. Detached from what? He had looked it up in the dictionary last week for an accurate definition but he couldn't remember what it said now.

His head feels full now, and he wishes he could empty it completely. Dwelling on it was depressing and he is depressed enough at the moment. He wishes he had something to play with. Maybe a rubber band to snap or a paper clip to bend. His hands feel so empty. He feels like they should be doing something more constructive with their last moments on Earth. He raises them above

Continued on next page

his head and rotates his wrists a few times. This doesn't help. He balls his hands up in tight fists and bangs them against the roof. That feels better for a moment. He looks down at the pavement below, and he knows there are only three minutes to go. Time to finish this up. It was fun while it lasted, but he can't remember the point anymore. He's sure someone told him when he was younger and in school or something, but he never paid attention in school. Think, remember. Nope. Gone. All gone. It's about... I don't know. I don't know. This should

happen now. It has to be in the next 60 seconds. Any more than that and he'll be too angry at the sun and the sky to make them disappear. They've ruined his day for the last time. They are of no concern to him anymore. In 30 seconds, he's not going to have to worry about the temperature outside or if he needs an umbrella or a light jacket. Unless they have weather conditions in Heaven or Hell.

He places his hands on the edge of the roof and stares down. Keep it. I don't want it. What if Heaven does not exist? What if this life is the best he'll ever have? Can't be. Even nothing is better than this. He leans forward. Remember to

keep your eyes closed. Keep them closed. Closed. He squeezes them shut and holds completely still. He feels the sun on the back of his neck and the wind messing about in his hair. He hears the birds talking and takes his hands from the edge. He holds his arms out to his sides and leans forward. Her face flashes in his eyes, and he smells his mother's homemade rice pudding. Maybe he should – but it's done, and that doesn't matter anymore. He doesn't open his eyes until the last minute. It was finished. He forgot to leave a note but that didn't matter, did it? It was done.



Emily drops her clothes on the bed and pulls her purple sweater over her wet hair. She watches the people outside her window. She wants to be one of them. She wants to be going where they are going. To work or to lunch with a friend. She'd give anything to go anywhere else.

She walks to the bathroom and feels how cold the parquet floor is. January has gone on long enough, and she wishes she had the power to make it stop. She used to believe she had the power to do anything. Today she just wants to go back to sleep and wake up when the world has changed its song. She looks into the mirror at her brown hair and

green eyes. She tries to smile to herself. She always had a pretty smile. She thinks that should count for something. She combs her hair and blows it dry. The sound of the hot blow dryer covers her ears, and she feels soothed.

Outside, the sun is bright, but the air is bitter cold. She forgot to bring her scarf. She always forgets something like that. She puts her hand into her coat pocket and feels for the folded piece of paper she has put there. It feels warm to the touch. She pulls her gloves on and begins her journey to the Lofton Cemetery.

All the people she passes remind her of people she's known. A short man walking

by looks exactly like her 6th grade English teacher. His hair is a little longer, but the resemblance is uncanny. An old woman passes with two friends and she swears it's her dead grandmother come back to life. She knows it's silly, but she feels like she knows everyone. There seems to be no difference between her and everyone else. She wonders what would happen if she invited the whole world to a dinner at her house. How many of them would show, and would they recognize her too, or would they just think she was insane?

She stops at a small deli to get something to eat. She was so nervous about

Because I Do... By Vanessa

leaving the house that she'd forgotten to eat breakfast. She never had a stomach for breakfast. She orders a small black coffee and a banana muffin and eats as she walks back down the street. The coffee burns her tongue, and she knows she will feel that burn all day. She should've been more careful. The muffin is good, and she eats it all within a few minutes. The coffee cup is warm in her hands. She slides her free hand into her pocket again, making sure the folded paper is there. She should've stayed in bed.

The buildings on the street look gray and tired, but she thinks that's probably her perception. She never was one for a positive outlook. He used to say that to her all the time. He thought she was constantly negative. She just thought she was being logical.

Lately, things had seemed half-and-half. Nothing was too dark, but nothing felt so brilliant either. Every day was there. She woke up, she smiled. She went to work, she talked to people. She got through it. Every day was a little bit easier. At least, that's what everyone said. Books said it, people said it. Her family promised it. Just take it one step at a time. One day at a time. Time heals all wounds. Emily believed that. She really did. She told her mother to stop sending her books on death. Her mother sent books on everything. Death, life, love, grief, loss, joy, pain, anger. Anything could be dealt with as long as it was on paper, wrapped in a nice cover with a smart-looking person on the back. Everyone told Emily it would be okay and she believed them. It would be okay.

She turns the corner and passes by the library. She has a tiny urge to go inside. She could find a nice book, a Nice, quiet

corner and just read all afternoon. That would probably be a lot more helpful than standing in a graveyard on a cold winter day. She remembers it is Sunday. The library is closed. She can't get out of it now. She's halfway there. It only gets better from here. She promised herself she would go today. Sunday was their day. Everything was quiet on Sundays. She was always quiet. A lot of people thought too quiet. He liked her silence. He used to say it was comforting.

Emily feels nothing as she walks through the cemetery gates. She is lucky he was buried in such a small place. She doesn't think she'd have the energy to walk around a huge cemetery. That sounds selfish. She bites her lip for thinking it. She feels the burn on her tongue. Something tightens in the back of her throat as she sees his headstone for the first time. All she can do is stare. It is so small. So simple. A small, grey headstone barely over a foot tall.

She continues to stare at the headstone. All her thoughts and feelings have vanished. Her mind is blank. She doesn't feel cold or warm or happy or sad. She kneels down in front of the tombstone and traces his name with her fingers. She slowly reaches into her pocket and pulls out the folded paper. She can hear her heart beating inside her chest. Her breath is fast and deep. She unfolds the paper and begins to read.

"I love you with nothing. I love you without wanting, without asking. I love you for everything. I love you for nothing. I love you with everything that's inside of me. Every single inch. I love you with my words, with my thoughts, with my eyes, with my hands, my head, and my heart. I love you when you're

here. I love you when you're gone. When you're happy. When you're sad. When you're tired, angry, scared, confused, curious, warm, smart, stupid, graceful, clumsy, arrogant, modest, selfish, and selfless. I love you in the stars, in the sky, in the giant moon. I love you in the clouds. I love you because you yell, because you smile, because you breathe, eat, walk talk, run, jump, cry, laugh, cough and live. I love you because you want to sing, because you want to shout, because you want to dance, because you want to be smart, because you want to give back, because you want something so simple. I love you because you sleep with no sense of time. I love you because you care, feel, want, need, hurt. Because you don't show it all. Because you save it all. Because the stars and sun rest in your eyes. Because your heart is so wonderful and fragile, and because you do so much with it and you don't even know. I love you with

no limits, no expectations, no faults, no failures, no anger, no spite, no hatred, no reasons, no conditions. I love you because I do."

Emily folds the piece of paper back up and slips it back into her pocket. She wipes her eyes with her gloved hand and lies down next to the tombstone. The ground is cold, but she doesn't notice. She closes her eyes and remembers his face in the cold. His red cheeks against his smiling face. His blue eyes always sparkled in the cold. Like it was snowing inside his eyes.

She begins to cry. The tears are warm as they fall down her face and onto the ground. The sky is cloudy and she hopes it will rain soon.



Hit

By Thomas Mets

Chapter One

At eight o' clock on a Thursday evening, Larry Simons, nineteen, sat by the desk with his laptop, looking at a picture he found online of Jesus doing very perverse things to a newborn infant. The way the newborn's mother watched, and prayed, made him laugh out loud, and he remembered the friends who'd enjoy seeing it, especially Eugene Lieber, a Russian-Jewish atheist high school buddy with a love of dead baby jokes. The TV had been on CNN for the last seven minutes, but he wasn't paying attention to it while the reporter said, "Hani Rashid, a Middle-Eastern oil billionaire with suspected ties to both terrorist groups and the Saudi Royal Family, has released a video on Al Jazeera announcing that he will pay one hundred million dollars to whoever kills an ordinary American citizen. He claims to have chosen the citizen at random, and his representatives say that this was done to prove that he can hurt anyone in the United States at any time."

While Larry was thinking about how he hadn't seen Eugene in months, and how he should get a haircut soon, the reporter continued. "We at CNN feel it is our journalistic duty to inform our viewers that the American in question is Larry Simons, a student of Andrew Jackson University, Illinois." At this point Larry Simons of Andrew Jackson University, Illinois, paid attention.

Before Larry could finish thinking, "I must have heard something wrong," the reporter said, "Here is a picture of him," and a photograph of Larry, and his father at Cedar Point appeared on the screen.

Larry closed his eyes while the reporter said, "Mister Rashid's speech goes on to describe several methods of claiming the money."

The reporter said, "We at CNN have decided that this information should be available to the public. The first method: confess to the police, prove to them you committed the crime, and the money will be added to

your," as Larry ran out of his room, and then ran back inside.

While the reporter said "bank accou--," Larry shut off the television.

At this point, a baritone voice said, "Hey, Larry," and he jumped up, turned around, and saw his suitemate Warren wearing nothing but size 38 grey boxers.

"You ever hear of the Traveling Wilburys, Larry?" Warren asked. "It was a late 80s superband with Bob Dylan, George Harrison, Tom Petty, Roy Orbison, and a fifth guy they all respected and admired. Their work's not available in the U.S. any more since it's in contract hell-- five record studios owning the rights to the complete work of five artists-- but it's pretty damn good," said Warren, before Larry had the chance to respond to the question.

"My younger brothers, since they're awesome, got me a copy from the UK as a birthday gift. I can burn you a copy if you want," finished Warren. "That'd be awesome," said Larry, right before he remembered what he was doing before he was interrupted. He trembled as he said, "Gotta go."

Warren asked, "You okay?"

Larry said "family emergency" because he wasn't sure what response "an oil billionaire is going to pay a hundred million dollars to anyone who kills me" would receive from Warren.

Warren said, "Shit, sorry I stopped you," as Larry walked out the door. Larry briefly considered saying something back as he ran past a staircase, barely noticing the door open. The girl who opened it yelled his name.

He looked back and saw Natalie Rosenberg, a friend of a friend he loaned cigarettes to once. He had a tremendous crush on her, and her current tank top did nothing to alleviate that.

"C'mon," she said, holding the door open, "I'll help you."

"What?" he asked, not comprehending what she had just said.

"You're a friend," she said. "I'll hide you until this whole thing blows over. C'mon."

"Wow. Thanks. Thanks a lot," he

said as he walked towards the door, and saw her left hand going for a gun in her left pocket.

"Fight or flee?" he asked himself, as he punched her in the nose. She said "Motherfucker" and dropped the gun. She staggered, looked at him, and before either knew what was happening, he had the gun in his hand and was pointing the gun in her direction.

"Where the hell did you get this?" he asked her.

"I was hiding it for my boyfriend," she said. "You don't know how to use that."

"I can still pistol-whip you," he said. "And I know how to use it."

"What the hell's going on?" an RA asked. Her name was also Natalie, but Larry preferred to call her "Robobitch" (only once to her face) because of the way she wandered the halls looking for noise violations while off-duty. Larry turned in her direction, gun in hand.

"He's got a gun!" Robobitch screamed, running into the recycling room. Larry briefly considered dropping the gun before he realized that would be an astoundingly stupid thing to do. He put it in his pocket and just ran.

Within seconds, he turned a second corner and saw a few of his fellow students and several uniformed somethings. He couldn't tell if they were marshals, federal agents, or DEA agents, but they were all looking at him strangely. Larry stood still for a second, ready to run at any moment. He turned as the marshal said "We're federal marshals. You'll be safe with us."

Larry stared at them, his brain unable to process any new information as he asked, "Promise?"

The marshal said, "We won't let anyone hurt you."

Larry said nothing for a few seconds, began to cry, and started wailing.

Two marshals escorted him out of the building and he heard himself say, "A friend of mine tried to kill me just now." One of the marshals asked, "What's his name?" Larry looked at the marshal and thought about what he should say. "Her



name. Natalie Rosenburg.” The marshal spoke into a walkie-talkie. “Get a Natalie Rosenberg into custody, please.” Larry recalled his encounter with her and said, “I punched her in the nose.” “We’ll settle that later,” the marshal said. “She tried to shoot me,” said Larry. “I took the gun, and threw it in a recycling room.”

Larry thought, “Why the hell am I lying to the police?” while the marshal spoke into his walkie-talkie again: “She may be armed, and dangerous.” He looked at Larry and said, “Thanks, kid.” Larry smiled while the marshal said into his walkie-talkie, “One of the other kids could identify her. She may have a broken nose.” Larry got into a car as he heard the marshal say, “Illegal possession of a firearm. Attempted murder. Lots of charges.”

Larry smiled as he sat in an interrogation room, waiting for answers and thinking of the questions. How long was this mess going to last? Was he going to be famous? Would that hurt him in any way? Would it help him kiss a girl? Would it help him fuck a girl? When everything blew over, was there a chance that some lone nut would come after him? When could he get a cigarette? How did CNN get his photograph so fast? If he had been watching Fox News, would the news have broken a little bit later, and would Natalie have killed him? Who else would have tried to kill him? When could he get a cigarette? Was God mad about the picture of Himself/His Son (he should ask a minister) raping an infant? Was that why his name was chosen? Did he turn off his computer? Was that going to show up on the news? “At eight o’clock on a Thursday evening, Larry Simons sat by his laptop, looking at a picture he found online of Jesus raping a newborn.”

Marshal Joe Reag watched from outside the two-way window of the interrogation room and spoke into a cell phone. “Yeah, we have him.”

The voice on the other end said, “Thank God. Anything else would have been an incredible embarrassment to the Bureau.”

Joe Reag said, “Yeah. Obviously.

Hey, would the Hani Rashid guy have been good for his money?”

The voice on the other end chuckled and said, “Yes, he would have, surprisingly enough.”

Joe Reag said, “Thanks” while the phone said, “Wait.”

Reag walked into the interrogation room. Larry looked in his direction, smiled, and said, “Hey” before he saw Joe’s gun. Joe Reag aimed at Larry, who remembered his gun, took it out, and fired.

Reag screamed as the bullet hit his left shoulder, and Larry ran out the door. Thinking of what would happen to him if Larry survived to talk to other agents, Reag followed, doing what he could to lift the gun in his right hand.

Larry ran down a long corridor. Joe fired in his direction.

Larry was hit in the leg, yelped, and collapsed. He looked up and saw Reag pointing a gun at him.

Larry cried, kicked, squirmed, and mumbled, “Please don’t do this. Please don’t do this” before Reag shot him in the chest.

Not sure if Larry was dead or not, Reag shot him in the head. When he was satisfied that he had indeed killed an otherwise ordinary college student, Reag left the building through a back exit as quickly as possible. He was ready to kill any opposition, but found none.

Marshal Reag walked out of police headquarters at 9:56 in the evening. He called at 9:59 to announce that he killed Larry Simons, although this was well-known by then.

An investigation into Joe Reag’s activities revealed that he had been selling information to the Israelis, Democrats, Palestinians, Pakistanis, Indians, Republicans, Saudis, Arabs, the Chinese, the Russians, the French, the Italians, the Irish (but not the British), numerous mafia organizations, several American business interests, and the Canadians.

Some time around midnight, he disguised himself by killing a man he met in the bathroom of a gay movie theater and stealing the man’s clothing. He made the correct assumption that no one would associate a murderous federal agent with a man wearing a pink tank top with the phrase “San Francisco Stud.” He also

shaved his head and removed the bullet casing from his shoulder, deciding that visiting a doctor of any sort would be too risky.

A later investigation determined that he somehow got to Indianapolis, where, the next morning, he purchased more conservative clothing and used false identification to get on a plane to Holland, claiming his older sister had died and his brothers wanted him there when they were going to break the news to their eighty year old mother. He saved a hundred dollars, thanks to the bereavement discount.

From Holland, he took a plane to Saudi Arabia, where, within weeks, he met with an associate of Hani Rashid. Within an hour, he received a bank account, from which he could access the hundred million dollars. He made a televised message demonstrating that Hani Rashid was an honest man, capable of paying those who carried out his wishes. He so impressed Hani Rashid that he was given the opportunity to stay as a private guest. He declined, wishing to develop and maintain a very low profile.

Within two hours, he was on a plane to Switzerland, where he maintained his access to the hundred million dollars. On the first night, he spent a few dozen thousand on expensive food, fine wine, and prostitutes. He would spend the rest later, to create a new life for himself and do whatever the fuck he wanted.

Based on the success of the earlier plot, a video was soon released in which Hani Rashid announced that he would be repeating his experiment within the week.

Very few people in America slept soundly that night.

Or the next.



A thousand micefeet By James Messina

A footstep echoed out, to be buried in the fog and the dark of night. The night was KOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOL in ways that words could not describe. The night was dark in ways that lurk and heave, and come and leave There was the footstep and little else Yet Torque could swear that it was not lone but many like a flock of birds descending upon him The echoes came and went inside him There was the footstep He went crazy, he howled The night was empty the fog was lost inside him there was no one else How long was that one footstep there and when did it arrive? Was it a footstep at all or a sharp clap muted by the night that very night that dulled him to his own questions so wondered Torque whose name was Charles perhaps in a land far away before the heaving and leaving and the grips of this strange icy night this icy inky black
inky
inky

Charles snapped awake. *What was happening?* he thought to himself. He looked around, found himself someplace strange, and realized he had gone a wanderin', as his father before him, and his father's father. It was something to do with the men of his family, as old as tradition and as strange as a medical disorder. His mother used to complacently smile and laughingly refer to his father's episodes.

Charles looked down; he

was unkempt. He could have been mistaken for a bum, and he stank. This was the longest episode so far. *How had it started?* The answer wasn't forthcoming. Charles reckoned he could hear a clang, a ring, a... something. It began and it ended, and it rolled like a wave. It sang and it soared, there were dissonant wondrous somethings swimming 'tween his eyes there began that singular tap that could only be the footstep Or could it?

inky

If men had hooves the sort of men that were surely following him, then their cloven hooves of murderous intent would come down on cobblestones the ground was bent underneath them and they leered their murderous smile and thought their murderous thoughts If all this were true then that sound that sound would be the singular sound that rings and dies in the inky night the blackest night to ever roll across a flat constricted land of men in choking neckties And that noise was

distant

His head was pounding in time with the steps What steps There was something

distant

His head was pounding He didn't know why Yet the blackest night to ever exist came into being and lived and died beneath his feet and above his head and all around him Streetlights stood out as solitary sentinels to guard against that night whose tendrils wrapped around him

He the standing tree the ivy never to end to live past death itself as it reached and reached but its fingers he didn't spy He let loose a cry his voice ringing once more and this cry like its brother before it but it did not fade softly into the fuzzy fog It fought and clawed and scratched and bit and railed and lived This was the cry for remembrance and power This was the cry This was the cry This was the cry This was the cry it died and died and died forever but with it died the tendrils that tended to entrap He was happy the night was his this inky night this wonderful inky night for some few seconds it was his His head was clear his intent was sure his purpose was

inky

Something slipped from his mind, something solid, and tangible, and altogether too visceral to be a passing reminiscence. Charles could recall pondering a sensation and then slipping into a wondering wanderin'. He heard a laugh. His head whipped around; nothing was visible in the fog. Charles thought to himself that perhaps it was best to get home and not to ponder whatever it was that had brought him to this point. He could be curious within the safety of his home. He turned about, looking to orient himself and begin the sojourn back, when he heard the laugh again. And then he heard a footstep, a singular footstep he could recall

distantly

Charles' head twisted and searched abruptly

Torque knew now this city he was in this very spot cemented to the ground with surety and knowing and the growing sense of that power his voice had called Torque knew the conflict as old as broken stone beneath his feet as old as the shadows clinging to the sticky spots of the swaying somber edifices about him As old as the fog The fog of the inky night he knew was forever and ever and it came for him The fog and the ink and what squid created it? Charles wondered Torque knew Torque knew Charles wondered and slipped

abruptly

Charles was disconcerted. His father. His father's father. His father's father's father, maybe – details weren't clear from long ago. They had gone a



wanderin'. He recalled a childhood of enigmatic father-son chats, of strange mystic connotations and half-known truths. He recalled grasping at them and knowing them. Most children had wanted to be firemen, astronauts, actors. Some had wanted to be superheroes. For the life of him, Charles couldn't remember the name of the hero he had planned on being, but he knew him well, and knew him deeply. He was strong, valiant, righteous, and powerful. His was the voice of justice.

The superhero inside of Charles had died. He didn't know when, but he believed it to be true. Similarly, one day his father's talks stopped making sense. He couldn't grasp them. His father was

One day, Charles' father disappeared. He went a wanderin' and he didn't come back. Charles thought that maybe this was his own last wanderin'. He recalled his father's rich voice echoing in his head, telling him of... of things like the time of Torque, and the last wanderin' to ever happen and it would happen

abruptly

When it would the buildings crumble the trees topple and Torque might stop it and he might not such things were in bigger hands than he had or any man yet made But the time would come and come it did in this very place in this very time and this was it the moment of truth the screaming the knowing the power

THE FOOTSTEP

It was no foot at all but a hoof but not a hoof It was a tentacle it was a claw it was a thousand micefeet scampering in lockstep it was coming for him and the foggy inky night couldn't impede him or it Torque held up his fist it did no good and he surged forward to find he hadn't moved and in this place in this city on top of these the broken stones and shattered bones of all who came before and roared for more Torque knew to fight and not give in He gave a battle cry and surged against the tendrils of the inky foggy night and he knew the squid He knew the squid He knew the squid He screamed

abruptly

Oh, shit. Charles was staring at



image by david k ginn

crazy. The things he said were nonsense. His father stopped the nonsense when he saw Charles didn't comprehend, and he became a normal father. Normal but for the wanderin'.

Torque was no superhero the thought was crazy from Charles the man who made the crazy but Torque was separate and secure and strong He had the power to cry out and slice the inky black

something. His mind couldn't make sense of it. It was larger than anything he had ever seen. *Well, no wonder they didn't come back from wandering.* It wasn't a presence so much as a lack

therein, a complete blackness so large, so completely

inky

Torque was screaming he was screaming so loud The stones echoed with the throes of his cries and rang through slinky buildings The fog was roiling and rolling and his mind was aflame No Charles no not now you go down to stay down He ran and ran forever in the space between time and leaped forward He leaped forward to combat the ink the inky night that spread and slammed against him too with monster-truck force and he struck with the humongous power of a thousand hammers on a single anvil to ring out and slam to pound and resound within the muted city of fog and dim nothings amidst this the inky squid the thousand tentacles twisting to crush him tightly against it But he denied it he cried out he dried out the ink and slammed and slammed and gave not an inch He was aflame He was glory and in that moment he raised his voice and The cry he belated the darkness mellowed and cowed and dead in its grave The day was saved and the darkness dead the night was over and died and bled and ran into rivers to

kill the fog which rained down upon him and thousands more and from the buildings which never knew day came outpouring people who had cowered and prayed Torque looked to the distance and roared and he shouted to the horizon which waited and shone out light like beams of truth to vanquish the shadows and unfuzz the fog to unstick the buildings to see the things that gave out steam This was the city and this was the time and thousands were coming to give thanks for his deeds which were done and dead and gone and still they thanked Torque for wounded night and he took heed of the men who stood at his side somber and solemn and stern with pride And he knew his time was done

abruptly

Torque came to himself came to Charles came back to Torles or Charque or whoever it was and he... His head hurt. His head hurt a lot. The night was over. He must have slept. No, wait, that wasn't it. Something had happened. Something was clinging tenaciously to the back of his skull, making him remember what had happened in an eerie landscape with an inky black beast with thousands of feet and just one footstep as it

followed him and he followed it and... *Shit.* His thoughts were ajumble. He looked around. He slipped abruptly from one thing to the other. He could swear he could see his father. He was very tired. Perhaps

His task was over his muscles raged and his mind was singed and his body aged and thousands were cheering but he saw those who came before They came to the fore and they smiled and nodded and the task was over and no torch would be passed from father to son and present to past and perfectly good was the golden sun to sit under forever and drink in and sleep To sit forever and drink in the sun to sit forever to sit forever Such was not his task, which was over He smiled and nodded and roared once more and his voice echoed and rang and soared in the sky with scintillating tones and dulcet drones and now was the time to wander once more to wander once more in the paths they all knew to wander once more amidst the gold and the blue and the amber hue of a thousand bucolic scenes idling gently past to await the time of the coming dark when one would wander again

Unfinished Story #2

Chris Williams

Originally written in April 18, 1999

Peering through the darkness, I saw her. Her creamy skin basted in the rich sapphire blue moonlight. Young and tender, she looked everywhere for me.

I approached from behind. My hand slinks forward, reaching for her. Fingertips trickled down her shoulders, like liquid shadows, sending chills throughout her naked body.

She did not expect me. I could tell. Her body felt so tense...so tight. Such a contradiction. How could something look so supple, yet feel so hard? Relax, I said with strokes down her sides. Smooth, and, ever so, slow. My fingers flowed past the curves of luscious femininity. Relax. And, she did, but only a bit. I still felt the tension mounted in her waist. Relax...My fingers lingered around her hips.

I came closer, pulling her hair away from her shoulders. Like chestnut. Her hair

was like chestnut. That fragrance. I smell her sweet scent more strongly now. It was such an enticing aroma.

I drew my tongue against the nape of her neck and blew against her, gently. My lips felt her quiver. Then, she slid backward, melting into me.



Unfinished Story #3
Chris A. Williams
Originally written in March 16, 1999

While putting my bookbag upon the chair, I turn my head and see that she has just entered, too. She sees me from across the lecture room. I look at her. The lecture starts immediately.

When the lecture finishes, I go outside. The day is unseasonably warm. A week ago, there was snow. Today, there is sunshine, shorts, and short skirts. Why not? This type of weather only occurs about 90 days of the year. Well, 180, if I include autumn.

I turn the corner of the lecture building and head toward a tree. When I reach it, I take a book out of my bag and start to read. I find a good spot, on the ground, to put my bag next to me. No one is here. Good. Finally, I can do some work. Hardly, anyone comes behind the lecture building. Hardly.

I lift my eyes from the book and see her in the distance. The “her” from the lecture class. She moves slowly. Leaves blow around her. Her open jacket wiggles in the wind. Strands of her hair fly into her face. As she comes closer, I drop my book onto my bag. These college libraries would charge an arm and a leg if I put a grass stain on it.

Her steps are sure-footed, as always. She lets her bookbag fall off of her shoulders and drop onto the freshly cut grass, when she is about three feet away. Then, she approaches me, even slower than before, with careful steps. My arms open to accept her. Her forehead leans against my shoulder, and her arms close around my waist. There is a sudden gust of cold air. She huddles closer to me, burying her face into my shoulder. She feels so warm. When the wind stops, her head pulls back slowly. She is staring blankly at the ground. Her mind is somewhere else. I pull the hair away

from her beautiful face gently. Her eyes quickly focus on me. Radiant eyes. Behind which, I can see pain and a twinge of fear.

She cranes her neck toward my face, toward my lips. I stretch my lips forward to receive her. I kiss her. Very slow, and deep. And, she returns it. Her eyes close and, soon afterward, my face is wet. She is crying. Little streams roll down her lovely cheeks to meet me.

This is not the first time that this has occurred. We always repeat this sequence.

In the class, she would see me and would smile. A beaming half-smile that is characteristic of her. And, I would smile in return. Then, I would see that her eyes would be hiding something. Something like...worry. Then, after the class, I would see her approach me at the tree with her usual firm steps, and stop as if she is considering something. She would finally decide to come closer, but her steps would be half-hearted and unsure. When she first kissed me (yes, she kissed me first?), her mouth was stiff, almost unyielding. Now, she has relaxed, but she still feels reserved. And, she always cries. Always.

I would try to stop kissing so that I could wipe the tears away from her face, but she would not allow me to. At first, she would not make me stop until she was ready. Now, we just kiss as she cries. I want to ask her why, but the angry, forlorn look in her eyes tells me otherwise. The kiss cannot be that good. Can it? It can't be that good. Well...I know it's not that good. But, why does she cry? I want to know. I want to know...but, but I told myself that if she want me to know, then she would tell me. But, still, I want to... The kiss ends. She stares at the ground again with hurt in her face, and sadness in her eyes. Her lips part slowly. She says, “I do not want this.”





By Amy Wisnoski



By Amy Wisnoski





By Amy Wisnoski



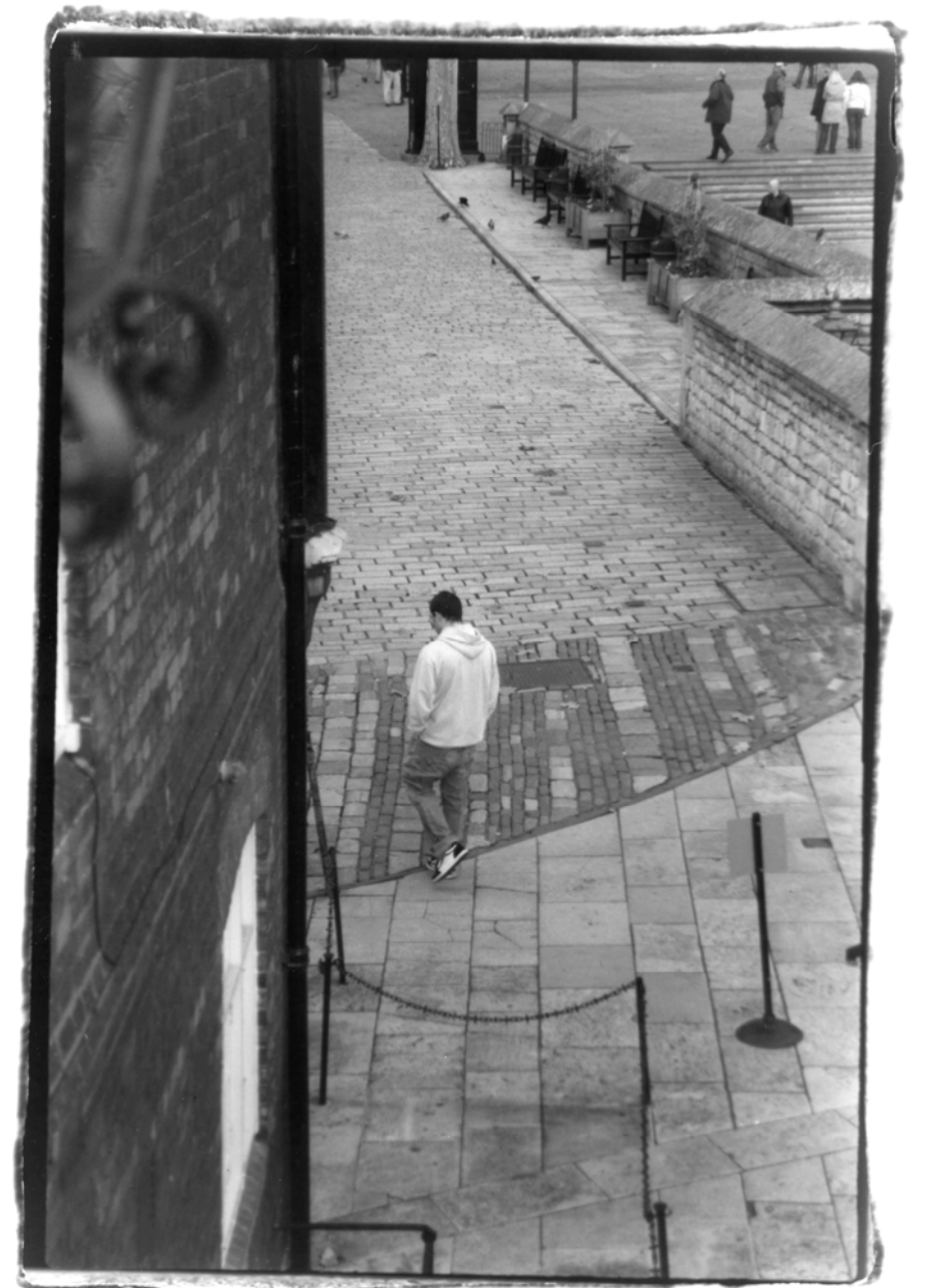
Hookah
By Blake Reinhold

Tower of London by Blake Reinhold





Eye of London
By Blake Reinhold

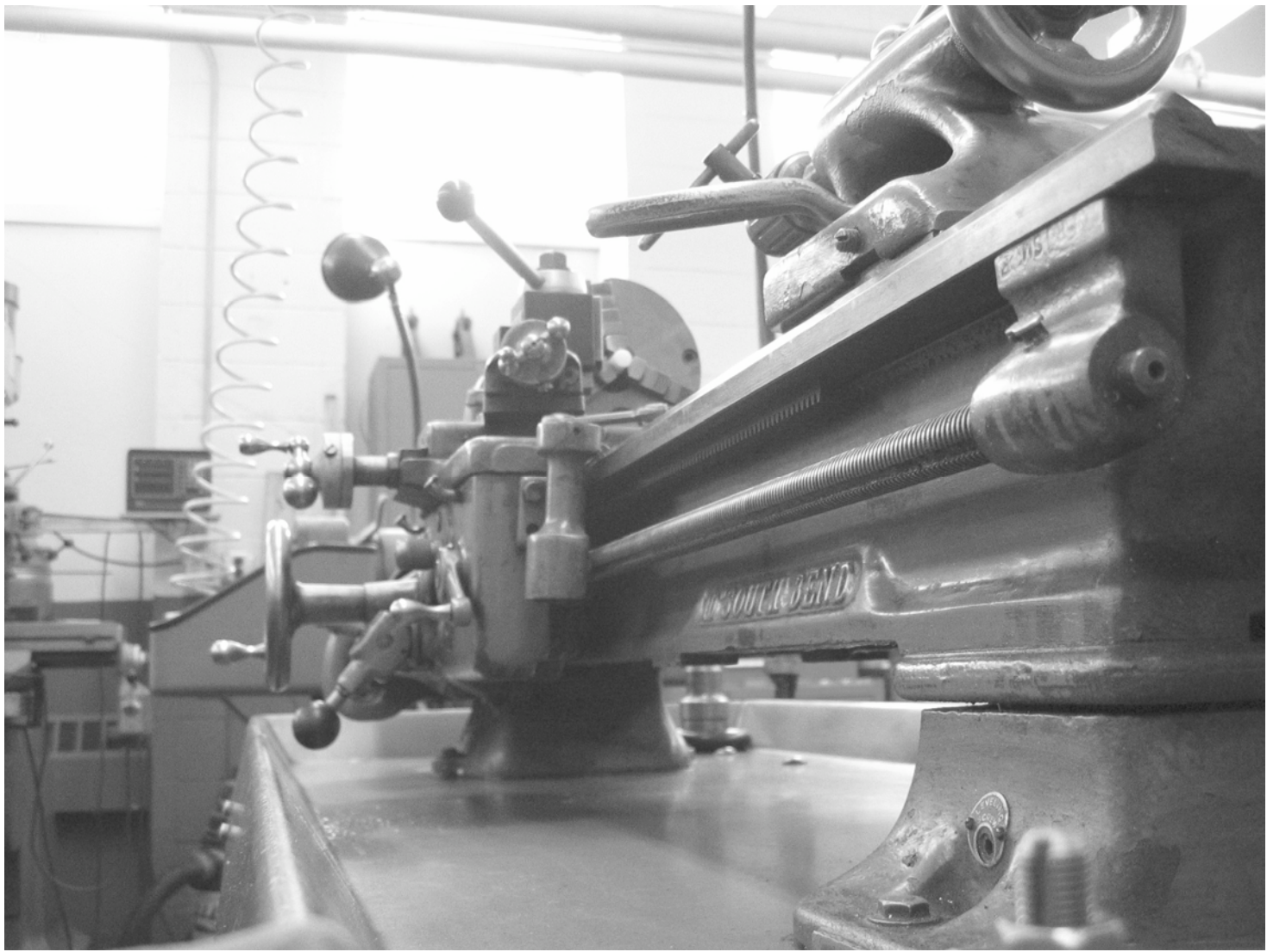


Untitled
By Blake Reinhold

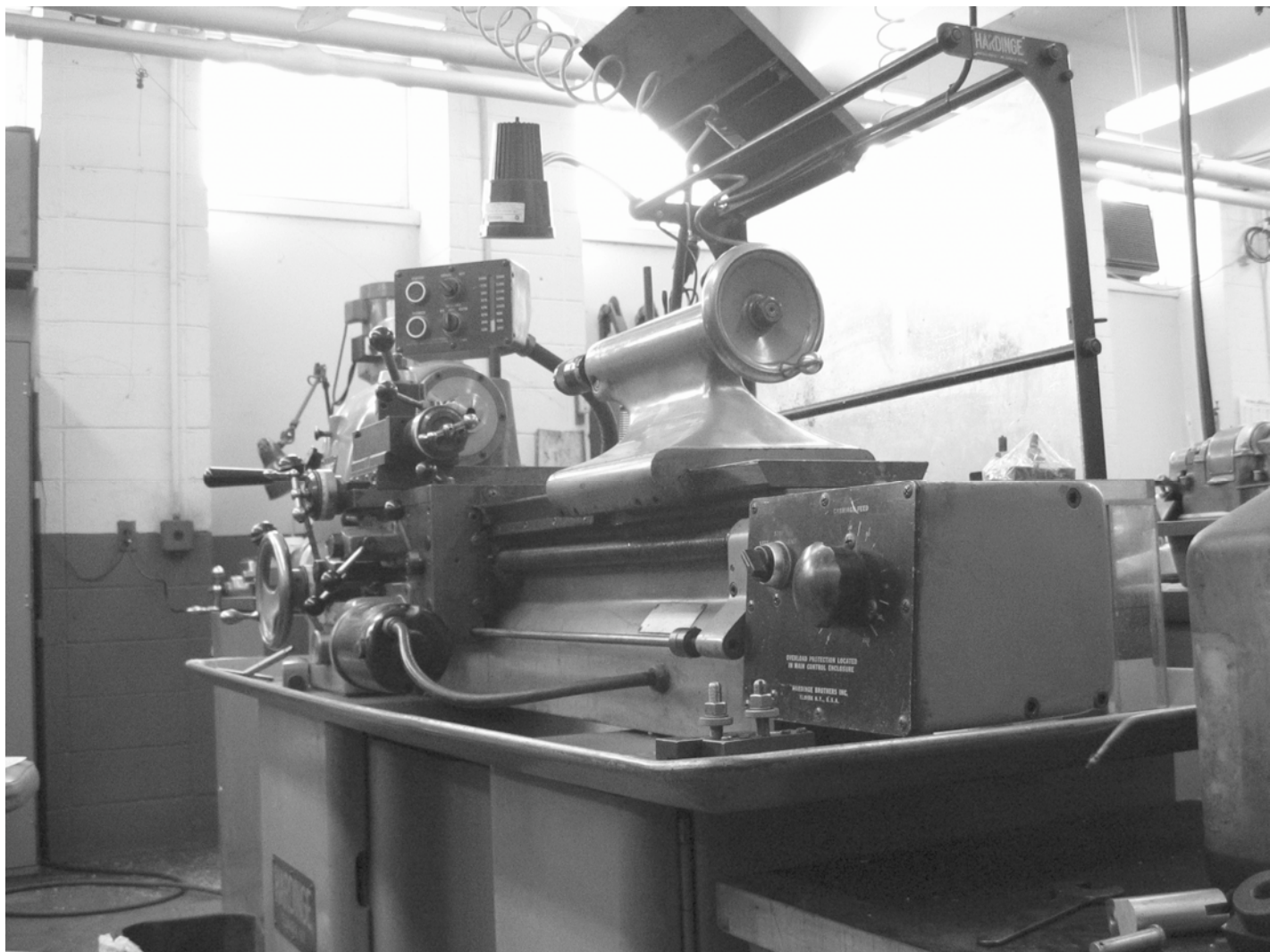


Gallery: Chris Williams





Gallery: Chris Williams

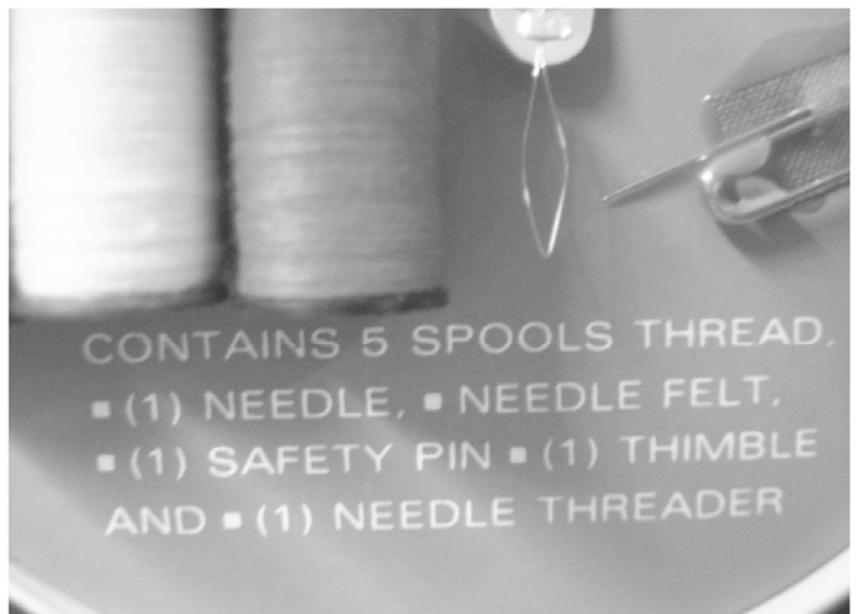
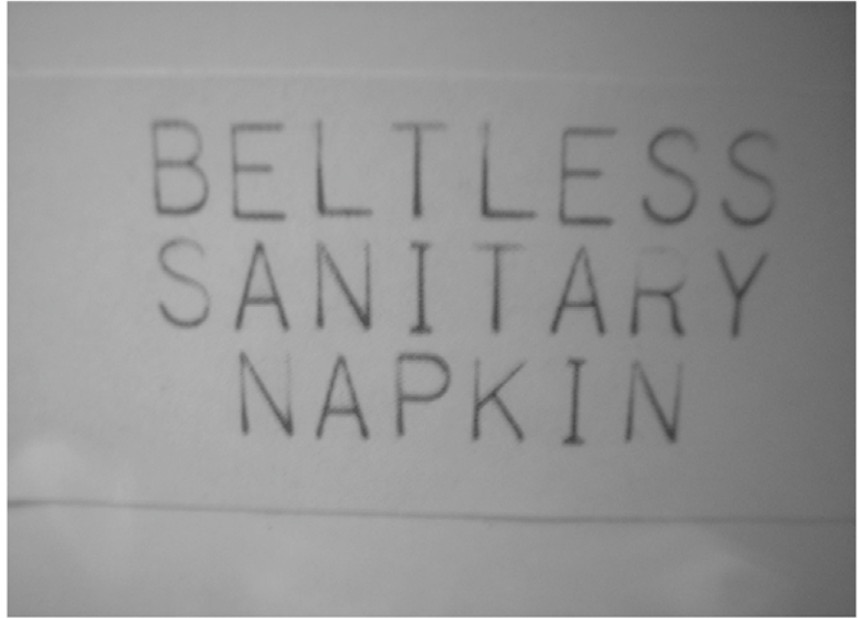
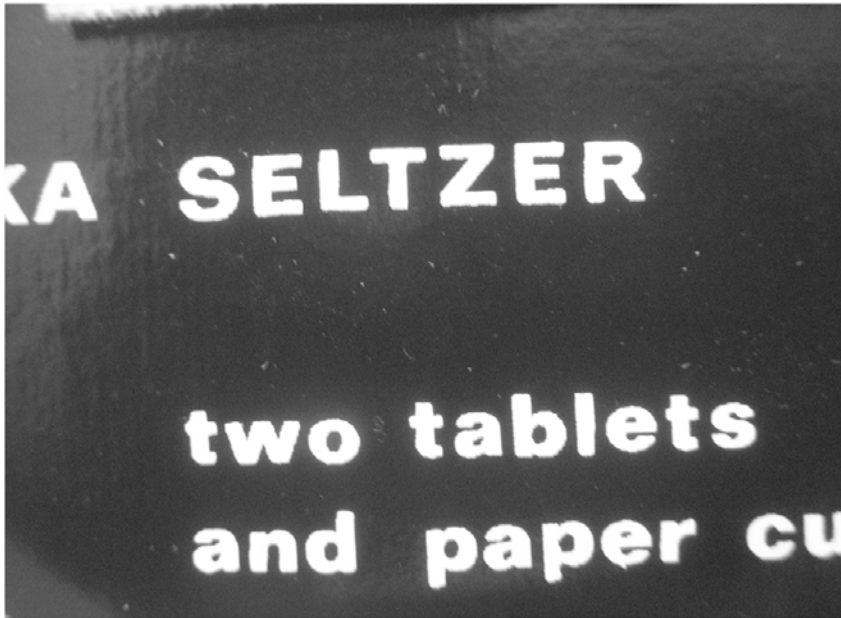
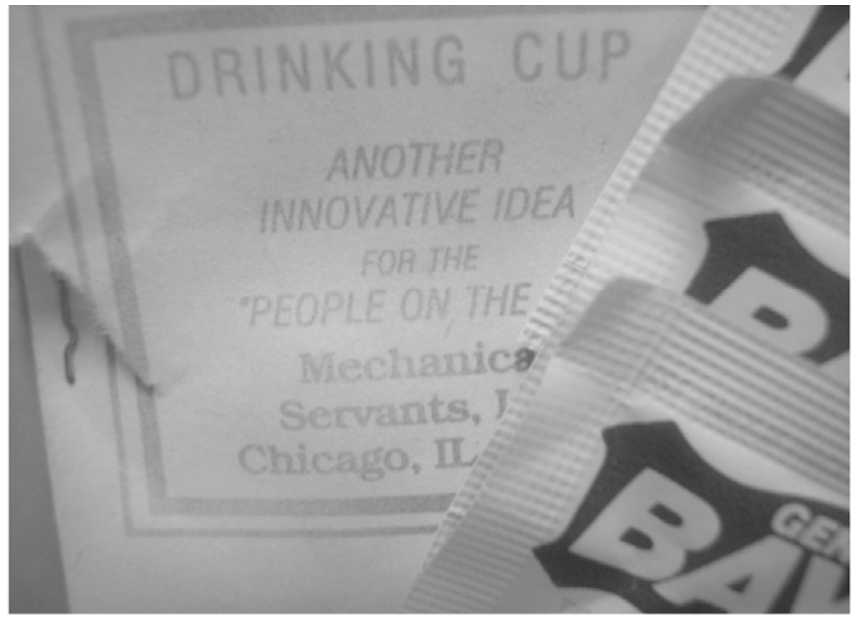
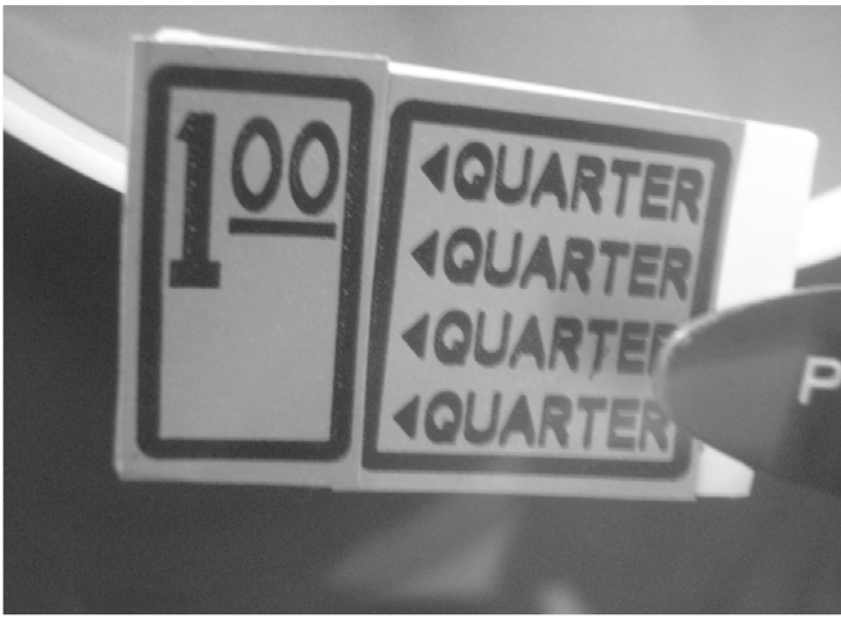




Self-Portrait
By Jowy Romano

Untitled by Gina Farber







Scoop Tribute by Stephanie Hayes

www.thestonybrookpress.com

The “Meat” Has Gone Bad

Neal Fox’s putter-out musical, *Meat Street*, opened its butcher shop doors on Saturday and Sunday in the Tabler Performing Arts Center. Based on a simple idea, the musical continued in its simplicity throughout its presentation. Despite high moments in the production, director Kat Khellblau has little experience in the realm of musicals and did not provide ample cover for Fox’s incomplete work.

The story is a simple one: a regular toilet salesman, Tony (Alex Geissbuhler), accompanies his soon-to-be-woman friend, Flo (Nelowfar Farooqi), to the hospital for his sex change operation. But things turn sour when Tony is taken hostage by a mental institution with such power that it can operate on and imprison unwilling patients. Evil Dr. Frick (Eric Cologianes) runs the mental ward in a most evil manner, providing no question as to his evil nature. Tony’s girlfriend Danielle (Kara Green) is helpless to stop Dr. Frick, and Tony is in grave danger.

Meat Street attempts to follow in the footsteps of *Rocky Horror*, facing challenges of a similar nature. While *Rocky* must overcome its one-joke nature, *Meat Street* has the problem of shaping Mr. Fox’s opinion of psychiatry in every line of dialogue and song in a way that will be interesting for two hours. The first act of the play has the distinct possibility of doing just this. Intriguing characters, entertaining introduction numbers and set-up of conflicts are all as near to text-book as they can be in the first part of the show. However, Fox drops the ball in the second act: he abandons storylines, drops characters, and doesn’t resolve important elements in the story. In other words, the show suffers from

second-act syndrome, or, the inability to resolve ideas introduced in the first act.

The weaknesses in the script could be Band-Aided by a skillful director, but Khellblau’s unfamiliarity with musicals showed in her lack of choreography and blocking for the actors. The lethargic movements probably made *Meat Street* look worse than it was. While choreography is credited to Jen Chura, it’s obvious which numbers she has choreographed, as they lift the show for minutes at a time, then it plummets back down into uninteresting dialogue. (Credit Chura also with the impressive vocal arrangements for the show. Fox’s harmonies were, for the most part, carried out smoothly by the entire cast.)

There are performances in the show worth paying to see. Nelowfar Farooqi gets to show off her Christina Aguilera-esque pipes in her solo “Flo”. Though some of the notes were too high for Farooqi to attempt (why wasn’t the key lowered?), she powers through and impresses with distinct passion and vocal technique. Stony Brook theater regular Dave Chura brings a sense of maturity and sureness to his part as the nosy reporter, and achieves brilliantly the story-progressing element of Fox’s design. Also of note are Kristine Renigen’s strong voice, clearly peppered with musical theatre experience, and Xavier Rodney’s charismatic turn as the villainous nurse in the ward. Alex Geissbuhler as Tony is untrusting of the material and of himself, leaving something to be desired. Eric Calogianes, normally a solid performer, especially in a musical, seemed to be on stage far too long with far too little purpose. His Robert Palmeresque number “The Doctor Is In” (an homage to

By Jacob “Big Meat” Hartman
“Dentist” from *Little Shop of Horrors*) is awkward without chorus girls moving around him; they are relegated to the side of the stage for his song.

The technical aspect is impressive. Greg (last name omitted from the program) continually entertains with expertly-crafted slides. The intermittent films are funny, and one wishes that the show had the same charisma as the movies. Ryan Ellis, limited in quantity of units, gels and space to hang them, achieves a feat in covering the stage and even adding dramatic effect.

In all, it would be desirable to see *Meat Street* again, with a cleaned-up second act, more-defined characters, and a more experienced stage director. Many of the actors have been seen before at SBU and have turned in winning performances. It would only be fair to them to give them a second chance to prove themselves, provided with better material and a seasoned director.

Editor’s Note

Danger! Shake that ass! Watch yourself!
Shake that ass! Show me what you’re working
with!

Copy Editor’s Note

Danger! Shake that ass! Watch yourself!
Shake that ass! Show me with what you’re
working!



Yes sir, the meat has gone bad...
Courtesy of the Interweb

The British Accent Never Gets Old and Neither Does

The Importance of Being Earnest!

By Adina Silverbush

Oscar Wilde's play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, directed by Valeri Lantz-Gefroh, was put on by the Stony Brook Theater Department April 20-23 & 27-30. The play, which is known for its British wit, mistaken identity, and satirical nature is a classic and thus made for an easy hit for the department, considering the great amount of talent it contains. If done correctly, the play should leave the crowd in hysterics as they think about the "elite" class, their faults, superficial nature, and how simplistic humans really are.

The Importance of Being Earnest is a work I am quite familiar with. I've had several experiences reading and analyzing the play and I have seen the movie. I was excited to be able to see the work performed on stage as it was intended to be as I went opening night to the show, but was not nearly as thrilled when I left. Overall, the production was good, but underwhelming.

Jack Worthing uses his naughty brother Ernest as an excuse to leave his home in the country to venture to the city for pleasure, where, in fact, he has no brother! His ward, Cecily, after hearing so much about Ernest, becomes increasingly interested in him and creates an imaginative love affair and engagement between the two of them. Algernon, after hearing about Jack's young, beautiful ward, becomes equally as interested in her. Algernon Moncrieff uses his insolent friend Bunbury to leave town whenever he pleases. (Bunbury is another person who doesn't exist, but who can be on his deathbed on a

moment's notice so Algy gets his excuse to do as he pleases.) Algy decides to go "Bunburying" to Jack's home in the country to win the hand of Cecily, under the false pretense that he is Ernest Worthing, Jack's brother. Gwendolen also decides to go to the country, to see her fiancé Ernest Worthing, who is, in fact, Jack. Gwendolen and Cecily realize that they are engaged to the same man. It turns out that they are two different people both posing under a false name; this is unacceptable to the ladies. No name but Ernest is thrilling and gives off such vibrations. Unfortunately for Jack and Algernon, no other name will do for their loves Gwendolen and Cecily.

Drew Boudreau played the role of Lady Bracknell, a part often played in drag to highlight the satire. There were often times during the play when Bracknell started "yelling" and the rest of the cast went silent in reaction to her powerful demanding nature. However, I felt the emotion in Bracknell was not nearly high enough to foster such reactions in the cast. So at points like this, the cast seemed like they were acting more than they were in character. Drew, other than these few moments, I must admit, looked very good in his costume, and he didn't fall short in his accent and movements. I espe-

cially enjoyed his constant sucking of his teeth, which added to the character's superiority complex.

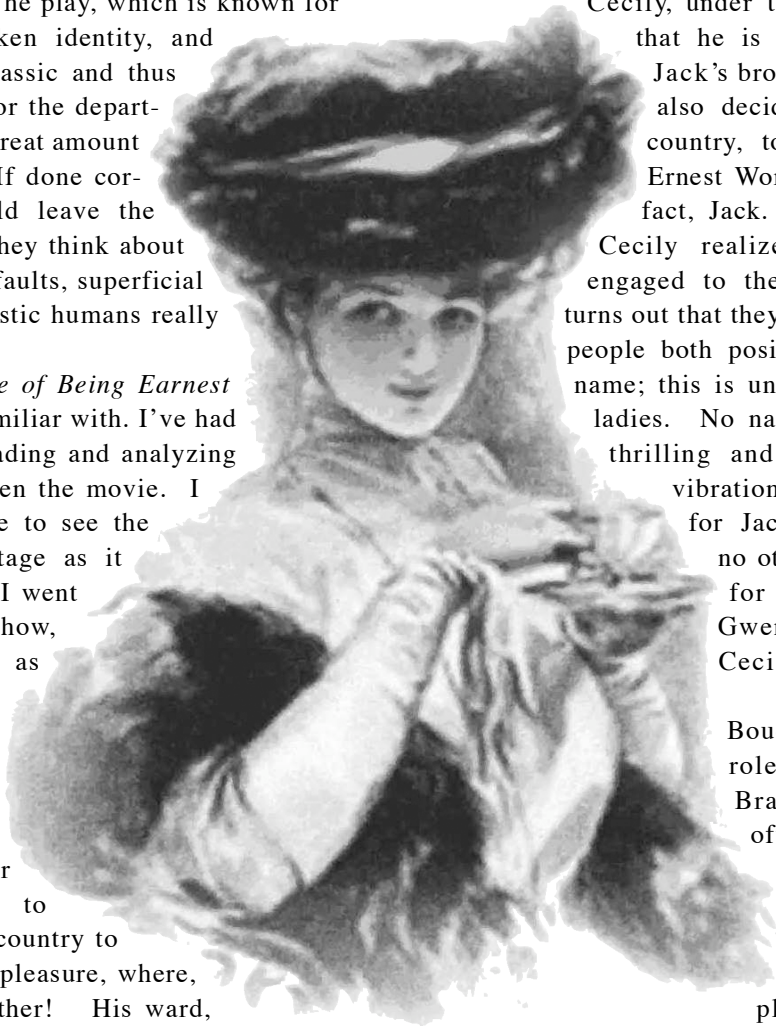
Louisa Johnson played Gwendolen, Bracknell's daughter. She was hysterical and really captured the role. Through her vibrations, that only came from the name Ernest, one could tell that she had a deep understanding of the psychology of her character. Not that her character was especially thoughtful, but that's the way Wilde wanted to write the simple, arrogant Victorian women.

Sheliagh O' Laughlin (Cecily) was adorable. She emphasized Cecily's youthful imagination and her bipolar nature. I felt her performance was phenomenal and exactly what Wilde had intended when writing the role.

Kevin Villeron and Robert Colpitts (Jack and Algernon) worked very nicely together as a slapstick team. The two kept the play moving and interesting, although they fumbled a bit with their lines, possibly from the stress of opening night.

Jillian Cross was playing Miss Prism, Cecily's teacher and caregiver while Jack is away in the city. Jillian gave light to this sometimes under-appreciated character, but I would have liked to see her made to look a little older since the way she talked and walked seemed like that of an older woman. She was in love with Dr. Chasuble (Rob Ryan), a Reverend, who is asked to baptize Jack and Algy with the name Ernest. Rob did a good job portraying this old romantic.

The set and costumes were quite impressive. They added to the acting and made this a very solid production. Wilde's Victorian play is hard to beat but I admit that I found more enjoyment in reading it than in seeing it performed. It could be that I've read it so many times that these jokes are no longer fresh to me. The audience, and my fellow editor who went with me, seemed to really enjoy themselves. Congratulations to the cast for getting down that British accent and for giving Stony Brook some class and sophistication!



Hands and Knees

By Vincent Michael Festa

How does it feel when you see the ones you love or care about change their lives around for that certain someone? To see them degrade and humiliate themselves to keep the ones they love?

How does it feel seeing those who used to be so close to you end up the ones being used and abused because they love someone or have the need to hang in there?

Does it bother you? Does it worry you the least bit? Does it hit you right here? The irony of giving the best care you could to someone who is now receiving the worst treatment by someone else?

I won't stand to see the ones I care about like this! For them to be treated like garbage or objects, instead of the gifts that they should be treated as.

No one should ever do whatever it takes or change themselves to be someone they're not for anyone else. This is not what it is all about!

People should stand up for themselves, for what they're really worth. No one should forget that. Life is too short to be submissive or to be controlled by a heartless dominator who needs his/her tilt in power.

Better yet, throw them away. Throw them out for good. The ones who have the need to control are really the ones who aren't worth it. Don't give them the opportunity.

Because when people realize and defend themselves for what they're worth, individuality, not worthlessness, will stand out in the end. So will you.

The Stony Brook Press



Where *all* the lonely women are.

Meetings
Wednesdays
at 1 pm
Union room 060

Record Label Review: RRRecords

By Vincent Michael Festa

Possibly one of the oddest ways of getting a shipment of music would be a simple cardboard box of cassette tapes, not a nicely-packed shipment of industry-style cellophane-wrapped CDs. If it happens to be the former, then chances are it must be from RRRecords.

Originally a used music store, it is also one of the major flagship labels for extreme noise run by Ron Lessard (better known as noise musician Emil Beaulieu) in Lowell, Massachusetts. From 1984 to 2004 he had created xeroxed catalogs from RRRecords, which not only sold noise tapes and other obscure music, but also helped define the spirit of the noise and experimental cultures.

With a full-fledged online mail-order service, seasoned noise fans all over the world can easily access a broad and accessible selection of CDs, vinyl records, cassette tapes, box sets, and CD-Rs of top noise artists such as Merzbow, Aube, The Haters, Bastard Noise, and newcomers like Prurient.

But the main attraction to RRRecords site is a series of music called "Recycled Tapes". Old cassettes are erased-over with RR label music, then covered with duct-tape and labeled with black marker. The cassette card is also masked and marked, leaving no trace of the original music, and sealed once more with a photocopied sticker. Environmentally friendly.

The recycled tapes normally have no track-

listing and normally run through on sides A and B. Rookies may doubt the material on the tapes, since all of the parts are interchangeable (assuming they

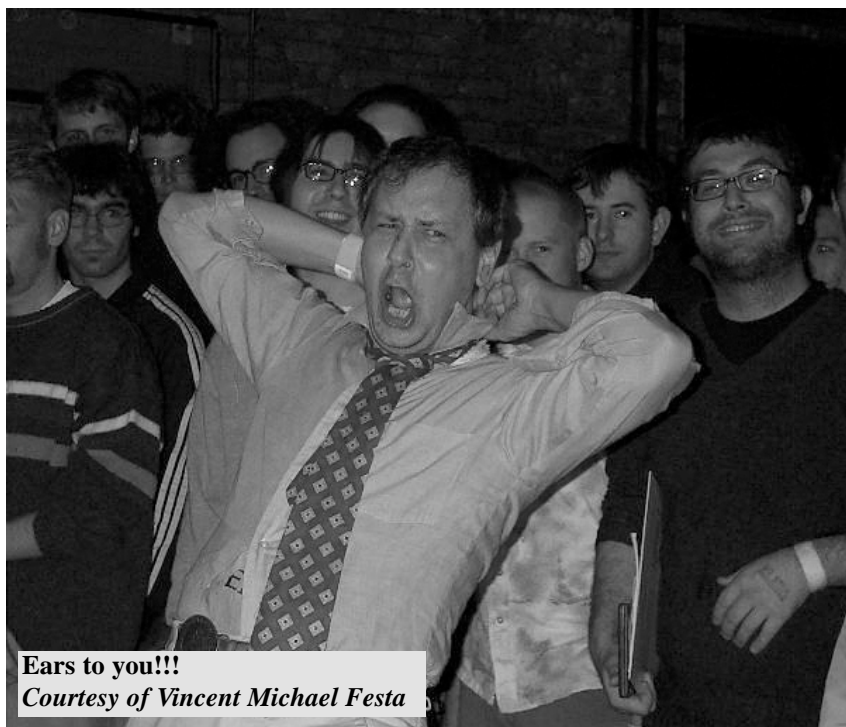
lations. Aube's *Quadrotation* on 7" vinyl and *Best Of G.R.O.S.S.* on tape are up for sale. For \$100.00, the Los Angeles Free Music Society is all yours.

As always, RRRecords lends a helping hand in promoting other artists and their labels. Nurse With Wound having a distribution deal as United Dairies to sell its catalogue on tape is the biggest example. Even Emil Beaulieu himself sells his own noise art. It's his label, you know.

Recycled tapes sell at \$4.00 a piece, so do 7" records, and most professional recordings run for less than \$10.00. And amidst all the harsh frequencies, dissonance, and walls of deafening white noise, RRRecords goes as far as even selling pop music. As budget items, they sell for \$5.00 apiece. Buy five of them for a special \$20.00. On a great day, Ron will treat buyers by throwing in stickers, postcards, flyers, and even rare memorabilia having absolutely nothing to do with music. Old music advertisements, train schedules, and small bank pamphlets, anyone?

Once in awhile, RRRecords holds performances to showcase its own artists, even, well, you get the hint. Hard-working Joes like Prurient and artistic Janes such as Jessica Rylan come over to perform with a flagship label.

For all RRRecords merchandise, shop at www.rrrecords.com. And e-mail Ron at ron@rrrecords.com.



Ears to you!!!
Courtesy of Vincent Michael Festa

can tolerate the material on these tapes), but veterans will quickly identify the artist's trademarks and the qualities to their music. Whether it's Prurient's screaming and metallic percussion or Masonna's razor-sharp anti-noise, RRRecords credibility is intact thanks to veteran's checks.

Besides recycled tapes, RRRecords sells videotaped shows and a host of box sets and compi-

Silent Hill

By Joe Donato

Silent Hill is a very difficult movie to review. This is actually my second version of this review, as I decided that I wasn't accomplishing anything trying to sell it to people. I'd rather go into a little more detail, for the people that have seen it already and want a little more insight. So don't read ahead if you haven't watched the movie yet. Here's your last warning: SPOILERS, GET DOWN!

This review is difficult because I'm torn on my opinion of *Silent Hill*. I came out of the theater torn, and a week later I'm still not sure. That's a sign of a movie that's at least interesting, and I'd say it's worth the price of admission.

It's a videogame adaptation, a genre that is synonymous with terrible. So in that respect it is at

the top of the steaming heap. None of the other game adaptations compare, as *Silent Hill* nails much of the atmosphere and style of the games, yet it's still a movie, and not a playthrough of the game.

The first two-thirds or so of the movie were really solid. There were a few bad lines, a bit of cheesy acting, but overall the plot was slowly unfolding, and the atmosphere was amazing. However, the screen went bright white, and then the movie started to get plain bad. It was weird to slowly reveal things throughout, and then to have the entire plot spoon-fed by Alessa as a "reward". Also, the cult was dumb. If I recall correctly, the cult was only hinted at in the first game, and it was the fact that it was mysterious and sinister that made it interesting. The cult in the movie is sinister, but it's because they are ignorant.

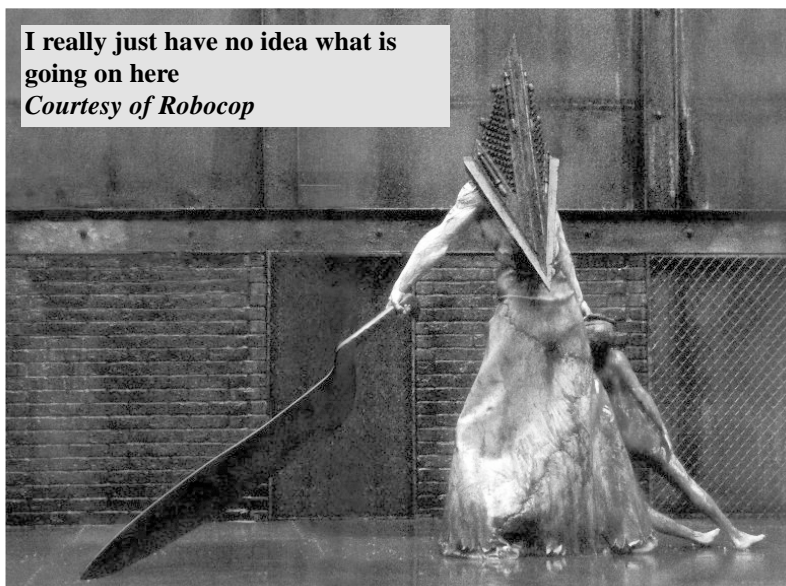
Fortunately, things still stay somewhat interesting: for example, the burning scene in the flashback sequence was genuinely unnerving. There's nothing like the slow roasting of a child to mess with your head. Alessa's final arrival in the church was also pretty cool, if only because it looked cool and was excessively violent. However, the plot goes completely off the deep-end. The flashback was a very blunt way of concluding the plot. Yes, it was good to know that Colin the dead janitor was a nasty pedophile. Yes, it was good

for them to emphasize how truly awful Alessa's existence was. It was bad because of the way it was delivered so ham-fistedly. The dialogue in the final church sequence following the flashback was too loud, irritating, and melodramatic. The whole ending, except for maybe the very end (which concluded the movie, but left it with awesome sequel potential), left a really bad taste in my mouth.

So why am I incapable of letting the few cool things I've mentioned go and accept this as another awful game movie? It's all about the first two-thirds. At that point, the plot was still mysterious, and it was all about the atmosphere. The road to *Silent Hill* was relatively short, and it wasn't long before the sirens went off and the town went dark. The walls started peeling away, the catchy piano soundtrack was replaced with creepy industrial noise, and the camera angles got pretty funky. Then Rose (the protagonist) was attacked by about a hundred charred and screaming zombie children. I was sold. They nailed it, I was watching live action *Silent Hill*, and it was wonderfully twisted. Things calmed down, a little more plot was introduced, and then the sirens went off once more. This time things were even more terrifying, as Rose got attacked by zombie Colin, who was really not happy about being restrained in a bathroom stall.

Colin shambled across the rusty floor and called upon his army of giant cockroaches. The walls peeled away, revealing steam pipes and chain-link fences. It was all so spot-on I didn't think it could get better. Oh, but it did. Pyramid Head, the

I really just have no idea what is going on here
Courtesy of Robocop



Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

definitive monster from the *Silent Hill 2* game, showed up. He's only in a few scenes, and isn't critical to the plot, but each scene he was in was brilliant.

Scary movies are really big right now, but even though many of them are R-rated, I doubt any recent ones had anything as disturbing as Pyramid Head stripping one of the characters of not just her clothes, but her skin. And it isn't just for shock value. The movie doesn't use cheap scares or excessive gross-outs; it's not even scary in that traditional sense. *Silent Hill* is unsettling. It was a different style of scary, and it was really cool. It tries to get a deeper emotional reaction out of you than just a quick jump. If it wasn't for that last third!

I'm still torn, though. It's simple enough to just say, "Forget about the end, the first two-thirds were so cool it doesn't matter." My problem is that the first two-thirds were so great because they WERE the games. Is this movie really an accom-

plishment to any degree? An adaptation is only worth its salt if it transcends or lives up to the source material. In *Silent Hill*, almost everything that is truly great about it is great because the games did it first. The monster designs, except for Colin the janitor, are straight from the first two *Silent Hill* games. The fog, sirens, darkness, and awkward camera angles are all references from the games. The music, which is fantastic (and much better than whatever pop-metal they were playing in the last *Saw* movie), is pulled track-for-track from the game soundtracks. In fact, anything that was changed or added to the *Silent Hill* lore detracted from the movie.

So, what are we left with? *Silent Hill* is a mediocre movie of extremes. It doesn't do anything particularly average. In fact, everything about it is either all kinds of awesome, or painfully irritating. The creators of the film had the foresight to take the best things about the games and recreate them faithfully for the film. Unfortunately they didn't have the writing chops to pull off the rest. I almost want to say that they were being too accu-

rate, as the plot and acting in the *Silent Hill* games are pretty bad, too. However, the movie is missing all the symbolism and deeper meaning that at least the first two games had. *Silent Hill 2*, for example, was all about reading between the lines. It was never explicitly stated that the main character in that game was sexually frustrated and came to *Silent Hill* to kill the memory of his wife. In fact, the dialogue and cutscenes portrayed the opposite. So, to sum it up, a series of videogames is cleverer than a big-budget Hollywood movie.

In the end, I still liked *Silent Hill*. I can't help it. I guess it's the thrill of seeing things that were once blocky models on a small TV screen turned into something much more real. Seeing a real man with a giant pyramid-shaped helmet and sword ended up being more awesome than I could have anticipated. I really hope there's a sequel, as they set it up very nicely to follow the story of *Silent Hill 2*. Plus, it will give them an opportunity to look back on what they've created and hopefully fix the mistakes. Now, how about that *Halo* movie?

Music Video Review: Throbbing Gristle "Discipline"

By Vincent Michael Festa

San Francisco, May 1981. Throbbing Gristle's final performance. As they said, "the mission is terminated". But not without a bang or a wonderful mess of events.

You see, the birthmothers of industrial music demonstrate just what *their* brand of discipline is all about. It's not normal behavior, yet this fascinating, shocking, and at times hilarious sequence of actions, expressions, and emotions shows the nature of one of Throbbing Gristle's live performances. Their brand of always-experimental sounds alongside Throbbing Gristle's direct and outright challenging behavior against normal expectations was always a push in the innovative direction in the artistic world.

It's not too long before Genesis P-Orridge's vocals are layered, echoed, and mixed in different speeds until they accelerate and permeate into the aura of the performance. Genesis works himself up into a total screaming tirade, intolerable to those who normally expect a sense of normalcy. Throughout it all, the ranting and raving, asking for and demanding discipline at the top of his lungs, ensues. Genesis is a kid again. Screaming for help or inciting chaos, it's up to you to decide.

His antics are spiteful, yet playful. He pulls a microphone in front of a speaker, creating blackboard-caliber screeching noises; he wields a very mean microphone stand and bangs his head against the amplifiers. There's also a great deal of crowd interaction: Genesis is face-to-face with the audience, asking very well what they want.

The sound is trademark Gristle. Abnormal,

always venturing into unwanted experimental territory. Sharp punctures stab through as their own catchy beat, so catchy that everyone in the audience is thumping to it, save for one female who is covering her ears in agony. Fuzzy lines and thin frequencies are stretched out, bounced, and raised in classic Throbbing dissonance.

Cut to one Peter "Sleazy" Christopherson, who works on metals and noise box, and Genesis rocking out on a guitar. All sounds totally drown out in a blanket of dramatic, turbine jet engine-like distortion, with Genesis proceeding to make out with a male audience member. The fan springs up in sheer amazement: he cannot

believe what he just did. The distortion sets the tone for irony and tries to match the feeling of excitement rushing through the veins.

Though this performance would be after their truly controversial *Coum Transmissions* (a pre-Gristle performance where Genesis and member Cosey Fanni Tutti crossed all lines of gross indecency), it's more than enough to stray away from normal conventions in that it would be an art performance. Always standing for unconventionality, uneasy subject matter, and going against the grain, Throbbing Gristle had always made for uneasy company, in a good way.



MMM...Throbbing Gristle
Courtesy of Vincent Michael Festa



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Honestly?

By Vincent Michael Festa

May I ask why it is so difficult to get a simple answer nowadays? Why can't people shut down their defenses and learn to be honest with each other?

I can't speak for the other person, but what is it? Are people too nice to hurt their friends' or lovers' feelings? Or, are their friends and lovers too nice for feelings to be hurt? Is tiptoeing through flowers what people always do? Or is the truth not good enough?

Sometimes I want to know about certain things. It's OK. I can take it. In fact, I demand it because that's how I want to be treated. It's a respect thing. I feel that people should be treated in a way they want to be treated back. I may be a nice person but I can take a rejection or a "no" now and then if done right. If flowers need to be stepped on, fine. I don't expect honesty to be pretty at times. But the damage is far less than that of others being dishonest and playing games. As long as I get an answer, I understand.

But honesty over the simplest things is hard to come by. It sometimes never reciprocates the way it should. It seems that there are those who can do so much and give their friends or

lovers the world, only to be left with nothing to take back. It's not too much to ask, compared to what was given.

Instead, some people have nothing to offer, indeed. They just run and hide. They're afraid. They're afraid because they won't take the hurt on either part of the scale. Sometimes they have too much pride because weakness makes them look bad. Maybe they don't want to admit that they're wrong. Or worse, they start to lie to mask their true feelings or say whatever they think is right to just get the moment over with. Games are played, instead.

To a point, that's where the real hurt begins. When things aren't done properly, they start to damage until they snap, collapse, or bowl over. The results are not pretty as a marigold. It's how things end up being twisted, mixed, or melted beyond repair.

Personally, it's weakness when people run and hide, when, instead, they can tell the truth about little things, just to get over it. It's weakness when people mask themselves and are dishonest because they can't be straightforward or admit they're wrong. And, of course, people playing games with others just to screw around. That, I

think, is weakness, and those who do it seriously need a self-esteem check.

It could be that some people choose not to be honest because they get nothing out of it, or they don't feel like losing. We were taught when we were young to tell the truth because it's the right thing to do, to cut down on losses. But, along the way, others learned that they could not only do what's wrong, but get away with it as well, so be it.

Possibly, when they are under scrutiny to answer, they dodge the issue or just say whatever. It's not right. When the person is being honest in telling others how they feel, they shouldn't be given something different in return, like falsehoods, rehearsed emotions, or broken sentences.

It's not a perfect world, I know. I don't expect for people to be strong or to do the right thing, but maybe if more people would be strong or actually do the right thing, then there wouldn't be a problem. Instead, they choose to run circles around the heads of others who need answers.

So, what's the problem?

Christ Comes to the Press Office

By Vincent Michael Festa

It was just another ordinary meeting at the Press office Wednesday afternoon. Slackers, rock hipsters, fan-boys, lost girls, and ass-kickers sat around listening to the weekly minutes and itinerary. And then the unreal happened: newfound Press writer Caroline D'Agati walked in.

"Hey, guys!" exclaimed D'Agati with a fun little bag of rainbow Skittles. "Guess who'll be hanging out with me later tonight?!"

It was then that the staffers were blown away by an increasing white glow permeating the office. Jesus H. Christ walked into the Press office during the meeting to stop by and say hello for a couple of minutes. The whole staff stood silent in amazement.

"OH, MY GOD! KOOOOOOOOOOOOOL!" exclaimed Rob Gilheany, Press living legend and lord messiah.

Jesus decided to stop by the Press office after an on-and-off run of the university paper referencing Jesus.

"I saw you guys put me on the front cover," said Jesus. "I thought it was pretty good. I like what you do, man. Keep it up!"

The Press staffers all laughed with glee as Jesus sat down and chatted with the crew, answering questions and talking about each other's per-

sonal achievements.

"Swedish fish?" asked staffer James "Puzzlemaster G" Messina, who chowed down a pound and a half of the fish before finally offering some to the Son of God.

"Jesus Fish? Ah, got you there!" joked Christ as he pointed and smiled at Messina in return.

"Hey, how's Mohammed—" asked Rob Pearsall, Press head muckety-muck, before being interrupted by the Great One.

"He's fine, trust me!" Jesus laughed.

At one point, Christ and the gang listened to various vinyl records DJ'ed by James Blonde, Press comics king.

"Hey, Jesus, let me play this one for you!" said Blonde as he deviantly played Led Zeppelin's *Stairway To Heaven* LP backwards to reveal the alleged subliminal Satanical backwards messages. "Hey, why don't you come to Beerfest and turn water into wine?" asked Blonde.

"No matter what happens, my son, Jesus will always love you," He said.

Despite one or two awkward moments, everyone in the office enjoyed His company as He explained how He got to the office.

"As soon as I heard that the Press put me on the cover of one of their issues, I had to walk on water to get here," explained Jesus. "I was in Africa feeding the poor children, and then I made a stop in Bavaria, Germany to hang out with Pope Benedict XVI for a bit before I crossed the Atlantic. Greenpeace says hello."

During the joyous occasion, each staff member broke Jesus' chops in performing some miracles. Among them were turning the entire *Statesman* staff into Darwinian monkeys, and magically giving the Press \$200,000 for their budget. However, it wasn't until David K. Ginn walked into the meeting that one of Jesus' greatest miracles came into play.

Ginn was stunned like a motherfucker.

"Oh, shoot... uh... hi!" said Ginn, where the 'K' stands for 'pervert'. "Uh, sorry if I gave you that eight-page wood in one of our issues last year, you know?"

"You're David K. Ginn?" Jesus asked with amazement. "Oh, man, I... oh, wait... oh, my God... I almost forgot about you! Wait... hold on..." said the Great One as He performed a miracle on Ginn, giving him an eight-foot woody, com-

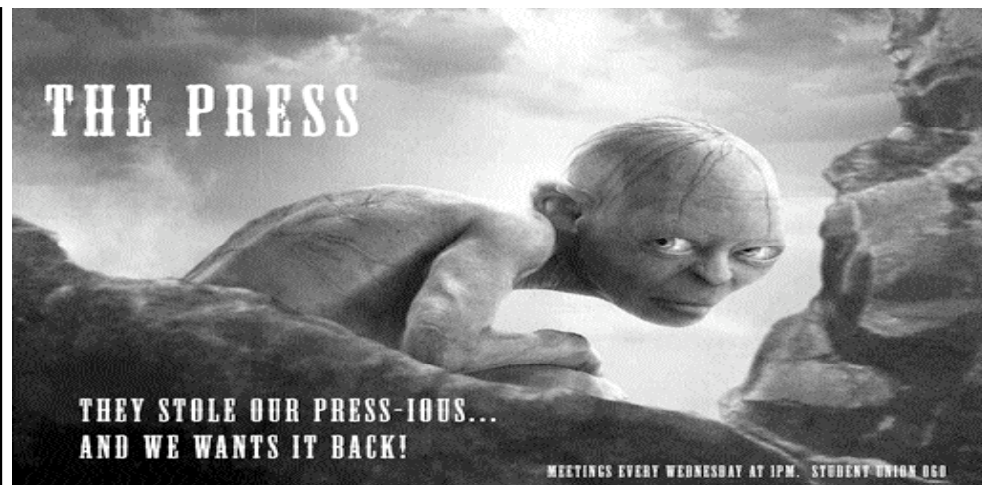
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My Space: Myannoyance

By Vincent Michael Festa

About last semester, I wrote a Myspace article detailing some of the major things on a little website that can get to me. However, so much more has taken a toll on my delicate, prized, and fragile ego that I decided to return to the subject.

For those of you who haven't yet become one of millions of users who use contact pages, a Myspace page can be set up that can reflect who you are. Upload a profile photo of yourself, your personal information, interests, favorite movies, music, books, TV shows, and even a personal blog or two. You can check your messages and post bulletins, as well as look up friends and frienemies from high school, potential dates, hook-ups, future wives, favorite bands, psychos, and other people for you to build yourself and your friend list on. And let's not forget Facebook, which works, in many ways, like Myspace, but with Facebook you can contact people by poking and upload unlimited photos.

But, after a couple of months, you start to see the downside of all that's fun with these contact sites. Whether it's profiles acting like escort services, hangers-on, wimpy rock bands who try to rape you with their music, or just some of that good ol' surprise titty, here's a new and revised list of old nuisances, as well as new ones, when you venture out friend-hunting.

Fact: People put up their best photo shots on their profile and in their photos to gain attention. And that was two hair colors and 30 pounds ago. Here's some advice: don't play yourself. How will you feel when that person you finally meet isn't what he or she is supposed to be? It could be some mama's boy named Leon who's out to make you his bitch. And trust me, you don't want to get to know anyone by the name of Leon.

Ever been tapped by a hot guy or girl that

seemed interested in you, only to realize that it's just a front for a nightclub that's really an escort service ready to do business with you? It's just like Christmas Day, you get all excited that someone gave you a present, only to see that there's nothing really in that box. What's worse is when the same people want you to accept them as a friend, only to find out that they're selling themselves to get a career in "modeling." Thanks for the shots of yourself showing your Holland Tunnel to the entire world. And by the way, nice Photoshop techniques!

If at any time someone asks you why they're not on your Myspace Top 8, suggest to them that it's only a website. And if the same person starts to crumble and melt as to why you took them off your friends list, suggest that they seek professional help. Again, it's only a website. Seriously, people's lives need to stop being dependent on a computer screen.

If you do happen to have a friends list with numbers in the thousands, then either you're highly insecure, or you're creating some sort of spectacular magical wonderland where you mistake "friends" for real ones. Remember, there's another spectacular magical wonderland waiting for you. It's called the outside world, and it starts with you stepping away from the computer and walking out the front door.

Here's a new danger to the eyes and mind of the average internet user: you click on a profile, only to be assaulted by seizure-inducing graphics of sparkly names; hot pink, cute little animals; and the latest 120-mile-an-hour reggaeton video that could pass for X-rated porn. And these kids are not even in middle school yet.

Speaking of music, if there's anything the MP3 taught us, it's that any whiny emo musician, half-artist, or two-note techno band can set-up their

two-note music in a matter of hours. Just because you can doesn't mean you should. We appreciate you doing what you love, but attacking us like Jehovah's Witnesses by bringing fortheth thou music won't do.

But back to the subject of loud profiles...I remember almost coming close to going to a hospital from viewing this one profile from a cute girl who claimed to be nice, sweet, affectionate, action-packed, and fond of romantic things. She turned out to be one of the nastiest princesses with an attitude I've ever spoken to, wanting me to kiss her butt while wielding her "whateva" flag around. I think those people should be crushed by a double-decker bus being tipped over, riot-style.

For all you Facebook addicts out there, poking each other back and forth is no substitute for good ol' one-on-one face-to-face human communication. Also, it's real frustrating when messages and burning questions are answered by...you guessed it...a poke or a friendship. I say, "tomato," you say, "smashing pumpkins?"

Nothing says evoking sympathy like unwanted bulletins about missing children, animals on the verge of being put to death, and political stances that would make late anarchist Abbie Hoffman smile. You are not newscasters, weathermen, or drama queens. Don't ruin our day, please! And not only that, "don't ask, don't tell": nobody asked to hear how you have fun in a backseat of a car, so don't get into it.

Finally, this goes out to child molesters who like to prey on innocent children: I really do hope you get caught and that one day you do get to meet that Leon guy I was talking about earlier in this article. You truly deserve it.

Christ Comes to the *Press* Office continued...

By VMFX

Continued from previous page

plete with AC/DC-style big balls.

"Gee, uh, thanks!" Ginn said ecstatically. "I mean, I may look like the guy from Einstuzende Neubauten, and that's all I ever wanted, but this is the greatest gift ever! Wait until I show Nicole!"

However, some staffers weren't happy with the arrival of Jesus.

"I challenge you to a battle, now!" demanded staffer James Del Kerr, who was dressed in a Relapse Records t-shirt, Viking horns, boots, and a sword-and-shield combo. Approximately fifteen seconds later, Del Kerr lost and was turned into a pillar of salt.

After the *Press* witnessed the battle of the century, it was time to say good-bye to their good friend Jesus.

"Sorry, my people," apologized Jesus. "But I have to gather up all of these Long Island daughters with cell phones and take them to the Tower of Babel. Remember, I love you all. And please, take care of Baby Jowy."



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The Reformation in Central Kentucky Scintillates

By James Messina

I, ladies and gentlemen, am a big fat phony. Yes, it's true. I have been relying on a principle of cryptology which is widely looked down on within the cryptographic community in order to produce my puzzles. It is called "security through obscurity", and I shall explain it presently.

In the nineteenth century, a Flemish man named Auguste Kerckhoffs wrote two essays whose fame continues to resound with cryptographers. (As an aside, he was born Jean-Guillaume-Hubert-Victor-François-Alexandre-Auguste Kerckhoffs von Niuewenhof and later shortened his name. Good move, dude.) Kerckhoffs was a linguist as well as a cryptographer; a mastery of language was more important than a command of mathematics in those days. Kerckhoffs studied at the University of Liège in Belgium, became a professor, and eventually found his way to teaching at the École des Hautes Études Commerciales in France. None of this is particularly relevant, but I wanted to include some background info on the guy.

Kerckhoffs' big move came in 1883, when he published two essays in *le Journal des Sciences Militaires* called *La Cryptographie Militaire*. Within these documents, he refuted the popularly held belief in security through obscurity (which I swear I'll explain) and began a new era in cryptography. Kerckhoffs' Law is as follows. (I copied this bit verbatim from wikipedia, so don't accuse me of stealing unless you want to be absolutely right.)

The system must be practically, if not mathematically, indecipherable;
It must not be required to be secret, and it must be able to fall into the hands of the enemy without inconvenience;
Its key must be communicable and retainable without the help of written notes, and changeable or modifiable at the will of the correspondents;
It must be applicable to telegraphic correspondence;
It must be portable, and its usage and function must not require the concurrence of several people;
Finally, it is necessary, given the circumstances that

command its application, that the system be easy to use, requiring neither mental strain nor the knowledge of a long series of rules to observe.

The second rule is considered the most important, and is often referred to as "Shannon's maxim", after Claude Shannon's interpretation: "The enemy knows the system." The idea that a cipher would have the ability to be compromised and retain its utility is a very important one to modern cryptography.

Ciphers in the modern era rely on the principle that the key is more important than the cipher's encryption algorithm. In cryptographic terms, the key is the piece of information that controls the operation of a cryptographic algorithm. With a well-designed algorithm, changing the key from one to another would completely alter the appearance of the ciphertext. For instance, in the Playfair cipher, the message that appears in the five-by-five grid would be the key. Changing the key drastically alters the ciphertext; the difference between encrypting a message using the keys "zebra" and "xylophone" is immense.

And here comes the description of security through obscurity: whereas in the ciphers utilizing Kerckhoffs' Law, the key is the most important aspect of the cipher, a cipher operating under security through obscurity relies on secrecy. Kerckhoffs' Law assumes that at some point, whether by traitorous action, intrepid spies, or simple accidents, a cipher will become known to the enemy, and that it is the security of the key which maintains the cipher's integrity. Security through obscurity assumes that the cipher will not be compromised. Period. A good example would be if you hid your porn in a drawer. Anyone who knows what drawer it's kept in can get your porn, man. That ain't cool. Kerckhoffs' Law assumes you put your porno in a drawer, but you have a lock on it. Problem solved. With security through obscurity, the emphasis is much more heavily on secrecy than the cipher's strength; we're talking cyanide pills, edible paper, this-message-will-self-destruct-style shit. Militaries primarily use this approach.

And so do I! In the puzzles I've given you, I've sometimes given hints as to the method of the cipher's decryption, but for the most part, you haven't been given significant clues. I apologize for not being more open, but after all, what are you going to bash your heads against the wall about, if not my puzzles? In that vein, I give you the solution to the old puzzle, and this week's, in the hopes that headbashing continues.

PUZZLE THE 13TH:

9 25 7 1 15 4 24 24 15 7 13 17 9 15 12 3 13

As was stated in the previous article, this puzzle is recursive. The first number represents the corresponding letter value. The second letter value is the sum of the first and second numbers. In this example, the sum is quite obviously over 26, and when this is the case, use a modulus. Thusly, $9 + 25 = 34 = 8 \pmod{26}$, and the second letter is H. The third letter value can be thought of in two ways. It is both the third number added to the sum from the second, or it can be thought of as the sum of everything preceding it. Thusly, it could be either $7 + 8 = 15$, or $9 + 25 + 7 = 41 = 15 \pmod{26}$. Either way, the conclusion is the same. Continue summing the values to arrive at the plaintext. Despite my clunky description, it's simple as pie, no?

PUZZLE THE 14TH:

This is the last issue of the semester. I'm pretty certain I haven't failed out. I'm also pretty certain I'll continue to have an interest in cryptography. If either of these conditions turns out to be wrong, I'd like you all to know it's been a pleasure to write these articles, and I hope someone actually read them. I've made a puzzle for the end of the semester, based heavily on the Playfair cipher, but obligations to the paper being what they are, I didn't have time to actually encipher any text. If you're interested in solving it, e-mail me at longinquous@yahoo.com. Peace outside.

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Ask Amberly Jane

Continued from back cover

might imagine loss and pain numbed me, the drugs just got me to visualize my numbness.

At age 19, I took the first chance I had and ran from it. I ran as fast and as far away as I could: first to the Marines; then further still when I volunteered for a six-month boat cruise across the infinitely warm and deep South Pacific. My only compromise was that I sail as part of a Marine Expeditionary Unit looking for war. My friends and I were lucky, there was none to be had. It took ten beautiful days to get across the Pacific, from San Diego to Thailand. Ten days, not counting a stop over in East Timor for peacekeeping. The little Micronesian country of East Timor wanted independence, and as a result of this, it had just been gang-banged by the Indonesian military like a prom queen at a prison rodeo. The UN there just looked on when it happened.

It was at this point, after seeing the aftermath of genocide that idealized innocence and virginity became dead virtues. The whole Roman Catholic “wait till you’re married” thing became the cruel joke of a faceless comedian; and worse still, a self-imposed sadism. I didn’t need any more sadism in my life; by then I had had my fill. My masochistic reservoir was “full-up” on 4 years in the Marine Corps.

Southern Thailand is where I fucked away my virginity and all of its artificial, unattainable ideals. Artificial ideals that put me at odds with all my own memories and made me push them away as bad, defective, or incomplete by accepting them. Imaginary ideals had kept my body in stasis and my mind and its memories in perpetual rewind. I gave it all up, my virginity to a beautiful brown-skinned Thai girl named Doll and the sadist’s paradise of othering my own memories as bad, defective, or incomplete.

Doll was the type of girlfriend that borrowed money and didn’t pay you back. This was all the better. I had made my mind up, and this was what I wanted. In her studio apartment midway up a high-rise apartment building, just barely above the streetlights of the Thai nightlife, but close enough for the dim street lights and noise to creep in through the window. Doll had just helped me lose my virginity with the help of some Lite-Fucking and confident composure. I loved it.

After, she offered me a shower. If I accepted I was afraid she’d steal my wallet so she showered first. I stood there with just my boxers on in her dimly lit bedroom... bored. I decided to keep a closer eye on her in the shower.

I walked my paranoid ass through the half-open bathroom doorway. I took my boxers off and stood there in the shower with her. I surprised her. She gazed at me and watched me throw the boxers out into the bedroom. The bathroom was dark, the steam from the shower warm. I took the bar of soap from her hands and I stepped toward her, closer. The water ran over our naked bodies; my thigh was pressing against her pubic hair. I slid the soap over her skin; first, over her arms; it lathered; then around to the small of her back and up the crease of her spine; she rubbed water over me; I brought the lather around to her belly button; moved down her

legs and feet. As I arose up her legs I stopped at her clit and worked back up to her breasts. She had covered them with her raised forearms. Doll had become shy. As the dim light left only Doll’s inviting silhouette to reach for, and the quiet sound of the warm water hitting her body told me where I ended and she began, the pain and chaos that I had carried across the Pacific faded into obscurity and silence.

Thanks Amberly Jane, you’ve kept me from feeling numb again.

Love,
John Wayne

JW,

I have a feeling we will meet again on this strange and meandering road of life. You are one of my favorite people, and I love you dearly!

And here’s a few of my favorite and more memorable letters...

This true story concerns a daily walk past a certain house in Brooklyn.

“Every time we walked by this house we smelled weed. The first time, it’s like, ‘Man, that dude is smoking,’ and then the second time is like, ‘Man, that dude’s having a party.’ And then it was like, ‘This dude is upta something.’

So the three of us look in his backyard and we see all these weed plants, probably 15 massive nine-footers. Huge bowling-ball size buds, red hair, crystals – the whole nine. So we go back to my house and we decide to bring plastic shopping bags and go steal the weed. Mind you, it’s 3:30 in the afternoon, right next to an elementary school, and little kids are walking around everywhere, and parents are walking with their fucking kids and shit. If we were smart we would have went at three in the morning with black clothes and masks. But we didn’t. And so we don’t even go around back, we walk right through the guy’s front driveway and go into the guy’s backyard and start stuffing the shopping bags, and I’m stuffing my cargo pants, with these huge buds. And my friend gets the bright idea to try and steal a plant, but the things were like fucking trees, with really thick trunks. So he hangs on it for a good 15 seconds before it finally snaps. And then we take off booking down the street – in broad daylight – with kids and parents all around – all three of us each with two shopping bags chock-full and a fucking 8-foot marijuana plant, running down the street in Brooklyn.

So we get to my house and we just sit, and then it hits us what we just did. The guy could have come out with a shotgun, or been in with the mafia. You don’t know.

It was September. That shit lasted us until October the next year! We gave it away to all our friends and smoked everyone up at school; they’d give us \$5 bucks, \$20 bucks here and there. We were the most popular kids in school.

We figured it out and calculated that we must have stolen \$50,000 in pot from that guy’s backyard.

That was the best year of my life.”

Dear Amberly Jane,

I’m a 28-year-old fat bastard who still lives at home with his mom, plays video games and surfs the Internet 16-18 hours a day, and has absolutely no prospect of getting laid. I don’t do well around people; in fact I hate most all of you. Needless to say, this doesn’t help my chances of getting laid. The last time I got laid was 6 years ago. It was a miserable failure, mostly because the unlucky lady decided that watching *Dukes of Hazzard* was more interesting than my thrusting prowess.

That was 6 years ago, with ‘6 years’ being the key word. But I’m not a one-time loser. I’m an all-time loser. Before her, out of my only two other girlfriends; one became a lesbian, and the other one soaked me for travel fare and a \$1,500 engagement ring... before I found out that she had given me a fake name and was already married.

I really could go on and on about the failures of my sex life, but I think this brief introduction gets the point across. You have to help me, because if you don’t I’ll be celibate for longer than most people are virgins.

The Muffin Man

Dear Muffin Man,

You miserable sack of stupid, all your answers are in your letter. You live with your mother, are fat and play video games all day. If you want to get laid, start by moving out and meeting people instead of sitting at home. Even fat people get laid, but working out probably wouldn’t hurt your chances.

You say you don’t do good around people, so leaving your house is probably difficult. I imagine you either clam up or become overly obnoxious. My advice is to find a good anti-depressant. (Marijuana is leaps and bounds better than Prozac, which side-effects include sexual dysfunction and bed-wetting... neither of which helps your chances of getting laid.)

And instead of sitting like a corpse in front of a terminal, a simulation, take the next step to a real fucking life. Even telephone chat lines are a step in the right direction. Baby steps, Muffin.

And look, if all else fails, hop a plane to Vegas, and purchase some time with a Roadside Sensatory Hostess. She’ll treat you right.

Dear Amberly Jane,

I read your column in every issue of the *Press*... I love hearing about your crazy stories! The story about stealing the pot was the funniest thing I have ever read. I decided to write you to ask for some advice in my sex life. I’m in a long-term relationship, but I’m also very bi-curious. This sexual interest is fine with my boyfriend, it’s just that I have no idea how to seduce a woman. There have been plenty of girls that I’ve been attracted to in my classes, but I never know how to approach the situation. I want to make a move, but I always end up chickening out. Please help me get a woman into bed...

Signed – Curious but Frustrated

Continued on next page

Ask Amberly Jane

Continued from previous page

Dear Curious,

Yes, females are lovely, aren't they? Soft skin, sinuous curves – no wonder you're curious. Although I have had my share of naked women on top of me, I have to admit that all of them came on to me, and more often than not, I really had nothing to do with it. To some extent, I still feel like a blathering idiot around women I am attracted to. Not men, of course. Men are easy. (It's nice, but not surprising, that your boyfriend is cool with the whole idea – he's probably looking to get in on the mix, and if he's not, he's nuts.)

Anyway, I want to help you out... that's my thing, so I discussed the matter with two of my friends who happen to be lesbians, and crucially, much more knowledgeable than I. They suggested a good strategy: Have a party. Invite your crush and remember – never discount a stiff drink or a joint, or both, to lift inhibitions. Then give her a massage in semi-private, slowly taking off her clothes... But be forward. Both of my friends could not stress this point enough, or as one put it, "Don't worry if you

think she may not be into women – because it really doesn't matter." Good luck.

Dear Amberly Jane,

I really, really, really want to have anal sex with my girlfriend, but she says she tried it once with someone else, and is pretty sure she doesn't like it. I bring it up a lot but she always says 'no.' How can I convince her?

Back-door Man

Dear Ass Man,

First of all, you have to face the grim, meat-hook reality that you may NEVER get to plug your girlfriend in the ass. Some people will never be converted, and as we all know you must respect her boundaries. But I definitely condone communication; maybe her previous ass experience was with a man with a bigger dick and it was painful, maybe she didn't use lube, maybe she'll consent if she can use a strap-on and fuck you in the can, so you'll both be even.

Remember, if a girl says she's uncomfortable doing something with you in bed, don't just go

and get her another pillow – that's probably not what she means.

Dear Amberly Jane,

I am a 25-year-old male and I still have never masturbated before. Could you please tell me why?

Anonymous

Dear Anonymous,

That probably because you don't have a penis.

Break out the tits and whiskey, take me down to China Town and show me how to kick the gong around...

How's that for a slice of fried gold.

You can always e-mail:

AskAmberlyJane@hotmail.com

Love to all of you, and kisses on pink parts...

Adieu.

iRate

A Macintosh Column by Joe Rios



Column 1.5

Hey everyone, hope you enjoyed your spring break! Welcome back to iRate, the column for Mac users, by a Mac user. It's good to be back, and in the last month, Apple has managed to step up to the plate and give us some new goodies to talk about.

About 3 weeks ago, Apple released a beta program called Boot Camp. When I first read about this, I almost spilled my coffee in my lap in shock. With Boot Camp, owners of Macs with Intel processors can now install Windows XP. While this sort of thing was a popular project for folks who like to "hack their Mac," now anyone with a MacTel and a Windows XP CD can do it. Boot Camp generates Windows XP drivers for the Mac hardware, makes a partition for Windows XP, and gets you through the setup. Once you are done, every time you start your MacTel, you have the option to choose your operating system.

There are a few questions people have when they hear about Boot Camp. The first one usually is, "Why would I want this?" The answer is, with Boot Camp, you can now have the two biggest operating systems in the world on one computer. Why buy a Windows machine that can only run XP when you can buy a MacTel and run whatever you want? The next question usually is, "What is this going to cost me?" Actually, Boot Camp itself is free, and even though it is a beta, it is very functional and will almost certainly be part of the next version of OSX. "How is it performance-wise?" This is a big deal, and is what has me sold on buying a MacTel as my next computer. Various computer magazines have

been running benchmark tests to determine the performance of the new MacTels, compared to their Windows-only counterparts. The results are stunning. The MacTels perform in Windows just as fast as, or even faster than, the Windows boxes. While the technology still needs work, it will be just a matter of time before people are able to use MacTels as hardcore gaming machines. Apple will finally be able to break into the hardcore gamers' market.

The final question people have about the Boot Camp situation is, "Do I have to reboot to change my OS every time, and what are my alternatives?" Well, Boot Camp's major downfall is that you have to reboot in order to load the other OS. As of now, the Apple software just doesn't allow you to run two OS's simultaneously, but there is hope yet!

Parallels has developed the first Virtualization solution for MacTels. What Parallels does is make it possible to run Windows, and just about any flavor of Linux, from within the OSX environment. This makes it possible to drag files and copy items from OS to OS. Parallels does have its own issues. It's still in beta testing, so there are some 3D rendering issues, but thus far, the drop in performance by having both OS's running is such a small percentage that most people won't really care. (If you are doing intensive work in either OS, you might want to reboot just to be at 100% performance, as opposed to the approx. 90% you get through Parallels.)

Parallels Workstation is available as a free beta at Parallels.com, and will be released as a for-sale product when it reaches 2.1. It is available for pre-order now, for \$40.

Also from those lovely folks at Apple is a brand new MacBook Pro. When the MacBook Pro was released earlier this year, there were a number of complaints about the machine: no Firewire 800 port, no dual-layer DVD burner, and only one size, 15.4". It was simultaneously a very beautiful machine and very annoying for something that costs no less than \$2000.

Earlier this week, Apple released the new MacBook Pro, proving that bigger is better. This beast of a MacTel is the most powerful laptop Apple has ever offered. It comes with a 2.16 GHz Intel Core Duo. It can be customized with up to 2 gigs of RAM, a 120 gig HDD, FireWire 400 & 800, a faster, dual-layer burning Superdrive, and has a massive 17 inch screen. It comes with all the other bells and whistles of the previous MacBook Pro, but the increased size and performance is going to cost you. The 17" is going to drain your pockets of a whopping twenty-eight hundred dollars! (Add 300 more for those 2 gigs of RAM!) Apple means business when they say this is the replacement for the PowerBook G4. Take a glance at the Apple website, and you might notice that the PowerBook is now only available as a 12". I imagine that by mid-summer, we can expect the iBook to make the same transition and be reborn as a MacTel.

That's all for this time folks. Send any email, comments or feedback to iRate.SBU@gmail.com, or drop down by the office of the Stony Brook Press (Union 060) and declare, "I'm here to beat up Joe Rios!" We're used to that sort of thing. Yo.

Ask Amberly Jane

This is the end, my beautiful friend.

Besides a few Paris encores, this is it – the 40th and final Ask Amberly Jane.

Allow me to jerk you off.

For old times' sake.

A million 'Thank You's' to the many fine souls who sent letters, and to those I've met in person over the years. I wish I could lick whipped cream off all of you - everyone who laughed out loud, learned something, or read with wide eyes. I tried to inform my dear populace, and entertain you, but beyond all things I've tried to show how one girl could turn the tables on traditional taboos, and own her sexuality unencumbered by shame or convention.

I can't fully express my gratitude for all the feedback, for letting me share the peaks and valleys, for all the times someone said, "I tried that position - greatest sex ever!" or "I didn't know there are 3 holes down there!" or "Thanks to you I tried masturbation/anal/closed-legged cunnilingus..." or "My god, you do exist!"

I hope you liked all the drawings, and the lurid sex. Always striving to give a good read, you know?

I must thank my *Press* family, especially my old editors – Dustin, Joe Flip, and Rob, for being so goddamn hot and so talented and so dedicated to the paper. Inspiring for your effortless talent and hard work, but more for your deviant sense of everything.

I'm a better person for knowing you all.

Just in case you missed something the last couple years, here's a stroll down memory lane:

Described my first threesome (a fantastic unplanned adventure); masturbating in the library; the time my RA yelled at me for being too loud during sex; various orgies and porn predilections; duping the cops; misleading the administration; hentai at I-Con; taking pictures of my hot friend for his porn career; donkey punches; penis envy, again – endless masturbation; the first time I kissed a girl... on both sets of lips; my fan in prison; foul-tasting semen; foreskin and the guy who asked me to pee on him; a Sex Tupperware Party; Scat Domination – projectile with gusto; doing mushrooms in the Bamboo Forest with 8 others – all banging on instruments in spontaneous song; doing mushrooms on Thanksgiving; doing mushrooms on the shore while talking to a thorn bush; hiding weed in my pussy over a Trans-Continental flight; having sex in the woods between Kelly and the SAC; getting paid by the school to go to Vegas (for some Gonzo reporting... only to spend the money on drugs and gambling); partying at Mardi Gras... where we drove in an illegally-rented vehicle; the dominatrix at the Sex Carnival who stripped and spanked me on stage; Burning Man and 35,000 other naked desert crazies; Boy Scout Camp – with 400 boys per week; the infamous reverse cowgirl; the night Natalie plaster-casted my body and tore out all my pubes; all my lovers; endless porn and masturbation; Beerfests and Halloweens - notorious all!; the drunk professor who jerked off on my floor; and random passerby's who whisper, "I could cum all over you."

It's been a long, strange trip... hard to believe it's over. But, on to new things, my friends.

An uncertain future awaits. Flinging my body over the cliff, entropy, chaos, a young buck lost and searching. Its OK to be thrust into a foreign environment, with only a rudimentary understanding of the French language, effectively homeless, hovering above some abyss two blocks from the Moulin Rouge. I can't wait.

I leave you with a few things:

Advice: Suck all the marrow from life. From birth, they sell you a false morality, mold you into a well-greased worker bee, ready to strive in the 9-to-5 for nickels and dimes, the wife, the 2.5. Do something outrageous instead.

Personal info: I'm in love. It's true - we've been together off and on for the last six years; been to Hell and back together. It's a mad love, a crazy love, that used to frighten me. What can I say, I'm devoted to the freak.

SBU Trivia: Firstly, beware of Lobster Boy! (He is waiting to attack you in the steam tunnels.) Secondly, I found out that the 1978 classic nudie-flick *Debbie Does Dallas*, one of the highest-grossing porns ever, was partially shot here at Stony Brook (a field near H-Quad). Apparently, they conned the top two administrators, who didn't know it was a porno shoot. The administrators gave them full run of the campus, and even played themselves in the film! (Download it, you'll recognize SB.)

Correspondence: The first couple letters are new, the last few are a collection of my favorite stories and e-mails from the last 3^{1/2} years. Enjoy.

Dearest Amberly Jane,

This is just a quickie, you know I could go for hours, so I'm just going to launch into it and skip the foreplay. Here's to the days, the drives, the trips to the beach, the trips on the beach, to shores not near here, and adventures that have yet to come. How was California Zoe? The moaning coming from behind the door, through the walls, was that me or you? If the readers only knew one tenth of the deviance we've caused, created, seen, experienced, LIVED. That night we don't speak of – the middle of the street is not a good idea. I know my life wouldn't have been fulfilled or complete without Amberly Jane (not even a lil bit!), like many other Stony Brook students, yet they will never know about missing their other half when you're gone. As much as we want to burn SB down, I am grateful that it has allowed for our paths to meet.

Cheers to the Dynamic Duo. Rrrrrrr! Much love mon petite lapin,

Love in all shapes and sizes (minimum 8 inches of course!),

Emily!

Emily, my dearest love.

Wait till we get to Paris – they should be very afraid!

Dear Ms. Amberly Jane,

I was surprised to learn that you are leaving Stony Brook. I have been a long-time reader of your column. Since you are leaving, I thought I'd ask if we could fuck before you leave, or at least fool around? Thanks for all the great work in the *Press*,

and I look forward to hearing from you regarding sex. Best wishes.

Carnally yours;

NYPD2BAGHDAD

Dear cop in Iraq,

I'm flattered. But can you hammer a 6-inch spike through a board with your penis? A girl's gotta have her standards.

Dear Amberly Jane,

I have a pretty good sex life with my girlfriend. We do a little bit of this and that, but she says she only likes to suck my cock when it's soft; she puts the whole thing in her mouth and rolls my nubbin around with her tongue. And when I get hard, she stops and makes me wait till my cock gets soft again and then gobbles up and sucks the whole thing and pulls off her mouth when I get ram-hard again, and we go through this again and again until most of an hour has gone by. It feels nice at first but then just as I want things to get going (by her giving me a thorough sucking), she stops. Why? WHY? I don't know how to get her to go the whole way and I love being deep-throated.

Lumber Jack

Dear Jack,

Sounds like she gets off on teasing you. Who can blame her?

Dear Amberly Jane,

You are such a sweetheart. You're so pretty and you always make me smile. I think you're a great writer... based off of your human evolution paper alone. You always seem really confident, fun, and sweet. I know we've only met this semester, but I will definitely miss you. There's such a light in you. I wish you the best of luck in whatever career or endeavor you take on. You're truly beautiful. I love that you explain things to me, and help me to have a bit more of a clue about the ways of 'love'. lol. I will miss seeing you come to class in capris, with your perkiness and red hair. Send me the pics of us!! (I know, kind of anti-climactic). But I definitely want something to remember you by as you travel the world, and explore unknown dimensions!

Yours Truly,

Sexi Kizzle :)

Dear Amberly Jane,

As a guy, it was hard for me to admit that at age 23 I was still a virgin, but I was. Life had a strange way of lining things up for me. I've had my dad and mom die by age 13; and by age 22 as a Marine, my good friend Jimmy was killed in a helicopter crash off the California coast. So. When I found my way to southern Thailand at age 23, it was a good place to be.

I was as far away from my time on Long Island as I could ever be. Far away from my time blazing entire dime bags with my brother while we drank cheap 40 oz. malt liquor to wait for the mescaline or sometimes shrooms to kick in. As you

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