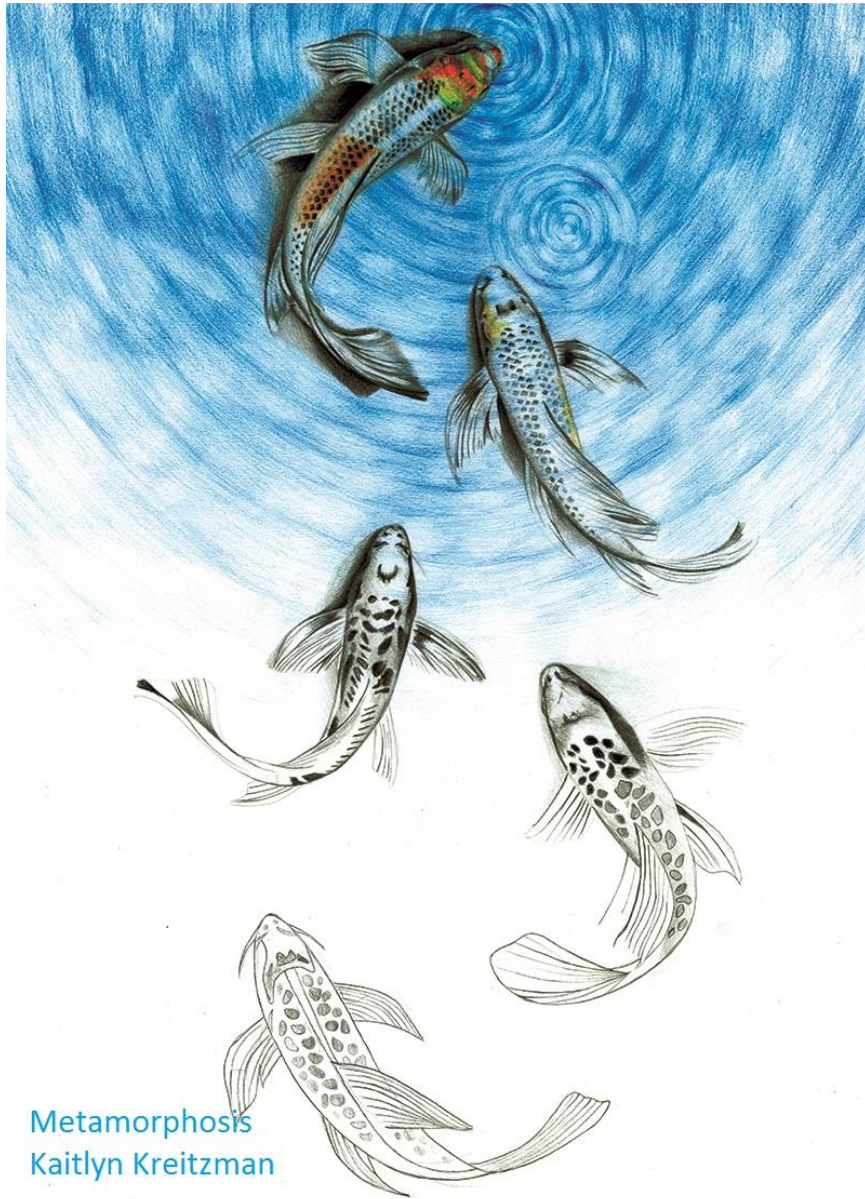


VISTAS

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Heritage and Beyond

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Introduction

We are our own legacies.

Without the acknowledgement of the past, it is impossible to step beyond the present and into the future. We must reconnect with what has come before us. That heritage will be imprinted on our generation to come, playing a crucial role in the ways we imagine, create, invent, consider, discover, and identify.

Heritage journeys beyond the color of one's skin or the customs of one's parents. It is a rebooting of tools which we utilize to refresh the human connections we create throughout our experience. We must replant ourselves in the soil of our surroundings, and allow our roots to reach into the paths of others in order to understand and grow.

Society is built upon previous beliefs, prior hardships, and former endeavors. Our heritage — our *history* — is the backbone of who we are and what our world will become. It's what makes us stronger, giving us the power to reboot and refresh in the face of adversity.

Complexity of heritage stems from self-understanding. It stretches far and wide in search of a connection. It is the reliving of our past

experiences. It is how we grow and explore a future we make for ourselves.

We, our own legacies.

Table of Contents

Refresh	4
Reimagine	47
Reboot	69
Reinvent	85
Recreate	102
Reidentify	107
Replant	122
Redefine	130
Reconsider	140
Reconnect	171

Refresh

Starfish

Megan Ofner

Some stars are better
Left to the openness of
The endless ocean

Linda's Dolphins
Linda Vichiola-Coppola



My Mother

Nicholas Pond

Creator of life, my life

Sweet and gentle as a breeze is her touch

Her smile so bright it lights up my heart
She is strong when I am weak
Her tears meet mine when I am sad and meek
She fills my spirit with pure love
Her confidence in me builds my soul
A teacher at every step sure and strong

Fill your life with joy and happiness
Do for others, lead the way
Steady and sure as an oak, my mother
Whimsical and unpredictable as a wave plays in the sun, my mother
A gift from God she says to me
Always there for me, my mother

Hands Up Close
Kaitlyn Kreitzman



The Meaning Behind Believing

Andrew Jackman

We all have different beliefs about the world. The confusing part is determining what someone truly believes versus what they express they believe. For some, there is no difference at all, but for others

it might be completely different. The purpose of this paper will be to set up a distinction between genuine belief and ungentuine belief. To do so I shall establish three essential factors and determine whether any given belief is genuine or ungentuine, borrowing from William James' structure of the genuine option. Then, I will discuss the application of these criteria to both the self and others, considering potential complications raised by self-deceivers using Eric Funkhouser's position on the topic. To conclude, I will describe how we obtain or lose these beliefs as well as why there is a need for any such distinction at all.

To begin, there are two types of beliefs that will be discussed, genuine beliefs and ungentuine beliefs. For the purposes of this paper, all beliefs will fall into one type or the other. To determine what a person genuinely believes, it is simple to ask people their stance on a particular subject. Yet there are cases of individuals claiming one belief while the person's actions would seem to differ from that professed belief. These are cases of self-deception or perhaps a total misunderstanding of core values. Since we are lacking a way to directly see the contents of another individual's mind, there is no easy way to determine what beliefs are genuine or ungentuine. The person's actions are the best next indicator. Put simply, genuine beliefs are the beliefs that an individual acts on, whereas ungentuine beliefs are simply professed beliefs by that individual. The difficulty will be to determine what actions constitute grounds to state that a particular belief is genuine, both from the standpoint of an observer and the standpoint of the actual individual. In order to accomplish this, three criteria shall be defined and must be met for the specific belief to be considered genuine. Should a belief fail any of the three criteria it will then be treated as an ungentuine belief.

The first two criteria shall be borrowed from William James' essay *The Will to Believe* where he describes his genuine option. The first is the belief must be a live one. The belief must "appeal as a real possibility to him whom it is proposed" (James 2). If individuals have no basic understanding of the belief—which means the option is dead to them— then they cannot profess to genuinely believe it. This eliminates most, but not all, of the nonsensical beliefs which will be addressed later on.

James' second criteria, where the option must be "forced," means that whatever action is taken, even inaction, would force the individual to be on one side of the option or the other. For my purposes this idea of forced means that whatever action or inaction the individual partakes in would inevitably be a statement about their stance on a particular belief, in other words "there is no place outside the alternative" (James 3). Speaking a belief may be considered a forced action for the purposes of this criteria though it is weak ground to stand on for the validation of a genuine belief.

Lastly the actions that pertain to a specific belief must be consistent with each other. Should an individual be faced with two different situations that both pertain to a specific live belief, and those actions are considered forced as defined above, their actions will demonstrate what they genuinely believe. If the actions contradict one another then it can be said that the individual does not have that genuine belief.

Having defined our criteria, some immediate issues that must be addressed before further progress can be made. Under the previous three criteria, certain nonsensical beliefs hold the potential to be genuine. Suppose we have an individual, Bill, whom appears to genuinely believe that he is a poached egg. By all accounts, we know this to be false statement; Bill does everything that a human needs to do in order to survive. It is impossible for him to be a poached egg. Yet we cannot deny his belief because his actions, bathing in hollandaise sauce and wearing pieces of bread, are consistent with his beliefs. The beliefs are forced; they refer to a belief in being a poached egg and, in so far as he understands the components of being a poached egg, the belief is live. From this example, we can see that any belief could potentially be genuine for any individual. Genuine or ungenuine are "not intrinsic properties [of beliefs], but relations to the individual thinker" (James 3). Whether the belief is true or whether a particular individual is in possession of any sort of sense is not for this paper to determine.

From the standpoint of an observer another issue raised is that individuals sometimes appear to genuinely believe in ideas that oppose each other. Let us suppose our friend Bill genuinely believed

violence is permissible in cartoons but not on reality television shows. It would seem these beliefs represent ideas that oppose each other. In their essence, the ideas run counter to one another. It is impossible to hold a genuine belief for something and its negation at the same time. However, I would argue that his beliefs are both genuine even though both beliefs deal with violence. The realms of violence are separated from each other, one is the realm of cartoon animation and the other our physical reality. Even though he believes violence acceptable in one instance and not the other, the beliefs do not directly oppose one another because they are beliefs about different instances of violence that do not interact with each other.

Yet let us take an example where the beliefs truly collide. Looking once again at Bill, suppose now he genuinely believes that all violence is wrong but he also genuinely believes that cartoon violence is acceptable. Furthermore, his actions are consistent; whenever an issue of violence is presented, he takes the pacifist route while whenever *Tom & Jerry*, or any other violent comedic cartoon, pops up on the screen he will be the first and loudest person laughing. The beliefs are apparently different, one is in regards to the cartoon universe and the other in regards to reality. Like before the essential claims in both beliefs are the same, both deal with violence yet in this example scale of the belief is different; one belief actually encompasses the other. Therefore Bill cannot be genuine about both at the same time though he appears to be. His belief in all violence being wrong, in its essential claim, would invalidate his belief that violence is okay when it comes to cartoons. What his true belief about violence is cannot be determined without more evidence so we must declare his beliefs about violence in general ungentle. That is not to say that he does not hold some genuine moral beliefs on the subject but rather that from our standpoint as an observer we cannot determine what those beliefs are.

Such an issue could never be raised with the individual; individuals know what they truly believe. Much to our chagrin, or maybe just my own, this is not always the case. What we actually believe and what we believe that we believe could potentially be two different things. If this is the case then the question arises of which belief, if any, is truly genuine. To solve this, some input will be taken from Eric

Funkhouser's *Do the Self-Deceived Get What They Want?* where he discusses the self-deceived and their beliefs. He argues that in the case of the self-deceived they "desire that they be such that they believe that p" (Funkhouser 296) where 'p' is some proposition they are deceiving themselves about.

In order to fully address the situation, an understanding of the three types of self-deception, as well as an understanding of the difference between self-deception and self-delusion, is necessary. For all cases there are four beliefs that the individual is caught up in: a belief that p and the belief in the belief that p, where the belief that p is a "first order belief" and the belief in the belief that p is termed a "higher order belief" (Funkhouser 295) and the negation of these claims, a belief in not p and the belief in the belief that not p. What the self-deceived desire, according to Funkhouser, is the higher order belief of the negation of the proposition, though he claims that what they end up with is a false belief in the belief that not p.

To clarify with a general example, let us look at Jack who is deceiving himself. Jack is fat, but he deceives himself to believe that he is not fat. In this case the proposition 'p' being referenced is "Jack is fat", the first order equivalent is "the belief that Jack is fat," and the higher order belief is equivalent to "the belief in the belief that Jack is fat." By deceiving himself, according to Funkhouser, Jack is attempting to acquire the higher order belief as follows: the belief in the belief that Jack is **not** fat, whose first order equivalent is "the belief that Jack is **not** fat". If Jack should ever acquire the first order belief of the negation (the belief that Jack is not fat) then Jack has transitioned from self-deceived to self-deluded.

The key difference between self-deception and self-delusion being that in self-delusion there is no higher order belief, or rather that the higher order belief has become a first order belief. To deal with this case right away, should Jack become self-deluded then his belief, that he is not fat, is a genuine belief. Jack is committing the same error that Bill is in that his beliefs aren't necessarily true yet his belief can still be genuine. The individual acts according to this belief and does so consistently, they believe it to be

true. Self-delusion aside, for those who do not take this leap over the edge it becomes slightly more complicated to determine whether their beliefs are genuine or not.

Having given at least a rough example of the relationship of beliefs the different types of deception can be explored. The first type is straightforward deception, the earlier example with Jack covers this type of self-deception. Jack engages in avoidance tactics so that he is never faced completely with the fact that he is fat; he has no mirrors in his house, nor any scales, eats as he likes, and wears clothing that is entirely too small for him but blames it on the manufactures rather than his size. Through these avoidance tactics we can determine that Jack's genuine belief is the original proposition, the belief that Jack is fat. Yet Jack also engages in actions that are consistent for the higher order negation, eating without regard to the effect it will have on his body and wearing too small clothing. This belief, I would argue through my criteria, is also genuine. Remember from the earlier example that even though the essential claim might be the same as long as the realms are different and are not directly opposing each other the individual can hold two seemingly contradictory beliefs genuinely. Since one belief is a first order belief and the other a higher (or second order) belief there is no conflict and both beliefs are genuine.

Initially Funkhouser seems to disagree with this stance through his Mistaken Ends Irrationality, the higher order belief is false and is based off an incomplete understanding of self but the individual has acquired it nonetheless(Funkhouser 305). For him the self-deceiver does not truly have this higher order belief because they internally recognize the truth of the first order belief. Yet later he concedes the point made about the difference in belief levels to coincide with our understanding of a separation of realms: "Because the self-deceived do not have the contradictory beliefs on the same level, this is not a dual belief account" (Funkhouser 308). This point being made we can move on to the other two forms of self-deception.

Luckily for us this important discovery also holds true for the one of the other two cases of self-deception, twisted self-deception, though some important distinctions will be noted for the sake of completeness. In the case of twisted self-deception the general structure remains the same but the motivation of the deceiver is different. However, it only requires a simple changing of the proposition to count as a twisted example. Let us look once again at the example of Jack given for the straight example of self-deception but change the base proposition to be the following: the belief that Jack is skinny. All the first order and their higher order beliefs, and their negations, follow just as they did from the earlier example. The only difference would be Jack's motivation to acquire the higher order belief. In the first example it was because there was some "intrinsically pleasant" (Funkhouser 298) value that the higher order belief provided for him. In this case this is not so, Jack desires to believe in the belief that he is not skinny out of caution, fear, or some other unpleasant motivation. What he really desires according to Funkhouser is the truth that is right in front of himself but he is deceiving himself regardless. Since the only difference between the two types of deception is motivation the previous conclusion holds. The twisted self-deceiver also holds two genuine beliefs, one of the first order and one of the higher order.

The issue is not so straightforward when it comes to the third of the three types of self-deception, the apathetic or indifferent self-deceiver. In this case the deceiver has no preference about the proposition 'p' but only about the higher order equivalent. Once more going back to Jack, his friends are all of the opinion that the new reality television show is fantastic. Jack has never watched the show, he doesn't know if he likes it or not, but in order to fit in with his friends he also exclaims about how amazing the show is. The proposition for this case becomes: the belief that the show is amazing with all the attending higher order equivalents and negations.

In this type of self-deception the first order beliefs becomes ungenthine for both the proposition and its negation insofar as it does not meet the three criteria. The belief is live, Jack could or could not think the show is amazing. However the belief isn't forced in that Jack has taken no actions and his inaction in this case is not a sign of his beliefs about the show but rather his time commitments. He does

however hold the genuine belief of the higher order proposition: that he believes in the belief that the show is amazing. This is a live belief, he is acting upon that belief in a forced way by speaking about it, and he speaks consistently in favor of it.

Armed with a general understanding of genuine and ungentuine beliefs in regards to individuals in general and those who are self-deceived, it now comes time to explore how we acquire these beliefs in the first place. For this section I shall use Stephen T. Davis' *Wishful Thinking and "The Will to Believe"* and his interpretations of James' ideas and structure of the genuine option.

To give an incredibly brief overview of James' ideology so that Davis' addition makes sense: there is some justification to believe something because you want to believe as long as it meets three criteria and thus would be considered a "genuine" option. The three criteria are the option must be 1) Live, 2) Forced, and 3) Momentous. Davis adds the following fourth requirement which was implicit in James' original explanation but not explicitly stated: "the option must not be decidable on intellectual grounds alone" (Davis 233). For my purposes it is the first, second, and fourth criteria that are the essential factors to acquire a genuine belief.

Any belief can become genuine as soon as it becomes a live belief for the individual or ungentuine should it become dead. As soon as the belief makes some sort of cognitive sense the individual is then able to act upon that belief. The belief must also be forced insofar as the individual cannot believe something and its negation, in the same realm, at the same time. Otherwise any action they would cause one of the beliefs to become ungentuine.

The most important idea is presented by Davis' addition which refers to some necessary intellectual grounds on which the option can swing. Davis, it would seem, offers that to acquire any genuine belief it would have to make some sort of logical sense to that particular individual. The individual must have some sort of logical foundation in order to acquire any belief, genuine or ungentuine. The only way that individuals acquire this sense is through personal experiences, either with a direct

interaction with the object of the belief or interactions with the beliefs expressed by others. For empiricists such as Clifford or Quine beliefs can only be acquired after rigorous scientific experiments and validation, they are searching for true beliefs to genuinely believe in. As for Bill and Jack this sense is acquired through their desires and motivations, a will to believe something about the world for whatever reason.

Admittedly it is perhaps a grave weakness of my argument that the beliefs of Bill and Jack stand on equal ground as James, Clifford, and Quine. Yet, in my defense, the point of this paper is not to determine the truth of the beliefs held but rather whether the individual holding those beliefs genuinely believes them to be true. In this respect Quine and Bill are on the same ground, which rings of some sort of cosmic justice that a fool and a genius are equal in some respects though they widely differ in others.

The last question that needs to be answered is the necessity for any sort of distinction between beliefs at all. To answer this I argue that there is some intrinsic good to be said of those who act in accordance with their inner beliefs. But in order to act in such a manner it is necessary to know what those beliefs are. Individuals who have this knowledge have an innate assurance of purpose not afforded to those who act against their genuine beliefs. Once an individual can determine what their genuine beliefs are and change their actions to act in tandem with those beliefs they will be in possession of a peace that will allow them to further excel in other areas of life. Dostoyevsky, in his novel *Crime and Punishment*, outlined this excellently when he described Raskolnikov's agony in trying to pursue the belief in the ubermensch. Raskolnikov's struggle to reconcile his beliefs with his actions, to determine what his genuine beliefs were, tore him apart. While Raskolnikov is definitely an extreme representation, his struggle still resonates within every person trying to understand their beliefs in life.

Every action we take speaks to some truth about our beliefs or our belief in our beliefs. By outlining the differences in the kinds of beliefs we hold and setting up a way to identify the genuine ones some of our own beliefs become clarified. Genuine beliefs lead to genuine actions and an understanding

of what constitutes both leads to a more genuine life. The genuine life is one filled with purpose, an understanding of your path in the world as well as your place in it. It is this genuine life that I strive for, the reason for this whole argument. The truth of your beliefs also plays a tremendous role in this understanding but the first step to finding the real truth is to find out what you believe it to be right now.

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The Wolf / Johnny Depp
Kelsie Mania



Encounter on the Train

Mary Awad

I never fall asleep on the train.

It's so loud and shaky,

it's as if its monotony and turbulence

keep me from entering the skies of my dreams.

I haven't seen those skies in a long time.

~

Per usual, I sit on the train, my brief case on the ground, my coat hanging on the wall hook, my hat on my lap. I have been commuting into the city for almost 40 years and nothing has changed. The route, the same. The people, unrecognizable. The train, as monotone as the first day I stepped on it. I rest my head against the window. Nothing changes. Nothing in my life has changed in a long time, but I suppose that is what the world of routine does to you. Routine and old age, of course.

"Dovish."

I look to see a girl sitting across from me with a piece of newspaper in her hands muttering to herself. She says a word and writes it on the page, thinks, mutters, and writes again.

"Systematic."

She looks up when she sees me staring.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I talk to myself out loud when I'm thinking. Am I bothering you?"

"No, it's quite all right."

She nods and turns back to her page. Her curious eyes peruse it, blink a few times, then focus.

"Magistrate."

"You know, I rarely see people your age playing the games from the funnies section."

She looks up and smiles. The train becomes less grey.

"I know, right? I guess it's because people my age don't read the paper anymore. But I like them. I see them reading *Denis* and *Peanuts* so I thought I'd give them a try. They're a lot of fun. I'm not good at the Sudoku, even though I try hard at it. I've never been good with numbers. But words are my thing, so I play the Word Scramble as often as I can."

She looks back to her ripped out page. I can see the alphabet above her head shifting in different places, allowing each syllable to settle into its rightful spots. She brings pen to paper and laughs.

"There it is. Canopy."

"You bring it on the train for something to do? Most people just put those things into their ears and listen to their phone."

I look away, embarrassed. My age is showing. I have never been able to understand those things. My wife tries to get me into the “new age” but it just doesn’t sit right with me.

“Listening to music is fine, but I hate when my mind is stagnant. I think about everything and anything no matter what. Stories, places, what I’m having to dinner tonight. My mind’s going to wander whether I listen to music or stare out the window, so I might as well let it be productive on the ride and bring the paper. It is an hour ride after all.”

“What’s your stop?”

“Woodside.”

“You live in Queens?”

“No, my sister does. I’m meeting up with her since today’s my 21st.”

So young. So full of life and expectations.

So colorful.

“Ah, you’re going to have a lot of fun tonight, I see.”

“No, no! Don’t make those presumptions. I’m not one to go out and get drunk for no reason. Alcohol makes the world all hazy and weird, and the world is such an amazing place as it is! I don’t like messing with my perception of it. How am I going to appreciate every moment of the night if I can’t even remember my name? I’m meeting up with my sister and of course I’ll have a drink with her. But no stupid stuff’s gonna happen, promise.”

Her eyes dare me to doubt her. I don’t.

“What’s your stop?”

“New Hyde Park.”

“Oh, I used to have a friend that lived there. It’s very nice.”

The conversation ends awkwardly and she continues her work. Before we pull into Woodside, I hear her say *king, salmon, agriculture, and heaven*.

She grabs her bags and stands up when the train announces her stop.

“It was great talking to you, sir. I hope I didn’t bother you.”

“Not all at. Have a great day.”

“Thanks. You too.”

She walks into the aisle and makes her way towards the door.

“Wait!”

She turns around. I find myself standing near my seat.

“Happy birthday.”

The joy on her face is indescribable. It’s as if the emotion takes over her entire body, as if the train has a tornado of life, excitement and passion blowing through it. The gust almost knocks me back into my seat.

“Thank you so much!”

And as the door opens and she walks out onto the platform, I see the sky through the crack and it looks like the vast, blue sky I have not seen in a long time.

Writing Across the Curriculum Second Prize

Musical Sound: A Mathematical Approach to Timbre

Timothy Weiss

Section 1 – Introduction

Music and mathematics both play an integral part in human daily life. To a certain extent, one may wonder to what extent mathematics and music are related. More specifically, this paper

will aim to explain this relationship through answering another question: What is the mathematical reasoning behind the ear's ability to distinguish two completely different musical sounds? In answering this question, one must call to mind a fundamental term with regards to music: *timbre*. The Oxford English Dictionary defines timbre as “the character or quality of a sound...depending upon the particular voice or instrument producing it...caused by the proportion in which the fundamental tone is combined with the harmonics or overtones” (OED, 2015). Simply put, timbre is what makes one sound different from another sound. Ultimately, the mathematical principles which the concept of timbre will depend on all begin with a closer inspection of sine waves and, consequently, the phenomenon that any given sound wave can be broken down into a series of simple sine waves.

Section 2 – Background

The viewpoint of music as a science is certainly not one which is unique to the past month, year, or even century. In fact, Fauvel, Flood, and Wilson, in their text “Music and Mathematics: From Pythagoras to Fractals” suggest that “the conceptual problems involved in the division of musical space were among the most important challenges faced by seventeenth-century mathematicians” (Fauvel, Flood, & Wilson, 2003). This would insinuate that for centuries, at the very least, mathematics and music have been intimately intertwined. From harmony and number theory, to musical scales and group theory, and far beyond, mathematics and music have always had overlaps and connections to explore (Benson, 2007). Most importantly with regards to this paper, the developments of modern acoustical science in the seventeenth century gave rise to a new science of sound – one which explored the very origins of sound itself (Fauvel, Flood, & Wilson, 2003). The science of timbre depends heavily upon these past developments.

It is important for the reader first to understand the difference between “sound” and “musical sound.” While sound (in this case, “noise”) encompasses anything able to be heard by the human ear, musical sound is much more restrictive. It consists of typically simple wave patterns which are pleasing to the ear, while sound, or “noise,” is typically rather chaotic and unpredictable, and may often be displeasing for the ear. See Figures 1 and 2 below, scaled equivalently to depict this difference.

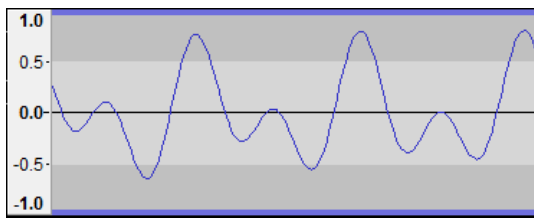


Figure 1. Typical telephone dial tone.

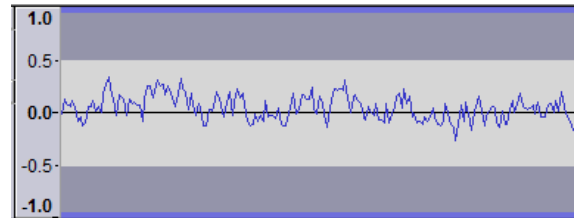


Figure 2. Pink noise.

While the dial tone from Figure 1, which represents musical sound, is rather simplistic with explicitly visible curves, the “pink noise” from Figure 2 is far more complex, with many more peaks and concavities. One would easily deduce that it would likely be far more challenging to generate this “noise” mathematically, compared to how simple it would be to construct a dial tone.

A familiar example of this difference would be the comparison between a note played on a piano and a sound from radio feedback. While the note played on the piano is simple and soft-sounding to the ear, the sound of radio feedback is rather complex in its waveforms and also rather harsh-sounding to the ear. This paper will seek to solely model musical sound through a mathematical approach.

Section 3 – The Significance of the Sine Wave

It is widely accepted that the sine wave forms the basis of all musical sound. But why has the sine wave been seemingly arbitrarily chosen as this basis? Note that all sound is produced by particles in motion. Now, consider a particle of mass m , vibrating subject to an outside force F towards equilibrium at position $y = 0$. The magnitude of this outside force is directly proportional to the distance y from the equilibrium position. This consideration grants the formula:

$$F = -ky, \text{ where } k \text{ is a constant of proportionality.} \quad (3.1)$$

Recall Newton's laws of motion which give rise to the formula:

$$F = ma, \text{ where } a = \frac{d^2y}{dt^2}; \quad (3.2)$$

i.e. acceleration is the second derivative of the position function y , and t symbolizes time. When combining equations 3.1 and 3.2, one may attain a second-order differential equation, namely:

$$m \left(\frac{d^2y}{dt^2} \right) = -ky \quad \rightarrow \quad \left(\frac{d^2y}{dt^2} \right) + \frac{ky}{m} = 0. \quad (3.3)$$

By solving this differential equation, one may attain the solution y as the functions:

$$y = A \cos(\sqrt{k/m} t) + B \sin(\sqrt{k/m} t). \quad (3.4)$$

Taking into account that A and B symbolize the initial position and velocity of a particle, let

$A = c \sin(\phi)$ and $B = c \cos(\phi)$. Now, by observing the trigonometric identity:

$$\sin(A + B) = \sin A \cos B + \cos A \sin B,$$

one may simplify Equation 3.4 by substituting in for A and B to attain the result:

$$y = c \sin(\sqrt{k/m} t + \phi). \quad (3.5)$$

This analysis of particles in motion explains why the sine wave is universally accepted to be the basis of all sound. While it is true that cosine waves and other waves could be used, the sine wave will prove to be the most simplistic and manageable. Now that this has been

established, one may examine how any musical sound wave can be constructed through a series of sine waves. (Benson, 2007).

Section 4 – Fourier Theory

Return to the original question presented: what is the mathematical reasoning behind the ear’s ability to distinguish two completely different sounds? As explained in Section 3, the sine wave is the basis of all musical sound. Since all sound is produced by different waveforms, it is implicit that all waveforms must be able to be constructed from sine waves. How, then, are these waveforms created? In order to begin answering this question, this section provides an introduction to the concept of Fourier Series.

First, observe that both the cosine function and the sine function are periodic with a period of 2π . In other words, they satisfy:

$$\begin{aligned} \cos(\theta + 2\pi) &= \cos(\theta) ; \\ \sin(\theta + 2\pi) &= \sin(\theta) . \end{aligned}$$

We can then consider any function f which satisfies $f(\theta+2\pi) = f(\theta)$ as a function with period 2π .

Jean Baptiste Joseph Fourier introduced the idea that periodic functions can be written as trigonometric series (Benson, 2007). More specifically, he claimed that any function f with period 2π can be rewritten as a trigonometric series, namely:

$$f(\theta) = \frac{1}{2}a_0 + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} a_n \cos(n\theta) + b_n \sin(n\theta) \tag{4.1}$$

for constants a_n and b_n . The question then arises: how must one find these constants? (Benson, 2007). Observe the formulae, for integers m and n such that $m \geq 0$ and $n \geq 0$:

$$\int_0^{2\pi} \cos(m\theta)\sin(n\theta) = 0 ; \tag{4.2}$$

$$\int_0^{2\pi} \cos(m\theta)\cos(n\theta)d\theta = \begin{cases} 2\pi & m = n = 0 \\ \pi & m = n > 0 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} . \quad (4.3)$$

$$\int_0^{2\pi} \sin(m\theta)\sin(n\theta) = \begin{cases} \pi & m = n > 0 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} . \quad (4.4)$$

These formulae can be verified using simple rules of integration, and they will be very useful in helping to solve for a_n and b_n . Now, in order to first solve for a_n , multiply both sides of Equation 4.1 by $\cos(m\theta)$ and integrate both sides of the equation, using Equations 4.2 – 4.4 to simplify (Benson, 2007). Observe:

$$\int_0^{2\pi} \cos(m\theta)f(\theta)d\theta = \int_0^{2\pi} \cos(m\theta) \left[\frac{1}{2}a_0 + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (a_n\cos(n\theta) + b_n\sin(n\theta)) \right] d\theta . \quad (4.5)$$

Now, we simplify. A standard theorem of analysis states that, so long as a sum is uniformly continuous, an integral can be passed through an infinite sum (Benson, 2007). Observe the Equations 4.2 – 4.4 and use to simplify the expression to find a_m . We attain:

$$\begin{aligned} \int_0^{2\pi} \cos(m\theta)f(\theta)d\theta &= \int_0^{2\pi} \frac{1}{2}a_0\cos(m\theta)d\theta + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left[a_n \int_0^{2\pi} \cos(m\theta)\cos(n\theta)d\theta + b_n \int_0^{2\pi} \cos(m\theta)\sin(n\theta)d\theta \right] \\ &= \frac{a_0}{2m} \left[\sin(2m\theta) - \sin(0) \right] + [0 + 0 + \dots + \pi a_m + 0 + \dots] + [0] \\ &= \pi a_m . \end{aligned} \quad (4.6)$$

Thus, we attain the formula for the coefficient a_m :

$$a_m = \frac{1}{\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} \cos(m\theta)f(\theta)d\theta . \quad (4.7)$$

Now, in order to fully apply Fourier Theory, we must find the coefficient b_n . In a similar fashion to the above methods, multiply Equation 4.1 by $\sin(m\theta)$ and integrate. Observe:

$$\int_0^{2\pi} \sin(m\theta)f(\theta)d\theta = \int_0^{2\pi} \sin(m\theta) \left[\frac{1}{2}a_0 + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (a_n \cos(n\theta) + b_n \sin(n\theta)) \right]. \quad (4.8)$$

Similarly, we can distribute the above integral into the above infinite sum, and simplify using Equations 4.2 – 4.4, to attain:

$$\begin{aligned} \int_0^{2\pi} \sin(m\theta)f(\theta)d\theta &= \int_0^{2\pi} \frac{1}{2}a_0 \sin(m\theta)d\theta + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left[a_n \int_0^{2\pi} \sin(m\theta)\cos(n\theta)d\theta + b_n \int_0^{2\pi} \sin(m\theta)\sin(n\theta)d\theta \right] \\ &= \frac{a_0}{2m} [\cos(2m\pi) - \cos(0)] + [0] + [0 + 0 + \dots + \pi b_m + 0 + \dots] \\ &= \pi b_m. \end{aligned} \quad (4.9)$$

Thus, we attain the formula for the coefficient b_m :

$$b_m = \frac{1}{\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} \sin(m\theta)f(\theta)d\theta. \quad (4.10)$$

Now that it has been deduced that any 2π -periodic function can be written as a trigonometric series with constant coefficients, one may be able to actually construct various waveforms and explore their differences (Benson, 2007).

Section 5 – The Square Wave: An Application of Fourier Theory

So far, Section 3 discussed why the sine wave, and not any other periodic oscillating function, is considered the basis of all sound. In addition, Section 4 explained how any 2π -periodic function can be written as a trigonometric series with constant coefficients. This section will now begin to explore how some particularly common musical waveforms associated with musical instruments are constructed.

As the initial question assumed, each musical sound is received differently by the human ear. The primary reason for this is due to each sound's unique waveform. For example, the human ear can certainly tell the difference between the sound of a clarinet being played and the sound of a violin being played. But what makes the waveforms of these so different that the

human ear perceives them as different sounds? The answer lies in the modeling of these different waveforms.

One may begin this comparison with an examination of the sound of a clarinet. The sound of a clarinet is widely accepted by musicians and mathematicians alike to be approximated by a square wave (Benson, 2007). See Figure 3 below for an image of a square wave.

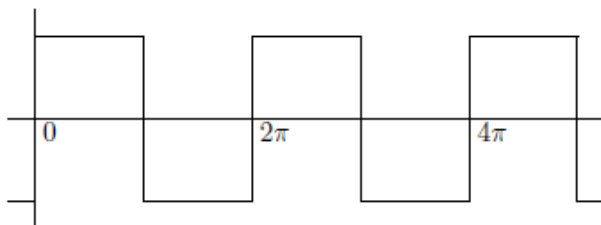


Figure 3. Square Wave. *Music: A Mathematical Offering*. (2007)

If one were to generate a tone with this waveform and compare it to the sound of a tone from a clarinet, one would find them nearly identical in timbre, or tone quality; this would be indicative of the square wave's importance to the sound generated by a clarinet. However, mathematically speaking, this wave is of little relevance because this is clearly not a function – if one were to perform the ever-simple “vertical line test” on this waveform, one would easily deduce that, at any points $n\pi$ on the x-axis (for any integer n), there are multiple corresponding y-values, indicating that this waveform is not a function. However, if this waveform represents the sound produced by a clarinet, and all musical sound waves can be modeled by a series of sine waves, then surely the square wave must be able to be, at the very least, *approximated* by a series of sine waves.

It is here that the previous analysis of Fourier Theory will be of great use. David J. Benson defines the pure square wave as the function $f(\theta)$ defined by:

$$f(\theta) = 1 \text{ (for } 0 \leq \theta \leq \pi \text{)} \quad \text{and} \quad f(\theta) = -1 \text{ (for } \pi \leq \theta \leq 2\pi \text{)}. \quad (5.1)$$

This will account for all values of θ since $f(\theta)$ has period 2π (Benson, 2007). Now, we will solve for the Fourier coefficients for $f(\theta)$ and plug them into the Fourier Series for $f(\theta)$. Observe, by using Equations 4.5 and 4.8 to solve for a_n and b_n :

$$\begin{aligned} a_m &= \frac{1}{\pi} \left[\int_0^{\pi} \cos(m\theta) d\theta + \int_{\pi}^{2\pi} -\cos(m\theta) d\theta \right] = \frac{1}{\pi} \left[(\cos(m\pi) - \cos(0)) - (\cos(2m\pi) - \cos(m\pi)) \right] \\ &= \frac{1}{\pi} \left[(0) - (0) \right] = 0. \end{aligned} \quad (5.2)$$

$$\begin{aligned} b_m &= \frac{1}{\pi} \left[\int_0^{\pi} \sin(m\theta) d\theta + \int_{\pi}^{2\pi} -\sin(m\theta) d\theta \right] = \frac{1}{\pi} \left[\left(-\frac{\cos(m\theta)}{m} + \frac{\cos(0)}{m} \right) + \left(\frac{\cos(2m\pi)}{m} - \frac{\cos(m\pi)}{m} \right) \right] \\ &= \frac{1}{\pi} \left[-\frac{(-1)^m}{m} + \frac{1}{m} + \frac{1}{m} - \frac{(-1)^m}{m} \right] = \begin{cases} \frac{4}{m\pi}; & m \text{ is odd} \\ 0; & m \text{ is even.} \end{cases} \end{aligned} \quad (5.3)$$

Now that we have solved for the coefficients a_n and b_n , let us plug them into our formula for the trigonometric series (Equation 4.1) corresponding to $f(\theta)$ (described in Equation 5.1). We now have, for $a_0 = 0$:

$$\begin{aligned} f(\theta) &= \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left[0\cos(n\theta) + \frac{4}{n\pi} \sin(n\theta) \right] = \frac{4}{\pi} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n} \sin(n\theta) \\ &= \frac{4}{\pi} (\sin\theta + \frac{1}{3} \sin 3\theta + \frac{1}{5} \sin 5\theta \dots) . \end{aligned} \quad (5.4)$$

Now that the Fourier Series for the square wave has been found, it would be rather simple for one to graph this series as a function to see to what extent the series approximates the shape of the square wave. One may begin by examining various extensions of the series as depicted graphically. Observe the following graphed functions in Figures 4 – 6:

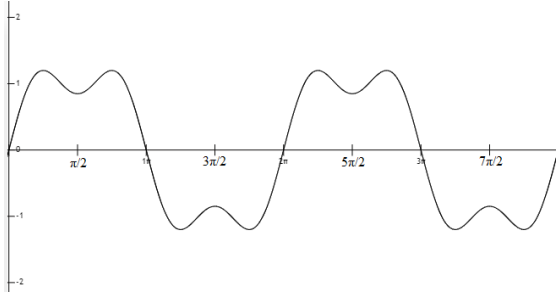


Figure 4. Equation 5.4 taken to $n = 3$.

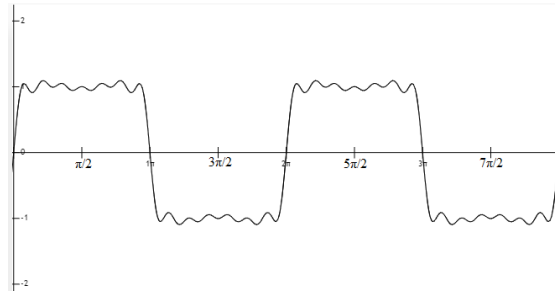


Figure 5. Equation 5.4 taken to $n = 13$.

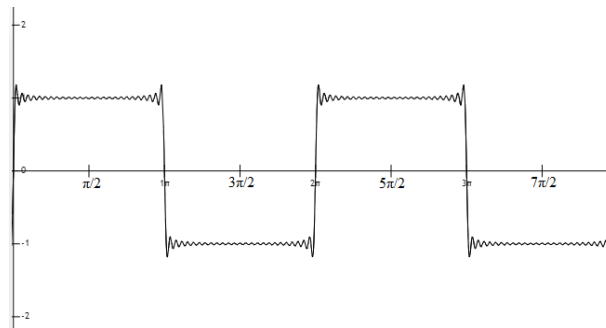


Figure 6. Equation 5.4 taken to $n = 51$.

One may notice that, as n goes to infinity, the Fourier Series more and more closely approximates a square wave (as depicted in Figure 1). Thus, Fourier Series prove to be a very helpful tool in approximating waves which might not fit the definition of a function. As mentioned previously, generating a tone corresponding to this waveform will sound remarkably like a tone produced by a wind instrument such as a clarinet. However – why does the square wave (and consequently the sound of a clarinet) differ mathematically from other waves? The next section will discuss the sawtooth wave, another very common and usable waveform in synthesis, and its musical equivalent – the violin.

Section 6 – The Sawtooth Wave: Fourier Theory Taken Further

In an extension of Sections 4 and 5, one may take Fourier Theory further to examine the waveform associated with another extremely common musical instrument – the violin. Similar to

the assumption that the sound of a clarinet is approximated by a square wave, the sawtooth wave has been widely accepted to approximate the sound of a violin (Benson, 2007). See Figure 7 below for an image of a sawtooth wave.

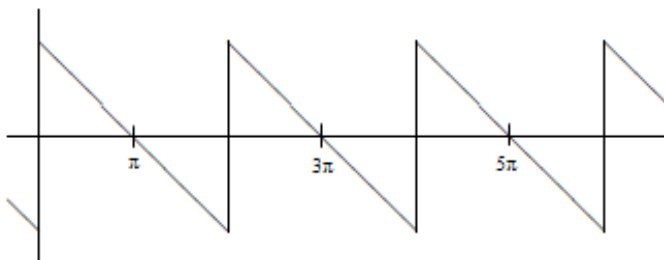


Figure 7. Sawtooth Wave (edited). *Music: A Mathematical Offering*. (2007)

Similar to the issue encountered above with the square wave, one may notice that the pure sawtooth waveform is mathematically insignificant, because this waveform does not represent a function. By performing the “vertical line test” on the waveform, one may observe that, at any point $2n\pi$ on the x-axis (for any integer n), there are multiple corresponding y-values. One may be familiar enough at this point to explore the possibility of approximating the sawtooth waveform using a function generated by a Fourier Series. To begin, observe the 2π -periodic function described by David J. Benson for the pure sawtooth wave:

$$f(\theta) = (\pi - \theta) / 2 \quad (\text{for } 0 \leq \theta \leq 2\pi) \quad \text{and} \quad f(0) = f(2\pi) = 0. \quad (6.1)$$

We may now use this function to generate the Fourier Series for the sawtooth wave and, in so doing, generate a function to approximate the sawtooth wave (Benson, 2007). Observe, by using Equations 4.5 and 4.8 to solve for the coefficients a_n and b_n :

$$a_m = \frac{1}{\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} \cos(m\theta) \left(\frac{\pi - \theta}{2} \right) d\theta = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} \cos(m\theta) (\pi - \theta) d\theta. \quad (6.2)$$

Using “u-substitution,” we can evaluate this integral as

$$\begin{aligned}
 a_m &= \left[\frac{(\pi - \theta)\sin(m\theta)}{2\pi m} \right]_0^{2\pi} - \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} \frac{-\sin(m\theta)}{m} d\theta = \left[\frac{(\pi - \theta)\sin(m\theta)}{2\pi m} \right]_0^{2\pi} - \frac{1}{2\pi} \left[\frac{\cos(m\theta)}{m^2} \right]_0^{2\pi} \\
 &= 0 - 0 = 0.
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{6.3}$$

By using “u-substitution” again to evaluate the integral, one may also attain:

$$\begin{aligned}
 b_m &= \frac{1}{\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} \sin(m\theta) \left(\frac{\pi - \theta}{2} \right) d\theta = \left[\frac{-(\pi - \theta)\cos(m\theta)}{2\pi m} \right]_0^{2\pi} - \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} \frac{\cos(m\theta)}{m} d\theta \\
 &= \left[\frac{-(\pi - \theta)\cos(m\theta)}{2\pi m} \right]_0^{2\pi} - \left[\frac{\sin(m\theta)}{2\pi m^2} \right]_0^{2\pi} = \frac{1}{m} - 0 = \frac{1}{m}.
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{6.4}$$

Now that we have attained formulae for any coefficients a_n and b_n , we may evaluate the Fourier Series of the function given by Benson for the sawtooth wave in Equation 6.1. By plugging in for a_n and b_n in the formula given by Equation 4.1, we observe, for $a_0 = 0$:

$$f(\theta) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} 0\cos(n\theta) + \frac{1}{n}\sin(n\theta) = \frac{1}{n}\sin(n\theta).
 \tag{6.5}$$

This function is, therefore, the function which approximates the sawtooth waveform. One may better visualize this by graphing this function and seeing to what extent it approximates the sawtooth waveform given in Figure 5. Observe the following figures:

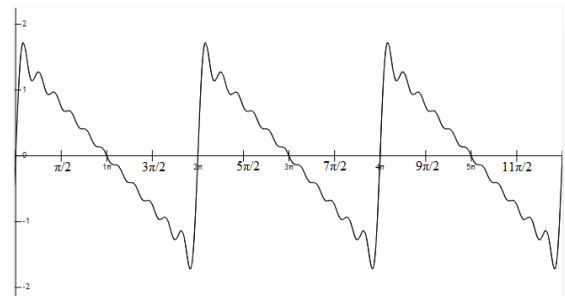
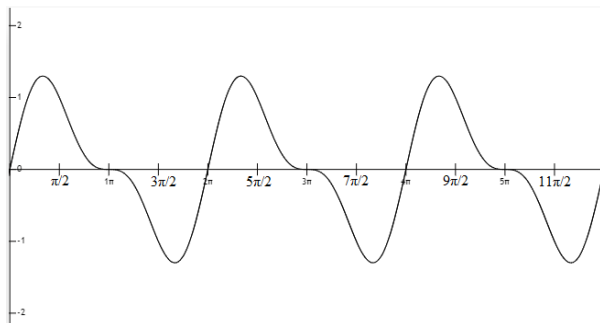


Figure 8. Equation 6.5 taken to $n = 2$.

Figure 9. Equation 6.5 taken to $n = 11$.

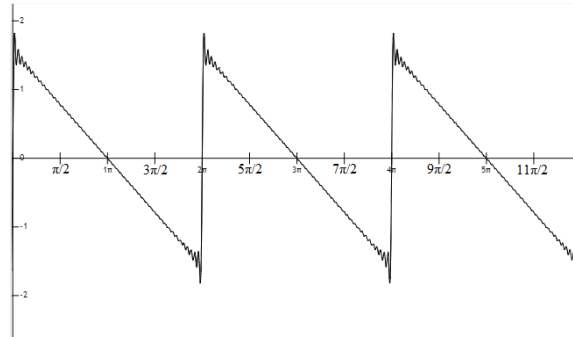


Figure 10. Equation 6.5 taken to $n = 51$.

By observing the graphs of the function given by Equation 6.5 taken as n goes towards infinity, one may observe that the function approximates the sawtooth waveform more closely as n increases without bound. If one were to generate a tone using this function, it would sound remarkably similar to the tone generated by a bowing of a string on a violin. Now that the mathematical difference between the sounds of a square wave and sawtooth wave (and consequently between a clarinet and violin) has been established, one may wonder: what are the *musical* implications of these Fourier Series on the sounds of the instruments? The following section will connect the previous sections of this paper by summarizing the way that mathematics and music are intertwined through timbre.

Section 7 – Fourier Series and Timbre: An Intimate Connection

Now that it is evident that Fourier Series can be utilized to model musical sound waves, one may pose the question – what musical significance does Fourier Theory have to timbre? First, it is important to note that, when graphing functions of sound waves generated by Fourier Series, the y -axis of the graph symbolizes amplitude, while the x -axis represents time. Thus volume, or amplitude, is measured on the y -axis, and frequency, or cycles per second (Hz), is

measured on the x -axis. Further, each Fourier-generated function represents *one* tone, or one sound that the human ear receives. Each tone is made up of infinitely many frequencies stacked on top of each other. Each frequency is mathematically represented by a type of sine wave – hence infinitely many sine waves in the waveforms depicted in previous sections.

The lowest frequency is especially important to a tone and, as such, is given a title: the *fundamental*. It is precisely the fundamental of the tone which the ear perceives to be the *pitch* of the tone – or the “highness” or “lowness” of the sound. So, if the lowest frequency is what the human ear perceives to be pitch, then what importance do the tone’s remaining infinite frequencies hold? In music and mathematics alike, these remaining frequencies are referred to as *overtones*, or sound waves whose frequency is an integer multiple of that of the fundamental. In terms of Fourier Theory, the fundamental is the pure “ $\sin \theta$ ” portion, while the overtones are the “ $\sin 2\theta$,” “ $\sin 3\theta$,” and so on.

It becomes evident, then, why the fundamental is the loudest frequency and is the particular frequency which the ear perceives as pitch – because, in previous examples, the fundamental is the frequency with the largest coefficient. Since the y -axis represents volume (amplitude), any coefficient multiplied by a frequency will change the volume of that frequency. Since the fundamental has the largest coefficient (namely, 1), one may conclude why the fundamental is immediately recognized by the ear. Thus, we can conclude that each tone, represented by a Fourier-generated function, is comprised of a fundamental plus infinitely many overtones.

Now, what significance do these overtones have to the *timbre* of a tone? Observe a comparison between Equations 5.4 and 6.5. Notice that Equation 5.4, which represents the Fourier-generated function for the approximation of a square wave, excludes *all* even overtones.

On the contrary, observe that Equation 6.5, which represents the Fourier-generated function for the approximation of a sawtooth wave, includes *all* overtones above the fundamental. There is a clear difference, when one generates a sound wave from these two functions, in the timbre of these two waves. While the fundamental of a tone determines its pitch, it is the series of its overtones which determine its timbre. The mathematical reasoning behind timbre, or the human ear's ability to determine two sounds as different, is in the different series of overtones which the tone possesses above the fundamental.

Section 8: Conclusion and Future Research

Both music and mathematics are extraordinarily important to human life. While it may appear as if the two topics have little in common, it is rather the contrary – music and mathematics are intimately intertwined in ways beyond what this paper presents, and it is valuable to explore these connections. For example, perhaps the reader might feel so inclined to see whether one may model non-musical sound by this introduction to modeling musical sound through Fourier Theory. Perhaps, rather, the reader would be interested in the geometric qualities of the square, sawtooth, and other musical waves. For example, do the angles which the waves give rise to have an effect on the timbre of the sound? Does the jump discontinuity have something to do with timbre? There is much to be done beyond these points, and much further research would be required to pursue such topics. Ultimately, Fourier Series provide an incredibly valuable approach to modeling musical sound and, in so doing, clarifying the bond between music and mathematics.

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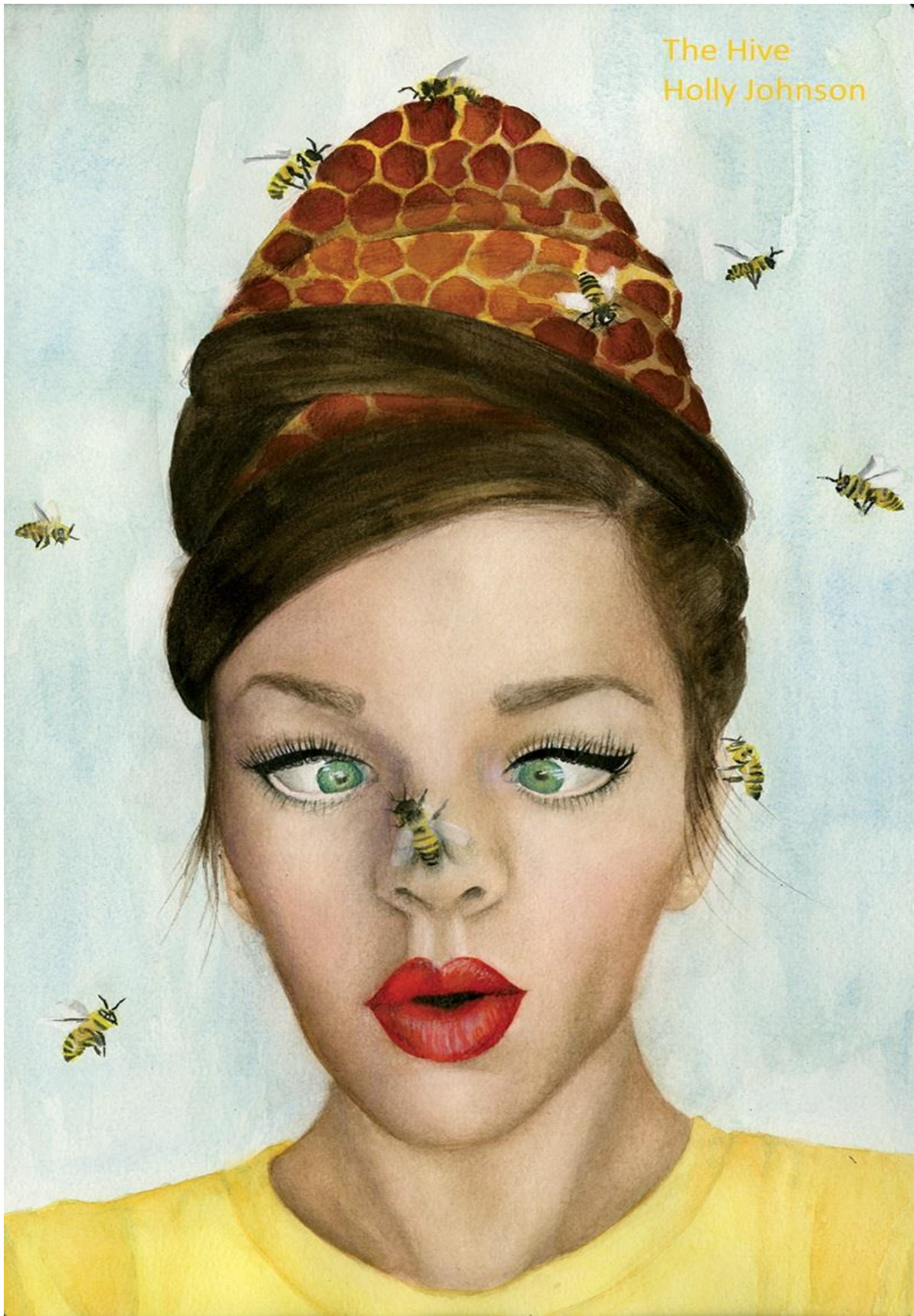
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The Hive
Holly Johnson

Ellie

Mary Awad

I once knew a girl who brought spring with her wherever she went. When she entered a room, a breath of fresh air coursed through it. The atmosphere lightened. With each step flowers grew, the sun shined, and to all whom she spoke discovered their ears filled with a bird's song. She was the embodiment of beautiful nature, the epitome of compassion, and an optimist with a smile that could make a homeless man grin. She was always so happy. And I loved her.

But there was a day when spring died.

She walked into the room and the air turned stale. A chill spread through it. All stared as she came towards me, her flower trail dying with each click of her heel. She stood in front of me. Her face was blank. She took my hands in hers. They were like ice.

"My father is dead."

And I did not see spring again.

Her name was Eloise, but, to her, it sounded too formal and stiff so she introduced herself to everyone as Ellie. I remember the first day she started working at our office. A young, excited college grad who's eyes still had an innocent outlook on the coming days of adulthood.

"My name's Ellie. I'll be working in Marketing and Advertising with Mary and Sam. I'm looking forward to getting to know all of you!"

I never formally introduced myself but, with my desk being the closest to the break room, she walked by me all the time. Two weeks after her first day, she stopped at my desk.

"Can I ask you a question?"

"Sure."

"Why is that women have to wear these goddamn shoes in order to be treated well in a professional environment?" She picked up one of her shoes and waved it in my face. "You guys are wearing flats. Why can't we? It would make my complex maneuvers so much easier."

"Complex maneuvers? Are there some hairpin turns in the office that I missed?"

"No, but weaving through the cubicles at the velocity I have to do my job on a daily basis would give NASCAR a run for its money."

We laughed. We always did. She was always able to make anyone laugh. It was one of her talents, one of her impeccable traits that made her the amazing woman she was.

She began stopping at my desk almost everyday before lunch. To complain about the stiffness of her skirt. To rejoice over a compliment from the boss, a "well done," a "good idea," a "happy you're working here." She'd get existential, overly excited, anxious about the meeting two weeks from now. But she always started by asking me how I was doing. Never once did she leave "How is your day?" out of her monologue. And it meant more than words can describe.

Through a flurry of assignments and errands, I found myself on her turf. I rarely had a reason to drop things off on her side of the office, but today the executive assistant asked me to run something over to her department and, once the deed was done, I found myself searching for her. Eventually, I found her cubicle; it was crammed in the corner near the bathroom.

"Hey there."

"Oh my god, hi!" She looked up from her work, first surprised and then excited, "I never thought I'd be seeing you in these parts! What are you doing here?"

"I had to drop off some stuff for Anna. Thought I visit while I was in the neighborhood."

"How thoughtful of you! Would you like me to give you the tour?" She stood up and rolled her chair over to me.

"It would be an honor."

"All right!" I sat down. She rolled me into her spot and leaned over, her face right next to mine. Her hair cascaded onto my shoulder, smelling like a fresh day. Like a sunny afternoon.

"This is my computer. It's a Mac but if I had to choose, I would have a PC. Most editing software though is on the Mac so I had to betray my kind. It was an upsetting day the day I bought it. But it works really well so I guess I can't complain. Over here is my pencil holder: a state of the art coffee mug. Under your feet you have a heating pad. Isn't it the height of luxury? I keep it down there in case my feet get cold since I work without shoes on. You know how I hate those high-heeled shoes."

"Where were you here?" I pointed to one of photos she had on her wall. Some were with friends and family, some of different scenes and horizons.

"Oh! That's Florida. My dad and I went to visit my brother at school one weekend and we made a trip of it. The beaches there were beautiful. We had so much fun on that trip. It was great."

"You and your dad went. Your mom wasn't in the mood?"

"No, she doesn't like to travel, so whenever there's something a bit farther away, I always go with him. The two of us have been going on trips together ever since I was a kid. We went to Jacksonville a couple times to see my brother but we've also gone to New York, Philadelphia..." she takes down one of the pictures from the wall, "That's us at the Liberty Bell. I was 17."

"Wow, you look exactly the same!"

"I know, right? My face, my height, everything's the same. I'd like to say I look a little more mature and lady-like but you said it yourself. I'm exactly the same."

I look back and forth from her to the picture dramatically. She laughs at my obvious theatrics and snatches it out of my hand. She took down another one from Rhode Island (it's the most beautiful in the fall), and then another from Las Vegas (nasty, sweaty, not worth it). We continued to talk but ended up laughing more about everything. Her pictures, her preference in ink color (black, blue gives her a headache), how she hopes to get her desk moved near the window, and whether or not I would ever think about road tripping Vermont with her some day (yes, yes, yes! Not that I got the courage to say it). Eventually, we looked at the time. It should not have taken me over an hour to drop off stuff at Anna's desk. I looked over to Ellie. She bit her lip.

"Whoops..."

"Yeah, whoops. I should be going. Thank you for the tour though. Very informative."

"Anytime, Cubicle block 36 is known for its hospitality!"

I walked back to my desk. I couldn't get any work done for the rest of the day. I could only think of Ellie and her father in Florida, what bathing suit she wore, how she'd look with her skin tanned by the sun. I began searching the web for the most interesting places in Vermont. Burlington, Montpelier, it'd be great if, one day, I get the chance to see those places with her. If somehow, someday, she'd come back into my life and take me away on this great adventure. With her, I'd go out of my element and into the world. We would burn each other CD's for the car ride and surprise each other with our favorite songs. We'd go out to dinner every night, hike on the Appalachian Trail (per her request) and take pictures by the lake. Then she would take one of the pictures and hang it with the others on her cubicle wall. She'd think of me every time she found herself staring at it. Like how I think of her every time I breathe.

I was walking through the parking lot into the office one morning when I heard someone yell my name. It was Ellie, calling to me from the sidewalk. She had an umbrella in one hand and her other stretched into the clear sky, waving at me, like a rainbow welcoming you after a storm.

"How are you today?" She asked when she caught up. We coursed through the parking lot towards our building, her umbrella now held playfully behind her back.

"Given that it just started, I have to say I can't complain. The traffic was a bit annoying though this morning."

"Ah! Your poor struggle! It beats taking the train everyday. The life of a recent college grad...no money for a car!" She sighed and held her hand to her forehead as if she were about to faint. We both laughed. She had the purest, most beautiful laugh. It sounded like church bells; it was stunning and uplifting, but there was something reverent about it, like it was something that should be cherished and protected.

She was something I wish I could have protected.

"Wait, wait...the train is kind of far away. You walk here from the station?"

"Yup! 14 blocks after an hour train ride is absolutely lovely in the mornings. Gets your blood pumping and energy out so you don't feel so horrible for sitting at a desk all day."

"If you ever need a ride from the station, let me know. I can always pick you up. I pass by it every morning."

She looked at me and she smiled. It took my breath away.

"I will definitely let you know. Thank you so much. Really."

We only ran into each other in the mornings a couple times after that by coincidence. She never asked me to pick her up or drop her off at the station. And I never got the chance to offer again.

One day, the office went out for drinks. Everyone went over to talk to Ellie, of course they did. She was the young, cheerful, new edition. The apple of everyone's eye. The part of their day that was never boring. But, out of everyone in the office, she sat next to me at the bar. It was an amazing feeling, it made me feel so *enough*. Even today, when I think about it, the fulfillment and accomplishment in that one moment was unreal.

The conversation flowed like a river, as it always did, and the force of nature that was Ellie the fireball became less of a force and more of a person. That was the night she became real. She became almost attainable.

"So I'm 18 and I'm in love with the world and they expect me to have every fine detail of my profession planned out. An action-plan, a back-up plan, and an escape route. Plans A through G. But how can I just pick one thing? How can I take every single part of me and put it in a category on paper? The universe runs through my veins! How did they expect to categorize myself when I can't even comprehend myself?! No one can!"

She yelled and laughed, spilling a bit of her beer onto the ground. I laughed and put my hand on her shoulder to steady her. She looked at me with rosy cheeks and glossy eyes. The most beautiful pair of eyes I've ever seen.

"So you're 24 and 200 miles away from home? How'd you get here?" I asked.

"Well, I knew I wanted to make stuff. I wanted to do something that gave me the chance to be creative and active in my work. I was never one for passive learning. So I got my undergrad in Graphic Design, but decided to go to Grad School for something in business so I could actually matter in the real world."

"You matter."

The mood changed. I squeezed her shoulder. Hard. So hard it made her look back up at me.

"You matter. You'll always matter. Whether you have ten degrees or no degrees, you will always matter to someone, Eloise."

It was a mix of alcohol and emotion. Well, mostly alcohol. Probably all alcohol. But she looked at me so tenderly and put her hand on top of mine. She leaned in, kissed me gently on the cheek. And for a second it felt that all was right with the world and that everything I had done up until that point was worth it. All the hardships and struggles I went through in my life were worth it for that one, perfect moment.

I can still remember how her breath felt on my neck when she whispered in my ear.

"Thank you."

"My father is dead."

I squeezed her hands.

Her cold, frozen hands.

My mind was empty. There was nothing there. I searched for words, something to say, anything to make this at least a little less horrific. But the only thing I could do was squeeze her hands.

Before I could speak, everyone crowded around her.

"Oh my god, Ellie, I'm so sorry."

"Is there anything I can do?"

"Sit down, Ellie. Please, you're scaring me."

These people, so many people, why all these people? Leave her alone. Let us be alone. How dare you intervene in this moment? I remember the rage I felt then, the absolute fury I felt at all my coworkers, my friends, at the thought of them swarming her like that.

But of course they swarmed her. They did because they loved her. We all did. But I think I loved her in a way that compared to no one else in the office. It was a deep love, it was visceral, it *hurt*. I definitely loved her in a way no one else I knew did. That no one else in the world could even come close to.

I know I did.

That was the last day Ellie came into work, the last time I saw her. She decided it would be better to find a job closer to home so she could help her mother. She didn't even come back to the office to collect her things; Mary gathered them in a box and brought them to her. Seeing all her belongings in a boring, cardboard box was almost unbearable. It felt like she was the one who died. The funeral was back in Seattle, too far for any of us to attend. So the day she left was the last time we saw Ellie. The last time I ever held her hands.

I regret not saying anything to her on that last day. Out of all the people in the office, all her coworkers and friends, she came to *me*. She took *my* hands. She spoke the hardest sentence she probably ever said in her life *to me*. And I said nothing. In that split second before the office broke into chaos, I couldn't think of anything to say. I could only squeeze her hands. I could only hold them tighter. Maybe it's because, subconsciously, I knew that I'd be letting her go soon. I knew that this was something that was going to bring change and I didn't want that. So I held her tighter, I squeezed her cold, beautiful hands. My words failed me, but my body didn't. I wish I could've told her with words that I didn't want to let go.

The strength of my hands wasn't enough.

Some days I think about her. I'll be on the train coming to work and I'll hear a voice that sounds close to hers. Or I'll be walking on the sidewalk and swear I see her walking passed me. I do a double take. A triple take. As many times as it takes for me to convince myself it's not her. Sometimes I stand there until the person is out of sight.

I hope she recovered. I know she did. Nothing could stop the awe and vigor for life that Ellie had. The passing of her father may have dulled it for a while, but there is no way she would let that heavy emotion drag her down. She would beat it and rise up again, like a geyser or a flood. Ellie's joy would come back with such a force that it would rush through her *new* coworkers at her *new* job and soak them all with her intense curiosity and weightlessness. Her flood wouldn't drown them. It would make them buoyant. They would swim. They would float through their lives once Ellie was brought into it. Our office floated with her around. They floated, I flew. I saw sights I never saw before and would have never seen it if wasn't for Ellie. All thanks to Ellie.

I know she recovered. I know this devastating loss didn't defeat her.

The colder the winter, the more refreshing and welcomed the spring. And spring always comes. No matter the cold.

Aubrey Hepburn
Kotomi Mizutani



Reimagine

The Vase

Linda Vichiola-Coppola

Yellow, red, and pink

Roses withered in a vase

Life's beauty at rest.

Puzzle Piece

Courtney McGinn



Scientists Monkeying Around with Autism

Courtney McGinn

My cousin Daniel is autistic, and he is the best person I have ever met. Daniel was diagnosed with autism when he was two years old. Since he is now 22, I have grown up with him as autistic. Daniel is an incredibly smart individual. He has taught me so much about life and inspires me to be a better person every day. He sees the world in a different way, he doesn't judge people before meeting them and he is extremely loving and caring. He can solve puzzles in minutes and can complete an "I Spy" picture game just as fast. Since he is so quick with puzzles, I always thought he was in a gifted program at school. I used to hear my aunt and uncle talk about the program he was in. I didn't know he was in a special needs program until I witnessed those programs for myself when I was in my own middle school and high school. Because I have Daniel in my life, I see people with autism as special miracles, not people who have special needs and require special treatment.

Growing up, Daniel and I were very close. I learned that the autism spectrum disorder is a developmental disability characterized by difficulties in social interaction and communication and by restricted or repetitive patterns of thought and behavior. The autism spectrum ranges from high functioning, which means people are able to do everything on their own and are actually more talented than the average person in a subject area or two, to low functioning or "Classic Autism." Individuals on the lower side of the spectrum aren't able to live or do things on their own. They will either need a guardian living with them for the rest of their life or they will be put in a group home. Unfortunately, Daniel is part of the latter group.

Different forms of autism have different programs. Autistic people and their families have to go through certain programs and each state has different programs and requirements. My aunt and uncle used to live in upstate New York but moved to Pennsylvania when Daniel was about six years old. They moved because Pennsylvania has a better state program for the autistic community, as well as special benefits for the families and the autistic individual themselves. However, with recent family issues, my aunt and uncle wanted to move back to New York to be

closer to the rest of the family. However, since Daniel is now 22, moving back to New York means Daniel would have to start the New York State program from scratch. This will take years and, by the time he is ready to go into a group home, he will not have all of the benefits he needs. For this reason, they have to stay in Pennsylvania. This is the case for many families with autistic children. These families have to think about their child's life and what will happen to their child in the new state before they decide to move the whole family.

Scientists have been trying to find cures for autism. In the article, "Monkeys Built to Mimic Autism-Like Behaviors May Help Humans" by Pam Belluck, scientists have genetically engineered monkeys with MECP2 syndrome. The MECP2 gene is the methyl CpG binding protein 2 which is associated with Rett Syndrome when the gene is mutated or duplicated. Rett Syndrome is a genetic postnatal neurological disorder of the brain that is mostly found in females but is also found in some male patients. The normal gene is known to be essential to the normal function of nerve cells. Belluck states, "...MECP2 duplication syndrome, occurs when people, especially boys, inherit two copies of the MECP2 gene." Monkeys in a lab in China have shown "autistic like behaviors and characteristics" such as running in circles, defensive and antisocial behaviors. The article also says, "these monkeys were more likely...to run in circles in their cages...showed more stress and defensive behavior, which the scientists said reflected autism-like anxiety. And they were less likely to be social by sitting with, touching or grooming other monkeys." These behaviors are equivalent to humans with autism that have repetitive behavior, anxiety and a social disconnection.

My cousin has all of these symptoms. He is repetitive in asking questions when he doesn't receive the answer he wants. He can get defensive or aggressive by pushing us away or hitting himself on the legs repeatedly. He is also disconnected when it comes to his family as well as with other people when it comes to talking. He likes to run around and hang out by himself and will frequently ask if he can go off on his own or if he can go home.

Don't get me wrong, I am very excited to hear scientists are trying to find cures for autism. I know that having autism is stressful on my cousin, aunt and uncle, and even the rest of my family. It is also extremely costly with doctor's appointments, medications and special foods for his strict diet. But, I hate to be selfish. I love my cousin just the way he is and my family wouldn't be who we are today if Daniel wasn't autistic. We wouldn't have the same values and beliefs about life and the world around us if it weren't for the impact autism has had on all of us.

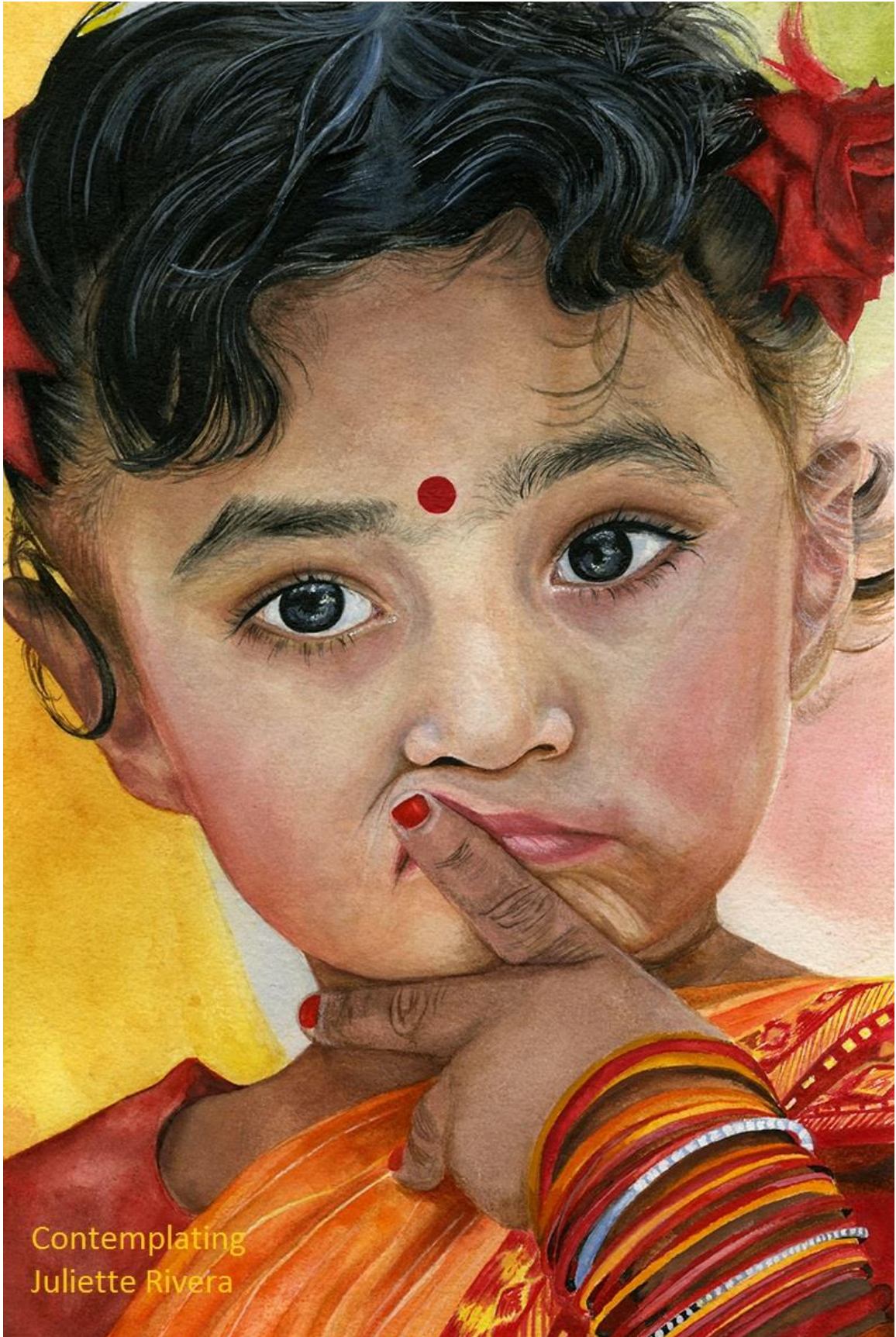
My cousin means everything to me. He was my best friend growing up. He inspired me to be a teacher because I taught him a lot throughout the years. Just from being around him all my life, I was able to learn from him how to value the little things about a person. I was also able to grow up without judgement and help stop bullies who can be verbally or physically abusive to other kids who were special in their own unique ways.

As an animal lover, I can't help but cringe when I see the monkey with the MECP2 syndrome running around the cage in circles. Belluck explains, "Much autism research has focused on mice because they are inexpensive and reproduce quickly. Though mice engineered with other genes have developed some autism-like behaviors, the complexity and variability of autism are difficult to study in those less-advanced animals." It made me sad to see the monkeys reacting to the gene mutations, but it got me thinking about my cousin and how he feels in his own brain, just like the monkey with the MECP2 gene.

Daniel is such a big part of my life, I even got a tattoo over the summer in honor of him. The tattoo is the autism puzzle piece, which is the symbol for autism because it reflects the complexity and mystery of the autism spectrum. The puzzle also represents all of the individuals who are mentally disabled by this puzzling condition. Having all of the puzzle pieces put together gives hope that people with autism will one day "fit in" to society. All of the colors represent how diverse the condition is. Since the colors are so bright, the brightness of the symbol represents hope for the condition. The puzzle pieces within a larger puzzle piece represent the mechanical nature of the brain and thought process of those who have autism. Although there is a clear meaning of the autism puzzle piece, any person who is aware of the autism spectrum can have his or her own meaning depending on how the condition has impacted his or her life.

For now, autism is completely genetic and can't be prevented. The autism awareness community has hope that scientists will be able to intervene early enough and get access to the correct services so people on the spectrum can live full and happy lives on their own terms. If you get to know a person who has autism, you will see a loving, caring person who sees the world from a different perspective. Autism has shown me the world in a different way and it has forever changed my life because of it.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/26/health/autism-genetically-engineered-monkeys.html>



Contemplating
Juliette Rivera

My Name is Ayush Kumar

Colleen O'Melia

My name is Ayush Kumar, but my friends like to call me Yushie.

I live with my Mām, Fathi Kumar. I have not seen my Pitā, Samarth Kumar, in two years.

I grew up in Gurgaon, a large city in Haryana, India. Haryana is located in Northern India, conveniently bordered by New Delhi, our nation's capital and, more or less, the heart of India. In fact, a ride from Gurgaon to New Delhi is a painless forty minutes (an hour with traffic). I know this because I've taken many drives there with my Mām. You see, back in India, my Mām worked at the University of Delhi as a business professor on Mondays and Wednesdays. When my Nānī was in the hospital, I would go to work with my Mām. I only learned one thing during those trips: College is extremely boring.

Education is very important to my Mām. She has always had high expectations for me. When I was just five years old, she already had dreams of me becoming a doctor. To be honest, when I was in elementary school, my only focus was passing Hindi. On the first day of second grade, I was asked to describe my favorite part about summer vacation and then draw a picture of what I had described. However, I did the reverse: I drew before I wrote (that is, if I even wrote at all). I will never forget the look on my teacher's face when it was time to hand in our first projects. She was angry, baffled, and extremely disappointed in my lack of ability to "remain on task." To this day, I tend to get caught up in my own world when it comes to assignments. I have always loved to draw. When my calculus teacher assigns practice problems, I doodle instead. Unfortunately, this talent does not earn you As in high school mathematics. Overall, I can't say my lack of ability to follow directions, or should I say lack of discipline, has done me any good. My Mām is *not* happy with my work ethic. But at least she cares enough to scold me.

My Pitā, Samarth Kumar, was always a silent man. When I disappointed him, he was quiet. He never put any effort into being a Pitā. You know, someone who is supposed to guide you through life and teach you right from wrong. Instead, he kept himself busy with work and other things. By other things I mean socializing with other politicians. My Pitā used to work for the Chief Minister of Haryana, Bhupinder Singh Hood, as a Member of Legislative Assembly. Back in India, he and his friends would often congregate on our back deck and discuss politics over a few beers. As a Member of Legislative Assembly, my Pitā was granted two bodyguards upon request. These men were always present at my Pitā's weekly gatherings. One was taller than the other, but they were both very strong. While they bantered about the Haryana State Government, my Mām served them home-cooked meals. When they were finished, she would clean up after them. My Mām rarely smiled.

Some nights, when my Pitā was busy with work, my Mām and I would go to my grandparents' house for dinner. I loved these nights. My Nānā would tell stories of his childhood while my Mām sipped tea with Nānī. Sometimes I overheard my Mām talking to Nānī. She mostly talked about her marriage.

My Mām never wanted to marry. Instead, she dreamed of continuing her education. She wanted to earn her doctorate. However, my old-fashioned Indian grandparents did not think this plan was proper, so they arranged for my mother to marry my Pitā when she was just eighteen years old. My Mām’s parents were very close with the Kumar family and, given my father’s social prestige, they felt that Samarth Kumar was the perfect fit for their beloved daughter.

He wasn’t exactly the perfect fit. My Mām resents the fact that she obeyed her parents’ wishes and married Samarth. For many years, she served my Pitā well-- but she never loved him. Her lack of affection angered my Pitā greatly, and I remember wishing there was something I could do. Instead, it felt as if my presence annoyed my Pitā, as if I was a reminder of the woman he wished he did not marry. Though divorce is more common in modern-day India, my Pitā could never bring himself to disrespect his parents’ wishes of marrying my mother, especially after their passing.

My Pitā had always been a cold man, but he grew colder when his Mām died. He loved her dearly and he often blamed himself for her death. I remember hearing him pray at night. He used to beg God for forgiveness. I once asked my Mām why he prayed. She paused and whispered, “Your Pitā put work before family the night your Dādī died. We do not speak of it, Ayush.”

From that moment on, I eavesdropped more than a child my age should have. When my Pitā had friends over, I always offered to help my Mām instead of playing outside with friends. She cooked the meals and I helped her carry each dish to my Pitā. When I was outside for even just a brief moment, I caught snippets of information-- names, locations, and dates. The more curious I grew, the more aware I became.

March 10, 2006:

As I deliver another round of drinks to my Pitā and his select group of gossiping politician-friends, my ears perk up.

“So, Monday the twentieth it is. Can you handle it?”

When I glance in his direction, my Pitā is eyeing each of the bodyguards sternly and intently, as if he could decode their ability to obey his orders at a single glance.

“Of course, sir. We will make you proud,” promises the taller of the two.

I do not tell my mother what I have heard, for she would scold me. It is disrespectful for a son to pry into the private life of his Pitā.

The twentieth of March welcomes an exceptionally quiet night. My Pitā does not have one friend over, he does not make any phone calls, and he actually asks me how my day at school was. It is a truly remarkable evening.

The following morning, my Pitā leaves for work earlier than usual. As I watch the news before school, my heart sinks. There was a murder in the nearby village of Harsaru the night before--

the twentieth of March. At just ten years old, I cannot formulate an explanation as to why this murder occurred. But I know it was my Pitā's doing. In this very moment, I realize I am afraid in my own home. Do I live with a monster? How could he do this to our family? To our family name?

I leave my untouched breakfast on the table and bolt for the door. I can hear my friends hollering "Hey, Yushie! Slow down! Wait up!" But I cannot bring myself to slow down.

In the blistering heat of late March, I run.

Scream and Laugh in the Dark

Linda Vichiola-Coppola

Every spring, my parents would take my brothers and me to Riverside Park in Massachusetts. We always went on the opening day of the season because of all the special events that were scheduled. Not only did the park have rides and live entertainment, it also had a speedway where stock car races were held.

Although the park had a lot of exciting rides to go on, Timmy and I weren't tall enough to go on most of them. Patrick was almost fourteen years old and had no problem getting on the rides he wanted to try out. But he didn't want to go on them alone, so he would invite his best friend Brian to join our family for the trip.

Fortunately for Timmy and me, there were a handful of rides which had no height requirement.

The Spook House was one such ride.

The outside of the attraction was painted to look like a haunted mansion. There were ghostly eyes glowing from the windows and a huge Frankenstein figure standing near a spooky tree. Metal bars formed a maze-like pathway for people to wait in line.

The line was moving quickly because people were constantly boarding and exiting the little carts.

The sounds of terrified screams and eerie music escaped from within as the metal exit doors to the ride popped open and a black cart seating two passengers flew out on the steel tracks. It looked as if the car would have crashed right into the unoccupied cart in front of it, but a uniformed park attendant quickly stepped in front of it and stopped it with his foot.

I watched as he unhooked the metal chain from the side of the cart and motioned the young couple who were seated in it to step out. I studied their expressions and tried to see if they had enjoyed the ride. The lady stepped out first, carefully trying not to trip over the side of the cart as the attendant let her take hold of his arm for added support. Her hair looked windswept and her expression was a bit flustered. The man she was with had a huge smile on his face as he followed her off the ride. He whispered something into her ear that made her laugh and playfully shove him.

Even as I watched their departure, the line moved several feet forward again. Now we were standing in the partial shade formed by the roof of the Spook House. The sweet odor of grease and cherry flavoring wafted at us from the fried dough and cotton candy concession stand located next to the ride. My mouth watered at the aroma. I turned slightly and watched as children and adults walked away from the food stand carrying pink puffs of cotton candy and nibbled on big wedges of pizza frita.

"I wish Mom would let us try some of that fried dough," I said, raising an eyebrow at Timmy.

"Yeah, me too," he sighed. "Maybe we can get her to buy us some after we have lunch."

"She'll just tell us it's no good for us," I shrugged.

"I bet Dad would let us have it."

“He says it bothers his stomach.” I sighed.

We soon forgot about tasting the fried treat as we moved forward once again in the line. I watched as the two groups of teenagers in front of us boarded the ride, and I clapped my hands excitedly as we were motioned forward to climb aboard the next empty car.

The wooden planks which formed the boarding platform to the ride creaked as we trotted across them and up to the empty black carriage.

Timmy and I both hesitated as we approached the cart. While the left side of the car had a protective wall enclosing it, the right side had a u-shaped opening to allow passengers on board. So, whoever sat next to the opening would only have a metal chain guarding him against whatever horrors were waiting in the dark.

Timmy seemed to realize this the same time I did. He glanced at me quickly and then bolted towards the car.

I started forward, anxious to get into the cart before him so I wouldn't have to be seated on the open side. But Timmy quickly skipped in front of me and smirked, “You can sit next to the chain, because I'm not sitting there.” And with an exaggerated wave of his arm, he stuck his tongue out at me and hopped up into the cart. He grinned at the weary expression on my face and slid across the padded green vinyl seat. “Ha-ha!” he teased, “You have to sit on the side where the monsters can get you!” He patted his hand against the sidewall of the car like it was his best friend.

“Oh, be quiet, you chicken!” I told him and deliberately shoved my elbow into him as I climbed into the cart. I frantically tried to make myself comfortable on the seat.

My foot was hanging over the side as the attendant hooked the chain across the doorway and said, “Keep your foot in there, kiddo.” He leaned his sweaty face in front of mine and I could smell strawberry bubble gum on his breath when he added, “All set?” He smacked the palm of his hand on his forehead, “Oh, yeah...I almost forgot. Your tickets, please?” He held his hand out and I resisted the urge to slap him five.

I held my ticket up for him to take.

“I got mine!” Timmy exclaimed, standing up and leaning over me to hand the guy his ticket. He stepped on my foot as he did this.

“Cut it out, dummy!” I shoved him off of me. “You're crushing my foot!”

Timmy clicked his tongue at me and pushed me sideways. “I'm telling Dad that you were calling me names.”

“Go ahead! And I'll tell him about how you wouldn't say you were sorry to the lady you kicked!”

“But I didn't mean to kick her! It was an accident.”

Before the argument could escalate any further, the attendant grinned and gave our carriage a huge shove that sent it squealing towards a set of doors that were painted to look like a gaping mouth with sharp fangs. The front bumper made contact with the door and the sound of gears began clunking to life beneath the frame of the cart. The doors magically parted to allow us in.

Once the metal doors clanked shut behind us, we were propelled into the darkness of the funhouse. The little cart we rode shook with each turn it took on the rail, looping around twice on a huge curve, and sending me sliding across the seat into my brother's side.

"Stop sliding into me!" Timmy's voice was disembodied in the inky blackness.

"You wanted to sit on that side!" I argued back, squinting to see his face.

As we rounded another turn, I went sliding back over to my side of the seat.

Other than the isolated feeling that the darkness gave me, there was nothing very terrifying about the spook house so far.

I strained to see if there was anything scary ahead of us, but instead I saw only the shadowy forms of people who were riding in the cars ahead of us.

The metal chain swayed and rapped against the side of the cart as we rounded another turn in the dark, and the car rotated sharply to the right to confront us with our first "fright."

We were looking into a small nook in the wall illuminated by an eerie blue light with a wooden coffin standing upright. The backdrop behind the coffin was painted to look like a night sky. There were fake bats with glowing red eyes hanging upside down above the coffin. Abruptly, the lid to the coffin popped open with the sound of organ music and a figure of Count Dracula slowly emerged and raised its arm at us.

"How stupid," Timmy's voice sounded hoarse.

"Yeah," I smiled because the Dracula reminded me of the awful art project I was working on in school. "I'll bet he's made out of paper mache."

There was a whining noise as the gears turned and we were sent speeding down a red tunnel until we reached an area filled with the sounds of moaning ghosts and screeching cats.

We were in a room with small alcoves on each side of a chamber.

Each alcove had its own horror to boast. To the right was a deformed green creature with pointy ears and a forked tail frozen in a peculiar stance as it stared blankly back at us.

Again I was reminded of my failed attempt to model something cute out of paper mache.

The cart spun around at a dizzying speed and sent us sailing off to a bigger and more ferocious sight: a giant red devil face that was sculpted into the wall. The cart moved up close to the devil, so that we seemed dwarfed in front of it.

"Look! Do you see that?" Timmy's voice sounded amused. I could see the silhouette of his hand pointing towards something on the evil face.

"What?" I leaned on the edge of my seat and craned my neck forward until I noticed that someone had managed to stick a blob of chewed bubble gum on the end of the demon's pointed nose. "Oh, gross!"

We both giggled at the sight.

Our laughter seemed to harmonize with the evil chortling that was coming from the devil's motionless and open mouth. I quieted myself quickly, and there was an unsettling moment where it seemed the sound of my own laugh was coming out of the mouth of the satanic face on the wall.

The cart suddenly lunged to the left and sent me tipping back on the seat. We were rolling towards an alcove that looked like a clearing in the midst of a forest.

In the center of the make believe forest stood the figure of a hump backed witch tending a steaming cauldron. Her body was illuminated in the yellow light beneath the cast iron pot.

The witch's knifelike facial features were twisted and frozen as if she had been in the middle of casting a brilliant spell when something (or someone) more powerful had decided to freeze her in mid-motion.

Unexpectedly, we were whisked away in the cart and sent towards a red and white striped door, which parted and spewed us out into the daylight.

Timmy stood up in the seat as the ride attendant rushed over to unhook the chain for us to exit the car.

Dad was waiting for us on the opposite side of the gate as we stepped off the ride. "Was it scary in there?" he asked as we squinted in the sunlight at him.

"No," Timmy said, climbing over me to get out.

"It looked like everything was made out of papier-mâché, Dad," I said.

Dad chuckled, "You're braver than I thought, Lisa." He glanced at his watch. "The races start in a few minutes. We'd better hurry."

Excited to see the stock car races, we rushed away from the haunted house and left behind the sounds of people laughing and screaming in the dark.

Patient Autonomy and the Right to Die

Roger Kelsey Halbert

Abstract

The Patient Bill of Rights grants protection for patient autonomy, the right to accept or refuse treatment, while the principles of beneficence and nonmaleficence, or doing no harm, is tightly held by medical clinicians. However, when doing what the patient wants is not in accord with what the physician believes is right and good, ethical conflicts arise. In the case of Mr. Roberts (anonymized), treatment for Cushing Syndrome had been completed but left him bed-ridden and connected to a ventilator, with no specific timeline predicted for recovery. Having experienced an ongoing series of refractory events, Mr. Roberts had grown weary of the suffering his “cure” had precipitated, and he expressed his wish to die. Ethical precedence already exists regarding the discontinuation of life-sustaining treatment in the setting of terminal illness or a persistent vegetative state, but can a competent patient refuse life-sustaining interventions as a means to end the suffering brought about from treatment? This case study examines the ethical dilemma.

Patient Autonomy and the Right to Die

The Consumer Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, adopted by the US Advisory on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry in 1998, addresses in its key areas taking part in treatment decisions: “You have the right to be informed about your treatment options and take part in decisions about your care. You have the right to ask about the pros and cons of any treatment, including no treatment at all. As long as you are able to make sound decisions, you have the right the refuse any test or treatment, even if it means you might have a bad health outcome as a result” (cancer.org, 2014). When the patient’s choice to refuse treatment will result in death, conflict arises between autonomy and beneficence. When treatment is complete but not completely curative, the balance between autonomy and beneficence becomes even more skewed. “The dialogue between autonomy and beneficence is ages old. Doing what the patient wants is not always consonant with doing what one believes is good and right for the patient. Inner conflict for the physician lies on both sides of this issue. It is just as hard to live with giving the judgmentally competent patient the right not to be treated when the outcome of treatment is likely to be good as with doing everything possible for a patient, predicting or even promising a good outcome, only to have the actual outcome make one question the quality of that saved life” (Daly, Gokhale, and Ramos-Estebanez, 2014). When there is diminution in the quality of life, does a patient have the right to die?

Mr. Roberts was admitted to a venerated teaching hospital after being worked up by a general practitioner for fatigue and weakness. An elevated cortisol level led to a suspected diagnosis of Cushing Syndrome, and magnetic resonance imagine was questionable for a pituitary gland tumor. Near the end of a surgical procedure to biopsy the tumor, Mr. Roberts experienced a traumatic extubation, could not be successfully reintubated and required emergent surgery for placement of a tracheostomy. Transssphenoidal tumor resection is a highly specialized procedure, and there was only one surgeon who performed this surgery at the hospital. Unfortunately, this surgeon was undergoing knee surgery shortly after the biopsy. Mr. Roberts had another surgical procedure to place a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube

and then was sent to a rehabilitation center for weaning off the ventilator. A long series of refractory episodes continued to plague Mr. Roberts. He became septic in rehab, and was readmitted to the Medical Intensive Care Unit (ICU). While there, he experienced a mechanical fall while working with Physical Therapy. Three months after the initial biopsy, he was able to have the pituitary tumor resected and came to the Neuroscience ICU post-operatively. After caring for him for three consecutive shifts, I signed up as his Primary Nurse. Mr. Roberts had grown diffident of many of the care providers, but trusted me. He had remained on the ventilator the entire time, unable to tolerate the weaning mode (continuous positive airway pressure, CPAP) for more than thirty minutes. This made it impossible for Mr. Roberts to speak, but he wrote recurrently in journals. Endocrinologists struggled to normalize his hormone levels, and further workup determined that an adrenalectomy could further address his Cushing Syndrome. Postoperatively Mr. Roberts was experiencing intense physical pain that prevented him tolerating lying flat, and involved a torticollis-like neck stiffness.

It was now six months since the biopsy. In that time, Mr. Roberts had not been able to speak, eat, walk, sleep comfortably, see his beloved cat, and more importantly, leave the ICU. I entered his room alone and he wrote, "Help me." When I asked how I could help him, he wrote, "I want to die." I could see Mrs. Roberts approaching the room, so I pulled the curtain and asked him to tell me more. When he finished, I asked if I could share his statements with his wife, who was also a nurse. He agreed. The three of us sat in silence for a short while and then decided it was time to approach the attending physician. Mr. Roberts wrote of his suffering, of the lack of any quality of life and any promise of quality. Mr. Roberts wanted to go home to die. The attending physician placed a consult to the Ethics Committee.

The Consumer Bill of Rights and Protection safeguards Mr. Roberts' right to refuse treatment, even though in this case treatment had essentially been completed. He was being followed by three services – neurosurgery, endocrinology, pulmonology – all of whom had determined that there were no more interventions other than to allow Mr. Roberts' body to normalize, strengthen, and wean him from the ventilator. "There is ethical and legal consensus that a patient has the right to refuse life-sustaining

treatment (LST), as an expression of autonomy-based principles, when the patient demonstrates an appropriate degree of capacity, the decision is consistent with the patient's preferences and free from coercion, and when the burdens exceed the benefits of continued treatment. Patients can request to discontinue LST for any number of reasons, some of which are ethically relevant. For instance, sometimes a patient refuses LST because of an inherent belief that maintaining current and foreseeable aggressive interventions constitutes an unacceptable quality of life" (Peña, 2015).

The Ethics Committee met privately with Mr. Roberts before questioning his family or any of his caregivers. Additionally, Mr. Roberts' pastor was brought in to discuss his desire to die. The committee then interviewed his physicians, myself, his wife and two sons. Among the committee's priorities was determining Mr. Roberts' capacity to make this decision. "While the right to withhold and withdraw life-sustaining treatment (LST) has been clearly established in American law, medicine, and ethics, clinicians and families hold to the time-honored principles of beneficence and nonmaleficence, in their desire to protect even the 'autonomous' patient from short-sighted, poorly considered decisions that can cut a life short, if there is any way to avoid doing so in a situation where all believe that the patient can get better. Depression does not always preclude capacity for specific medical decisions, but it can lessen second-level autonomy—which is the ability to reflect critically upon current wishes with the ability to change such wishes in light of more important preferences and values. Capacity to appreciate knowledge is more than just what one knows or understands about treatment choices and their consequences; it is how those choices and consequences are believed and what they mean, when applied to the personal, lived situation" (Leslie and Robinson, 2015). The Ethics Committee had determined that Mr. Roberts had capacity to make this choice and had taken all aspects of his decision into consideration, even at a metaphysical level.

In a group meeting with all of the mentioned parties to Mr. Roberts' care, all of the physicians maintained that Mr. Roberts had been cured. But when asked how long it would be until Mr. Roberts could exact any normalcy in the quality of his life, no one was able to offer a predictable time line. Six months to a year were suggested. Mr. Roberts was in a form of medical purgatory. "Since none of us are

very good at predicting the future, we have all probably travelled this road to medical purgatory. We have traversed this path either as a personal journey or as a guide with patients and family members under our care. Our patient arrived here by following the rules of the road, seeking the best of medical opinions, choosing options that were reasonable, receiving excellent care, and encountering surprises that were not predictable” (Brown and Galanos, 2015). The meeting dispersed and the committee adjourned to determine if Mr. Roberts would be permitted to go home to die.

The Ethics Committee was given a daunting task. There are no cut and dry normative theories that dictate an obvious resolve. A Utilitarian approach would allow Mr. Roberts to die if certain criteria were met. From the Utilitarian perspective, the right action would be whatever results in the greatest amount of happiness to the greatest number of people involved. “Thus if the person wanted to die, and less family members objected that agreed, the mercy killing would be ok. However, if more family member objected, the Utilitarian would push the principles of the Utilitarian approach back on the family members to ask what would result in the greatest amount of happiness. In this case, the unnecessary suffering of a family member that will inevitably result in death is not choosing to produce happiness. Thus the conclusion would be to allow the mercy killing” (Cohen-Almagro, 2008). Mrs. Roberts, as a nurse and nurse educator, was advocating for her husband, promoting his wishes above her own. She would often say that she felt the physicians blamed her for allowing the events to unfold. From a Kantian perspective, allowing Mr. Roberts to die would not be the right thing to do as it would create a new acceptable behavior of murder, an exception to a universal law. Kantian philosophy believes in retributivism: murder is approved when one is convicted of killing another, taking into consideration the specific circumstances involved when taking a life. Retributivism ignores the specific circumstance of needless suffering and the request of someone wanting to die. Deontologists would also not approve of allowing Mr. Roberts to die, as they maintain that the killing of innocent humans is strictly prohibited. “Deontology prohibits only active killing. It is compatible with this doctrine that we allow people in poor countries to starve to death while we are living comparatively well. Even some kinds of active killing can

be morally acceptable (and required) as long as it was not intended. For example, it may be morally permitted to give a patient a painkiller that kills her if the intention is to kill the pain not the patient. The death of the patient is then a foreseen but not desired consequence of the action. Similarly it is permissible to withhold nourishment from a patient in a persistent vegetative state and allow them to die” (Tännsjö, 2005). Deontologists may struggle with the fact that the actual mechanism of Mr. Roberts’ proposed death would not be active on behalf of the physicians; Mr. Roberts would voluntarily stop artificial nutrition and hydration, disconnect the ventilator, and progress to death. But deontology makes no moral distinction between murder and suicide, thus determining that allowing Mr. Roberts to die would be morally wrong.

Catholic teaching authority has addressed the moral issues concerning artificial nutrition and hydration (ANH) in the Ethical and Religious Directives (ERD) for Catholic health services. Specifically, ERD 58 states that “in principle, there is an obligation to provide patients with food and water, including medically assisted nutrition and hydration for those who cannot take food orally. This obligation extends to patients in chronic and presumably irreversible conditions (e.g., the ‘persistent vegetative state’) who can reasonably be expected to live indefinitely if given such care. Medically assisted nutrition and hydration become morally optional when they cannot reasonably be expected to prolong life or when they would be ‘excessively burdensome for the patient or [would] cause significant physical discomfort, for example resulting from complications in the use of the means employed.’ For instance, as a patient draws close to inevitable death from an underlying progressive and fatal condition, certain measures to provide nutrition and hydration may become excessively burdensome and therefore not obligatory in light of their very limited ability to prolong life or provide comfort” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2009). From the standpoint of this ERD, there is no justification in withdrawing ANH from Mr. Roberts as he is not suffering from “an underlying progressive and fatal condition”; his suffering is existential.

Most, if not all normative theories regarding the right to die are guided by the sanctity of life. The argument exists from one side, which maintains that man has complete authority over his life (autonomy)

and the other side, which asserts that life is sacred and must be preserved at all costs. “This argument is equally problematic because it limits human choice and could hold us hostage to the many medical technologies available today that have the ability to stave off death while also imposing significant burdens and increasing patient suffering. A more balanced Christian view holds neither extreme to be true, recognizing both a duty to preserve life and reasonable limits to this duty” (Panicola, et al, 2011).

The Ethics Committee ruled in favor of Mr. Roberts and his request to go home to die. Palliative care was brought on board to his medical team, and the goals of care made the transition from recovery in the hospital to optimizing his condition in order to be stable enough to go home. Ironically there was little difference between the two; a primary focus was weaning Mr. Roberts from Assist Control mode to CPAP mode on the ventilator. Going home with a ventilator was not an option. We worked closely with Respiratory Therapy to strengthen Mr. Roberts’ respiratory status and find a vendor who could merge a CPAP machine with a tracheostomy. We trained Mr. Roberts’ wife and sons on the use of the PEG tube, feeding pump, and tracheal suctioning equipment. Mr. Roberts’ mood was decidedly lighter, his anxiety lower, and seemed more engaged with his family and with some of his healthcare team. “Patients’ awareness of their continuing power to control this important aspect of life, despite the constraints posed by serious illness, can be in itself therapeutic” (Berry, 2009). Two weeks later Mr. Roberts left the Neuro ICU and returned home.

Visiting Nurses who administered medication, respiratory therapists who maintained the CPAP device and stocked oxygen, hospice nurses, clergy, friends and family, supported Mrs. Roberts and the care of her husband. “Whichever transfer approach is adopted, there are a core set of needs to be met for all dying patients in their own home including: good symptom control; confident and committed general practitioners; access to specialist palliative care; effective co-ordination of care; and education of what to expect when someone is dying. In critical care there is a growing body of work to guide the management of a ‘good death’. In practice there is a need for clear and respectful interdisciplinary communication to facilitate effective planning for end of life care. Involving the patient, the family and significant others,

and all key health care staff in discussions about care requires the intelligent and compassionate use of nursing skills. Through this, the experience of patients and families during end of life care can be improved” (Tele, Pyle, and Coombs, 2012).

Two weeks after returning home, Mr. Roberts wrote, “I think it’s time to stop the tube feeds and water,” and made a similar statement three days later regarding the CPAP device. Hospice care managed his comfort, and he passed peacefully at home, surrounded by his family, his cat, his books, and his music collection, on his own terms. As Brown and Galanos (2015) stated, “You see, you cannot leave purgatory unless you get well or unless you turn off the vehicle that is keeping you there.”

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Reboot

Teach

Colleen O'Melia
You'll never be rich
Their words replay in my mind
Happiness trumps all

Rycenga Freshman Essay Contest Winner

Reiki Therapy: Miracle Healer or Pseudoscience?

Noelle Mayne

Ever since Stephanie was a little girl, she suffered from anxiety and depression, and it only escalated as she got older and went to college. In college, she decided to try different therapies again, and was given various medications. However, these medications eventually took their toll on her, and while she would put on a “happy face” for friends and family, what she did behind closed doors said otherwise. Her depression eventually became so bad that she contemplated suicide by overdose a few times, but didn't go through with it because she believed that there was a light somewhere, and that eventually all the darkness would go away. Shortly after, she was introduced to Reiki therapy. After one year of Reiki therapy, for Stephanie, “each session was emotionally draining as my body, mind and spirit processed the energetic shifts that were occurring within me.” However, “the fog began to lift. After a few months of treatment, I decreased my medication and within a year I was drug-free. That was several years ago. To this day I have no need for medication” (Colletti 2013).

There are hundreds of thousands of Reiki therapy success stories like Stephanie's out there today. These stories, or testimonials, along with the advertisements for Reiki from trustable sources, like the Cleveland Clinic, are largely responsible for the popularity of Reiki. The Clinic's website ad describes Reiki as a natural healing process that uses the vital, limitless, universal life force energy that flows through all living things. The Reiki practitioner is the connection between the person and that energy. The ad praises all of the supposed medical benefits of Reiki, such as pain relief, detoxification, bettering the immune system, and helping with side effects from various treatments (Bellamy 2014).

Reiki therapy dates back many years, and there are multiple versions of the way it has been practiced; however, there are two main versions practiced today, the Western version and the Japanese version. The Western version began when Dr. Usui opened his first school in 1922, and the Japanese version began when Mr. Rand heard about Dr. Usui's teachings and sought to correct them (Freeman 2009). So, the most common versions of reiki therapy

practiced today are almost one hundred years old, and were developed during a time when science was nowhere near as advanced as it is now.

With new advances in science, practices like Reiki therapy are now able to be tested using the scientific method. However, these tests have yielded unreliable results because there are obstacles in researching Reiki therapy, mainly the placebo effect. However, over the years, improvements have been made in the research done on Reiki therapy in an effort to reduce the placebo effect, and improvements are still being made. For example, in 1999 the placebo arm was introduced to reiki therapy research in an effort to eliminate the confounding variable of human touch that was present in all prior research (Miles 2015).

Despite the lack of reliable research, trustable people and places, like the Cleveland Clinic, are advertising the benefits of the therapy and thus misleading all of their customers into paying for, and receiving, it. While there have been no associated casualties, it can be dangerous to believe that Reiki will heal someone if it really won't because it can prevent that person from receiving the proper care. Due to the current lack of reliable experimentation and research, Reiki therapy can't be considered a scientific practice. In this paper, experimentation done on Reiki as well as various testimonials of its success will be evaluated and discussed in an attempt to prove that Reiki can't be considered scientific.

Alternative medicine and other similar practices have many followers in the corporate world, especially in southern California, the home of Mr. Kenneth Klee. Mr. Klee is a top-rated, "white collar" lawyer who publicly moonlights as a self-employed Reiki practitioner with many success stories. He says that he first got interested in Reiki therapy when he received a massage on a business retreat during which a therapist activated energy within him, and since then has studied various techniques in the Philippines and Florida. Mr. Klee says that during his Reiki therapy sessions, he removes the bad energy and replaces it with better vibrations. By doing this, he has helped people overcome some of the worst illnesses. Those Mr. Klee has helped testify to his healing abilities (Corkery 2013). Michael Corkery was a writer for the *Wall Street Journal*, and has recently resigned to write for the *New York Times*. Both newspapers are very reputable, and Corkery has a reputable education from Brown University. He was part of the Business and Investing Bureau of the *Wall Street Journal* when writing this article, so he doesn't usually write about topics like Reiki, and so has no bias towards the field. Corkery makes no scientific claims in the article, but does point out that medical professionals don't believe what Klee does is really "energy healing," and that results are only temporary, not cures. There are no sources of misinformation present in the article.

Many hospitals are currently offering Reiki therapy for cancer patients. Because cancer patients tend to have multiple sensitive areas on their bodies, such as ports, the gentleness of Reiki therapy tends to be quite appealing for the patients. And, there is certainly anecdotal evidence for using Reiki therapy on cancer patients. So, while many scientists don't support the theory that Reiki helps the energy to flow in a patient, they believe Reiki therapy does work. However, they believe it might just be the simple touch from another human that does the healing. This idea is supported by a study done in 2007 that showed that five 45-minute Reiki

sessions did lead to an improved quality of life for the cancer patients, but study co-author Linda E. Carlson says she thinks the results may just be a result of a good relationship between the Reiki practitioner and patient (Johannes 2011). While I couldn't find any of Laura Johannes's credentials, she writes for a very reputable newspaper, *The Wall Street Journal*. I was also able to find some of the other articles she has written for *The Wall Street Journal*, all of which have to do with various health "aches and claims" like Reiki therapy, and she is still currently writing for the journal. She references scientific studies but points out the flaws in them, and no misinformation is present. Johannes also has no conflicts of interest in Reiki therapy, and so her work is not biased.

Reiki therapy may also be helpful for dementia patients. Elderly dementia patients tend to become very agitated or frightened, especially when their nurse comes to help them, and so Reiki therapy could help calm them down. Some hospitals and homecare agencies have begun to practice Reiki therapy on dementia patients with positive results. While this practice is still in its early stages, aides and nurses are beginning to see the benefits of it, even if the patients are simply feeling comforted instead of actually being healed (Span 2011). Span writes articles for "The New Old Age" section of the *New York Times*. While I could not find her credentials, the *New York Times* is a very credible newspaper. There are no sources of misinformation in the article. She references the lack of scientific evidence because of the flaws in the research currently done on Reiki. These flaws include low numbers of participants, the experiments aren't randomized or blind, and the measures used are subjective.

From the view of a Reiki Master Teacher, Kathleen Lipinski, Reiki works. But, it is best explained through the use of compassionate and helpful feelings that affect the heart, and then eventually the nerves and vascular system in the hands. However, since more and more medical professionals are using Reiki, a scientific explanation has been sought. According to Lipinski, the best scientific explanation is that practitioners can emit extremely low frequencies from their hands. However, medical research is still in its infant stages, and this explanation has not been proven (Cuellar 2006). Kathleen Lipinski is a credible source to answer Cuellar's questions in the sense that, as a licensed Reiki Master Teacher and practicing holistic nurse, she knows a lot about the subject. However, she is biased for Reiki therapy because that's what she makes her living doing. Also, a lot of the information she provides is based off of what she thinks or how she feels. However, she does address the problems with conducting scientific research on Reiki therapy.

In order for healthcare professionals to be able to recommend a treatment to a patient, they need to have evidence backing the treatment, which is something Reiki therapy lacks. One main problem in the research done is that Reiki is said to promote balance and de-stress the patient, but stress is a very vague and subjective term. Another major problem is the placebo effect. In this case, the placebo is that just the presence of another human being caring about someone, or just human touch, can improve one's health. To compensate for these issues, more modern research done on Reiki is using "allostasis," or the body's attempt to maintain homeostasis, instead of "stress," and a placebo arm instead of a human one. The placebo arm is used to eliminate the confounding variable of human touch and affection. Nonetheless, this new research is just beginning (Miles 2015). Pamela Miles is a Reiki master who has published

peer reviewed articles and participated in research studies, so she know a lot about Reiki and is a credible source. One would think she would be biased towards Reiki since she is a master; however, in this article she discusses the problems with Reiki therapy research. So, her balanced view makes her a credible source. There are no sources of misinformation.

The interest of medical professionals in using Reiki therapy is growing. While there has been little experimentation done on Reiki therapy, this lack of research may be due simply to the lack of interest in Reiki, and the quality of the research is improving as more medical professionals become interested in the field. As of right now, a majority of these studies have been done on Reiki therapy and stress. The findings in one investigation done by Shore showed that Reiki might have beneficial results, but the findings have limited generalizability because of the small sample size and lack of replications. Research has also been done on Reiki and pain management. There is a trend suggesting that Reiki is beneficial for pain; however, overall results were not statistically significant and so those benefits can't be attributed to Reiki alone. Only one nonsignificant study has been done on Reiki and wound healing. Research done on anxiety/well-being and Reiki therapy has yielded mainly qualitative results; once they become quantitative, the results will be more reliable (Vitale). Anne Vitale is a credible person to review such research because she is a graduate student earning her PhD in nursing at Villanova University. The information is credible because it was taken from peer-reviewed, published journals. Vitale critically analyzes the scientific research done on Reiki therapy as well as Reiki itself.

Because of the aforementioned anecdotal evidence for Reiki therapy, as many as sixty U.S. hospitals have adopted Reiki therapy as a part of their patient services, and Reiki education is offered at around eight hundred hospitals. So, Reiki is becoming more and more popular, but that doesn't mean it really works. As of today, there is no scientific evidence backing the claim made by many of the Reiki therapy practicing hospitals that the energy involved in Reiki therapy exists; and while there have been many positive responses to Reiki therapy, these responses may just be a placebo response from the presence of another person. Therefore, any of the hospitals that claim Reiki will provide the patient a health benefit due to the adding to, moving of, or unblocking of the patient's "energy," is misinforming its patients. These hospitals knows that there is no reliable scientific evidence backing Reiki therapy, yet put these claims out there to attract patients. These patients are justified in believing that Reiki therapy really does heal through energy, so in a court case, the patient could sue the hospital for fraudulent misrepresentation, and win (Bellamy 2014). Jann Bellamy is a Florida attorney who concentrates in complementary and alternative medicines (CAM), so she is a credible source of information. She is unbiased because she has dedicated her life to informing others about CAM; she doesn't practice it or have any claims in it. Also, she can educate others on CAM whether they are proven to be scientific or not. She highlights a major source of misinformation in her article, hospitals, and addresses this problem from a legal standpoint. She includes what we currently know about Reiki.

Reiki therapy is a form of complementary and alternative medicine. The practice of Reiki therapy involves a Reiki practitioner who is theoretically able to manipulate a vital life force energy in the patient. It is supposedly very beneficial to one's health and is said to relieve pain,

detox the body, and better the immune system among other things. Because of these benefits, many hospitals and medical centers are now offering Reiki therapy to their patients.

There is a lot of anecdotal evidence for Reiki therapy, but little scientific evidence. An example of anecdotal evidence is the positive outcomes of performing Reiki therapy on cancer patients (Johannes 2011) and dementia patients (Span 2011). The gentle nature of the therapy is accommodating to cancer patients who are very sensitive post treatment, as well as to agitated dementia patients who need to be calmed down by their nurses. Studies and testimonials have shown that Reiki therapy does help relieve the pain and stress in these patients. However, there is barely any scientific evidence to back these testimonials. As of right now, the experiments that have been done didn't accurately account for the placebo effect of human touch or the vagueness and subjectivity of measuring "stress." Many of the experiments also haven't been done on large sample sizes, and thus have limited generalizability and scientific significance. Using the results of the limited experimentation done and the abundant anecdotal evidence, scientists agree that Reiki therapy works, but don't believe it has to do with a life force energy. Instead, they believe that the patients simply knowing their Reiki practitioner cares about them, and human touch, are responsible for the positive anecdotal evidence for Reiki. This is why removing the placebo effect of human touch is so important for future experiments.

Reiki therapy research, from a medical standpoint, is just in its beginning stages. As time goes on, the research and experiments done on Reiki therapy will improve, and thus so will the reliability of the results. As of right now, the placebo arm and an objective definition of stress have been added to Reiki research in hopes of improving the reliability of the results. As time goes on and more improvements are made to the execution of Reiki therapy research and experimentation, the more reliable the results will be. With more reliable results, one may better determine if Reiki really is scientific. If it turns out that Reiki therapy really is a reliable scientific form of treatment, it will become more accepted and commonplace in hospitals and medical centers. Reiki therapy has the potential to prevent so much pain and suffering if more experimentation leads to its acceptance in the scientific community. Until then, however, due to the lack of reliable research done on Reiki therapy, it can't be considered a scientific practice.

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A STORY OF RELIEF

Sumantha Nalli

After having a bad day at home, I had a downpour of very devastating thoughts about my own self, unable to figure out what was wrong. Life looked like an unsolvable maze and everything that was going on around me was playing a harmony of discouragement. I had a lot of questions which seemed unanswerable. Initially I felt a little unimportant, but this was just the start. Then I fell into the space of nowhere, nobody, and nothing. This became terrible. My heart roared to speak her thoughts out but was unsure who would believe it, and knew if one stroke of negativity sprung up then I would go into the abyss called "the drug of unhappiness."

Suddenly, mum asked to get some vegetables. Very unwillingly, I started out of the house, still having all these thoughts very active on my mind. I started walking on the road as if I was the only one who was carrying the heaviest burden on earth on my shoulders. Having reached the vegetable shop, I started groping all the vegetables, unable to decide what to take, which maybe happened because my mind was absent at the time. My eyebrows were fully frowned. Then, I saw a little boy who was very tiny. He looked energetic.

I was giving little attention to this boy. He was dressed in untidy clothes. He wore a woolen sweater with a hood which was all faded and shabby. He was hopping around and then suddenly came near me and smiled. He did this a couple of times. He looked like a diamond in the rough. His smile was pleasant, cheerful and very peaceful-- somehow it was a therapy for my despair. I reciprocated with a smile. He came closer and took my hand. I bent a little for him, wondering what would happen next, when he held my hand in both of his tiny hands and kissed it. I really did not know how to react, but my stress was instantly relieved.

Gradually, I realized this boy was not mentally sound, but he encouraged me to be happy and hopeful, and I returned home with a light-heart. I learned that God sees you in all of your pains and He provides you with pain killers instantly.

This little boy was my pain killer.

Happiness: Faker than a Plastic Lemon

Mikaela Marbot

A friend of mind once said “when life gives you lemons throw them back. No one likes lemons.” I laughed at the joke, smiled, and pretended to throw a lemon. Whenever life got tough I kept throwing. But now my arm is tired. My friend is gone. And I’m buried in lemons. Each lemon represents a moment in life. A moment I took a wrong turn, a moment I failed to see the truth, a moment that made me want to turn around and give up. I want to shake them off, throw them away. But I can’t. That would mean ridding myself of a past I’m not ready to let go of. That would mean giving myself a chance for happiness. And in today’s world happiness comes at a price: it’s fake.

Happiness risks change. It risks progress. It risks weakness.

And I don’t know if I’m ready for that.

To me, happiness is something that sells books and movies. It’s a sad ballad crying over lost love. I bond with artists who express their longing and desperation through song. When I’m sad I play depressing music. I play it when I’m “happy” too—I don’t know any better. I chase after happiness, but what am I chasing? Am I chasing success? Am I chasing friendship? Am I chasing love? Or am I running from loneliness?

I often think that I’m one step ahead of the game. I’m a student athlete and scholar, I have a solid friend base, and I have a family who genuinely cares about me. I have a steady job when I’m not in school, I’m working towards my master’s while still in undergrad, and I’ve created connections that will lead me to a nice future. I’m supposed to be happy with this. I’m supposed to be satisfied with the fact that I’m developing my future and growing as an individual. But I feel empty.

I’m not happy. I follow life’s current with a smile on my face, waving and laughing as I drift along. No one sees how my feet slip and scrape against the current. No one sees as I struggle to hold on. They smile back and continue drifting. My face cracks once they’re out of sight. I envy them. They’re content to just drift. To smile and wave. I don’t see that their feet are slipping too.

If we saw our feet slipping we would know that we weren't alone, but that would make us weak. We can't afford to be sad. We can't afford to show anything other than happiness or satisfaction. Our world is too cut-throat. Our society too preoccupied. To show sadness is to show weakness. Happiness is the only answer. We must show it however we can. We force a smile on our face. Hide the truth and the reality. We want to succeed. We want to have a future. We want to be happy. So we fake it.

We sacrifice our own happiness in order to look strong. We'll be happy in the end, right? Maybe. But until then we're all just drifting along, empty bubbles on swirling tides. Ready to burst and disappear as soon as we get hit with another lemon.

What You Never Needed A Boost?
Elizabeth Mastrocola



Ticking Time Bomb

Jane Kenney

Dwelling on an uncharted path,
An unwanted journey.
As my lungs fill with fury,
And the inevitable crawls under my skin,
I can feel every inch of the irritability,
Eating away at me,
From the inside out.
And it is only a matter of time,
Before my mind explodes and trickles out of my mouth,
Piece by angered piece.

The Captains Last Season

Carolyn Eckel

New Jersey Devils captain Bryce Salvador was injured all last season. It all began with normal hockey injuries, such as broken bones and slap shots to the face. Bryce was trying so hard to come back strong and finish the season, but it seemed that game after game our own captain was a constant scratch. I am an avid New Jersey Devils fan, so it was beyond stressful for not only the fans but also the head coach at the time, Peter DeBoer (who has recently been fired and sent to the San Jose Sharks).

Bryce is a very influential person on and off the ice. He was one of three defenseman on the Devils and was lucky enough to wear the "C." He had a total of seven goals, eleven assists and eighteen points during his years on the Devils. Off the ice, Bryce volunteered at local children's hospitals, especially during the holidays to be there for the kids who would look up to not only him, but also other New Jersey Devils players. I have been going to the Devils games at the Prudential Center, located in the heart of New Jersey, for nineteen years now. Every holiday, our very own captain, Bryce Salvador, was always leading his team into the children's hospitals. He also raised a lot of money for different children's organizations, such as Saint Barnabas Children's Hospital.

Bryce seemed to hit his downfall during the 2009-2010 season. The Devils were playing their archrival, the New York Rangers. It was the second period, but there was no score. With 53 seconds left to go, Bryce Salvador cleared the puck and took a hard hit into the boards. Any dedicated fan knows the hatred between the two teams is pure and dangerous. Being a fan, it actually makes me angry knowing that the team I actually despise is the team that injured our captain.

Weeks following the hit, Bryce had constant ringing in his ear, blurred vision, and trouble maintaining his balance. This kind of injury affected him off the ice as well. He was not able to hear other people unless they were screaming at him. He did his best to get through the season despite his injury, but he had no idea what was wrong with him.

Game after game, it seemed like a long run through hell. After being scratched every game and going to endless doctor's appointments, there was still no word as to what was actually wrong with our captain.

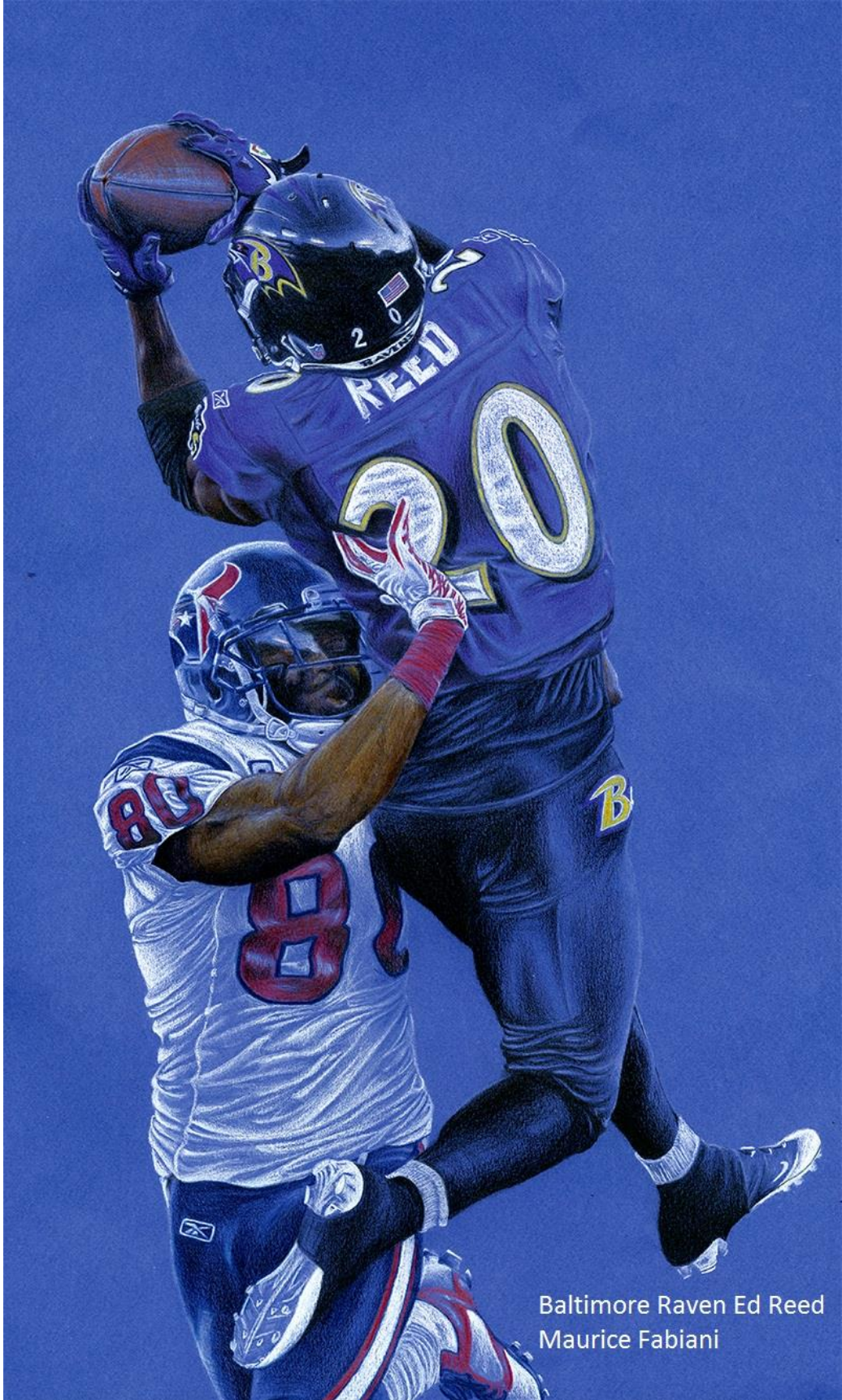
"When I tried to step onto the ice, I had no concept of where I was in relation to anything else. Everything was white, the ice was white, the boards were white. All of the visual signposts were gone. I've skated on the same ice hundreds of times, but now all of the sudden I felt lost. When I tried to drive at night, it felt like I was floating through space," claims Salvador.

Six years later, the one hit he took against the New York Rangers would end his hockey career. Bryce was diagnosed with a broken vestibular system, which had been hindering his ability to hear, see, and maintain balance.

Bryce was able to suit up one last time wearing number 24 to play a couple games before he actually had to take a seat for the rest of his hockey career. He said, "I want my teammates to remember me as a player and not the guy on the scratches."

This is exactly what Bryce accomplished.

Andy Greene, #6, was the new captain for the past 2015-16 season. The Devils just recently felt shy from a playoff spot, but will be working with their general manager to rebuild their organization from the bottom with younger players. John Hynes, and the New Jersey Devils will be looking to have a strong comeback next year.



Baltimore Raven Ed Reed
Maurice Fabiani

Top Shelf

Maeve Smith

Liz's eyes darted around the room. She scanned to see where her peers were with their exams – how many pages were flipped, how many spaces on a given page. She was then abruptly reminded of the AP Psyche exam sitting in front of her. Graphite covering the page, her hand growing sore from her superior intelligence– Elizabeth entered “exam mode” once again. She would hone in on a question – multiple choice, short answer, true or false – relentlessly beating it down until her mind surrendered the answer. If any unworthy student were to approach the teacher, test in hand, Elizabeth would fixate on the scenario until she was sure they hadn't reached completion. If *anyone* were to beat her to handing it in, it was because they were stupid and left a bunch blank. No one could out smart her, she wouldn't let them.

Once Elizabeth relinquished her exam, she sat. Elizabeth's nose soared high in the air as she watched the rest of her peers struggle. She closed her eyes and let out a sigh, loud enough for everyone to hear. She wanted them to realize she was finished in record time. She wanted them to *feel* her level of dedication. But no one looked up. Normally a few would glance over at her empty desk, where she would then softly smile at them with her piercing eyes. She took pride in these moments, maybe more than the pride she took in her academics. But there would be none of that this time. Elizabeth ran through the possibilities. Did she miss something? Was the test actually harder than she thought? She opened her water bottle and took a swig. She came to the conclusion that it was her first exam in an AP class, maybe the others didn't know the routine yet – surely by the second exam they would take notice of her genius. She smirked, took another swig and continued to watch them. As the time passed, student after student turned in their work and, as they did, Elizabeth would quench her persistent thirst.

The bell rang and Elizabeth gathered her belongings and stood from her desk. Her slender hip made hard contact with the corner of her desk, knocking her right back into her seat. She laughed it off and gave it another try. This time her foot caught the leg of another chair. She rolled her eyes at her clumsiness and laughed again. Before she left she took the last swig from her bottle, the burn of vodka trickled down her throat. She grasped the empty bottle as she walked down the hallway – her dry, cracked, cold hands, her knuckles white with anticipation. Once she made it to her locker, she tossed the third empty bottle of the day and reached for another ration of vodka. Swinging the bottle as she made her way to Calculus, the smirk returned to her face. They were all so oblivious she thought, she had them all fooled.

Upon her arrival to class, she walked confidently to the seat she always took. Except this time someone was in it, but Elizabeth didn't notice until she was half way sitting down on top of the girl. Flustered, Elizabeth helplessly searched for another one. None would be as good as hers, but she would just have to settle. She sat in the second row near the door but within good view of the board. As the teacher began to instruct, Elizabeth practiced her perfect note taking and wrote everything down calmly – a model student. Halfway through, she noticed the numbers beginning to dance. She tried to follow them, she wasn't going to let their tricky dance stand in the way of her grades. Unable to keep up with their movements, Elizabeth gulped down more "water." Half of the fun was keeping a straight face, the other half was because she was blitzed. She exhaled after she swallowed. "Ah, goose," she thought to herself. Her high quality liquor choice gave her a sense of pride.

After class Elizabeth rode the bus back home. During the ride she fantasized about arriving home to her mother, dressed in one of her casual dresses that always made everyone else feel underdressed, cooking dinner – basting the chicken countless times until the dish was of gourmet quality. Her father enjoying a scotch in the den, reading the paper for the second time of the day or maybe watching Jeopardy and answering every question before the contestants.

Elizabeth wrapped herself up in these dreams and floated off the bus. She blissfully walked up her front steps, opened the door and let the words, “I’m home” fly out of her mouth. With no answer, she closed the door. Elizabeth made her way to the den, praying for a different scene, hoping for change. She turned the corner to find her mother, passed out on the floor. She looked out the window and noticed her father’s car wasn’t there. She turned back to her mother, she was trying to murmur something, make some statement of worth. Elizabeth gave her a chance, but not a long one. She looked at her mother, and saw her for what she was. She used to be able to juggle anything and everything, and look great doing it – the quintessential trophy wife with an intellectual and outgoing flare. This was a woman that Elizabeth strived to be like, someone who had a handle on her life. Now, her mother only cared about her handle of Smirnoff. Elizabeth took one last look, lifted her eyebrows and smirked – she had surpassed her mother. “Cheap,” Elizabeth thought as she looked at the plastic bottle. Unlike her, she was top shelf.

Reinvent

In the Sky

Terry Randell Jones

Sun, blood red with life
Moon, mysterious and pure
Bold stars, pierce the night

Farewell, Penelope

Addison Chau

For the first time in months, I opened my violin case. What I saw was an image that had been imprinted into my mind over the last ten years: Penelope, my violin. She was named by a bassist friend of mine during high school. She was the color of burnished copper. Beside her rested two violin bows. I took in the curves of her body and admired the scratches and worn edges that accumulated throughout the years: the evidence of our history together.

We were alone in my room. While still in her case, I stroked Penelope's strings. Each string almost perfectly harmonized with one another. I was happily surprised, proud even, by how in tune she was, having remained untouched for so long. It was as if I had been reunited with an old lover who still remembered how to make me smile. Still, my trained ear caused me to cringe at the little dissonance I did notice.

I unhooked my bow and tightened the hairs. I picked Penelope up and rested her under my chin. She fit like a glove, or in this case, a violin. With heavy back and forth strokes of my bow, I expertly tuned her back into playing condition.

Primed for activity, my left hand tenderly held Penelope's neck. The sensation of holding her was the same as it had always been: very smooth and cool to touch. Slowly, I began to finger musical scales on her strings. First a G major scale, then A major, then B flat major. Every fiber of my body attempted to retrace Penelope's hot spots I once knew, spots that produced the most exquisite sounds. But eventually I grew bored with our foreplay. I longed to play the songs that had people standing on their feet after our performances together.

Firmly, I placed my bow on Penelope's strings. My right hand carefully pulled the bow along her G string while the fingers of my left hand shook back and forth, causing Penelope to quiver in vibrato. The sensuous sounds that came from her F-holes penetrated the silence around us. "Meditation of Thais" by Jules Massenet was what she sang.

Yet for the most part, the sounds we made together were very crude. They were very unlike the well-polished sounds we nearly perfected years ago. What was I to expect? During the past year, I had taken

Penelope out of her case only a few times a month. Above all, I had stopped playing diligently ever since I began college. Simply put, I was unpracticed.

Nevertheless, I continued to play and applied different techniques throughout the piece. With each note that resonated throughout my room, my confidence slowly built. The robotic movement of my right arm adjusted into a more fluid and graceful motion. The fingers of my left hand gradually found their way back to the optimal locations for perfectly in-tune notes. In a matter of minutes, I had rediscovered the proficiency that had taken me years to acquire.

And with that I stopped.

I had played my violin for a mere fifteen minutes. I wasn't attempting to learn anything new. I wasn't even attempting to preserve the little skill that I had left. I knew my years as a budding violinist had passed.

The playing was an affirmation of my ability. Proof that no matter how many years after I stopped honing my craft, playing the violin would remain an innate ability.

Having established my skill as a violinist, I bid farewell to Penelope.

I loosened my bow and hooked it back onto the case.

I placed the violin back into its resting place.

And shut the case.

Patient Self-Management: Impact of Racism-Related Vigilance in the Management of Hypertension in African-Americans

Rackelle Wilkinson-Alston

It is important to understand the role that discrimination plays in health disparities. Studies have shown a possible link between racial and ethnic disparities in hypertension and discrimination (Hicken, Lee, Morenoff, House, & Williams, 2014). Racism-related vigilance, also known as anticipatory stress due to discrimination, has been described as a set of thoughts and behaviors caused by a perceived need to constantly monitor and modify behavior (Himmelstein, Young, Sanchez, & Jackson, 2015). As an understudied mechanism, this paper will discuss racism-related vigilance, and its role in health outcomes in hypertensive African-Americans (AAs). This paper will also attempt to provide insight on how the absence of a culturally competent health care system may predispose AAs to developing stress-induced hypertension due to racism-related vigilance. And lastly, this paper will explore how a community partnership program may be an effective intervention for building resilience and promoting positive health behaviors among hypertensive AAs.

Background

To understand the role that racism-related vigilance plays in health disparities and chronic disease management, health care professionals must first acknowledge that there are events of racial discrimination that AAs endure and/or anticipate on a daily basis (Himmelstein et al., 2015). Evidence supporting the link between racism-related vigilance and wear and tear on bodily functions, demonstrates that vigilance is an important determinant of hypertension in AAs (Hicken et al., 2014).

Studies have also shown that racism-related vigilance causes a continual activation of the biological stress response systems (e.g., autonomic and hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal systems) characteristic of this type of anticipatory and perseverative stress (Hicken et al., 2014). In addition, there must be a shared awareness between the patient and the health care professional of the toxic impact that prolonged exposure to environmental stressors may have on one’s health and well-being (Hicken et al., 2014).

In consideration of the demoralizing history of medical ethics, as it relates to the exploitation of AA subjects for the purposes of experimental medical science, health care providers must examine how these events continue to shape AAs’ perception of health care and medicine (Arrington, 2015). To address the various factors that contribute to racism-related vigilance, one should first examine the longstanding history of medical experimentation on AA communities from colonial times to the present (Arrington, 2015). According to Arrington (2015), from a colonial perspective black bodies were perfect for experimental exploitation because they were in abundance, subhuman, and replaceable. Arrington (2015), also points out that AAs’ vulnerability to institutional abuses, such as forced sterilization and the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, continues to generate AAs’ distrust in the U.S. health care system. Arrington (2015) has coined the term “Afro-cultural trauma” to define how these traumatic events continue to harm the collective identity of AAs in the United States. And thus, it would be equally important to take into account that these traumatic events would threaten one’s worldview and/or negatively influence one’s sense of the meaning of justice (Smith, Abeyta, Hughes, & Jones, 2015).

In a study examining the relationship between discrimination, stress, vigilance, and depression, it was found that racial discrimination is a causative factor in psychological distress; as discrimination through anticipatory vigilance was found to be a key aspect of understanding the stress inducing effect of discrimination (Himmelstein et al., 2015). Furthermore, to adequately discuss strategies to improve health behaviors in hypertensive AAs, health care professionals must explore the role that race, racism and discrimination continues to play in maintaining the socioeconomic conditions that have been

constructed without regard to how it would limit AAs' access to essential quality-of-life factors (Hutson, Kaplan, Ranjit, & Mujahid, 2012). The lack of access to good medical care, affordable and efficient transportation, adequate housing, high-quality education, jobs that pay a livable wage, and green recreational spaces are among the most common environmental factors influencing health outcomes among AAs today (Hutson et al., 2012).

Behavioral and Social Theories of Change

Behavioral Change Theories and Vigilance

The Health Belief Model (HBM) is considered one of the most widely used conceptual frameworks of health behavior research. Since the 1950s, the HBM has been used to understand and predict health-related behaviors based on the assumptions that individuals will take action to protect their health according to their subjective perception of the severity of the illness; susceptibility of contracting a disease; benefits of behavioral changes; and ability to overcome barriers to change behavior (Kamran, Ahari, Biria, Malpour, & Heydari, 2015). Similar to the HBM, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model, focuses on specific indicators that can be used to determine a person's intention to perform a behavior. such as, their attitude regarding the behavior; impact of social pressure or acceptance; and expectation of success in performing contemplated behavior (Geyen, 2012). And so, the TPB suggests that when people believe they have access to resources, opportunities, and the ability to perform a behavior they will most likely take action (behavior change) (Geyen, 2012).

The HBM can be used as a framework to develop interventions to address some of the most common factors associated with poor health behaviors and outcomes in health in hypertensive AAs. However, as it relates to racism-related vigilance or anticipatory stress, the HBM lacks the capacity to evaluate the sociocultural context of health behaviors or the various sources of AAs' collective attitudes towards health. Furthermore, the HBM fails to explore the role that influencing factors such as familial history, socioeconomic status, and stress plays in self-efficacy and self-management of an illness.

Cognitive Theories and Vigilance

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) refers to a psychological model of behavior that was introduced in the 1970s (Denler, Wolters, & Benzon, 2014). Since its introduction into behavior research, SCT has been applied to studies focused on understanding how to motivate learning and promote changes in behavior (Denler et al., 2014). The SCT model rests on the following assumptions: (1) Learning occurs through observation within a social context; (2) An individual's belief about consequences or outcomes are most likely to ensue if particular behaviors are performed; (3) Self-efficacy depends on an individual's belief that they will successfully perform a task; (4) Goal setting is a cognitive representation of a desired or preferred outcome; and (5) Self-regulation is dependent upon goal setting (Denler et al., 2014). Overall, the SCT model argues that there is a reciprocal interaction between the person, environment, and behavior (Denler et al., 2014). Moreover, the SCT model is an appropriate framework for health promotion in hypertensive AAs, as its constructs are based on the concept that people possess the ability to influence their own behavior and environment in a purposeful and goal-directed fashion (Denler et al., 2014).

The Health Self-Empowerment Theory (HSET) is a cognitive-behavioral model for self-empowerment; and recognizes the relationship between the individual, environment, behavior, and sociocultural determinants of health that are influencing factors to engaging in health-smart behaviors in racial/ethnic minorities (Tucker et al., 2016). HSET focuses on the importance of personal, modifiable, cognitive-behavioral variables (i.e., health motivation; health self-efficacy; active coping styles/skills for managing emotions such as stress, depression, and anger; self-praise for positive health behaviors; and health knowledge/responsibility) in improving health seeking behaviors (Tucker et al., 2016). And thus, HSET can be used as a model to develop strategies within a health care system that promotes culturally competent and culturally sensitive care. HSET may also be used as a model to guide the development of interventions that promote health behaviors, and management of stress in hypertensive AAs from a

psychosocial and sociomedical context. Furthermore, HSET may be used a framework to support health care providers with gaining insight of the role that racism-related vigilance and subsequent toxic stress plays in the management of hypertension in AAs.

Promoting Behavior Change

Behavior Change Theory asserts that behavior changes occur through a series of stages including pre-contemplation, contemplation, and preparation prior to action; and thus, promoting changes in behavior is a gradual process that may require the use of specific interventions that are tailored to facilitate completion of each stage (Sudore et al., 2013). There are several factors or processes that may be considered to understand the various stages of change in behavior, such as the following: (a) knowledge or understanding of the importance of changing the behavior, (b) contemplation of engaging in the behavioral change, (c) self-efficacy to complete the behavioral change, and (d) readiness to complete the behavioral change (Sudore et al., 2013). As Shern, Blanch and Steverman (2014) argues, there is a need for a new action plan in public health that is focused on promoting change in health-seeking behaviors within underserved populations to eliminate racial disparities in health. Shern et al. (2014) also suggests that innovative strategies be explored to prevent or reduce extreme stress; promote resilience; and provide trauma-informed care. And so, to improve health behaviors in hypertensive AAs, health care providers need to be aware of possible sources of environmental stressors, and provide adequate support throughout the behavior change process.

Interventions

Since the enactment of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), there has been a recent expansion of preventive services (Shern et al., 2014). Along with the recent expansion of preventive services, there has also been an increase in community-based services to enhance the accessibility of health care services to the most vulnerable and underserved populations. According to Shern et al. (2014), one of the most essential functions of public health is to monitor and prevent the spread of disease-causing

circumstances. And therefore, it is essential for health care providers to identify the factors that contribute to toxic stress and subsequent poor health outcomes to develop effective interventions that meet the specific needs of hypertensive AAs. Studies have found that community partnership programs were effective strategies for promoting change in health behaviors among AAs (Tucker et al., 2016). Additionally, as Tucker et al. (2016) points out, there are social, ecological, and cultural determinants of health that are common among AAs who are most at risk for poor health outcomes. For example, Tucker et al. (2016) suggests that barriers in promoting recommended lifestyle changes, among AAs at risk for hypertension or managing hypertension, include living in dangerous neighborhoods that deter outdoor physical activities and living in food deserts. Evidence suggests that collaborating with community organizations, such as churches and other faith-based organizations, provide health care professionals with access to a wide range of resources to promote health behaviors and improve attitudes about medicine and health care among hypertensive AAs (Tucker et al., 2016).

Establishing a community church-based health-empowerment partnership program at a predominantly AA church, designed to increase health-promoting behaviors, could be an effective intervention for health care providers to explore health risk factors within a vulnerable population (Tucker et al., 2016). This intervention could occur over a six-month period, and a health care team made up of nurses, could monitor a group of hypertensive AAs church members who volunteer to participate in the health empowerment program. On a bi-weekly basis, the church members who wish to participate in the health empowerment program and nurses leading the program, can meet to share ideas about ways to motivate change in health behaviors for hypertension management. At the first meeting, the health care team could use an instrument such as the Daily Discrimination Survey (Appendix A), to gain insight on the participating church members' personal experiences or perceptions of the role discrimination plays in health and well-being. The health care team could also use open group discussions on various health-seeking behaviors, such as increasing physical activity for weight

loss in obese/overweight individuals, to identify common barriers in reducing health risk. Furthermore, the health care team could also engage the participants in interactive group activities such as, educational workshops, bi-weekly weight check-ins, or review of daily food diaries. Essentially, the program would allow health care providers to collaborate with hypertensive AAs, to provide culturally sensitive and culturally competent care that empowers participants to engage in health promoting behaviors.

Causation of Racism-Related Vigilance

According to Arrington (2015), cultural trauma due to a history of racism towards AAs, has left an indelible mark that remains in the consciousness of AAs. Institutional and structural racism (Appendix B) has been instrumental factors in establishing and maintaining living conditions that have resulted in generations of AAs being exposed to environmental stressors and toxic stress (Hutson et al., 2012). As it is well documented, chronic exposure to toxic stress causes persistent activation of the stress response and subsequent exposure to stress hormones (Shern et al., 2014). HSET can be used as a model to explain how factors such as, toxic stress, environment, socioeconomic status, culture, and trauma in combination with genetic vulnerability plays a major role in disparities in hypertension and in one's overall health and well-being (Tucker et al., 2016). Racism-related vigilance has been found to be linked to a wide range of negative health indicators and outcomes (Himmelstein et al., 2015). Himmelstein et al. (2015), also points out that racism-related vigilance negatively impacts health directly and indirectly by increasing unhealthy stress-coping behaviors (Himmelstein et al., 2015). Studies have also shown that racism-related vigilance affects mental health, through the constant and increasing activation of the stress response. Researchers have also found that poorer cardiovascular outcomes, including decreased elasticity of large arterial vessels, along with higher blood pressure in those reporting higher compared to lower levels of anticipated racism-related vigilance (Hicken et al., 2014). Additionally, the continual activation of the biological stress response systems was found to cause an

increase in oxidative stress and inflammation that is characterized by the development of numerous cardiovascular diseases (Hicken et al., 2014). As Hicken et al.'s (2014) study also concluded, chronic exposure to environmental stressors would lead to dysfunction of the biological stress response systems, which would affect the body's ability to respond properly to further stress (acute or chronic, physical or psychological). And so, nurses and other health care professionals should utilize interventions in patient care that are focused on stress management, promoting positive coping skills, and connecting hypertensive AAs to community-based health promotion programs for self-management and preventive services.

Conclusion

In conclusion, understanding the role that racism-related vigilance plays in disparities in health does not negate the importance of promoting health-seeking behaviors among hypertensive AAs. However, exploring the relationship between racial discrimination, vigilance, toxic stress, and hypertension does provide insight on how these factors contribute to negative outcomes in health among AAs. Health care providers and AA patients must establish a partnership that reflects understanding of the mechanisms through which discrimination operates in health disparities to ensure that AAs, and other communities that are considered minority groups, receive culturally competent care. Ongoing research of the relationship between racism-related vigilance and hypertension may lead to further understanding on other underlying contributors to poor health outcomes in hypertensive AAs, as well as create potential interventions to promote positive health-seeking behaviors among AAs (Himmelstein et al., 2015).

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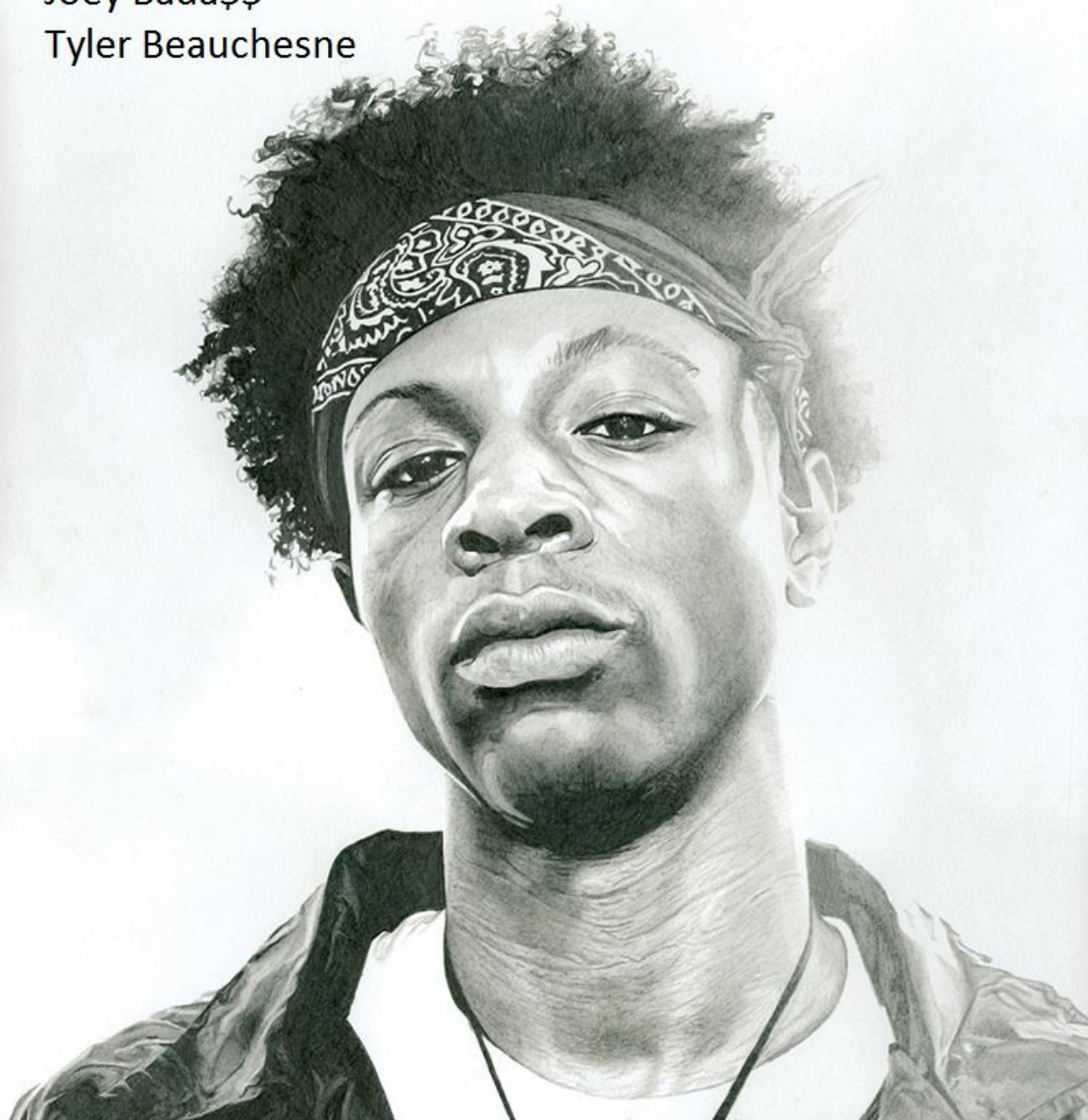
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Joey Bada\$\$
Tyler Beauchesne



Making Up My Mind

Willow Holschuh

Relentlessly Red lipstick in Retro Matte finish. Sumptuous Olive eyeshadow in Veluxe Pearl formula. Midnight Strata nail lacquer.

These are all popular and favorite products at MAC Cosmetics. A company founded in Toronto, Canada in 1985 by two men, Frank Toskan and Frank Angelo. With the pressing need for long lasting but pigmented cosmetics in the fashion and film industries, Toskan, a salon owner, and Angelo, a self-taught makeup artist, formed a brand that has since become world renowned. They started making cosmetics in the back kitchen of one of Toskan's unisex hair salons and were inspired by the colors of Crayola crayons (especially the coral pink of Flamingo.) Their first public retail store opened in the West Village of New York in 1991, and now their franchise has grown to over 1,000 stores worldwide. Although this may seem like very few in our ever-growing and developing world, make no mistake: MAC is a prominent leader in the makeup industry.

Makeup made its debut in America in the 1910's when it was finally popularized by ballet dancers and actresses. It came in the form of cherry flavored chap sticks, white face paint, and pencil eyeliners (which were also used on the eyebrows.) The makeup industry has since developed, and crazy products which claim to plump your lips, lengthen your eyelashes, and minimize your pores have been created. MAC Cosmetics has been one of the only companies to stay true to their claims and formulate products that not only look good on the skin but feel good.

I first learned about MAC when I was about 13 years old. I picked up my newest edition of *Seventeen* magazine from my post office box, and eagerly walked home anticipating the gossip and trends that would spring out from my monthly subscription. After I flipped through the first few pages, I came upon an advertisement for MAC Cosmetics. The ad depicted a model with high cheekbones who was contoured, highlighted, and blushed to perfection. Her features looked like they were chiseled and

her skin was flawlessly glowing. At that moment, makeup became more exciting than the new skateboard I had just gotten for my birthday.

Over the next week, I attempted to recreate the ad on my own face. However, the various drugstore cosmetics and dollar store brushes were not doing the trick. Living in the thickly wooded mountains of Vermont made it even harder to find magazine ad worthy products. I needed to get my hands on the professional line of makeup that MAC offered its customers.

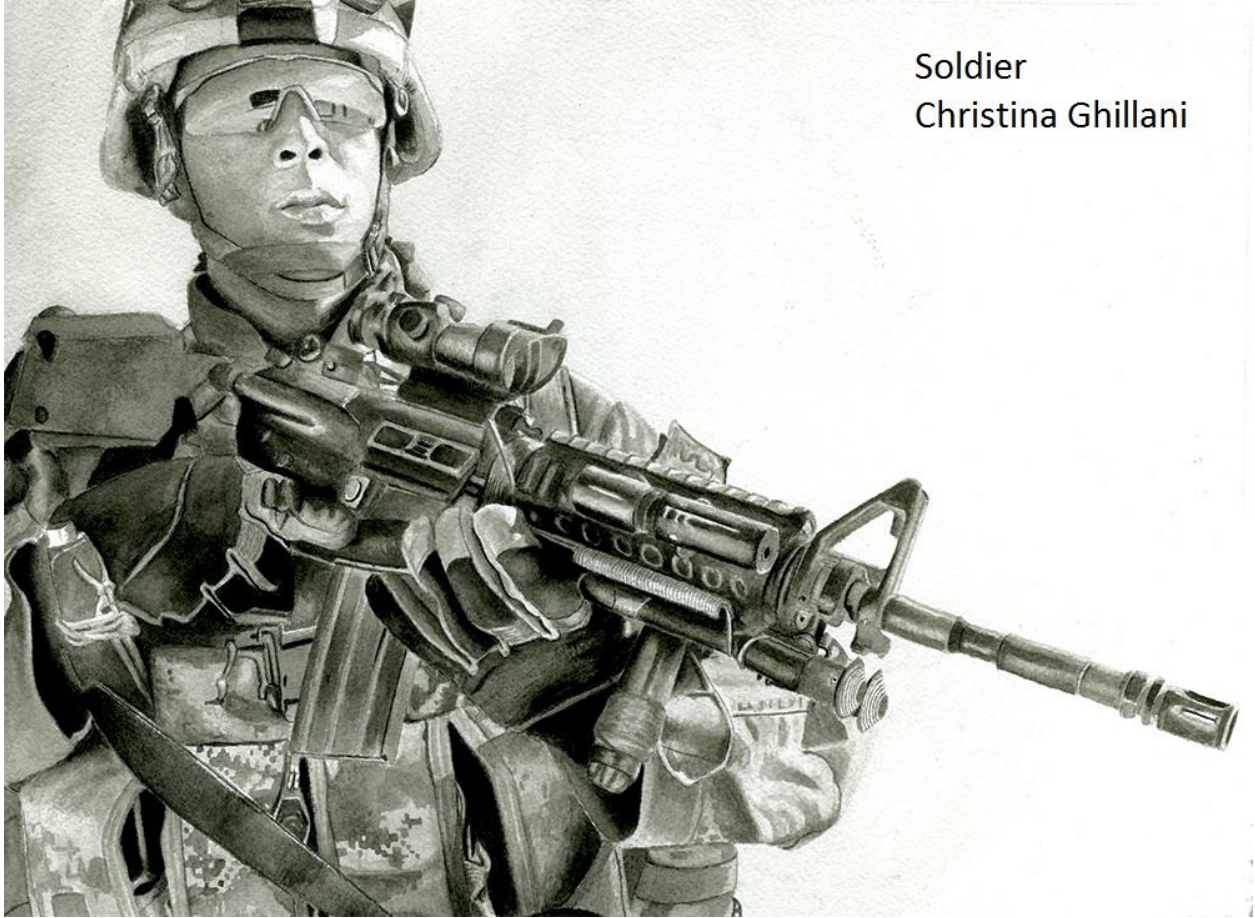
I spent countless days earning all of the dog sitting and lawn mowing money I could. Until finally I accumulated the whopping \$22 dollars that MAC's Full Of Joy frosted cheek blusher (which is now discontinued) cost me. I handed the money over to my mother, who was always happy to help me with my creative endeavors, and she used her debit card to purchase the blush from MAC's website. Every day I checked the mailbox hoping it would come, and after six business days it finally arrived. I tore open the box and awed at the sleek black packaging. I opened the blush container and swatched the shimmery pastel color onto my cheekbones with my index finger.

The pigmented purple blush not only made my cheeks look like those of a fairytale princess, but it instilled a passion within me. Over the next couple of years, I spent dedicated hours watching YouTube videos which taught me how to properly manicure my eyebrows, create a cut crease (a technique which uses an eyeshadow darker than your natural skin tone to create the illusion of a bigger or more defined eyelid crease) and wing out my eyeliner (a brush technique used to create a "flick" at the outer corner of a top lash eyeliner line.) My makeup addiction required a lot of dedication. I traveled to stores as far as two hours away in order to buy new products and try out all of the latest runway looks. Makeup became my getaway. A way to become something new when I needed to escape the present. A way to create living piece of art from the blank canvases of my face.

MAC Cosmetics won my heart with its promise of animal cruelty-free products and their dedication to helping those infected with HIV/AIDS. But it also taught me that you can be whatever you

want to be. If you feel a certain way on the inside, you can look it on the outside. For me, makeup is never a means to hide my insecurities from the world, but a way to channel my energy and emotions and show off my talent. My love for makeup has outgrown the confines of my bathroom and vanity top. I now paint the faces of my friends, family, and community. Word of my expertise in cosmetology has spread, and I even get paid to do special occasion makeup for proms, weddings, and parties.

Tiffany J, an artist from MAC's cosmetologist team, says "Makeup is all about individuality and one's freedom of expression. There are no rules or boundaries, just endless possibilities." Fix Plus Setting Spray, and the 109 Small Contour Brush are some of her favorite MAC products (and I'd have to agree.)



Soldier
Christina Ghillani

Recreate

Dos Cake

Mary Awad

Lemon and carrot
with delicious white frostings
We all love dos cake



Man Smoking in Clouds
Holly Johnson

The Trash

Linda Vichiola-Coppola

She sits in the front seat staring at me as I struggle to yank the garbage bag out of the trunk. The plastic is caught on the latch to the lock and I hold my breath while I strain my eyes in the dark, trying to see if it ripped. Every time I tug to free it, the car bounces up and down in defiance. I'm trying to reassure myself that the heavy duty bag will not tear.

Well, it better not.

It has to stay together long enough for me to drag it out of sight. Finally, I get it free and feel my back straining as I try to sling it over my shoulder.

Behind me she rolls down the window and worriedly calls to me, "Lewis? Do you need help? I think we should hurry before someone drives by!"

I don't know what she is so worried about.

We are surrounded by dense woods.

There's never any traffic on this road at this hour of the night and there won't be for hours. The nearest house is twenty-five minutes away.

It's the perfect spot to dump garbage.

She's wondering why I haven't answered her yet and gets out of the car with her arms folded nervously across her chest. She's shivering and holding her hands tucked into her armpits for warmth, so I hand her my sweater.

I hate the sound of her heels clacking on the asphalt as she walks.

I re-adjust my grip on the mouth of the garbage bag. My knees buckle as I struggle to stand upright.

"Lewis? Are you okay?" She asks, nervously glancing up and down the road as she follows me.

"I'm doing fine," I tell her, even though the bag is so heavy I feel like I might crush my spine under its weight. I wobble towards the silhouettes of the hemlock trees.

We finally reach the clearing in the woods and I dump the garbage bag on the ground while she stumbles up behind me in her high heels and gasps at the trees.

The blue sweaters hanging from the branches resemble ghosts in the moonlight. And the sequined pocket books are sparkling like a thousand dizzy little Christmas lights suspended on the tree to our left.

Her hand locks around my wrist and her frightened eyes resemble two glass globes in the dark. “Do you see all this stuff?” What’s all this stuff doing nailed to the trees?” She turns slowly around and her face is inches from all the shoes nailed to the trunk of the hemlock in front of her. “This place is creeping me out. Let’s get out of here, Lewis.”

I pull the hammer out of my back pocket while she turns towards me. I’m clenching the wooden handle so tight that my knuckles blanch. The full moon is making her red lipstick flare at me in the dark and the brainless sound of her voice is irritating me so much.

I think I’ll just rip it right out of her throat and nail it next to those damn shoes she’s wearing.

Forever
Juliette Rivera



The Liar and her Lies

Mary Awad

I knew I wanted to be a story teller because I was a liar. And not some "whiny lying punk," but a grade A, high class liar. I didn't lie often but when I did, they were intricate, effective lies and I rarely got caught. I had the plan – as a kid I already knew the formula – to tell a believable and influential lie. It had to be realistic, it had to be understandable, and it had to include just enough of fact for the lie to get off the ground. The lie had to sound like the truth and I was a master craftsman. Some people lie themselves into a hole; I would lie myself into a circle of lies that always released me at the end. I had the imagination and the memory. I never contradicted myself. I just had a knack for effective lying. And I used my powers for good and evil, mostly good, but, still, sometimes evil.

When I got older, the lies got more elaborate but also more realistic. The anecdotes and facts I had to support my lies were incredibly specific and no one could catch me. I was a fireball of falsity. It helped me take control of my high school life. I was a genuine person, with good grades and great friends, but if anything happened to my friends or myself, I would lie and be free of any sticky situations. It was my safety blanket, the thing I could always go back to. I could always rely on my lying.

But college was different. I met new people and they interpreted my lies in a different way. When I would tell stories about my lies, or just the truth of my everyday life, my friends would laugh and laugh. "You're such a good story teller," they would say. People would come to me and ask to tell them stories, even if it was just about my day. It seemed that I used the perfect amount of emphasis, exaggeration, and commentary to tell an entertaining story. "I love listening to your stories! Isn't telling a lie just telling a really believable, persuasive story?"

And they were absolutely right. I wasn't just a liar. I was a story teller and my deceptions over the years were the perfect training. I started taking writing classes and fell in love with them. I finally had an outlet for my creativity that didn't involve emotionally slighting people. I could make anything up and tell my stories without the casualties. I could honestly lie, and everyone would believe me.

I still lie, but not as often. Contrary to what you think of me now after reading this, I am actually a pretty good person with good values and all that jazz. Sometimes it's just more fun to lie. Maybe that's why I like stories so much. I can make anything true, anything how I want it to be, minus the mental and emotional manipulation. People suspend their belief to read my stories. They're asking me to lie to them. And besides, every story starts with a good hook or, for me, good lie. And I never get caught.

Pulp Fiction
Maria Saporito



Reidentify

Erased

Linda Vichiola-Coppola

Blank stones in a row
Marble, granite, and sandstone
Old names fade like air.

Self-Love

Jane Kenney

It is something that cannot be forced,
But learned in time.
The bad is first needed,
In order to find the good,
That is in every,
little,
thing.

It is rewarding,
Stabilizes your conscience,
And evolves your internal growth.

It is not physical,
But psychological.

And like the third-degree burns from a rising wildfire upon your skin,
How can one relieve herself of the same catastrophic disaster in her mind?

How My House Stole Christmas

Mallory Martilla

I've lived in two houses my entire life. One big house fit five people and the other fit two. Christmas used to be a magical time in my life, so magical that I believed in Santa until I was at least 14. I lived in my house on Landing for 18 years. It was a castle-looking house that was painted a light green. It was perched on top of a hill. As I left, I looked up to the top of the tower and pictured my Christmas tree. I could not believe I would never celebrate another Christmas there. I got in my car and drove away.

My dad came home one day and told us "Today is the day we are going to get our tree!" This was my favorite time of the year. We went to the same nursery every year, the same place we got our Christmas ornaments. Once we arrived, we walked around and looked at all different types of trees. My dad was very particular. He never wanted a tree with a hole in it, he always wanted to make sure it was full enough, and he obviously had to be sure it was new enough to last for the whole month of December. My dad pulled a tree out that was bigger than the width of three of us. It was so tall and beautiful, and we all decided that was going to be our tree.

We threw it on top of the car and drove home. My brother and dad brought it into the house. They continued to carry this humongous tree up a flight of stairs into the tower. As they put it into the tree stand and hoisted it up, we hit a stop with the tree at an upward 45-degree angle. We realized that our tree was too tall for our ceiling. So my dad took the biggest serrated kitchen knife and started chopping at least like six or so inches off. As we chopped off more and more, we would try again and again until we got it right. Finally, we raised it back up and it was just right. Except for the tiny fact that it

made at least a foot long scratch on the ceiling. The tree was wedged between the ceiling and the tree stand.

As Christmas came to a close that year, my mom and I took all the lights and ornaments off the tree. I emptied the tree stand with a turkey baster, sucking the water up. Thinking we could take the tree to the curb by ourselves, we tried to un-wedge the tree. Suddenly, we realized we weren't going to be able to do this. But then my mom thought of an idea. She went downstairs to the garage and came back up with a box. She opened a window in the tower. She pulled a saw out of the box. She began cutting branches off and throwing them out the window. She had forgotten the screen was still in and, after releasing the first branch, the branch and the screen flew down two stories onto the lawn.

My mom asked me to go outside and drag the branches to the curb because it would make the process go more quickly. It did but it was the scariest thing I ever did—it was like a real-life whack-a-mole. As she cut the branches and threw them out, she didn't necessarily look where she was throwing them. The first one was heading right towards me and was coming quick, so I ran away from it. As she got the hang of the saw, branches were coming out like bullets out of a gun. I was dipping, dodging, and weaving as fast as I could. When my mom finally looked out and saw that I had brought none to the curb, she proceeded to tell me I wasn't doing my job. I looked at her and huffed and puffed. I picked up the branches and walked to the curb. Even though it was crazy, it was such a great memory of Christmas and tradition.

When I moved into my house with my mom, it was smaller and in a gated community where all the houses were connected. It didn't feel the same. This was the first time my mom and I were living together without my siblings or dad. The first year we were in the house for Christmas, my mom actually contemplated whether we should get a tree. My heart dropped thinking that this would be my first Christmas without a tree. With enough stomping of our feet, my siblings and I convinced her to get one.

She said that she wanted a small tree. It was in the corner of the house and looked like we cut the top off of the tree. It wasn't Christmas. How could we go from a nine-foot tree to a tree that was shorter than I was? I felt like all my cherished memories of Christmas would only be ones in the house I grew up in.

I loved Christmas and I wondered whether this new house would start to take away the magic of Christmas. The trees grew smaller and the presents grew fewer, and the family parties became more difficult because everyone was gaining significant others and had to split up time between both families during the holidays. Very quickly I realized that, without my family surrounding me all the time like they used to in my old house perched on top of a hill, I lost the spirit of Christmas. My new house didn't let me have the same Christmas. My new house became my Grinch. My new house stole Christmas.

Real Adult Life

Mary Awad

Boredom with a capital BORE. Kill me with a capital KILL ME.

That's how I feel on days at work like this, days when I am removed from my comfy cubicle into the back room with the also forgotten crafts, dusters, and interns. At my desk I feel confident and important, sharing a workspace with my peers in a way that makes me feel like I am meant to be there. But today Annie and I are in the back room, typing away on our laptops like lab rats spinning on their wheels.

Annie's a nice BC student from Fairfield whose personality is as common and cute as her appearance. We talk sometimes, make lunch promises we know we will never keep, but usually work in silence on our own individual projects, hers curriculums and mine newsletters.

Riveting, I know.

But today is a special day for me, an achievement in my "college-student-live-alone-and-survive" lifestyle. Today I am going out to lunch. I did not brown bag it per usual but will venture out into the chaotic, suburban streets to fend for myself and retrieve my sustenance (I ran out of bread and couldn't make myself a sandwich this morning). I will become a real adult and take a real lunch break like other real adults. It is the highlight of my ever-so-exciting week, which says a lot about my days as an intern.

I say farewell to Annie and walk to my car, prepared for my promotion from lowly lab rat to real adult. Promotion? More like coronation! I sit in my throne, the driver's seat of my squeaky 2005 Chevy and pull out of the parking lot, scanning the street-side restaurants, searching for my prey. No...no...too fancy...not "real adult" enough...BAM! There it is. 'Wich Day! The venue of my coronation!

I've always wanted to go to this little sandwich place. The name is so cute! How could I not? I walk in and look at the décor, just your average little sandwich shop for you average real adult on their average real lunch break. I step on line and thank God that it is long. I get anxiety when I order food and being able to hear how people are doing it before I order gives me the chance to duplicate them, which takes some of the edge off.

I order an Italian combo on a roll, Portuguese is fine, lettuce and tomato are fine too, and a medium iced tea. The man at the counter asks if I want anything else on the sandwich. I shrug.

"This is my first time here so I don't really know what's up."

"Don't worry," he says in a thick Italian accent. "Anything you want, we have." I smile.

My royal subjects are so obedient today.

I take my sandwich and drink and sit at the bar facing the window. I eat as I watch the Post Road traffic zoom by. I read some articles on my phone, "20 Websites College Students NEED to Know" and "Donald

Trump's Bizarre Presidential Announcement, in Gifs," and play some phone games. The sky is as grey as my mood. I sit bored in my seat. I ordered a sandwich and I ate it, whoop-dee-darn-do. Sitting alone, eating alone, in silence, is worse than my job. At least Annie is there to prove I'm not the only human remaining in existence. But my kingdom is empty and it's just me in my real adult world eating my real adult sandwich.

Being a real adult is lonelier than I thought.

The most exciting thing happens when I drop my phone face-down in the parking lot. I pause for a second, scared to see what the damage is. I am relieved to pick it up and see there isn't even a scratch. If my phone, my only real adult companion, was destroyed, shattered to pieces, by my own hand, I don't know how I would live with myself!

Real adult life is also really pathetic. And sad.

I drive back and walk through the hallway to the Dungeon of the Forgotten where Annie greets me with an amiable wave and her usual smile.

"So, how was lunch?"

Boredom with a capital BORE. Kill me with a capital...

You know the rest.

Headline News

Linda Vichiola-Coppola

Aunt Tammy was in the hospital being treated for shock. While Mom was visiting her, Aunt Lorraine and I went for a walk to browse the chain of stores lining the road. We noticed a rack of local newspapers as we passed variety shop cramped in between a donut shop and a children's consignment store.

The photographs which Aunt Tammy gave out to aid in the search for Christie were on the front pages of the newspapers.

"Body of Five Year Old Found in Swamp" proclaimed *The Citizen*. Under the headline was a snapshot of Christie dressed in her costume from last Halloween flanked by a picture of the police lifting a small covered body onto the coroner's gurney.

"Search Ends Tragically" proclaimed the front page of *The Post* with a candid photo of Christie blowing out the candles on her birthday cake.

While we stood there gaping at the papers, several people nudged us out of the way to snatch up some copies.

Aunt Lorraine grabbed the paper off the rack. "I can't believe this." She pressed her face against Christie's picture and sobbed. After a minute or so of being bumped into by people who wanted to purchase the paper, she looked up at me and cried, "Can you believe this?"

"I know..." my voice trailed off. I didn't know what else to say. The outrage those newspapers provoked in me was beyond my capability to vocalize. I wanted to cry, too, but I was angry.

I watched a woman comparing the front pages the newspapers before selecting *The Citizen*.

“Please don’t buy that paper,” Aunt Lorraine told the woman.

The woman looked at her like she thought she might be mentally disturbed and then went up to the cash register to pay for her newspaper.

“I’m going to buy every one of these papers!” Aunt Lorraine was sobbing so hard she was choking as she spoke. “And then we’re going to go to every newsstand in this town and buy them all out.” She sniffled and began to snatch up as many copies of *The Citizen* as she could carry in her arms. “Come on, Lisa,” she cried hysterically, “grab what you can!”

I was embarrassed as my aunt piled a huge stack of newspapers into my arms and nearly sent me stumbling over backwards. People walking by were staring at us.

She was fueled by a mania that made her move with urgency. And she was making a spectacle of herself. I thought that if I could make her realize how ridiculous her idea was it would stop her from pursuing such a crazy vendetta. So, I asked, “How are we going to carry all these out of here?”

Aunt Lorraine rapidly began to snatch the newspapers from my arms and place them onto the counter. “I’ll have to go get the car and load these in. We’re going to go to every newsstand we can find in this town and buy all the papers up.”

I stared at her for a minute. How could she think it was possible to do that?

“There isn’t enough time in the day!” I protested. “How can we find every place that has newspapers for sale?”

“We’ll find them all.” Aunt Lorraine nodded her head as she sobbed. “Then we’ll burn them when we get home.” She knocked over a display of chewing gum as she dumped more of the newspapers down on the counter.

The sales clerk got a panicked look on her face. “Ma’am, I can’t let you buy all of these papers!”

“Well, I’m going to buy each and every one of them and there’s nothing you can do about it,” my aunt sobbed. “You might even be able to make your sales quota for the day.”

“Ma’am, I’m going to have to ask you to leave my store or I’ll call the police.”

I was thinking of finding a pay phone and calling Dad to come and get me if this continued. “Aunt Lorraine, please, let’s just go,” I whispered to her. “Everyone is staring. We’re causing a scene.”

She looked at me in silence for a minute and then clutched her hand over her mouth. “My God, Lisa, you’re right.” She wiped her eyes, frowned, and then sighed. “I don’t know what I was thinking, but I’m glad you were with me today. You know what I’m going to do instead?” She grabbed me by the elbow as I turned to walk back outside. “I’m going to write a letter to *The Citizen* and let them know what an outrage it is to exploit a dead child this way.”

I glanced at the newspaper with the photo of Christie in her Halloween costume.

I sighed, “I never saw that photo of her before. I wish I had it.”

“Me too,” Aunt Lorraine used her sleeve to wipe tears from her eyes.

Later when we were on our way back to Grandma and Grandpa’s house from the hospital, I asked Mom to stop at a newsstand so I could purchase the paper. I ripped out the photo of Christie in her costume and tossed the article away without reading it. Later, I put it in my photo album. When the paper came out the next day Christie’s picture was on the front page again. But that was the last time

her picture ever appeared by itself. The day after that her picture would appear along with the mugshot of the man who killed her. And again...and again.

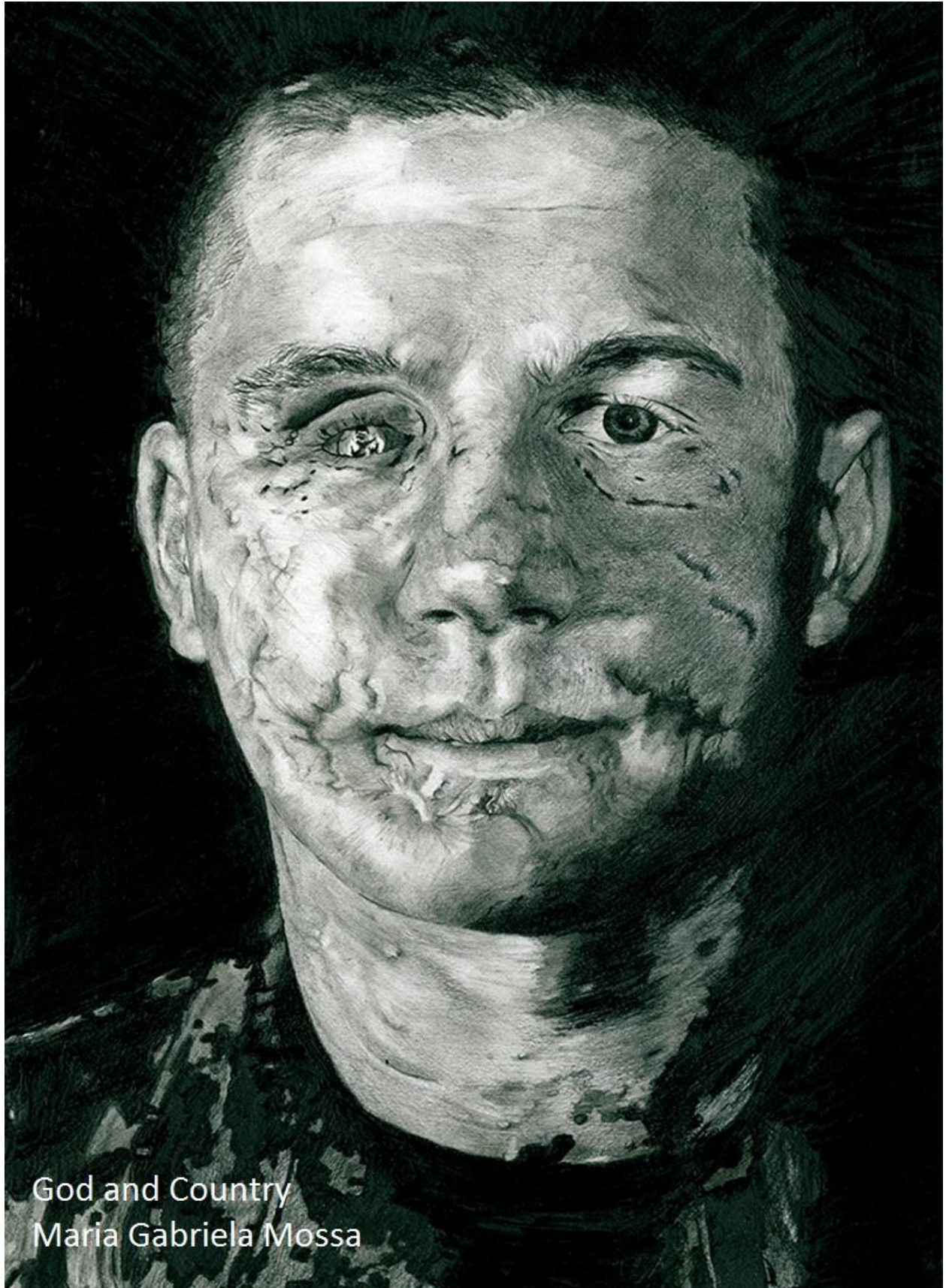


Phantom Shadow

Linda Vichiola-Coppola

I've heard the caretaker say the ground where the dead are buried is never flat. He speaks to himself while he works and mumbles about how the earth refuses to hide what lies beneath it. Often he will shake his head and add, "Nothing attests to that more than right here at Old Oak Cemetery." Sometimes, when I'm wandering around the graves, I hear the people passing by refer to this place as "Phantom Oak." They speak in hushed tones about local legends of ghosts and disembodied voices as they walk across the road to another cemetery reserved for those who have recently passed away. I spend a lot of time watching as they visit and place flowers on the graves of their dearly departed. They

bow down on one knee and pray for the souls of their loved ones, trying not to gaze over their shoulders at this small and ancient graveyard. If it's near evening and they dare to look, they sometimes catch a glimpse of me as I join the mist and bend into shadows. Soaring like a twist of white smoke, I uncoil in the dark and raise my skeleton arms up like tortured ladders. I stare back at them with eyes of burning blood. I become the inky blue fabric of nightfall and unite with the moonlight in the creeping vines like screams encompassing the bleached headstones as I take flight and refuse to leave them blind.



God and Country
Maria Gabriela Mossa

At least you know who you are

Mary Awad

You're standing in a city surrounded by masked faces. At first, you think it's a dream. You're in some dreamscape circus and a creepy clown with a machete is going to stalk up behind you and stab you in the back. Trip on a kink in the sidewalk and wake up. Doesn't work. Look at the crowds and touch the mask on your face. There's a carnival in the city so of course you and everyone are dressed like fools. How did you forget? You walk around with the people that invited you and make petty conversation, still fearful of the machete clown as you cross the street.

You've always been a bit too observant for your own good.

Next thing you know, you're alone. What irony. But you don't mind, with or without your "friends" you'll have a good time. It's an ability you have: to be able to enjoy yourself even when no one is around. Walk into a shop and buy yourself a gift— a puny cell phone key chain. Puny it or not, put it on your phone. The feeling of your own independence inspires you. Go talk to that boy you think is cute. Yes, you know, the one sitting over there on the bench. Be careful of your voice, it always rises an octave when you try to impress people.

You leave once you get bored. You like his face. He likes your mask.

Shallow people leave much to be desired.

Then, people come up to you, bombarding you with questions. They ask about your costume, your mask, your shoes. Be angry that's the only thing they care about. Although indifferent, try to answer all the questions until...your eyes fall upon a clown.

Run away.

You know the object in his hand rubber, but run anyway with your new key chain slapping against your leg. Search for those "friends" you thought you didn't need. You see them, one waiting on line for the port-o-potty, one choking on a hot dog.

Part of you wishes you didn't find them.

People continue to ask about your mask. Although still angry, smile and wave. Stick to protocol. Put on affectations to please the crowds. Eventually they tire and leave, as do you. The "friends" you left behind again tell you it's time to go. Comply without complaint.

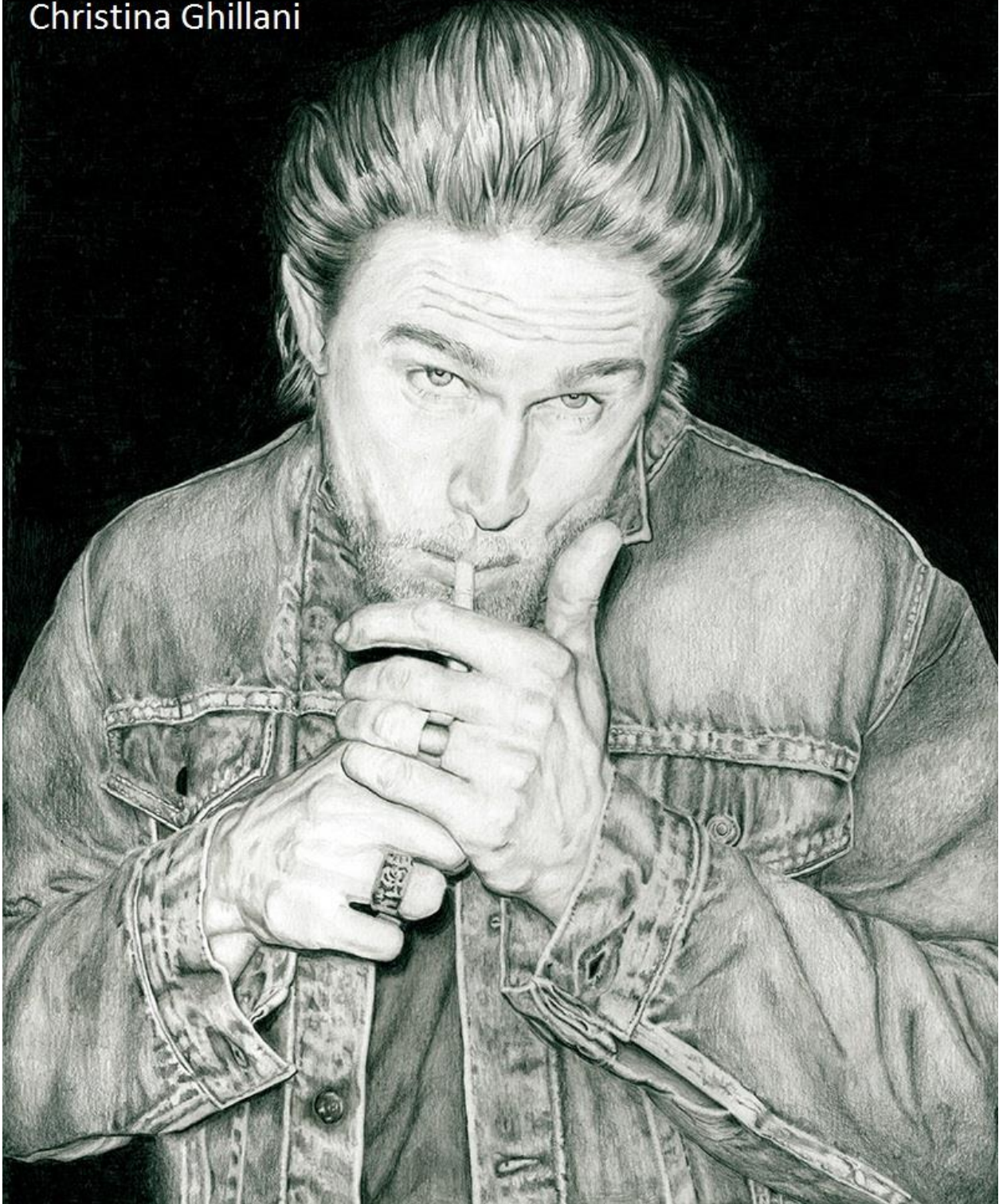
You're on the train with them now, talking about the *oh so much fun* you had today. You don't lie, you really did enjoy yourself; other than the haphazard clown's potential machete attack. You don't tell them about the suffocating crowds or your fear of the perpetual murderer. Why make yourself look like a fool? They don't question you when you keep your mask on while you talk to them.

Apparently they think it's more interesting than your real face.

You leave those people; you decide you really didn't like anyway. Wait until you're at your house before you take your mask off.

Stare at your real face in the mirror. Touch it. Tell yourself the things you didn't say, about the day you had, about the music, the colors, about how you wished that person really choked on that hot dog. The only person who seems to care about

Charlie Hunnam
Christina Ghillani



Replant

Angel

Linda Vichiola-Coppola

Ascending in clouds

You recall tasting the rain

And re-growing wings.



A Werewolf's Kill

Patrick Smith

*Hungry hungry
food food
need eat food
smell food
that way
run run run
faster faster
must eat food
small food
run away
smell big food
smell good
run through trees
bright light
hot light
food screams
try fighting
hot light
hurt me
pain pain pain
food runs
I run
run run
faster faster
jump on food
food screams
bite food
rip food
food stops screaming
eat food
stomach filling up
bite food again
tasty blood
blood tastes delicious in my mouth
sweet, sweet meat tastes like heaven.
I keep eating, starting from the chest
and working my way down, ripping the clothes
off with my teeth and taking huge bites at a time,
not even chewing. Pure bliss fills my body as I
eat the meat, the delicious, fresh meat from the
helpless camper oh God I killed a man what do I*

do what do I do I didn't mean to do it oh God help me
eat meat
I don't want the *meat*
eat eat
I'm not so *hungry*
eat all meat
eat eat
all meat gone
still hungry
need more meat
need more food
eat again
eat again
run run run
find food
smell food
that way
more big meat
lots big meat
run run run
loud noise
pain pain
pain in side
run away
run no I want to die!
run run no run!
escape stay!
live
die!
Another *loud noise*
more pain in my side
my body feels heavy
must run can't run
I collapse to the ground
move move
my blood flows freely
from the wounds, and my
body grows tired
no no
wake up
run
die

Protective

Maeve Smith

As Glenn weaved through the lanes of highway traffic, he found himself anticipating a particular section of the car ride. He knew that as soon as he'd hit Vermont, the ensuing drive would bring him a sense of pleasure and solitude. Winding steadily off the expressway, he entered a state of pine trees and wide lanes. The vibrant green of the pine trees served as blinders, as his vision was solely focused on the purity of the sky that was in front of him. The lack of congestion allowed him to tap into his thoughts. He thought about the time he was about to spend in his childhood vacation home on Lake Winnepesaukee's Governor's Island in New Hampshire. He thought of how the monotonous five hour car ride was almost over. He thought about the number of trips he'd taken to the lake, how many hours he'd spent in the car. Yet despite these numbers that all added up to time spent traveling, they all seemed obsolete in comparison to the feelings that overcame him time and time again whilst on the lake. Finally, he thought about the difference between driving himself to the lake, versus being driven.

Sometimes it would be his father. His lead foot caused young Glenn to clench the thick leather strap on the door. Yet whenever his father turned or glanced in his direction, he would immediately release the strap. Maybe it was because he didn't want to show fear. Maybe it was because he didn't want to reveal that he felt unsafe. Maybe it was because he didn't want his father to think he was less of a man for doing so. Other times it would be the family's driver. But every time it was his mother, passed out in the passenger seat. She would fall asleep in Scarsdale, and wake up on Governor's Island. However when she would wake up, she'd be a different person. The thick and suffocating air that encompassed their WASP social circle would dilute. The dinner parties and country clubs wouldn't be mentioned or considered. Sometimes, she wouldn't even set her hair in curlers before bed. It was great.

It was what Glenn loved. The power that this destination had over his powerful family.

Glenn remembered how new the house felt when his grandfather had first built it. He thought about the wrap around porch and the sliding glass doors that allowed the warm air to freshen the house. He thought about how his father and grandfather started the Governor's Island Club. As a child, he thought of it as just another exclusive club that their family belonged to. Yet, as an adult, he chuckled at the thought of the club; another excuse for his family to exude its standards of pristine beauty and wealth. They wanted to be able to control what would be built on the island, and who would inhabit it. They wanted to ensure that, if they were to allow anyone in, it would be their kind. Glenn chuckled a little harder.

Glenn then thought about the family boat. The fun of being on the water at night, not being able to determine what was ahead, but nonetheless trusting the path they were taking. He thought about ice cream across the lake, wincing up at the direct sunlight only to have the sight intercepted by his mother's cat eye sunglasses. Her moistened thumb pressing and smudging the excess ice cream off his cheeks.

But perhaps the most appealing aspect of the lake was that it was undiscovered in more ways than one. As a child, there was always something new to explore, new territory to cover. But more so than that, the area was quiet. He felt protective over the lake because it seemed as if no one knew about it. When friends would ask about summer plans, Glenn felt proud mentioning New Hampshire. The other families would crinkle their eyebrows and wonder why such a prominent family wasn't vacationing in a more exotic location. But they didn't understand. New Hampshire offered a different world to Glenn. A simpler world. One in which natural beauty was embraced and time wasn't watched.

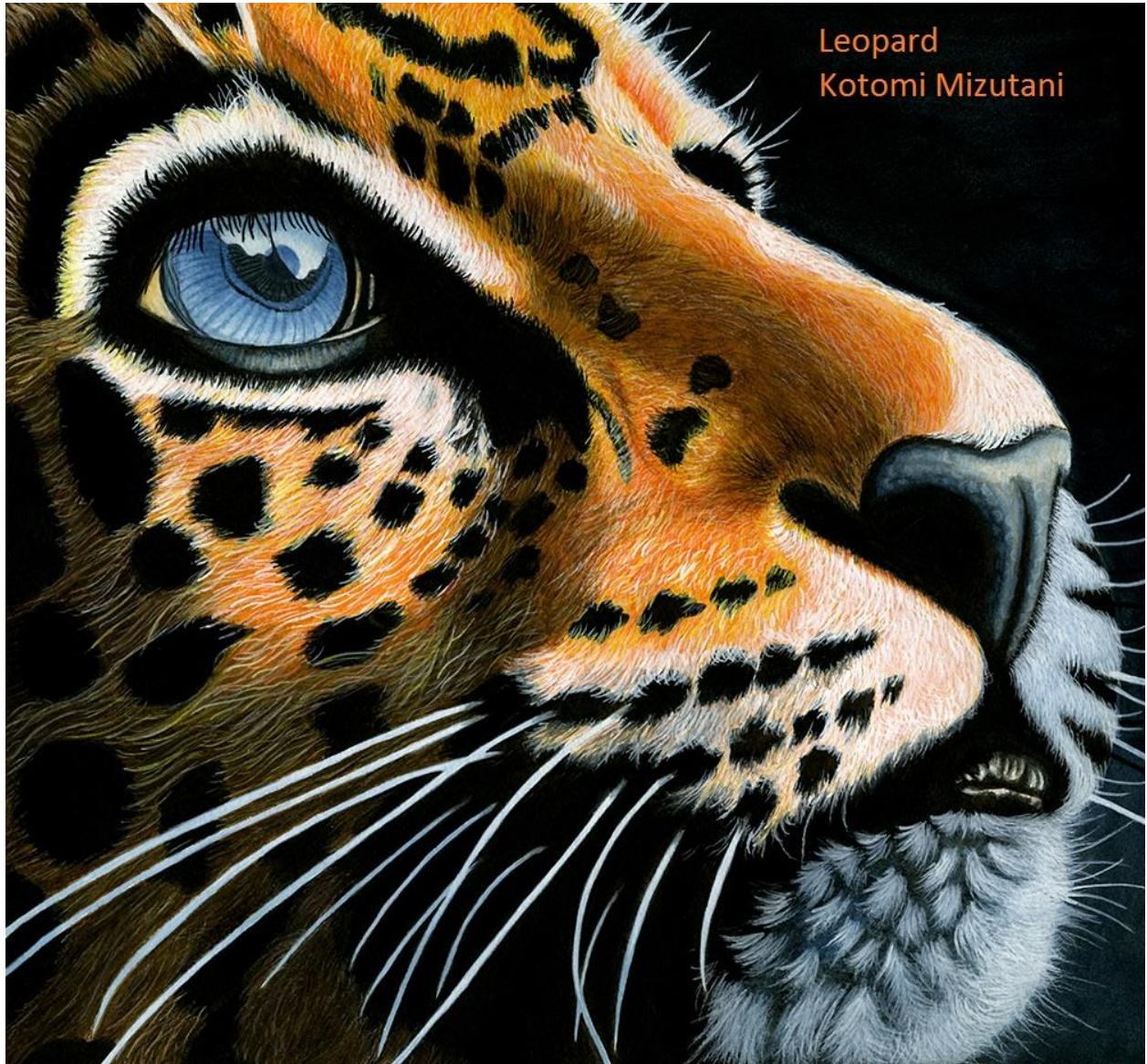
Glenn's daydreams were cut short by the sound of his left blinker. The bridge to Governor's Island lay before him. As he crossed the bridge, he saw the club sign out of the corner of his right eye. He

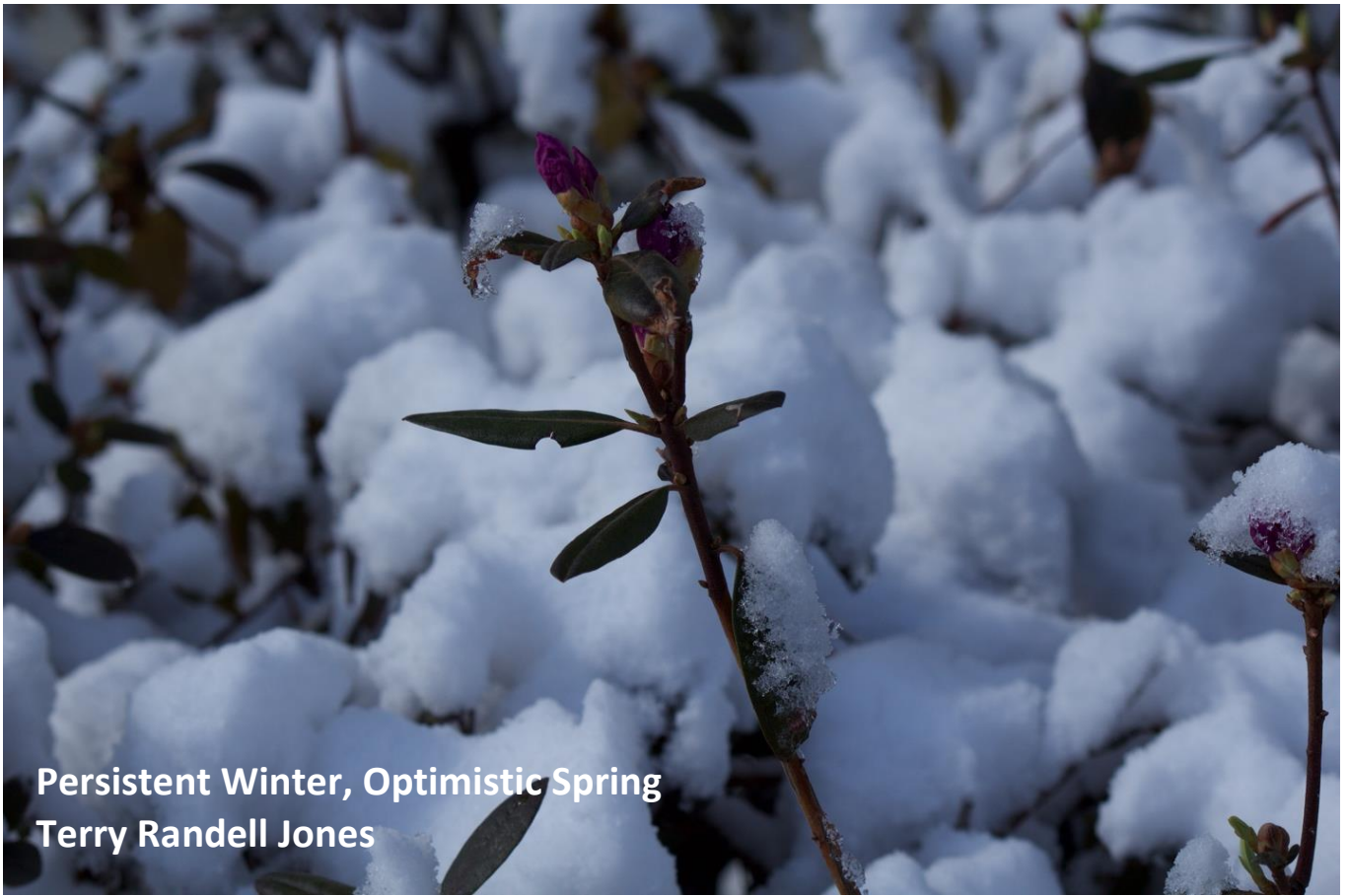
chuckled again at the irony of it all. What was once a modest, woodsy island was now packed to the brim with mansions. His eyes scanned the roads as he studied one gaudy summer home after the next. Sometimes cringing at the tacky structures. He thought his mother would've called them "new money." This was the only part of the drive that made his blood boil. He thought of how these people didn't know New Hampshire like he did. They used it as a status symbol. They looked at his house, still the same as it was in the 1960's, as an eyesore. Little did they know it was that house and that family that started the damn club. Sure he could've renovated. But he worried that, with the renovation, he would have lost a sense of himself. He didn't care what they thought. In fact, it was now, at this mid-point in his life, that he had never felt more isolated on the island.

After he finished unpacking, Glenn decided to go out onto the wrap around porch. The sun-soaked wood creaked with every footstep. He rested his arms on the rough railing and looked out onto the deeply blue, gleaming water. He noticed that the water was calm on this particular afternoon. Without skipping a beat, he looked down at his docked boat. He thought of how his father taught him tie up the boat. How his mother would reach for Glenn's hand every time while boarding, even if it was just a few inches away. He thought of the storms that caused the choppiest of waters and the early mornings that made for the stillest. Glenn then shifted his weight to the right and leaned over a bit, trying to see past an obstructing tree. His eyes were set on Mount Washington, his favorite view on the lake. There was something completely unique about admiring the heights of a mountain while being on the water.

Glenn smiled as he drew a deep breath in. The air felt brisk but soft, as if it were sun kissed. His eyes closed with the exhale. This is why he came to the lake even after the rest of his family grew bored of it decades prior. This is why the lake always made for the perfect escape from reality. This is why it would be so hard to let the lake house go. With the recent death of his mother, Glenn was the only one

left to care for the expenses of the house. He would normally be able to let go of something he held so close with relative ease. But thinking of his grandfather's house, what seemed to be the only highlight of his childhood, being demolished and replaced with another cookie cutter McMansion, his sadness into irritation.





Persistent Winter, Optimistic Spring
Terry Randell Jones

Redefine

Graduation

Colleen O'Melia

A convocation

A vast sea of proud faces
Cords and caps, commence

Waiting for Snow

Mikaela Marbot

Remembering summer is interesting. The sun was so hot. The way the car glided over the road effortlessly and took you places you never thought you would go. Country music softly played as you drove round and round. Nervous but carefree. You smiled. Was it a real smile? Or were you trying to convince yourself to be happy? Did you see it coming? Did you see the snow even though it was only August? Were you waiting for it to start?

Here you are. Standing amongst your memories as the wind snatches at the leaves outside. Gazing out the window watching the fall day pass by. You're waiting for it to snow. Waiting for the ground to freeze over and the ice to fall from the sky. Maybe then your heart won't feel so cold. You don't even know why you feel this way. Why does it matter so much? Why is the hurt so strong? You just keep watching those leaves. Waiting for them to crash to the ground.

You weren't always this way. At one point in your life you actually enjoyed going outside. You enjoyed the fresh air and the way the breeze blew back your hair as you walked into the wind. The clack of wedged boots on concrete sidewalks once gave you confidence. The way you walked down life's path laughing along with friends once made you happy. Now you've shut yourself in your room. Staring out that window. Waiting for snow.

Here you are. Watching life pass by. It has grown colder. The leaves have fallen from the trees. Every year they try to fight the cold, but it always wins. You pity them. The temperature is dropping. The cold is creeping closer. Numbing senses. Changing your world. Crashing the leaves to the ground.

Here it comes. The end you were waiting for. Now you know that summer lied. The promise of warmth and security failed you. The sun's rays grew shorter as your heart grew colder. As the earth tilted away from the sun, your soul tilted away from the world. You gravitated to the window and started to watch the snow fall. First one flake dropped from the watery sky and then the torrent was released. A flurry of fury and emotion. You were overwhelmed. You lost yourself in the snow and struggled to see the light. You closed your heart to the sun and watched the snow begin to fall.

Eventually the weather turned too cold for even the snow. But you stood by your window. Waiting for the return that will never happen. Watching for movement. Willing the snow to fall. Maybe if it falls it will erase the pain. Blanketing your world in a clean sheet of white. Starting over.

But there is no snow. No matter how hard you wish for it. No matter how many times you press your hand against that window, you don't know if the snow will fall again.

You'll wait. You'll wait for it all to end.

I'm Not Loud like "Gloria" or Can't Move My Hips like Shakira

Judith Tacuri

As Latinos, we get irritated when people ask pointless questions about our heritage. Sometimes we don't want to give an answer. One reason is because the media has used our image in a negative way. Some Hollywood films use Latino actors and actresses to play the roles of maids, drug dealers, gang members, or crazy, loud people. But the truth is that not all Latinos fit into this description.

According to the stereotypes created by the media, we Latinos have large extended families, we are all Catholics, we only speak Spanish, and we women have our children during our adolescent years. The media states that all Latinas have strong accents and our moms act like Gloria from "Modern Family." If you believe everything you see on this hit television series, you believe our "very" sounds like "berry" and our "you" is pronounced "ju." You might also think all Latinas can move their hips like Shakira or JLO, love to show their cleavage, have the perfect café con leche skin and are blessed with long wavy hair. Latinos eat tacos, rice and beans and love to drink tequila...right? And all Latinos come from Mexico and only listen to Mexican songs...

But Latinas are different. I'm an obvious example: My hips can't move like Shakira or JLO's hips. I don't have much cleave to show, and I don't have perfect skin or a perfect long wavy hair.

Latino men are not drug dealers, gang members or thugs as they are portrayed in Hollywood films. Nor are they "Latino lovers" like Antonio Banderas, Fernando Lamas or Ricardo Montalba, who starred in roles that perpetuated the idea that Latino men are suave, sexy and skilled between sheets. Some Latino actors who have played the roles of thugs, drug dealers, and gang bangers gave the public an idea that all Latino men are criminals or lovers.

Not all Latino are criminals. Latinos are accountants, lawyers, doctors, teachers, pastors, police officers, engineers, and more just like white people. Sometimes people don't see that these films portray the negative side of Latinos. On the other hand, filmmakers like Alejandro Gonzales Inarritu, Miguel Arteta, Alfonso Cuaron, Guillermo del Toro and Robert Rodriguez are creating films where Latino actors play important roles. Latino filmmakers are changing the way the media sees Latinos.

According to the Pew Research Center, 50.7 million Hispanics are living in the U.S. and, of that population, the top ten largest Hispanic origin groups are Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Salvadorians, Dominicans, Guatemalans, Colombians, Hondurans, Ecuadorians, and Peruvians. Therefore, not all Latinos living in the U.S. are Mexicans. We come from the Caribbean, Central, and South America as well.

Another misconception people have is that Latinos and Hispanics are the same. According to the website *Diffen*, the term "Hispanic" was adopted in the 1970s during the presidency of Richard Nixon to distinguish people who were descendants or emigrated from Spanish-speaking countries to the United States. The term "Hispanic" comes from the Latin word for Spain "Hispania" which later became España. The term "Hispanic" refers to language. On the other hand, the term "Latino" refers to geography, Latin America and the Caribbean. "Latino" was adopted to identify and segregate the mixed white with black and native "mestizo or mulatto people of Central and South America" (*Diffen*). This includes people from Brazil and other countries that do not speak Spanish in Latin America. Latino is a word shortened from the Spanish word "Latin America." I do not use either words, I prefer to say my nationality rather than use Hispanic or Latino.

Stereotypes do not portray Latinos properly. Stereotypes are made to discriminate and degrade people of other races, so don't think stereotypes outline the qualities of other races. Do not underestimate Latinos and consider us a problem or danger to the community. Latinos living in the U.S. contribute and

help the entire population. The U.S population is formed by different heritages, backgrounds, and countries. The Latino/ Hispanic community works hard to have a better future.

This country needs to be free of stereotypes to any race.

Why I'm Completely Cool With Being Called a "GDI"

Colleen O'Melia

"What is a GDI?" you ask? A GDI, or a "Goddamn Independent," is the term coined by college students everywhere for an individual who is not a fraternity or sorority member. After my first acquaintance with the term, I was flattered. Who wouldn't want to be considered a goddamn independent woman? I've rocked out to Kelly Clarkson's famous hit "Miss Independent" countless times. And we can't forget about the Destiny's Child jam "Independent Women." According to my musical agenda, a GDI was a title any college girl like me should strive to attain.

In reality, the term GDI stands for anybody who is, essentially, a nobody. A GDI does not have any "brothers" or "sisters," nor does he or she have a mentor or mentee (better known in the Greek language as big or little).

It gets worse. Unfortunately, if you aren't a part of Greek Life, you're expected to be on a sport's team. "So, what sport do you play?" I'm often asked as I stroll through the halls without my "letters" (sororities and fraternities often sport tees with Greek letters to represent their organization). When I admit that I am not a student-athlete, I'm automatically deemed a NARP, a non-athletic regular person. Um, excuse me, but I actually exercise *every* day. I also played soccer my entire life *and* ran track in high school, thank you very much. But my pleas are useless.

"Aw. You can always rush next year!" sorority girls say in a comforting tone when I explain my on-campus independence. It does not occur to them that I am not ashamed of this label. Write GDI on my forehead, I don't care.

"But, if you don't rush, then you can't go to formals and mixers," sorority sisters press. *Apparently, mixers are more than a drink of choice you add to your vodka?* I think to myself. OK so I'll miss a few parties, whatever. However, my denied access to off-campus formals did disappoint me; I hate passing up the opportunity to cupid shuffle in a new dress.

"But sororities and fraternities raise money for a variety of amazing causes," Greek Life members continue to rebuttal, and I agree with them. My roommate's sorority raised over three thousand dollars last year for Prevent Child Abuse America. I fully support the effort she and her sisters put into that accomplishment.

However, behind the scenes, there is more to Greek Life than its exclusive parties and dedication to philanthropies. Rebecca Martinson, Social Chair of Delta Gamma Sorority at University of Maryland, clarified this reality for us back in 2013 when she threatened to *assault* members of her sorority who cheered for the wrong kickball team at a Greek event. "I don't give a SHIT about sportsmanship. You cheer for our goddamn team and not the other one. Have you ever been to a fucking sports game? Are you fucking blind?" her friendly email reads. She even

advises members of her sorority to punch themselves in the face after being awkward and boring around fraternity brothers. She then concludes her email perfectly: by referring to her eighty “sisters” as “fucking faggots. So much for sisterly love. So next time you whisper “GDI alert” to your best friend’s grand little’s twin’s aunt twice removed, know that I am secretly gushing with pride. GDI? More like *Miss Play it Smart*, in the words of Kelly Clarkson.

Furthermore, during The University of Florida’s recruitment, girls are required to participate in a “catwalk boot camp” in which they practice walking in heels. How, may I ask, does being able to walk in heels benefit one’s philanthropy? It doesn’t. Beyoncé may claim *it ain’t easy being independent*, but hunny it’s a *hell* of a lot easier than being judged based on how well you can strut your stuff in five-inch heels.

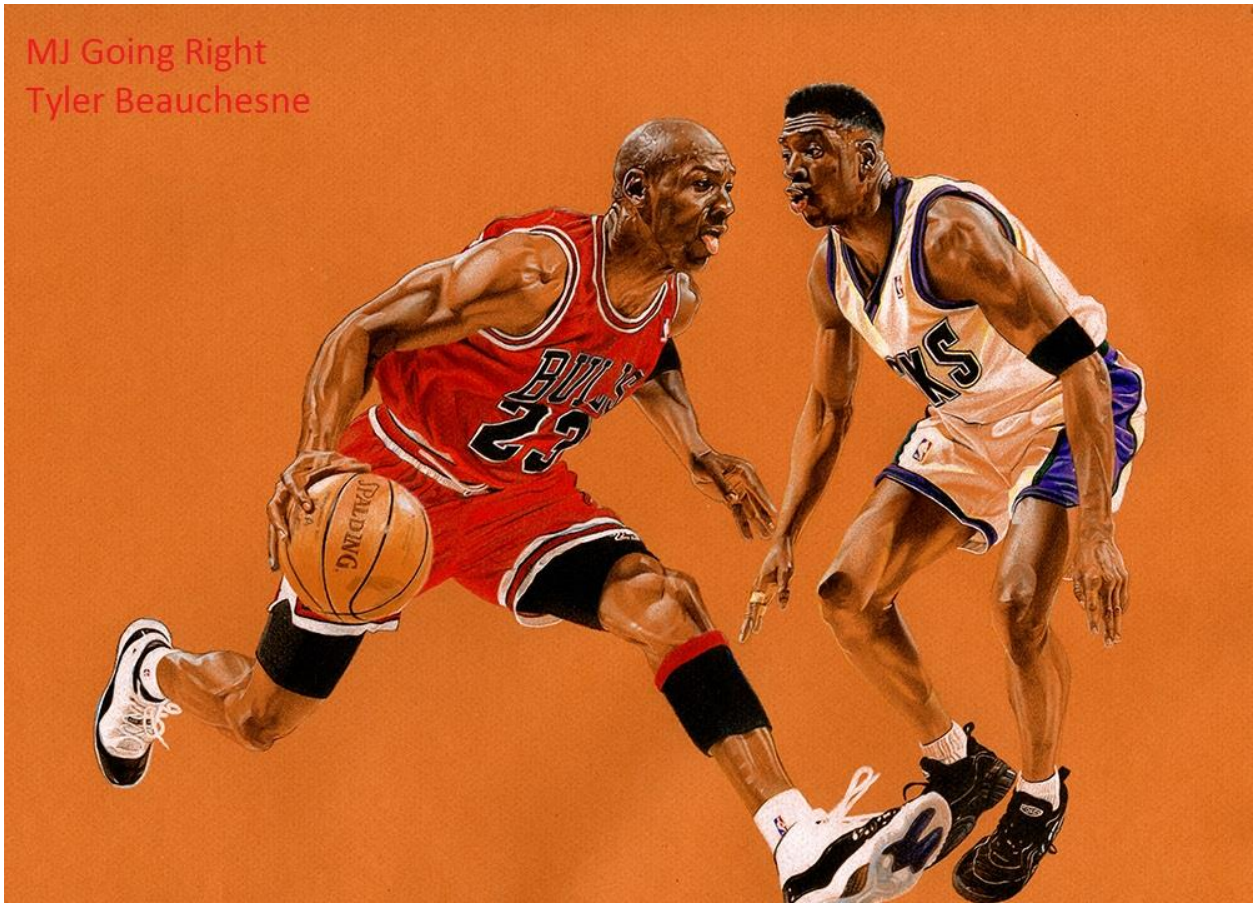
Money is yet another factor that contributes to my Greek Life standpoint. Some first-year sorority members owe *nine hundred dollars* at the conclusion of their first semester. Recruitment signs should read, “If you cannot pay the fee, you are not welcome to join.” This message seems harsh and unwelcoming, but it’s the truth. I am already paying an obscene amount of money to receive a degree; I do not find it necessary to ask my parents for an extra grand just so that I can lengthen my resume and gain fifty new friends.

But, are girls in the same sorority even friends? I’d laugh if I met a “friend” of Rebecca Martinson’s from Delta Gamma Sorority. In the eyes of “Miss Independent[s]” like myself, friendships that form behind the walls of weekly, top-secret sorority meetings seem to be just for show: merely a way to gain more followers on social media and invites to parties swarmed by cute frat guys.

A sorority girl’s Instagram is filled with captions that read, “I love my sisters!” or “Lambda-Alpha-Whatever forever!” But, I don’t know anyone who actually keeps in touch with the entirety of their sorority “sisters” after graduation. OK, a majority of girls will keep in touch with their big, their little, and about five other close friends within the organization. Other than that, sorority members say sayonara to their “sisters” once they receive their diplomas. Perhaps the bonds that consume the Greek world are not meant to be decoded by a GDI like me; I’m sadly not granted this privilege.

Overall, despite my social disparities as a Greek Life alien, I’m a Goddamn Independent woman and proud of it-- or, as Beyoncé would say, *I [proudly] depend on me*.

MJ Going Right
Tyler Beauchesne



Gymtimidation

Allie Potenza

For me, working out is not just a way to maintain my health. Exercise is a method by which I not only strengthen my body but also my head. It's my act of catharsis. My daily anxieties and stresses dissipate when I move my body. Similar to a sacred or holy place, the gym has its collection of devoted followers. It is within this place that the sanctification of the act of exercise invites universal acceptance of the worshipper.

There is no fundamental difference between holiday Christians and frequent church-goers other than that they choose to worship differently, and this is not seen as a problem amongst the gym community. The followers don't focus their attention nor judge others' methods of worship, for they all have a common goal: to better themselves. For me, the gym holds the same reverence. Those who choose to go once a week should not be compared to those who go five or six times a week. The common denominator is that most who go are either looking to maintain or improve their health.

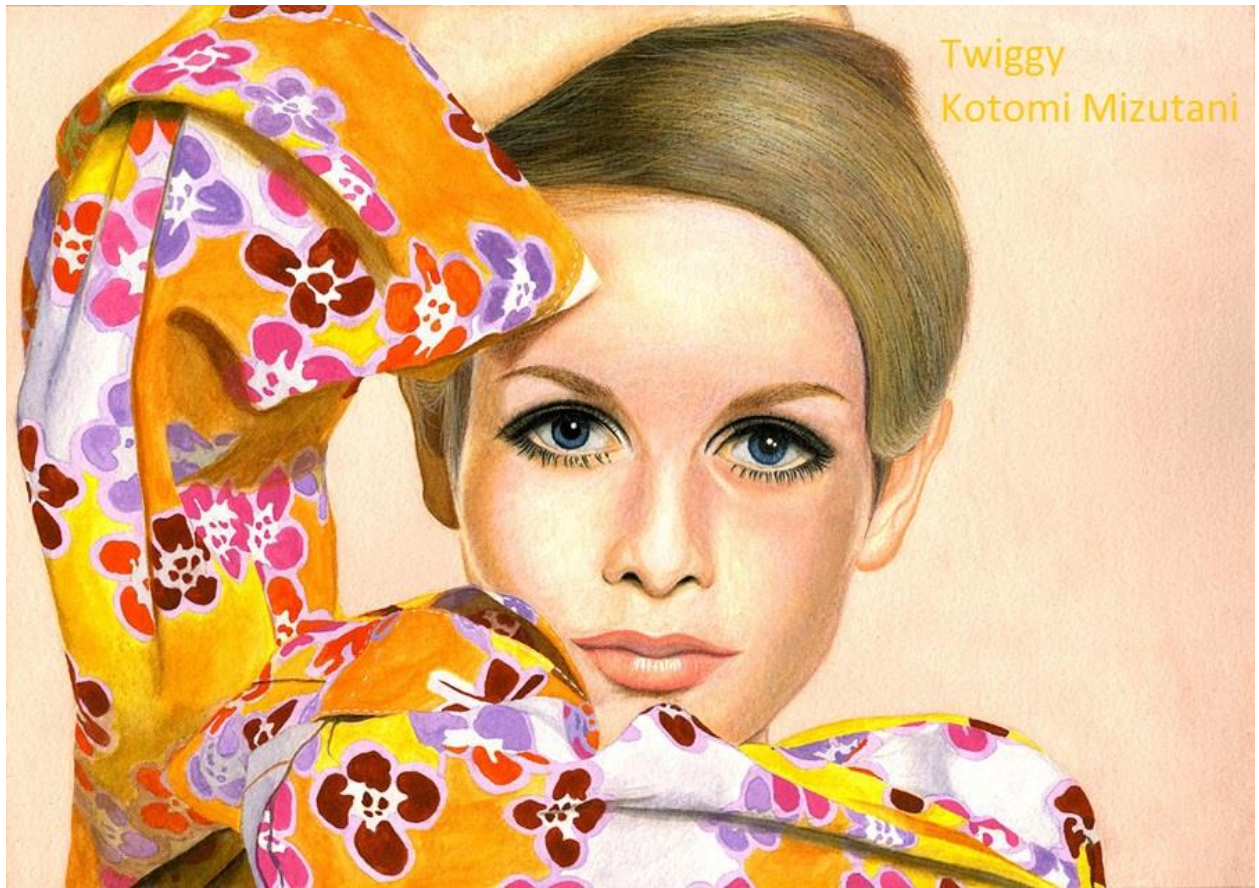
On a humid August afternoon, I attended my sanctuary. I left my friend at the elliptical machine and endeavored to lift some weights. Out of the corner of my eye, I spotted an ex-friend of mine. No travesty there...I hadn't seen him all summer, and I had no interest in his gym agenda. A few sets later, I heard someone laughing. I turn my head and my not-friend is pointing and laughing at me. Was I not lifting correctly? Was the weight not heavy enough? These thoughts and others circled my head but one thought was in the forefront screaming its head off. *How could you have the audacity to laugh at someone at the gym?* It was disgusting. I couldn't understand how someone would think that kind of behavior would be acceptable, especially in this house of worship. My confidence suffered minor bruise, but I continued to finish my routine.

The gym - hallowed ground - is an environment where people big or small go to maintain their health. *What kind of seedy person would try to embarrass or objectify someone trying to accomplish a goal?* You, sir, are obviously a piece of crap with a cherry on top, and the cherry is an act of kindness.

Gym intimidation is a form of bullying that is often overlooked and underreported. Most girls with whom I have spoken have either described their own similar experience or that of a friend's where they've felt stigmatized. I know, guys experience it too, but that's an entirely different matter best left for later discussion. I'm more concerned with girls here because I know for a fact that girls experience it more so than men, and their culturally-induced sensitivities of self-image are more intense. Stories run the gamut from intimidation to overt harassment. Some girl's experiences have been similar to mine, and others just involve weird and creepy staring. Gradually moving away from the sliding scale of intimidation on the left and approaching the harassment area on the right, girls also experience getting hit on at the gym. A friend of mine told me that once while she was on the elliptical machine, a guy came up to her and said, "You look like you could be my next girlfriend." Really?

I rest my case.

It's both a bummer and a distraction. Who wants to be glared at as though they are clueless about lifting weights or running, or as if they are an object of desire? There's no difference in being a devout or occasional gym-goer. When you go to your place of worship, you should be implicitly respected for getting your ass to mass at nine am, period. Church-goers, whether devout or not, are welcomed and invited to worship without judgement. So should they be at the gym.



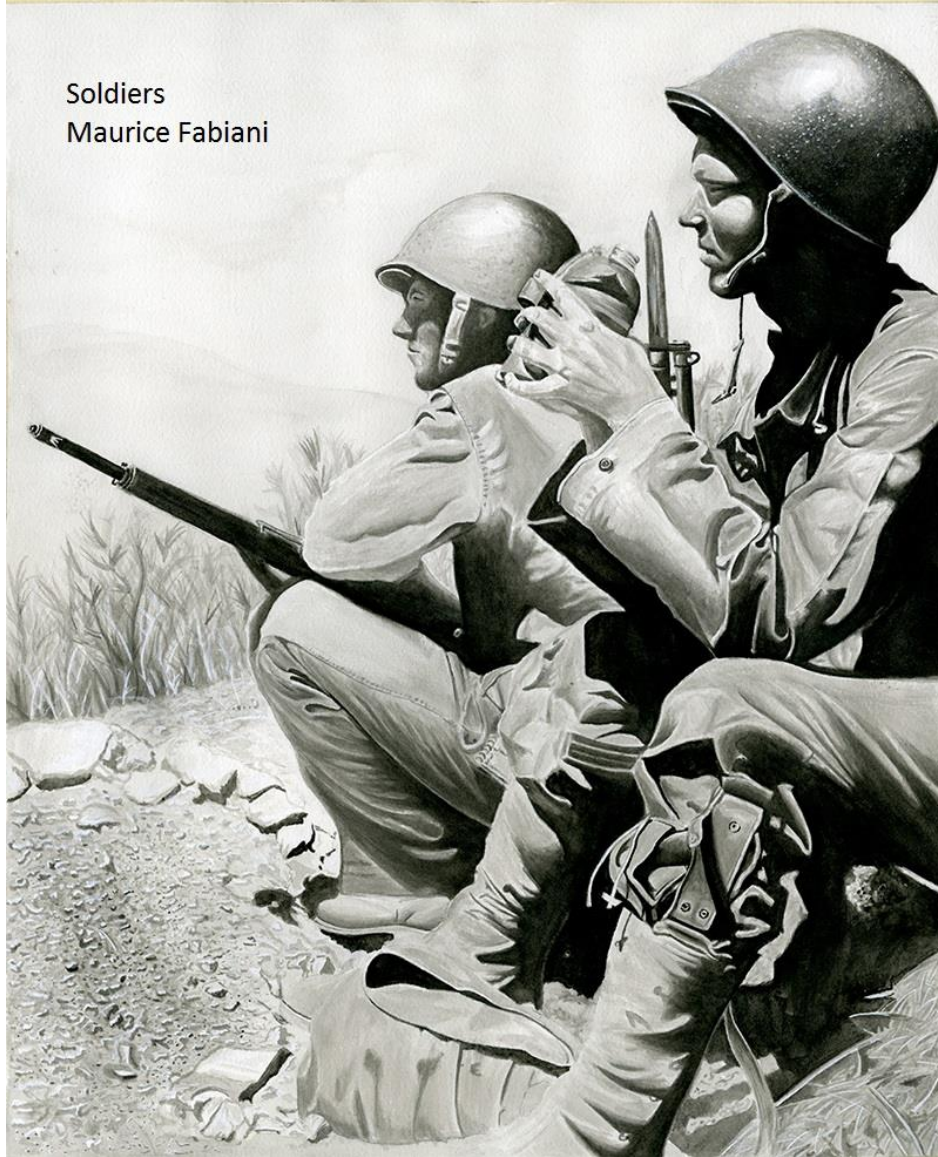
Reconsider

Farewell

Mary Awad

While drowning, I reach
towards the sky and grab nothing
like a wave goodbye

Soldiers
Maurice Fabiani



Dogs Playing Poker

William Sanchez

Pedophilia intrigued me. On the sofa, I sat. Chai tea in my right hand, I sipped. Nuts in my left hand, I munched. All the while, I never broke my fixed gaze off the dancing boy.

The young boy danced alone in a counter-clockwise circle. I did not know his name, but I knew his label. Chai boy or *bacha bazi*.

The boy wore a black traditional outfit, *Chafan*. The outfit was dull and lifeless. The neutral clothing lacked gender identifying curves or markings. A matching knee length shirt, *Perahon*, covered his baggy trousers, *Tunban*. Bright white tennis shoes escaped the cotton clothing like early morning light punching daybreak. Eerily white in a dusty landscape, the shoes were clean and untouched. His feet swam in those shoes, which were three sizes too large, and looked like moon boots. Tied around his head was a scarf, *Dismaal*, that bore no tribal or family colors, just the National Colors of Afghanistan a trio of red, black, and green, colors not traditionally worn in this area.

No thread of hair escaped. His childish face became the focal point.

His arms, like angel hair pasta, gave way to thinner and limper wrists. He swayed to the music and wavered in and out of orbits above a woven red carpet stretched from one bulkhead to the other. Everything about him was effeminate. Exactly as I was supposed to expect. In between circles, his right leg kicked up high enough to place his knees near his chest. Like a fruity flamingo in distress, his gestures were too feminine and flexible to be male. But, he was.

Those delicate hands flailed about in an effort to grab something. Every modification in his body had a purpose. But his

eyes were empty. I watched his petrified search for a point other than another pair of eyes. His darted around the room. I read in them a message of emptiness from witnessing a life of war or fear of knowing what was to come.

I had full knowledge that I was watching a child sex slave/entertainer. I am not a pedophile, nor do I support the exploitation of the child sex trade. But in this part of the world, I know that women are for babies and boys are for pleasure.

The Afghan men around me imagined flirting. A playful boy engaging them in a display of teasing flesh. The men with me were four other US employees. Army, Green Beret, British contractor, and one Afghan turned CIA informant, who was too out spoken, too cocky in this room filled with real killers because he had power. Not physical power. Power of a stronger kind. CIA backed political power. We watched.

This was my first time at a Commander Aziz party. No one refused Aziz's parties. Aziz and his men were the reason I was alive. During the day, his men trusted me to work on their weapons. At night, to decline their invitation, meant I stood the possibility of losing their trust and protection. Tonight was an offer I could not refuse.

I was far away from my home on Orgun-E. I was on Commander Aziz's base, guarded by his Special Squad. My base was a ten-minute drive away from here. Aziz's men controlled this piece of land. Not the Americans, Coalition, or Afghan forces. This part of Afghanistan

was stashed away for those inside Aziz's circle of trust. His land. His rules.

Commander Aziz personally invited everyone in attendance. The other men were from the Orgun-E area. Local leaders, businessmen, and village elders. Outwardly, they came for free food, entertainment, and the possibility of future protection Aziz could offer. On the inside, they feared Commander Aziz and they did not dare insult their host. He had the firepower and backing of the Americans. Paid by US dollars, Aziz recruited at gunpoint.

A Tajik, Commander Aziz was the sole reason Taliban bodies dropped. No one questioned the man responsible for pushing the Taliban death counts into the thousands. My host was doing more in Paktika Province than the collective group of American forces in the area. To Brits and Americans, he was the Chuck Norris of Afghanistan. So notorious and well known, *Fox News*, *Times Magazine*, and *The New York Times* wrote articles on his involvement in alleged crimes against humanity. "Alleged," is what they said.

Before we were seated in the main dancing room, four of us were escorted to a special room cut off and tucked away inside Aziz's compound. Each turn put us face to face with another pair of Aziz's men. They were guarding something. Deeper in we went. The Special Squad members channeled us to the inner circle within an inner circle, the black hole of Aziz's complex. After the shepherding, I was inside Aziz's personal bar. For a dry country, the bar was drenched with alcohol. Familiar faces of Jack, Johnny, and Bombay greeted me. Aziz

had good taste and poured us the fine stuff. No idea how he was able to stock his bar, but I was not going to question my first taste of liquid freedom miles away from home since I arrived.

The walls were decorated with war trophies dating back to the 1800's. British and Soviet weapons, and one day, American firearms would join the collection. Not because we would present them to our Afghan hosts, but because history repeats itself. You can invade Afghanistan, but you cannot control it. We would retreat like the rest.

I brought my host a selection of Cubans, because I heard Aziz was a cigar smoker. Through a translator, he thanked me. We drank and smoked.

Thirty minutes passed. Commander Aziz's son escorted the Chai Boy around the small bar like a VIP. Aziz personally poured the boy a stiff four fingers of whiskey. He passed the drink to his son to give to the boy. Aziz's son watched the boy to make sure he drank it all. Through a grimaced face, the boy kept it down. Color raced to his young cheeks. Did I see embarrassment or fear? The second he finished, Aziz's son escorted the boy out and through the maze back, passed the armed guards to the main hall to the regular party.

Commander Aziz wrapped up the booze-fest and told us we were done drinking. We traversed back through the many corners to the main room where everyone waited. A raised stage held a 4-person band with speakers. They played as the only two couches in the room were

cleared of their previous occupants. Then Aziz told us to join him on the empty L-shaped couches. Behind us, eight rows of plastic chairs were filled with Afghans. Commander Aziz's men guarded the door. They were armed and they lined the walls.

Around the room, dark and empty Afghan eyes were glued on us, the foreigners with Aziz. These Afghan men, hardened from equal parts fear and the survival, and the need to grow up fast in this harsh environment. The innocence of their childhood passes too quickly when they are forced take up arms.

Aziz motioned for his property, the Chai Boy. The party continued as all eyes converged on the boy. He was the main attraction.

Our night ended after the boy's last dance. I said goodbye to my host and joined my friends for a drive back to base. I went home drunk and happy. I slept through the night because I only saw the boy dance. I do not know what happened to the boy after I left the party.

That night in 2012, I sat first row to crimes Americans deemed illegal. Outside the jurisdiction of the USA, Chai boys were common practice here in Afghanistan. They were property. Aziz's boy endured something far worse than death.

That night I lost something. I wanted to tell him, I could not save him. Did he expect the Americans to save him? I hope not. That boy probably thinks Americans practice the same art of perversion. I

wanted to tell him I did not own a boy. I could not provide him housing on Orgun-E. Even if I did, Aziz and his men had access. They would recapture the boy. Making me a traitor to Aziz and his men. I would lose his trust. I would die. I was silenced like a dog.

I had a great time that night. I drank real liquor. I ate good food. I clapped to the music. I watched the dancing boy. What happened that night revolved around camaraderie mixed with survival. We were just dogs playing poker.

Could this be the saddest thing I saw in Afghanistan?

I recently looked at pictures from that night. I was smiling. Smiling at a drunk chai boy dancing for me.

I tell myself I was having fun. I have to tell myself I was having fun.

A Ghostly Reflection

Linda Vichiola-Coppola

The knuckle to Jim's left thumb was starting to swell from arthritis as he finished nailing a loose floorboard on the porch to the old Inn he and his wife had purchased. He was savoring the thought of cold lemonade when his wife stuck her grey head out the door and caught his attention by flapping a dirty rag in the air like a surrender flag.

“Jim!” she called in a frazzled voice. “Can you come inside a minute?”

He put the hammer down on the porch steps and asked, “What’s wrong, Ginny?”

“Something just frightened the maid while she was cleaning upstairs,” she said, pressing the palm of her left hand against her throat.

“Are you sure she didn’t hear the electrician?” he asked, wiping sweat off his forehead.

“No, we are the only ones here right now,” she lowered her voice. “Jim, I told you something scared the wits out of me the other day when I was waxing the floor up there.”

“Well, maybe there’s a squirrel in the attic making a racket,” he frowned as he followed her through the door.

She stopped short in front of him and turned around with a cross look on her face, and from the way she lowered her voice when she began to speak he knew she was probably going to curse at least once.

“You know it wasn’t a damn squirrel that I heard,” she flapped the rag at his shoulder as if she were about to shoo him away with it but instead waved it towards the staircase where the maid was standing with her arms crossed over the front of her torso.

“What room did you hear the noise in?” he asked the girl.

She turned her head slightly in the direction of the steps behind her. “It was in that room you opened a few days ago. You know the, uh, one with the jammed lock.”

The weary look on her face seemed to warrant reassurance. He was willing to give it to her but it would sound better if he could remember her name. He grunted and said, "Well, I'll go have a look."

He glanced at the maid and his wife. "No need to stand around. I'll let you know if I catch any ghosts."

The maid looked away quickly, and he knew she was probably going to quit before the week was over if she had any more frights.

He reached the second floor landing, paused to grab the rail, and a disconcerting sensation swept over him. He felt as if he had sneaked into a private room unannounced and was receiving a hostile greeting. Doing his best to ignore the feeling, he walked down the hall to a door enclosing a small white room. He opened it and a gush of stagnant air rushed out at him despite the closed windows. When the room became still, he stepped into it.

The lack of color in this room always disturbed him. There was not one streak of color betraying the clarity of the whiteness, but he somehow just knew it had once been painted pine green.

Abruptly, he felt something disturb the stillness of the air behind him. It was followed by a series of raps against the floor-length window panes. Startled, he spun around to see if there was a bird trapped inside the room that might be trying to escape.

But the afternoon light revealed that the room was empty.

When he stared back at the windows, the reflection mimicked something besides his own image. The glass revealed a flock of colorful parakeets flying gaily around the room. He watched the window in terror as the door behind him flung open and emitted a hazy figure that appeared to be wearing the uniform of a confederate soldier. The lower half of the apparition's face was distorted and lost in shadow. In one swift motion, it aimed a shotgun up in the air and fired at the flock of swooning

birds. The gunfire made no sound, but the windowpanes vibrated. And in a blur of feathers and crimson mist, the images captured within the glass slowly cleared.

The mystery of the Inn's past seemed to swell upwards to the ceiling as the sunlight congealed in hellish red hues along the dusty spatters of dried rain on the glass.

The frightful replay was over. Yet, it was a long time before Jim was able to step back out into the hallway. He gave up trying to make sense of what he had just witnessed and decided to leave the whole incident nailed shut behind the door of the little white room. He would explain his reasons to his wife later.

That is, if he could find a way to explain it to himself first.

A Force Beyond Repair

Colleen O'Melia

A chilly February thirteenth about a decade ago, Jinxie Starcross was born the happy and healthy baby of Lulu and Larry Starcross. The Starcross family resided in Fairy Kingdom which, to insiders, was often referred to as Fairy "Wingdom." The village fairies loved to boast about their kingdom of talented flyers. Those who did not know how to fly were ostracized which, after the birth of their daughter, Jinxie, made life for the Starcross family extremely difficult.

Upon her arrival, the Starcross' daughter appeared to be flawless-- a future model fairy. As a baby fairy, Jinxie's wings were small but well sculpted. Light pink and sparkling, her future success seemed promising. In Fairy Wingdom, young fairies started their schooling at about age three. By five, the youngsters were already developed into expert flyers and, in turn, were prepared to carry out notable jobs. For instance, the most impressive fliers scored tooth fairy jobs. The tooth fairies were role models for the kingdom. *Everyone* wanted to earn tooth fairy status, especially Jinxie Starcross. Becoming a tooth fairy had been Jinxie's dream ever since she was a little, fairy tot. However, a few days into her first flying lessons, Jinxie's dreams were

crushed. Since her birth three years ago, Jinxie's left wing had not developed properly. This prohibited her from flying at an adept level, that is, if she was ever able to fly at all. Not much to the Starcross family's surprise, Jinxie's newfound disability was accompanied by a number of other issues, predominantly ridicule by the other town fairies. In a kingdom where well-endowed fairies were the norm, Jinxie Starcross was an unquestionably odd spectacle.

"Try one more time, Jinxie. Maybe give yourself more of a running start," suggested Mr. Fairweather.

Jinxie, losing confidence with each failed attempt, made a running stride for the "leap line." This time, Jinxie's fragile body soared into the air. Much to her dismay, the success did not last long. Within seconds, Jinxie's wings failed and she descended before her giggling classmates and disappointed teacher.

"That's enough Jinxie. We'll pick it up again tomorrow after I mention this recurring problem to your parents," Mr. Fairweather decided. Meanwhile, the other fairies giggle amongst themselves. They pitied their fellow classmate but, more so, they were confused by her.

"What's *wrong* with you?" asked Trixie.

"Yeah. Do you have, like, a *disease*?" asked Pixie, startled.

"Are you *contagious*?" asked Dixie, in disbelief.

Jinxie's first instinct was to deny any of her classmates' negative accusations. Although she was not even sure herself the real reason behind her lack of flying skills, Jinxie hollered back, "Nothing is wrong with me. I'm just a slow learner. I'll fly soon enough, you'll see."

Although she appeared confident, Jinxie was mortified and worried. Later that day, Jinxie walked hesitantly into her home on Elf Lane to find her parents waiting to speak with her.

"Hello darling," said her mother. "Your instructor called. He is concerned about you and your struggles with flying during lessons."

"He recommends we take you to see Dr. Fairchild before your next class meeting," Jinxie's father continued. "He fears the issue may be more definitive than a psychological one. He is worried the issue is your wings."

The very next morning, Jinxie and her parents traveled across town to visit Dr. Fairchild. Located in such an elite kingdom, Dr. Fairchild rarely had many patients with wing disabilities.

In fact, Jinxie was his first patient with a wing issue in *five years*. Regardless, Dr. Fairchild specialized in wing malfunction-- Jinxie's future relied on his evaluation.

"Oh, dear. I am afraid I have some difficult news," began Dr. Fairchild. "Jinxie's left wing is about two sizes smaller than her right and bent inward, making it immobile. Any flying Jinxie has done has been thanks to the undoubtable strength of her right wing. It's a miracle that she has ever been able to lift herself off the ground."

Mr. and Mrs. Starcross sat speechless. Jinxie, on the other hand, fired questions.

"How can we fix it? Was it something I did? Will I ever be able to fly again?" she asked, panic-ridden.

Mr. and Mrs. Starcross understood the severity of the diagnosis. They knew their child would never be able to fly. They could see it in Dr. Fairchild's sorrowful gaze-- there was nothing they could do. Mr. and Mrs. Starcross were worried about their family's reputation in the kingdom but, above all, they were worried for their daughter. Like any parents, Mr. and Mrs. Starcross wanted nothing more than for their daughter to lead a happy, healthy and successful life. However, after hearing this news, Jinxie's future did not appear promising.

Looking Jinxie in the eye, Dr. Fairchild cautiously admitted, "There *is* one thing that can be done, but it's very dangerous and I do not recommend it."

Without thinking twice, Jinxie asserted, "Tell me what it is. Whatever it is, I'll do it."

Lulu and Larry Starcross shot a sharp glare at one another, as if they were telepathically speaking.

Dr. Fairchild explained, "It's a prescription medication that I would have to order from far outside the Wingdom. By taking it, you have a fifty percent chance of living with two high-functioning wings, but also a fifty percent chance of not surviving more than twenty-four hours after your last dose. If the latter occurs, it will be sudden. You will not feel sick and you won't be able to feel any changes, which is both a blessing and a curse. I do not recommend taking the medication, but I feel that it is my professional duty to explore all possible options with you. I am aware of the emphasis the Wingdom puts on flying, and I will support any decision you make."

Before Jinxie could speak, Lulu Starcross stepped in. "We'll discuss this further at home. We are not making any drastic decisions before discussing it first as a family."

Jinxie reluctantly agreed and sullenly followed her parents outside. The journey home was silent. Even dinner was silent. No one wanted to discuss such a morbid situation, but the conversation was unavoidable and Jinxie knew it. She was the first to mention the newfound disability. Jinxie's primary concern was her schooling. School was the foundation of every fairy's existence. Although she was not able to fly, Jinxie was still a fairy at heart. She still lived in the prestigious Fairy Wingdom among her talented peers. What was she going to do, hide? No. Jinxie told her parents she was going to school regardless of whether or not she could participate. Jinxie still had high hopes for a miracle, and if that miracle were to happen she would at least need to know fairy-flying technique. So the next morning, despite her parents' pleas to avoid the classroom for a while, Jinxie marched her way to school.

"Welcome, Jinxie," greeted Mr. Fairweather.

As the rest of the student-fliers snickered, Jinxie asked to speak to Mr. Fairweather privately for a moment. Jinxie explained her situation and asked if she could continue to attend lessons, hoping she could learn by observing. Although unsettled by the news of Jinxie's disability, Mr. Fairweather admired Jinxie's hope and dedication. He told Jinxie she was welcome to attend class regardless of her disability. Pleased, Jinxie thanked him and they parted ways-- Jinxie had some observing to do.

"Trixie, you're up first!" called the instructor. "Excellent take-off! Now, Pixie, it's your turn. Show us what you got!"

One by one, each student-flier practiced their flying-- all but Jinxie. As the students left class, the able-fliers began to taunt Jinxie.

"You don't belong in Fairy Wingdom, Jinxie," Trixie so rudely stated. "You don't have wings that work. If Mayor Fairwing hears about your disability, he will force you out of the Wingdom immediately. Your presence is harming the Wingdom's reputation."

"Well--" Trixie began before she was interrupted by Dixie.

"Well, I would start packing my bags if I were you," Dixie suggested.

"Just in case, especially for the sake of your family name," added Pixie.

"That is if they aren't also asked to leave, seeing that they birthed this jinxed fairy," concluded Trixie.

Tears filled Jinxie's eyes. All previous hope she had of a miracle disintegrated. She couldn't find the words to respond to her classmates without bursting into tears. She had to leave before she embarrassed herself any further. Jinxie felt like a disgrace to the kingdom. There was only one place to go-- back to Dr. Fairchild's office.

"Ah, Jinxie," said Dr. Fairchild. "You're back sooner than expected. What can I do for you?"

"I need the medication, doctor," Jinxie declared. "I am ashamed of my disability and I will do anything I can to rid my name of this dishonor."

"Jinxie, by taking this medication you are taking a major risk," the doctor reminded her. "I'm afraid I cannot fetch the medication for you without parental consent."

Jinxie then pulled out a hand-written note, a note written and signed by none other than herself. Recalling her previous visits with Dr. Fairchild in the event of a minor cold, Jinxie knew parental consent was required for just about any medication. She knew that if she wanted the medication, she would have to be prepared...and by forging her parents' signatures, she was.

"Alright, Jinxie. I will order the medicine right away," he assured her.

For the next week, Jinxie remained very quiet. To her parents' delight, she did not attend class. Instead, she remained confined within the private walls of her home where she was protected from the cruel words of her classmates. The following morning, Jinxie arrived at Dr. Fairchild's office to take her first dose of the medication. She did not dare bring it home in fear that her parents may uncover the bottle. So, each day, Jinxie traveled all the way to Dr. Fairchild's office by foot to take a dose of this life-altering medicine. On the final day, Jinxie asked the doctor a favor.

"Dr. Fairchild," she began. "If the worst does happen, can you promise you won't tell a soul that the medicine is the reason why? If I die, I want to die peacefully without any added gossip."

"Of course, Jinxie. Confidentiality is my job," the doctor, who had been in the delivery room when she was born, reassured her.

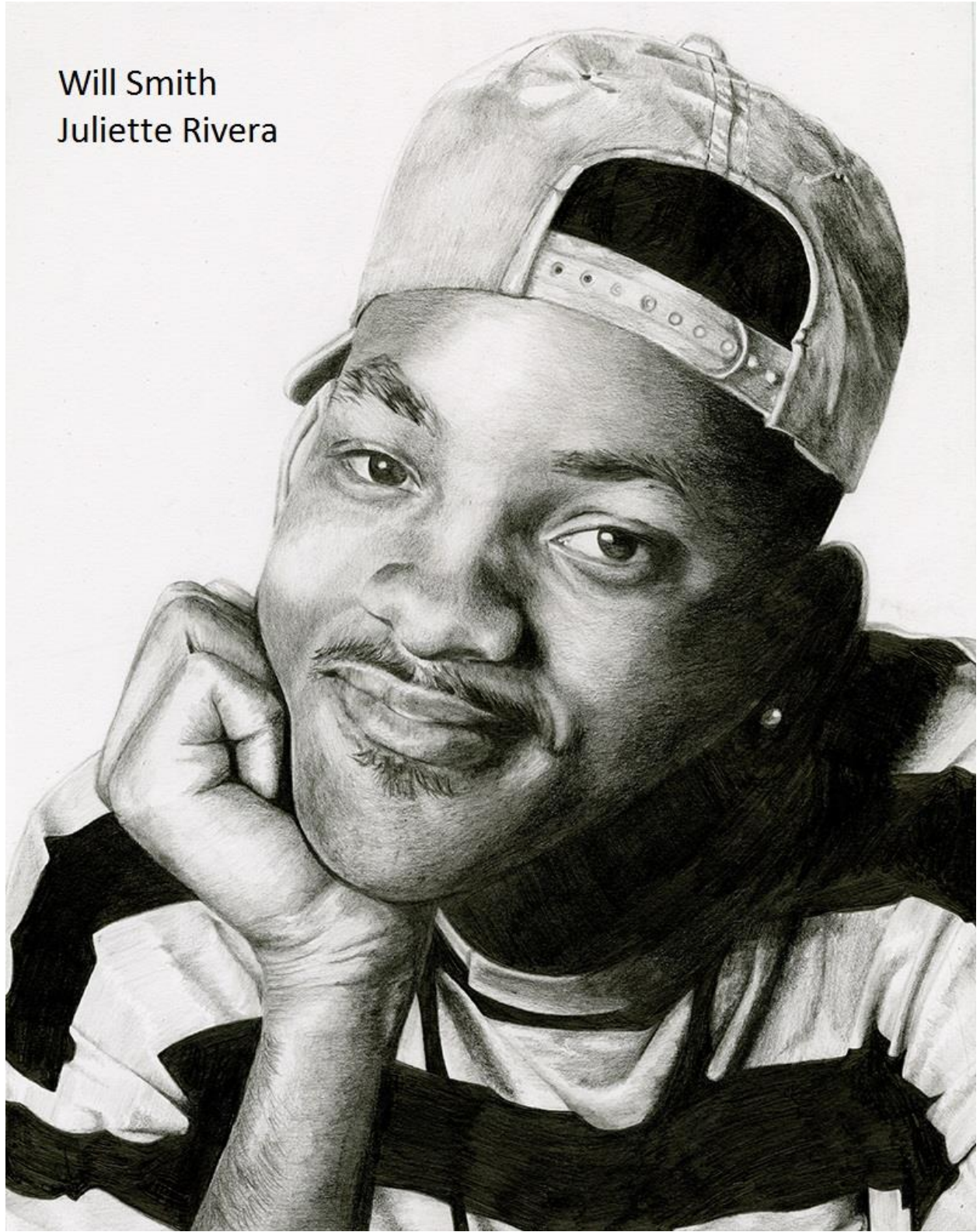
The morning after her final dose of the medication, Jinxie arrived to class with her parents. She told Mr. Fairweather that she wanted to try flying just one more time. Skeptical but curious, the instructor let Jinxie be the first student to fly that day...and, boy, did she fly. Jinxie soared through the sky with ease. Beaming with joy, she out-flew even her most talented

classmates. For the first time in a long time, Mr. and Mrs. Starcross were proud of their daughter. Jinxie's instructor and peers were amazed. After class, the Starcross family celebrated with music, dancing and pixy stix candy. For the first time in weeks, Jinxie was actually happy.

However, at three o'clock, exactly twenty-four hours since she had taken her last dose of medicine, Jinxie was nowhere to be found. After a few minutes of searching, to her parents' horror, Jinxie was found lifeless in her bedroom. Her cheeks were still flushed, her body still warm-- she still felt so alive. Her parents did not have to ask questions. They knew why their precious little girl had passed away so suddenly. Jinxie put her life in danger so that she could belong to a society that did not deserve her. Fairy Wingdom was consumed by fairies with ever-flapping wings and never-beating hearts, two qualities Jinxie Starcross did not manifest.

So, as they mourned their daughter's death, Lulu and Larry Starcross did not curse Jinxie, Dr. Fairchild or the medicine. Instead they cursed themselves and any other fairy who failed to believe in the greatness of their daughter's existence. Jinxie Starcross may not have had model wings, but she had an exemplary soul-- a soul that would have touched so many lives in the future if it had not been destroyed by hate. Jinxie may have assumed she could fix a pair of broken wings, but her broken heart was a force beyond repair.

Will Smith
Juliette Rivera



Three Fourths Home

Cody Lerner

I had always promised myself I would never let school get in the way of education. I hated school. I hated the atmosphere, the smell, the frosted lights overhead that would broadcast your insecurities to everyone around you. Everything about it, from the color of the walls to the dusty, frayed floors. I absolutely hated it. I had dropped out of college and now, three years later, I wasn't going back. When I left college for that last time, I had acted as impulsively as ever – as if I had a bottomless pocket of money.

I vividly remember that walk off campus for the final time. I woke up as dawn broke with a definite apathy for my surroundings. Muted reds and tame oranges called from the sky in tandem with binary sunlight as I hopped out of bed and grabbed my bags. I had packed the night before for an expedient exit. I was happy and I was free. I finally could make my own path. Cars passed slowly, time as well. As the wind brushed through my hair, it was a strange feeling, not having anything to do or anything to hold me back. Everything felt slow. Like a soft cloud pulled along or a lost fish underwater, I was content to be slow, away from the vague traps between cause and effect. Birds bellowed from atop high tress along the roadside. I smelled the sandy heat of incoming summer as I closed my eyes and dreamed of my grand plan. I had no problems; the past didn't matter. I was going to make life my adventure. I have become tired of people telling me to go back to college and get my degree. People got what they paid for. I hated the relationship, the equation, the vending machine like ambiguity. I was tired of hiding behind alcohol. I tasted the chemicals and glowed on the highs. I refused to grow up, I shirked responsibly, rejected the whip, and sunk into happy delirium.

This was me trying to grow up. Out of school, I was free and wanted a life. The weather was warm; I hitchhiked and drifted past trashy strip malls and flickering signs. I was one of dancing coffee cups and flying plastic bags. I used faded construction ribbons as a make shift blanket. It was nights like this when I began to dwell on how stupid I was and what I should've done. I wished I had appreciated it more. I spent the night in roadside woods and shivered on rocks. I had alcohol and cursed to make sure I was fighting and not dying without being noticed. I whimpered in the dark, listening to highway sounds as they slowly drifted into nothingness. It was on a night like this that I drank myself to stillness and quietness. I could feel my heart going into that goodnight as I stared at the house lights that shined through the forest like jewels. Like the warm clusters of families that they were. I laughed a small laugh and cried at my sad voice in the still of night. I clutched a bottle as my fingers clamped on a cold dry cigarette. "Why can't you take it? Said the voices as they shrilled. "You special? More delicate?", the voices never stopped. Birds chirped in the blue dawn. The sky grew grey as I smoked cigarettes. I was glad to have something. I thought my parents loved me. I thought I loved them. Everything seemed so long ago – nothing connected. I became a worse person with each year that passed and I began to forget who I was. I wanted people to know I tried. I know I don't have many nights left, I know I'm running out of time, I know that I am already three fourths home to my death. Perhaps in death I will finally find peace.



Self Portrait
Kieran Walsh

**Sociological Analysis of
“Donald Trump’s Victory Spurs Renewed Scrambling Among Republicans”**
John Munday

In the article “Donald Trump’s Victory Spurs Renewed Scrambling Among Republicans” by Alan Rapperport and Maggie Haberman, *The New York Times* authors look into what will happen now that Trump has won in South Carolina. They question what he has done to get where he is and what the Republican party will do now, especially with Jeb Bush dropping out of the race.

When Trump announced he would be running in the Republican primaries in June, many people thought he was kidding. No one thought he would be a threat to the Republican primaries and, even if he did go through with his crazy ideas, people thought he would drop out in a few months. Not only has Trump continued in the primaries, but he is doing extremely well. In fact, he is doing better than all his opponents. What does this say about the people in this country?

If Trump is doing so well, there *has* to be a group of people in this country who have been impacted by his words and agree with his point of view on multiple issues. Most of the people I discuss Trump with do not agree with his views or ideas, but that could be because the people I discuss politics with are most likely liberal, considering I live in the largely liberal state of Connecticut. I also talk to a very small group of people in their twenties, so they are more likely to be liberals as well. So this begs the question: who are the people that believe Trump would be a successful leader of this country? Considering how often Trump expresses anger about minorities and his feelings on male superiority over women, his supporters are most likely white males. I would assume that these white males are upset with how things are being run in the United States, so they want an anti-establishment candidate.

One can argue that Trump does have many rational anti-establishment plans and ideas for this country, but one cannot ignore how much of a bigot he is, especially after hearing the amount of hate speech he uses whenever he stands behind a podium. But his supporters probably feel upset about how this country is run. In our society, we are always discussing the importance of equal rights for minority groups and how white men especially have so much more privilege than other groups. This may lead white males to feel as if they are now on the fringe of society, but this isn't the reality. As long as this group feels threatened by other racial groups, they will continue to support this candidate. Trump promises to make America great again. His whole platform revolves around the idea that things have gotten worse in this country, and the notion that he is only person who can save the day, because of the very fact that he is not a politician and is not afraid to say anything that pops into his mind. For example Trump has said, "I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose voters," showing both his arrogance and his lack of fear.

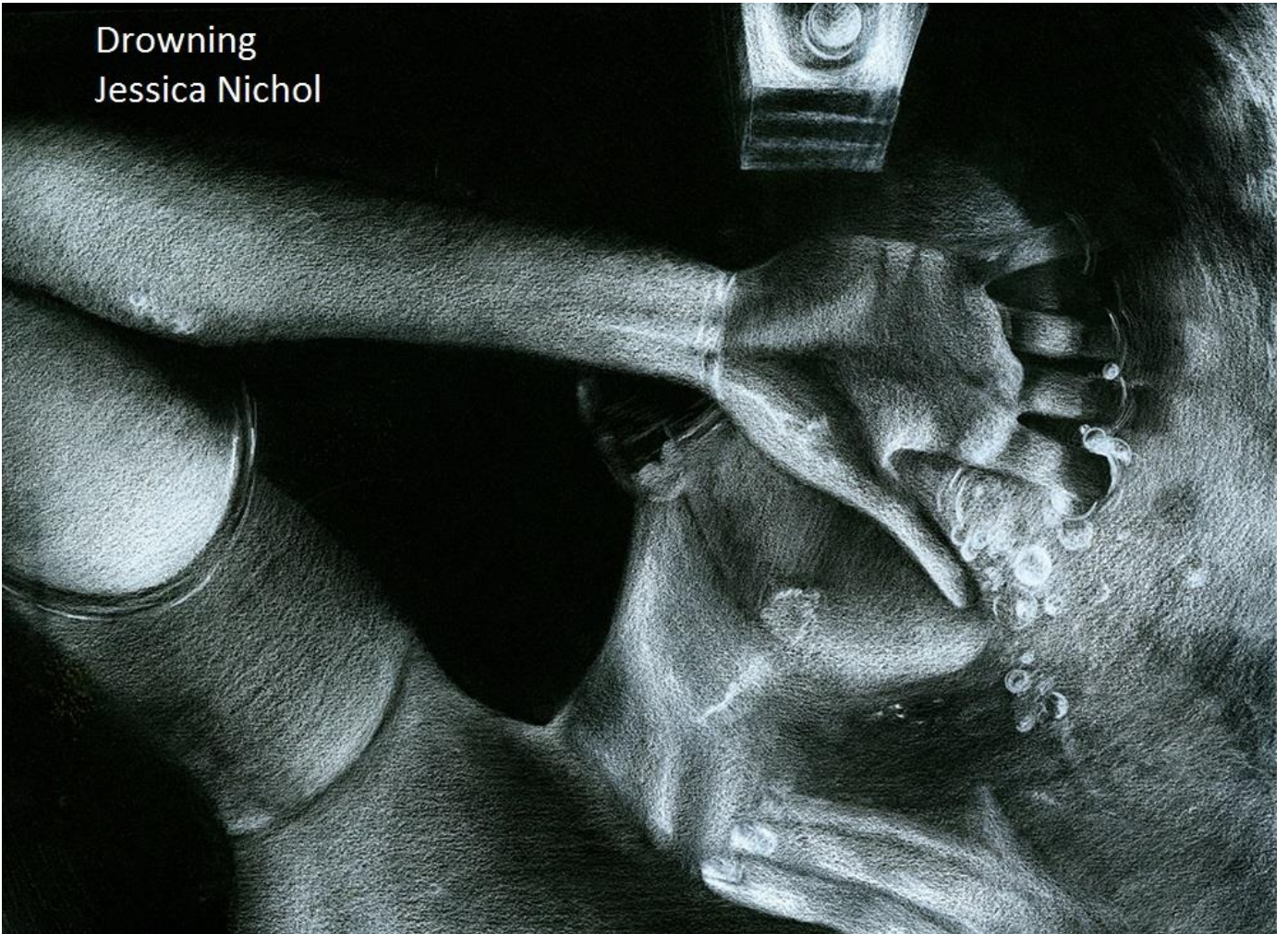
As far as Republican candidates go, Trump is very moderate, meaning that his policies are not very conservative at all and that, within the Republican Party, his supporters are not typical Republicans. So one of Trump's greatest advantages might be that there are numerous candidates running against him that attract typical Republicans. This is a *good* thing for Trump since there isn't only one other candidate that anti-Trump voters can all support to make a unified stance against him and beat him. Therefore, Trump can gain a majority because his opposition is divided among multiple candidates that do not individually have enough support to beat him.

Trump's image as an outsider is part of his huge success. Most Americans do not follow politics to extreme detail, and it can become very confusing to choose who stands closest to your own views. However Trump is a familiar face who most people recognize thanks to his show and

the fact the he is able to fund himself appeals to many people who want a strong, self-sufficient candidate. But one of the greatest factors contributing to Trump's success may be the constant coverage of him in the media, which makes him seem like a more present and real force. Since Trump has been so exposed to the American people through the media, they may feel more comfortable with him. Voters may feel like they know him more than any of the other candidates and are therefore more likely to vote for him despite the fact that he is often in the media because of his frequently racist or sexist comments. These people often brush aside these comments as Trump just speaking his mind and being honest.

Overall, Trump's greatest strength is the ability to pull people who feel like outsiders and convince them that his inexperience is the key to re-establishing America as the world power it once was. No matter what you think about the candidate, you have to agree that he is very good at bringing attention to his ideas and convincing people he can solve the issues that matter to him.

Drowning
Jessica Nichol



Walk of Shame

Maeve Smith

Silvia's head lay against the cold Honda Civic window. She closely followed the rain drops as they steadily made their way down the glass. Forging a path in bold inches at times, but at some points struggling to gain leeway. Every now and then her focus was drawn to the dingy gear shift. Her uncle's knuckles turned white every time he shoved the stick firmly into gear. She watched the tendons in his wrist tighten with every jolt. She closed her eyes every time they came to a stop light — finding comfort in the constant vibration she felt on her forehead from the window whilst praying that her life could stay in this singular moment. She didn't want to go back. She didn't want to go forward. She just wanted to stay in the moment she was in. Unfortunately, for Silvia, that wasn't possible. She knew she couldn't afford to waste what she was about to do. She knew she couldn't fathom the alternate option. But what Silvia truly didn't know was how this next step was going to affect her in the long run. She figured she would cross that bridge when the time came. Yet as her uncle's sad excuse for a car rolled forward, the bridge became closer and more real.

When they pulled into the parking lot, Silvia's uncle attempted to offer her some words of comfort, or wisdom, or something along those lines. Her mind couldn't follow the stream of words as they awkwardly poured out of his mouth. Her eyes in a permanent glaze. As if she was about to cry, but the tears didn't want the break through to her rounded cheeks. Just then, the jumble of advice offered by her uncle was broken by a pounding on the window. She hesitantly turned her head. She knew what she was about to experience. It was part of what she was dreading. A crinkled, sun-spotted, old face appeared through the rain dropped window. The crinkled eyebrows and piercing stare was something she would never forget. Silvia read the dry lips of the woman. They read "Murderer! Baby killer!" Silvia then tilted her head to the right and was confronted with a portrait of a fetus, picket signs, and more angry protesters. The tears she was holding back were now rolling down her cheeks at a steady pace. Just then, her uncle grabbed her cold, boney hand. She jumped and her knees knocked together. He told her it was going to be okay. He told her that she was strong. She was a fighter. She could make it through this. He wiped away the tears from her face with one smooth motion around her cheeks to her jaw bone. Silvia took a deep breath and attempted to find her center.

Her uncle got out first, cleared the protesters and opened her car door. He reached for her hand and she gave it willingly. He put her hood up and placed his hands on her shoulders. She hunched forward and took lunges towards the clinic door. Here she was, one girl. Surrounded by at least twenty people. She couldn't help but hear what the people had to say, but she couldn't stop the words from settling into what seemed to be deep in her gut. Every harsh comment was an even harsher swallow. But oddly enough, being called a baby murderer didn't affect Silvia in the way her uncle's hand on her shoulders did.

As her white-ish Keds propelled her towards the glass clinic doors, she felt an awkward sensation trickle up each leg. Her stomach began to turn and drop. She had that weird pit in her stomach — the

type that felt dirty and wrong. Silvia knew this feeling. She shut her eyes tight, as she had each time before. She felt as if time was moving at a unbelievably slow pace. She wanted everything to go so much quicker. Quick enough so that the reality of what was taking place couldn't sink in. Silvia looked up, past her hood at her uncle. Her eyes shut tight as she let out one singular, powerful weep. Then another. And another.

Silvia leaned into her uncle's chest. He was the only one to protect her from the crowd. She was yelled at and pointed at. There were parts of the mob that were angry and violent. And then there were some who were crying just like Silvia, begging for her to save the life she was about to end. One woman stepped in front of Silvia, blocked the young girls path and hollered, "Can't live with your mistakes, can ya little slut?" Silvia's blood boiled. He rubbed his hands across her back for comfort. Once up the steps, Silvia opened the door and stepped inside to a waiting room full of women. The outside noise seemed distant now. She felt a wave of peace flood her face, releasing the tension in her shoulders. She took a deep breath and took off her hood. Now all she had to do was get rid of her uncle's baby.



Anti-Smoking
Kaitlyn Kreitzman

She Walks Alone

Jane Kenney

The evil of the world softly grazes her cheek,
Inviting her into its gruesome woes.
She's always been a beacon of light to everyone she knows,
But her patience is slowly meeting its peak.

Catching her breath as she comes to terms,
A hitch in her throat by the Devil's clutch,
And though she may not trust herself much,
She walks alone as the Lord affirms.

Independently, she will stride.
Lost in the dark, surrounded in fear.
The warmth of the silence she holds so dear,
Close to her heart with her hope as a guide.

Yabusame / Japanese Archer
Kotomi Mizutani



Reconnect

Celebrate

Vistas Editors

Beat the drum and feast
Kick up one's heels and let loose
Watch, perform, honor

When Life Strikes

Willow Holschuh

Most of us have these moments we wish we could relive for all eternity. A sliver of time where all of our worries dissipate and true happiness warmly radiates throughout our bodies. Some people may have trouble pinpointing this occasion while others might have millions of moments to choose from. I, on the other hand, have absolutely no issue discerning what moment it was for me.

July 16th, 2014 was a thick and hot Wednesday in the Deerfield Valley of Vermont. *Now, before I really get into this, let's be clear about something. This isn't an excerpt from a Nicholas Sparks novel, okay? This is my life we are talking about.* My boyfriend, Chris, and I had spent the afternoon hours splashing around in the cool lake next to my home before we decided to head back to his place for some well-deserved ice cream. We made our usual drive down the winding dirt roads to his house, all the while we discussed what we should do for the night. Maybe it was the warm weather getting to me or maybe it was a divine thought, but I suggested that we camp on his trampoline for the evening. He laughed, a hearty rumble, before he realized that I was completely serious. We pulled into his driveway, gravel crunching under the hot rubber of my car's tires. Before leaving the cool interior of my car, I asked him if he was up for it. He saw the wink of challenge sparkle in my eyes and the slight smirk mixed with my smile, he accepted.

We opened the car doors and climbed out into the sticky mountain air. I ascended the wooden steps to his front door, with Chris in close tow, eager to gather the night's supplies. Inside we collected all of the blankets from his bed and made a pile of provisions. *But let's be honest, I did most of the work. I always do.* I also gathered pillows, a flashlight, and the very necessary snacks. A typical teenage boy, Chris reaches for his fully charged iPad. I scoffed. After the pile was half of my height, we took turns lugging it out to the trampoline. The sun was setting over the blue mountains, and excitement stirred as we made our makeshift bed on the bouncy black fabric of the trampoline.

The muggy night slowly enshrouded our camp while we watched Dredd, a futuristic action movie. After the movie ended, we laid on our backs, held clammy hands, observed the twinkling stars, reminiscent of the fireflies that swarmed around us. Soon, the night got the better of us and we drifted into a summery sleep.

2 AM, my sliver of time I wish I could freeze began. We were awakened by the thunderous roar of the storm clouds overhead. We locked eyes and laughed because we should have expected Vermont's crazy weather to throw something like this at us. In the mere minute that we gathered up everything on the trampoline, it started to pour. The rain, like waves, washed over the dry straw fields surrounding us. Instead of running for cover, Chris and I grabbed each other, dropped the blankets in the process, and kissed. Realizing quickly that all of our belongings were getting soaked, we ran and threw them into the car. *I was actually quite worried about my new iPhone despite not wanting to "ruin the mood."* Once the provisions were sheltered, we ran back out into field and played like children who had never seen a storm before.

After we saw a flash of lighting on the mountainous horizon we decided to take cover. Instead of going inside his home to sleep on an actual bed like most people would do, we opted for the back seat

of the car. Huddled in our damp blankets, we drifted off to sleep again. The rain and thunder created a stormy lullaby that sung us into slumber.

We awoke the next morning at 8:30 AM to the sounds of Chris' black Rottweiler, Jada, scratching at the car windows. *She's quite obnoxious like that.* We rolled over to face each other and I smiled through the masses of wet hair that covered my face. Chris apologized that the night hadn't gone as planned, but I told him that he didn't control the weather and I had enjoyed our night.

The rain hadn't stopped me from having my moment. It actually created my moment. The storm, in all of its glory, gave me a lasting memory and a stronger connection to the boy I love.



Dear House on Camore Street,

Every time I look at my right knee I begin to think of you. The two inch scar takes me back to the narrow staircase leading to the attic and a shard of glass. When I think of you, I think of the slate porch where I posed for a picture on my first day of kindergarten wearing a Barbie backpack.

To the walls that watched me forge my first real friendship and sing-a-long to Barney, I thank you. You were the guardians that sheltered me and nobly looked on as I grew through my tiny formative years.

It was easy to complain about you. Whenever the air conditioner cut out or the kitchen sink had a leak, we began to resent you little and wished to move to a new place that was less problematic. As it is with most people's first homes that, in time, may no longer suit the needs of its inhabitants, you were no exception. Somehow, what my parents saw in you faded, and you became second rate.

At the green age of six, my parents packed up my sister and I and brought us to a new house. Since she was only one, my sister had not yet gotten to meet and imprint her memory on you. She hadn't hunted for eggs on dewy Easter mornings nor had she drawn on your aged and cracked blacktop with rainbow chalk. But I hadn't forgotten you. Whether it was the memory of the dated stucco walls in the living room, or your antique wooden beams, you always made me feel safe and comforted.

Driving by you as the years pass immediately brings me back to the times we shared.

Thank you for keeping them secret and keeping them between us. Like that time I put a unicorn party hat on my dog for her first birthday. You always understood and, with unwavering support, you cheered me on as I danced around the kitchen to the soundtrack of *The Little Mermaid*.

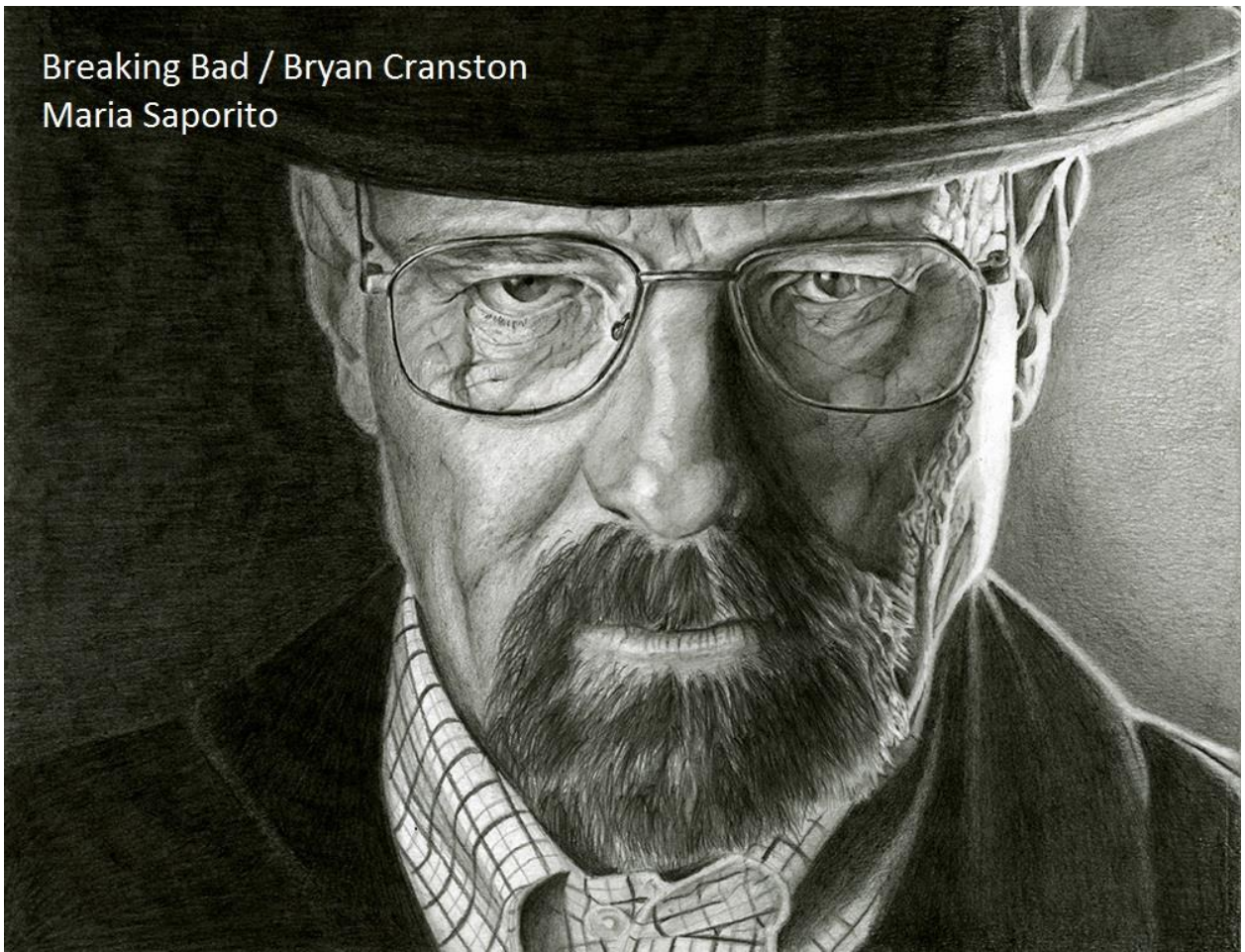
I thank you for these moments because you were the space where I first found myself. You observed my first steps, tantrums, and dress up games. You allowed me silence so I could fill it with my laughter and words. Your entryway gave me many bruises from many attempts to skate on your wooden floor with my socks.

Thank you for keeping an eye on me when my parents were busy and when no one else would listen. I knew I could close the white shutter door to my room and confide in the painted pink daisies that bordered the molding.

These are the reasons why I couldn't and still can't let you go. Each time your blue door passes by my windshield, I am reminded of playing with my Skip-It on the back porch. When the memories surge, my scar begins to tingle. It's my permanent reminder of you, as the mark on my body is just as real as the mark you made in my heart.

Love,
Allie Potenza

Breaking Bad / Bryan Cranston
Maria Saporito



Ole Blue Fixer-Upper

Mikaela Marbot

A woman is sitting cross-legged in an empty room holding a small blue toy truck in her hands. Her gaze is distant, looking through every person in the audience, as she begins to speak.

Adriana: He told me that we would be okay. He told me we would have a life together. He told me he loved me. But now he's gone and I'm left here with the burden of knowing I'll never see him again. I still have the scar that forces me to remember that what we went through wasn't a dream. The pale pink line is all I have left of my memories with him. Even though I can still sense the touch of his lips on mine and the shivers his hand created as it traced through my hair, I can't feel *him*. I can't walk over and touch him or talk to him or even call him on the phone. I can't dial his number and hear his voice reassuring me that he'll return my call as soon as possible. All I can do is trace my fingers along this jagged scar and hope that he is somewhere safe. I hope he's in a place full of light... he always hated the dark.

She holds up the toy truck in her hands and shows it to the audience with pride.

His truck is still parked behind my house. I absolutely refuse to let anyone touch it, let alone move it. Sometimes at night, just before sunset, I go out to the truck and run my palm across the warm metal as a cool breeze sends shivers down my spine. I never climb inside it though. I just run my hands across the heated metal and then leave. I go back to the house and up the steps, into the kitchen to make dinner—but I'm always looking out the window at that blue pickup truck glinting in the dusky light. But as soon as the light fades from the sky I close the curtains and leave the truck surrounded in darkness. I can't stand to see the shadows crawl across the hood and mask the blue shine of the metal. The dark is not something I enjoy looking at.

Eventually the darkness fades and the sun reappears in the sky. I start my mornings with a jog and I always make sure to jog around the truck and give it a loving pat before completely beginning my day. Sometimes weeds grow up around the tires and I have to take a few moments to clear them out. The truck has to be ready. It has to be waiting for his return. Everything has to be just right, because someday I know he'll come back to me and he'll want his truck. It has to happen.

The woman looks down at the ground and speaks softly.

But I'm stupid for letting myself believe in the return of a ghost. He's not coming back. It's been three years since I lost him. Three long years of waiting for his return even though I know he's gone. I should be gone too. I don't know how I made it out of the truck that night...

The woman begins to roll the toy truck in small circles on the floor in front of her.

The doctors said that I'm lucky to be alive. Only the lord knows how that happened. But it's not fair. It's not fair that I've spent the last three years waiting for a ghost to return. You know, sometimes, I think I hear the truck running. That's why I close the curtains at night. I don't want to see the eerie glow of headlights passing by my windows. I don't want to think about the shattered headlights dully glinting in the cracked sockets of that rusty blue pickup truck. I don't want to remember the burst of light that blinded me with pain. I don't want to remember losing him.

The woman slams the toy truck on the ground.

Stop.

I have to stop this.

I can't keep thinking about the accident.

I have to move on.

But how?

How do I move on when my heart tells me to wait? How do I drive away from the pain when the truck is rusting out in the backyard? You should really see that truck. Let me tell you. That old truck is a monster. A demon I tell ya. It's ugly and dented and there's a gash stabbing right through the back of the bed. It's like my scar, all jagged and sharp. The windshield is shattered and the area above the driver's seat ripples out from where he...

Tears begin to fall from the woman's eyes as she picks up the toy truck and looks at it closely.

[Whispering] You know what, I bet he never felt it. I bet he never even knew what happened. He didn't see it coming, that's for sure. He was too busy looking at me. Too busy making sure I was okay. My stupid scream. I was yelling at him. Telling him that I hated him. Demanding that he take me home. I told him that he was useless and I wanted to be with someone who would actually pay attention to me instead of some stupid old truck. I never understood his infatuation with that old blue fixer-upper. I always thought he loved the truck more than me. I thought I had to fight for his attention. I wanted to be loved more than the truck. That's why I grabbed the wheel....

The woman is overcome with tears and the rest of the sentence is just a guttural cry. She smacks the toy truck on the ground and it loudly bounces and rolls a few feet away from her. She reaches for it before continuing.

[Angrily] That stupid truck. *[She grabs the toy and clutches it until her knuckles are visibly turning white.]* How he loved it. How I hated it. But now I can't seem to get rid of it. *[Softer]* It's all I have left of him. The only thing that reminds me of that night. The only thing that makes me remember the pain and heartache. It's the largest reminder of my biggest mistake.

The worst night in living history. The night I told him that I hated him. I told him that I wanted to move on. But I really didn't. I loved him. I still love him. But I lost him. And I can never forget.

The woman begins to cry again and pushes the toy truck away, to the other side of the room. A small crash is heard as the truck smacks into the wall and bounces back. The woman closes her eyes to her tears and fiddles with a chain that is hidden beneath her shirt. Slowly she pulls it out and trails her finger across the silver.

[Barely audible whisper] But the truck isn't even the worst reminder of losing him. I know he loved the truck, but he loved me more. I know because they found a little black box in his pocket. He was going to make the night perfect. I have proof.

The woman reveals what is at the bottom of the necklace chain. A shiny engagement ring sparkles in the shine of stage lights.

[Crying] He was going to make the night perfect. But I grabbed the wheel.

Blackout.



CONTRIBUTORS

Mary Awad is the Creative Fiction/Drama Editor of this year's edition of Horizons. A native of East Norwich, NY, she is majoring in Digital Communication and minoring in English. After her anticipated May 2016 graduation, she will join the job hunt and hopes to find something both creative and fulfilling. She has written for *Groove*, a local New Haven publication, *The Artifice*, an online magazine for articles about games, anime, art, and pop culture, *The Oyster Bay Enterprise-Pilot*, and *Levittown Tribune*, her local newspapers. Mary is also a member of the Delta Epsilon Sigma and Lambda Pi Eta Honor Societies, NRHH, and SHU band program.

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