

Fishladder: A Student Journal of Art and Writing

Volume 1
Issue 1 *Spring 2003*

Article 14

10-11-2011

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Recommended Citation

Lewis, Casey (2003) "625 Virginia Ave.," *Fishladder: A Student Journal of Art and Writing*: Vol. 1: Iss. 1, Article 14.
Available at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/fishladder/vol1/iss1/14>

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625 Virginia Ave.

CASEY LEWIS

These are the guys that live in my house.

Paul is a right-handed buncher and a front-to-backer. He likes it quiet, but not too quiet. If there's a party going on, then it can't happen. But if there's nobody in the house, he'll walk upstairs, turn on the TV, and walk back down. There needs to be something to take any attention away from him, but not so loud that he can't concentrate. I remember one time the rest of us all knew that Paul had just gone downstairs to take care of business. As soon as we heard the door close, we turned off the TV and sat there in the living room, not making a sound. After

a minute and a half, Paul yelled up at us to start making some noise. When we didn't, he came up the stairs and stormed out the front door. We watched as he ran across the street to the neighbor's house. It was hilarious.

Paul uses this time to gather his thoughts and ponder life's many questions, like "How do they cram all that graham?" and "What should I wear to the bar?" Leaning to the left, it usually takes him three times. And he always looks to make sure.

Ethan is a reader. He can't do anything until he has read something. He doesn't even need a book, either. He reads shampoo bottles, lotion bottles, band-aid wrappers, shaving cream, anything. I think he's read every single word that is printed anywhere in that room. As a result, he has become the designated shopper of the house when it comes to toiletries. He'll see lotion commercials on TV and say, "Sure, it might have aloe vera, but without seaweed extract, it's never going to give your skin the firmness you really need." One time I came home from the store with Selsun Blue and he said "You idiot! Head and Shoulders has 68 percent more dandruff-fighting power, and it's about a buck and a half cheaper."

Ethan's a roller, too – three times around the hand. He was taught that front to back is the safest way to do it, and he's ambidextrous. I asked him why he didn't use the same hand all the time and he said, "Sometimes my arms get tired from holding up a book or something, and I have to switch." He was a switch hitter when he played baseball in high school. Go figure.

Neil is a strange case. He likes to do homework in there. Hours can go by without any trace of him. "It's the only time I can work without any distract-

tions," he says with a straight face. I believe him, too. The grades on his papers went up considerably after his parents bought him a laptop, which he brings in there whenever he has trouble writing. Needless to say, he's the only one that ever uses it.

Neil can't function properly unless the paper comes from the back of the roll. This seems strange to me, because I think it's easier when it comes from the front. I'm not as weird about it as Neil, though. He has to change it before he can take care of business. I've walked in there after him, knowing that I had just set it the way I like it, and he had changed it. Not that it bothers me that much, but I always change it back, just to mess with him.

Neil is a left-handed back-to-fronter. He bunches it up into a ball, usually using way too much. He figures that if there's a whole lot of paper between the mess and his fingers, he doesn't have to wash his hands. "Sick, dude," I said. "Why don't you wash your hands?"

"I'm a busy man. I don't have time to be washin' my hands," replied the guy who spends at least 3 hours a day playing NBA Live. "Besides, we don't ever have a towel in there." He had a point. I would have told him to wipe his hands on his clothes, but in Neil's case, it only would have made his hands dirtier.

My roommate Lawrence is kind of a free spirit. He's got long hair, rides a motorcycle, plays guitar, smokes pot. He's smart and does pretty well in school, but he doesn't really seem to have to work at it. All in all, he is the most easy-going guy in the house, probably the most easy-going guy I know. This is why I was so shocked when he told me about his peculiar daily habits.

It almost always happens for him between 1 and 2 in the afternoon. When at home, he uses the one downstairs. Before he sits, he prepares all of his papers. He tears off five lengths of five squares each, folds them accordion style into one five-layer square, and places them in a neat row on the counter next to the bowl. He uses every one of them, too, even if he doesn't need to. "If it takes more than five, I get in the shower," he explained, almost shamefully. He's a front-to-backer and he stands up.

When on campus, Lawrence uses one place. Only one. It's in the basement of Bessey Hall. No matter how far he is from it when the urge hits him, he'll go there. He could be 2 feet away from another one, and he'd still walk 20 minutes to get to the one in Bessey. He claims that it's the cleanest there is, and that nobody's ever in there. He always uses the handicapped stall because he can lay the papers out on the rail. Unlike Neil, he is very concerned about washing his hands. He counts to 20 while he scrubs each one, to make sure it's completely clean. He uses only Dial antibacterial hand soap. "I carry around a little sample-sized shampoo bottle filled with it in my backpack, for when I'm on campus. I don't trust that pink shit they have in that big container attached to the mirror. You never know what's in it."

"Soap," I said.

"How can you be sure?" he asked. I was so disillusioned.