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TO ONLY  
LOOK  
LIKE  
SOMETHING  
THAT CAN  
STING

Three Essays by  
Claire Winslow

QUIZ & QUILL

SINGLE AUTHOR CHAPBOOK 2015

# QUIZ&QUILL

OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT LITERARY MAGAZINE

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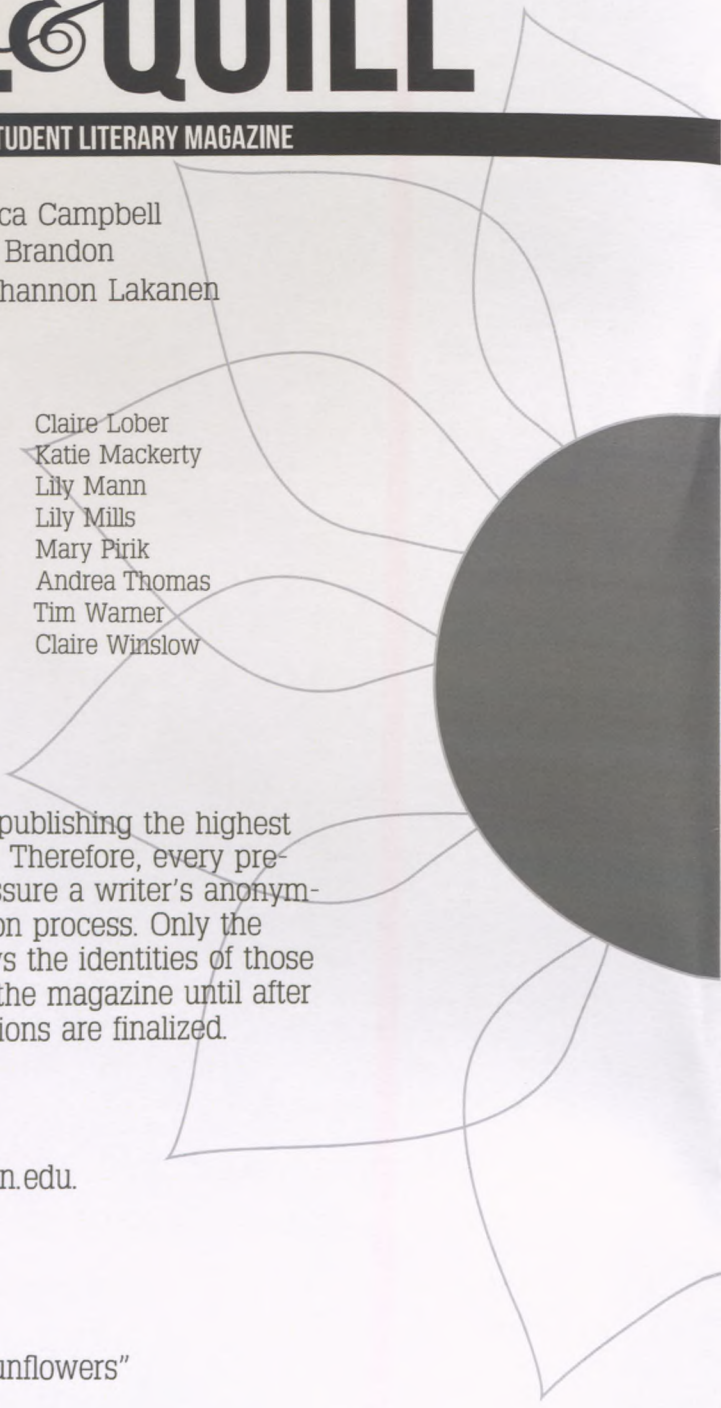
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## COVER ART

"Vase with Twelve Sunflowers"  
Vincent Van Gogh



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Claire Winslow is 20 years old, a junior, and a Literature Studies and Creative Writing double major with a minor in Religion. Having grown up in Oxford, Ohio, Claire now lives in the Gender and GLBTQ Resource House, works as a tutor in the Otterbein Writing Center, and is an officer for Sigma Tau Delta. In addition to writing essays, Claire enjoys Harry Potter trivia, baking bread in the middle of the night, making lists, and naming her plants after Hamlet characters.



"I believe so. ... Don't accuse anybody else."

-Vincent Van Gogh in response to the police  
when asked if he had shot himself



# ON BEES

*“A multitude of bees can tell the time of day, calculate the geometry of the sun’s position, argue about the best location for the next swarm. Bees do a lot of observing of other bees; maybe they know what follows stinging and do it anyway.”*

—Lewis Thomas

The bees didn’t care about us. We had stumbled upon that ocean of sunflowers, an accident on the way to the real destination. Drawn in by the stunning yellow blooms, thousands of them, stretching farther than I was choosing to see, we piled out of our 13-seater university van, and piled into the field. Standing on the very edge, about to plunge, you could see the haze above the flowers, undulating fog drifting over and around. Bees. Hundreds, thousands, millions maybe, drawn in by that golden sea, just like we were. They clustered on each flower, burrowing inside to find its nectar, becoming coated in fuzzy yellow pollen in the process; they buzz around, carry it from

flower to flower, just as nature had intended, or maybe it was life, or maybe just me.

As we made our way deeper, pushing aside flowers and bees alike, neither one noticing our quiet wonder, one member of our group lost her nerve.

“It’s gonna sting me! No. No. I can’t go in there, look at all those bees, I don’t wanna get stung!” The screeching grated on my overwhelming calm of metaphorical reverie, as I have been just thinking the same, “Look at all those bees!” Unable to let her ill-founded fear ruin this moment for me, I called to her, frustration and just a touch of condescension creeping into my voice,

“The bees don’t care about you! They are just here for the sunflowers. Do you think a bee is going to give up its life just to sting you when they are surrounded by *this*? This is a feast for them, it’s paradise! Just enjoy it. The bees aren’t going to hurt you; we are all here for the same reason.”

And then I stopped. It’s not often that you are struck so hard by something that came out of your own mouth. I don’t know if she calmed down after that, I stopped paying attention to her squeals. Because what I had just said struck me in a way that I hadn’t intended. As it came out of my mouth, I realized.

*We are all here for the same reason.*

\*\*\*

Later that day, at our actual destination, hiking trails through a gorge carved out by millions of years of river water, the serendipitous repetition of rushing stream and layered sandstone, I stood with my hands in my pockets. I stood, staring through the river, pondering every event that had brought us here, congregating to this unlikely corner, believing that it was somehow better than all the

others. But it was. It was beautiful, and I marveled at the unlikelihood of this place, and my existence in it. The woods were that false sort of quiet, actually bursting with rustling leaves, splashing water, and birds singing in the faraway sycamores. But then that seemingly silent cacophony was shattered.

I heard them before I saw them, a gaggle of ten or more, clutching coolers and cameras and Styrofoam cups. The noise of their raucous laughter and mindless chatter seemed far louder than necessary as it echoed around the gorge. They squeezed past me on the narrow trail as I stood with my hands balled in my pockets, still resolutely staring at the river. Didn't they know that I was trying to contemplate the reason for my own existence? Didn't they know I was attempting to revel in the splendor that had brought me to this beautiful corner of earth, all of the events that had led me to this moment? They just rumbled on by. But the last woman to pass me, in her mid-50s, a Disney World tee shirt and New Balance sneakers on a body that may have been thin once, stopped. She paused beside me, as her friends traipsed on ahead, drowning out the murmur of the water. Standing beside me on the narrow trail, she slid her hands into the pockets of her cargo shorts, looked at the river, and said,

“It sure is beautiful, isn't it?”

She was gone before I knew what to say; my tongue still scrambling for a response by the time she caught up to her friends, laughing and stumbling and enjoying each other's company. They were enjoying the day, enjoying life, enjoying the unlikelihood of their own existence. And as I stood there, hands in my pockets, staring at the river, despite every improbability, a bee landed on my arm.

\*\*\*

In elementary school, our playground seemed to have an unusually high concentration of bees. We would be going about our business, on the boiling hot metal slides, or the wooden play set that

gave so many kids splinters it has since been torn down. Suddenly a bee would buzz over, going about its business, pollinating clover, and unintentionally scattering children. Everyone would scream, running and swatting, until it finally drifted off, or else some braver soul than I was able to stomp it into the ground.

One afternoon, recess was drawing to a close as we lined up to go inside, when a bee bumbled towards us, scrambling the line that had just managed to become straight. My father had taught me that if a bee comes near you, just stand still and it will go away; so I was frozen, motionless in the chaos around me. In my stillness, I was one of the few that heard the teacher's attempts to calm everyone down. She pointed to the cause of the commotion, saying,

"Look! It's only a bumblebee!" And I didn't understand what she meant by "only"; it was one of those big fat ones, sure they were fuzzy, but it was still a bee. Bees sting, I looked at her quizzically, allowing my face muscles to move just enough to convey my confusion, but not enough to attract its attention.

"It's only a bumblebee," the teacher repeated. "Bumblebees don't sting. They only look like they can so that predators don't attack their hives. They can't actually hurt you."

I wasn't sure whether to believe her or not, or if that changed anything. I began to feel sorry for all those bees that had been smashed on the playground; had they been the dangerous kind? She had said it was for protection, but wasn't it fear that made us kill them in the first place? Suddenly bees were far more complicated than they had been, requiring a close examination before knowing whether or not to be afraid. Wasn't it easier to just assume they could all hurt me? You have to make your judgments quickly in this world. But in any case, as I stood, still frozen in line, I wasn't sure if I felt sorry for that harmless little bee. He was causing an awful lot of chaos. As I stood, frozen in line, I thought, how wonderful and

how terrible to only look like something that can sting.

\*\*\*

On an afternoon spent exploring parts of Columbus that I would normally never visit, a man with dirty hair and bulging eyes approached us. I was already feeling uncomfortable, out of place among the graffiti and abandoned buildings, in a part of town that my mother would later describe as “sketchy”. He came up to us and I was immediately nervous, mistrusting of this stranger, so different from myself.

“How are you today?” he asked enthusiastically. He seemed as though he really did want to hear our nervously mumbled answers, oblivious to the discomfort there.

“I just wanted to talk to you; you seemed a bit out of place here. I’ve just been at church, singing. I love the music. I’m not sure how I feel about the church part of it, but I just want to sing.” We chatted for a bit, telling him we were just exploring the area, and he recommended a jazz club two streets over. A few minutes into our conversation, still walking down the cracked sidewalk, he stopped, midsentence.

“Look at this little bee!” he exclaimed, bending down to grin at the insect perched on the grass by the side of the road. He nudged his cracked fingertips under her, and with his assistance, the little bee floated away on the wind.

“They are disappearing, you know; won’t be around much longer. Well you have a nice walk now! Don’t get lost!” And with one last crooked smile, he bumbled on, a stranger who I never would have approached. Drifting away, unstung, unstinging, just here to walk, to sing, to talk to strangers, and speak to bees. Maybe that’s why I’m here too.



# NEWSPRINT

3 AM, March 2013. Walking across a campus that isn't mine, the wind cuts my yellow spring jacket. I wish I had borrowed your coat.

In that room with the impressive ceiling, I remember it from before, but I don't remember if you told me what was in the books lining the walls, books of newsprint. Every day of news, The New York Times, times a hundred, over a hundred years lining the walls with newsprint.

February 1919.

A man reads the front page, TROOPS RETURN HOME!

A young girl answers an ad, WANTED: Ladies Companion. Young, White, Educated. Light housekeeping, hairdressing, conversation.

And here I sit in the room with the impressive ceiling almost remembering, almost understanding that the present is only the

same gift for a moment before it's past, and before it's forgotten and before it's crumbling between my stumbling fingers as I marvel in a room with an impressive ceiling in the middle of the night on a Thursday, March 2013.

And maybe that man's son did come home but another's didn't, added to the list of bodies on page 4. And maybe that girl got that job so she could buy the handkerchief that her mother wouldn't, other girls couldn't, a gloating trophy to tuck into her sleeve. But maybe some other daughter didn't as her family scrapes by on another month of only just enough. And it was here and it was now and it was only for a moment before it was yesterday, and was bound into a book to crumble in a room with an impressive ceiling.

And today's paper will soon join it.

Tomorrow will be another day, as all the other days before it, and in a hundred hundred years a girl will sit and sift through our crumbled lives and think,

"These people really lived! They had hopes and dreams and fears and loss and love and lies just like I do. They made mistakes, they tripped and they stumbled and they fell. They got colds. They said the wrong thing, made the wrong turn, loved the wrong person. And they sat and read this paper in a world that was living in the present now past, when history was just current events. And now it's just newsprint."

And someday they'll forget about me and my life will seem so strange to them, from the way I speak, to the way I style my hair. And we will all move on from the now and on to the later, as it gets later and later until the now disappears, just like so many nows before it.

But we were people too. I walk and I sing and I look at you and I pull a funny face. And the wind is too cold, and I want spring to



come faster than it can. And the hope that I have for a spring that may never come may seem silly to someone who already knows. Because I know that another war will come and what few soldiers did return will be heading right back again. The stocks will crash and the city will burn, after a short reprieve of jazz and gin. And I want to shake their shoulders, shake them till they know what I know. Because I know that everything will fall apart again, just like everything always does, and it will and it was, but they don't know that. Because right here right now, it's February 1919.

And someday they will look to me and say "Why didn't you see it coming?"

But then they will realize that I was more than just newsprint. And they will realize that I lived. And they will realize that I laughed, and I learned, I lost, I loved, and then I died.

And as I sit in that room with the impressive ceiling, I will realize too.



# THINGS MY FATHER TAUGHT ME

The moon appears larger as it rises, as the angle at which its light is passed through Earth's atmosphere distorts the image when it is nearer to the horizon. This phenomenon is called the Moon Illusion, and occurs because its light must pass through a thicker layer of atmosphere than it does when the moon is positioned directly above the viewer. During its journey to our eyes, the light is bent in such a way that the moon can appear to increase by up to 30% of its normal size, and can also make the usually white or yellow orb look orange, or even red in color. Perspective is everything.

# THINGS I NEVER LEARNED

The moon hadn't risen yet as we stood by the pool, craning our necks to see the stars. I pointed out the constellations that I knew, confident in Cassiopeia and the Big Dipper, but only able to hazard a guess that those are the Gemini Twins, and those four may be Pegasus. I hoped my desire to impress wasn't too obvious. It was my dad who had taught me the constellations, evenings spent in the driveway, necks becoming sore as he pointed out the pictures made by stars. I had supplemented those lessons with books of Roman mythology and an introductory astronomy class, but with only the names of figures and a vague idea of the arrangement of their pinpricks, I could not know which constellations lived where, or if any of the names that I knew would even appear in the sky tonight. Perhaps they were currently visiting the other side of the world, or couldn't be seen on a July evening, or didn't like Wilmington, Delaware, or didn't like the way that I was using my half remembered knowledge to try to impress a boy who appeared to love me. I leaned into you as I pointed to a particularly bright speck, just becoming visible over the tree line. It hadn't been there when we first came outside; proof that the world really was moving under the patio, that time was passing, that the moon would rise to dim the stars, that the probably-a-planet-maybe-Jupiter wouldn't seem quite so large once it cleared the horizon. Perspective is everything.

## THINGS MY FATHER TAUGHT ME

When my father finds something really funny, he giggles. That's his version of hearty laughter, not just the chuckle of amusement that he uses as an everyday equivalent, but the full body surrender that he saves for special occasions. It starts slow, just the normal snicker at some ridiculous thing that we all find funny, but then he will gain momentum and nothing can stop him. "There he goes," my mother smirks. His laughter increases in pitch while decreasing in volume, becoming a small squeaking giggle that would sooner be attributed to a toddler in pigtails, or perhaps a mouse, than a 5'11" science teacher with rough palms and a beard. Soon, the laughter becomes audible only to dogs as tears come to his eyes. He takes off his glasses and places his face in his palm, shoulders quivering as he loses all control of himself. By this point we are all cracking up, whether at the original joker or dad's reaction, it's never quite clear. It was my father who taught me how to laugh, and I mean really laugh, and especially when something isn't even that funny. It's usually the stupid things that get us going, the bad commercials or the ridiculous reports in the police blotter that he reads out loud to me. We giggle at emotionless accounts of the hilarious exploits of drunken college students that fill the weekly paper, or else it was something silly that someone said, every action is fair game. From my father I learned that kindness does not always equal love or perhaps it's the other way around. The laughter will start with a sarcastic remark, bringing up a past mistake, never allowing anyone to forget the time that he pressed his face to a solid metal wall, thinking that it was an overzealously tinted window, or the day I was attacked by an overzealous father swan while on a kayak. Any slip of the tongue is pointed out, every misunderstanding mocked relentlessly. My father's laughter is how he shows affection, with the high-pitched giggle and the way he slowly shakes his head as he rubs his eyes. He is often set laughing by our constant game of overanalyzing stupid advertising, always imagining the group of people sitting around a conference

In elementary school my father did not allow me to go a day without homework. Any evening that I came home with the designated folder marked “take-home” empty, he would create his own assignment: math problems spaced out on a legal pad, a pop spelling test always written in green ink, scrawled in his blocky, nearly illegible script. I tried to complain relentlessly, but it is my father who is not a quitter. He is somehow always able to just get things done. He makes a plan, and then he follows it, no problem. I have never once seen him procrastinate or put something off; he can fall asleep the moment his head hits the pillow, and once he makes a commitment it is essentially a guarantee. I did not inherit this discipline. Growing up, I was constantly being scolded for the things that I “forgot:” the promise to unload the dishwasher, the assignment that was due last week, or how to fall asleep without two melatonin, a Benadryl, multiple relaxation exercises, a chapter of an audio book, another Benadryl, and multiple hours of trying not to think about the thing that I can’t stop thinking about, until the sky is pink and the moon is setting and as the shadows are returning and I can see his disappointed look.

## THINGS MY FATHER TAUGHT ME

table discussing how to best sell their product, coming up with the stupidest idea imaginable, and then spending thousands of dollars to make it happen. Walking through a store, I will point to the dumbest object I can find: the eight-foot-tall giraffe made of crushed velvet, a mannequin decked entirely in cheetah print, or the bulky kitchen appliance specifically designed so you can make your own fortune cookies, and straight faced I will turn to him and simply say “buy me that.” And then the giggling.





## THINGS MY FATHER TAUGHT ME

The first time I saw my father teach, I didn't know him. I had never met this person, this "Mr. Winslow," so animated and peppy, gesticulating in a way that my dad had certainly never done. He has a drastically different teacher voice, a mask that he slips behind, a whole other personality that he can evoke at will. It's someone for strangers, for children, for those he must impress. He keeps voices hung in the closet, ready for anyone, ready to whip it on in one practiced motion, skilled at making it seem like this is who he always is. It's a skill I have inherited; I can impress someone when I need to, I can lie, I can pretend that of course I can forget about you, of course I can sleep, of course I can tell you anything you need to know about the stars and the stories they tell and how the earth always moves when you don't want it to, and once the moon clears the horizon it won't seem to be nearly so beautiful.

I do not know how to meet new people. Unfamiliarity makes me overly polite; nervous and self-conscious, I always laugh too loud, breathe too little, and think entirely too much. But I am good at pretending so as I get to know someone; how much I make fun of them becomes a marker of my comfort level. I do not mock the people that I dislike. This is how I grew up. To make fun of someone was always a display of affection, with kindness reserved for the hated or the unknown. I told you once that I wished you made fun of me more; I felt bad always dishing it out while you showed love with compliments rather than mockery. I felt like you were being careful with me, like you were uncomfortable or afraid or maybe you were pretending to like me, the same way that I am always so kind to those I cannot stand. This is the only way I know how to love. I never learned how to feel cared for without the assurance of a sarcastic comment to ground it.

## THINGS MY FATHER TAUGHT ME

When the weather begins to get cold, trees can sense the coming winter and enter a state of dormancy. As the lower temperatures and shorter days make photosynthesis inefficient, the green chlorophyll that saturates the tree's leaves for most of the year drains away. The tree ceases to send nutrients to its now useless leaves, cutting them off from its stored food supply. Unnecessary until spring time, the leaves fall to the ground. Free of that which once sustained it, the tree is able to survive harsh winters in hibernation, not creating any food for itself, but also not consuming nearly so much as it does in the warmer months. However, without leaves, growth slows dramatically as the tree relies solely upon stored food sources, and without the hasty return of spring, the organism would be unable to sustain itself.

It was a constant litany that my father told me: whenever I complained about the laziness of my sister, whenever I cried about the apathy of friends. He chanted this instruction so often that I ignored it, that I never really learned. I never really listened when he told me that “You need to worry about you.”

## THINGS MY FATHER TAUGHT ME

I said to you once that I thought all human actions are based in fear. No matter what it is, you can trace it back to its most simplistic level and find that in the end, we are all just afraid. Afraid of loneliness, afraid of change, afraid of the power that I gave you, afraid that you couldn't sustain this, that you couldn't keep trying so hard. You said you didn't believe me.

When spring arrived in 1998, the oak tree in the front yard didn't wake up. I was four years old, and when the other trees began to reclaim their cover of leaves, I was afraid for the skeleton that had been left behind, afraid of the day that my father would cut it down. That tree had always been there, through all of my four long years. I had scraped my knee on its roots that fall, but my grudge was ended the day that I learned that it would soon be gone. I was born in the same town where I graduated high school. My parents have worked in the same places all my life, and the only move we ever had was simply across town. I have friends today that I knew in preschool, and once something is lost to me, I will miss it forever, regardless of how I felt when I had it. I am a nostalgic; I do not know how to move on from something, I do not know how to leave things behind. Homesickness is not only longing for a place, but for a time before things had changed. I miss the people we were when we were all someone else, I miss the things that I took for granted, I miss the walls that I had before I helped you break them, and I miss the versions of you that I created in my head. I never learned how to lose things. My father met my mother when he was eighteen years old. She was a grad student when he was a freshman in college, and they spent years convincing people that they were just friends, really. They have been married for 25 years, having known each other for 6 before that. It is clear to anyone how much they love each other. I see it in the way that they tease each other, the laughter that I can hear from the other room, or the way that my father always seems to know when she's had a hard day and would love it if the house was clean and dinner was ready when she pulls into the garage. They love each other and that will never change. I never learned how to change and that scares me.

## THINGS MY FATHER TAUGHT ME

It was my father who taught me how to love someone, like really love them, including their faults, especially their faults. To love someone without limit, without doubt. To love someone like you as a rose garden, with its beauty and its thorns and its need for constant care, and the way that no matter how hard you try, sometimes something happens, something you can't control, the skies dry up, or the caterpillars move in, or maybe the roses just get tired of trying so hard. My father taught me how to love them anyway.

I never learned how to stop.



## CHAPTER 10

The first part of the chapter discusses the importance of understanding the customer's needs and wants. This information is used to develop a marketing strategy that is tailored to the customer's needs. The second part of the chapter discusses the importance of understanding the customer's buying process. This information is used to develop a marketing strategy that is tailored to the customer's buying process. The third part of the chapter discusses the importance of understanding the customer's buying behavior. This information is used to develop a marketing strategy that is tailored to the customer's buying behavior.







# Q&A

**CLAIRE WINSLOW**

## **WHEN DID YOU START WRITING?**

Most of my childhood was spent writing a lot of bad short stories, filling the first pages of journals with angsty confessions, and worrying far too much about sounding inspiring. It really wasn't until college that I began to allow myself to make mistakes, and thus to write anything worth reading.

## **HOW DID YOU COME ABOUT WRITING CREATIVE NON-FICTION? WHAT DO YOU THINK, IF ANYTHING, CNF OFFERS WRITERS THAT OTHER GENRES DON'T?**

I have never been a very good storyteller. I remember being about pre-school age and my mother attempting to teach me that a story needs to have a beginning, middle, and end, a concept that I never truly grasped. When I began to work with creative non-fiction in college, I quickly learned that this was what I was looking for. It doesn't concern itself with the story, but rather the experience, the metaphor, the message of a moment.

## **HAVE YOU EXPERIMENTED WITH OTHER GENRES?**

I've attempted poetry and dabbled in playwriting, but non-fiction is definitely my home.

## **DO YOU TAKE ANY CREATIVE LIBERTIES IN YOUR ESSAYS OR DO YOU TRY AND REMAIN AS HONEST AS YOU CAN TO YOUR OWN EXPERIENCES?**

I'm not sure if I really believe in "reality" when it comes to essay. I choose to focus on the truth of feelings and of my own personal experiences rather external events. They are always honest, but if you want a historical account on my life, my essays probably aren't the best place to look.

## **DO YOU SEE NATURE AS AN INTRINSIC PART OF HUMAN CONNECTION? HOW DID WRITING ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO BEES PRODUCE THIS EXPLORATION IN "ON BEES?"**

Bees are an irresistible metaphor for me, both in the way that humans see them, and in how they relate to the rest of the hive. So many people view them with fear, rarely appreciating the beauty of this tiny being who lives so thoroughly as a member of a community. A bee will sacrifice its life for the sake of the hive, showing a level of selflessness that is rare in this world. For me, bees represent the empathy that people, myself included, all too often lack.

**YOUR SECOND ESSAY, "NEWSPRINT," IS ONE OF BREVITY, BUT NONETHELESS CONTAINS A FASCINATING TAKE ON GENERATIONAL CONNECTION. WHY WAS IT NECESSARY TO TAKE ON TWO DIFFERENT VOICES TO HASH OUT THIS EXPLORATION? WAS IT DIFFICULT TO WRITE THIS WAY?**

In this piece there are almost three different viewpoints. There is myself, reading a 1919 issue of the *New York Times*, which is contrasted with the experience of the person reading that newspaper the morning it was released. Then there is the voice of some future individual, experiencing the same epiphany that I did on that evening in March of 2013. I think this future persona may be the most important, as it hopefully prompts the reader to see their own lives as history, and thus view the past with the same complexity that the present contain.

**THE TWO COLUMNS IN YOUR FINAL ESSAY OFFER THE READER A FEW CHOICES ON HOW TO READ IT, AND THE READING EXPERIENCE VARIES DEPENDING ON THIS FACTOR. WHERE DID YOU GET THE INSPIRATION TO WRITE THIS ESSAY IN THIS TWO-COLUMN STYLE? HOW DO YOU THINK THE EXPLORATION WOULD HAVE MANIFESTED ITSELF IF THESE COLUMNS WEREN'T AT PLAY?**

I'm kind of in love with the ambiguity that the two column format lends to this third piece. It forces the reader to decide for themselves how to read the essay. Everyone will experience it differently, which does change how the message is perceived. For me this essay is an exploration of perspective, and I think the formatting reflects that.

**THE EPIGRAPH THAT APPEARS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CHAPBOOK IS A QUOTE FROM VINCENT VAN GOGH, WHO IS ALSO THE ARTIST RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PAINTING THAT APPEARS ON THE COVER. WHAT IS THE CONTEXT OF THE EPIGRAPH IN RELATION TO THIS COLLECTION OF ESSAYS, AND HOW DO YOU SEE VAN GOGH RELATING TO YOUR OWN LIFE AND EXPERIENCES?**

For over a hundred years it was believed that Vincent Van Gogh had intended to commit suicide when he died 30 hours after receiving a bullet to the chest. However, recent evidence has revealed the likelihood that he was shot accidentally by two young boys playing in the woods. Vincent lied to protect them, taking the blame for his own death. Van Gogh was deeply misunderstood throughout his lifetime, and his death was no reprieve. These misconceptions are a central theme of this collection, and I cannot help but be both captivated and haunted by the artist's determination to protect those who had hurt him most.

The painting on the cover, Van Gogh's "Vase with Twelve Sunflowers", was part of a study that involved scientists placing a group of bees into a room with different paintings of flowers, and the bees liked this one best. I'm not sure of the scientific value of this experiment, but I appreciate it. And as in everything, I stand with the bees.

**HOW DO YOU SEE THESE THREE PERSONAL ESSAYS CONNECTING TO ONE ANOTHER AND TO YOURSELF?**

It's all about perception. For me, all three pieces reflect the ways that we misunderstand each other. It is a collection of misinterpreted complexities, simplified truths, and skewed perspectives.

## **IS THERE A CERTAIN ORDER YOU WANT THE ESSAYS TO BE READ, OR DO YOU SEE THEM WORKING IN A WAY THAT THE READER COULD START AT ANY AND PICK WHICH ONE TO READ NEXT?**

I think they can be read in any order. They follow similar themes, but in the end all three pieces are meant to function independently.

## **WHAT OR WHO HAS HAD THE GREATEST IMPACT ON YOUR WRITING STYLE?**

I have to call out Shannon Lakanen, who allowed me the confidence to make mistakes and gave me a name for the personal essays that I had been writing for years. I think my style is also influenced a lot by the writers that I adore: Paulo Coelho, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jane Austin, John Keats, and Khaled Hosseini, all fueling my obsession with metaphor and lush descriptions.

## **HOW HAS YOUR WRITING STYLE DEVELOPED OR CHANGED WHILE YOU'VE BEEN AT OTTERBEIN?**

I don't know how much my style has changed, but it is certainly developed enormously. When I first arrived at Otterbein I would plan every moment of an essay before I wrote it. I have since learned to allow myself to just write, editing can come later.

## **HOW DO YOU PLAN ON INCORPORATING WRITING INTO YOUR LIFE AFTER GRADUATION?**

All I want is to spend my life in a beautiful old farm house, writing essays and keeping bees.

