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115 Vernon: The Journal of the Writing Associates at Trinity College, "Renewal"

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RENEWAL

115 Vernon

**The Journal of the Writing
Associates at Trinity College**

Spring 2011

Editorial Board

Alexander Champoux '11, Alessandra Siraco '11, Emily Thornton '13, Lorenzo Sewanan '12

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A Note from the Editors

We, the Editors of *115 Vernon*, are proud to present our Spring 2011 issue of the Writing Associates' Journal. Where last semester's issue covered a broad range of disciplines and topics, our Spring '11 issue has been composed with the theme of "renewal" in mind. Even then, we were lucky to receive a variety of submissions, wide-ranging and vibrantly creative despite the topic restriction.

Information Regarding 115 Vernon and The Writing Center at Trinity

The Writing Center at Trinity hires Writing Associates and Head Tutors to demonstrate engaging and intellectual characteristics of passionate tutors. These Associates collaborate in an editorial board—comprised of, for this edition, one Associate and two Head Tutors—to establish the literary journal *115 Vernon*. The journal aims to demonstrate the intellectual curiosity, academic diversity, and written finesse present on Trinity's campus. The College boasts a liberal arts education, and *115 Vernon* strives to exemplify that interdisciplinary characteristic unique to Trinity.

The Writing Center at Trinity is open Monday – Thursday, 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. Information is available online at <http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/writcent/> or via e-mail at writing-center@trincoll.edu.

Crutches
Alessandra Siraco

It had been six months, but we were still moving slowly.

"Allie," my mom said, "Can you walk a little slower?"

I pulled my new sunglasses down a little bit further over my nose so she wouldn't see me roll my eyes. I gradually slowed myself to a steady pace, keeping in stride with my mom as she pulled one crutch in front of the other, slowly but surely, as we moved closer and closer towards Boston Common.

We move slowly even now, sometimes, four and a half years later, although now the crutches are in the basement, somewhere. I don't want to look for them.

My hair was still slightly straight but I could feel it beginning to curl from the humidity as we stepped further out of the trees, into the sun. I felt locks of hair, in tiny ringlets, forming around my face. The Starbucks coffee cups, designer handbags, and relative silence of Newbury Street transformed into sneakers, hoodies, and Berklee students' guitar chords of Boston Common.

I wanted her to walk faster. So I walked faster.

I could walk forward and fast, and I didn't want my life to slow down, even if hers had to. But I didn't want hers to, either—I wanted to forget, to move on and move on faster.

Her sunglasses ducked beneath her eyes and she stopped and stood still for a minute to prop them up again, leaning one of the tan crutches against her side as she paused.

"Allie," she said again, and I could tell her voice was strained, "Can you just wait here for a minute?"

I stood against the chain-like fence next to a baseball field in the Common, glaring at her. The old-fashioned, heavy camera hung from my wrist, and I hated her for making me carry the camera, even though she couldn't. I hated her for making me stop.

The chain links of the fence, hot from the sun, dug into my back.

"I'm sorry, Al," my mom said when she saw the look on my face, "I can't do anything else, though."

We aren't tourists in Boston—we live in Massachusetts and my mom grew up in a close suburb of Boston—and when someone walked by they smiled when they heard her talk.

"You're from Boston, right?" the woman stopped and asked my mom, taking advantage of us standing still. Not waiting for an answer, she asked, "Can you say 'park the car in Harvard yard' for me? I want to hear what it sounds like."

I glanced at the tourist, who had no idea what stationary argument she had interrupted. She was holding a map of Boston's Back Bay, with little sticky notes to highlight the sites on the Freedom Trail, and she was probably someone who "quacked" at Duck Tours, too.

"Park the car in Harvard yard," my mom said, pronouncing all of her "r's," as if to prove that she could, and the tourist looked a little disappointed. We were in Boston that weekend because my brother and dad were away on a baseball

trip, and Boston was all my mom and I could do, with no way to drive or fly because of her leg.

I started walking again, away from the tourist, and then stopped and waited for my mom as she walked up slowly towards me. We made it to the pavement. It was smooth and perfect, like this day could have been, if the car had missed the guard rail, if it had been summer instead of icy winter, if the tire hadn't flew off. But my mom's unsmooth crutches and the limp I acquired from walking at an unnatural pace made us walk at an odd angle together, in silence, complementing each other in our awkwardness.

She was trying harder than I was.

I wasn't mad at her, I was mad at what had happened, but I'm not sure she knew that then. Or now. The crutches are in the basement, but the bolt is still in her leg—she tells me that every so often, when I begin to yell at her because she can't walk up stairs normally, or because she gets nervous when I want to drive in the snow. She tells me that a lot, actually, because I've graduated from silent glaring to vocal shouting, trying to yell so much that maybe the violent words will shake it out of her, shake the bolt out of her leg, shake the memory out of myself. She doesn't remember because she was asleep, but I woke up in the middle of it, while the car was spinning. I tell her that all the time, after she tells me that she still has stitches in her leg. I remember waiting for the passenger door to be cut open so she could get out.

The crutches are in the basement now, but back then they were still gripped between her fingers, making them so red and raw she'd have to put a wet cloth on them at night, to soothe the blisters. I was angry that she still had them, even though it had been six months; I didn't care that her hands hurt.

The Swan Boats were in full swing that day, because it was sunny and summertime, and as we walked by we saw little kids riding them like it was the best thing in the world to throw bread at swans planted in a dirty pond. There's a bridge that hangs the water, where the boats go under and where people can watch them glide by. I remember walking with my mother over the bridge when I was little, running with her, even, and throwing bread in the pond together. We would rip the pieces and feel its stale crunch as the bread split down the middle, ripping the crust off first and then the middle part.

Back then, nobody was limping and nobody was in pain. Nobody had tan-and-metal crutches held at her side. We hadn't even bought that car yet, never mind lost it.

The Swan Boats faded from my sight as the sun did, and we gradually walked to the T at Boylston. I went in and held the door, smelling in the scent of sweat and McDonald's that the Boylston stop always smelled like, and looked in front of me at puddles of spilled soda and crumpled newspapers piled in overflowing trash cans. Two people stood at the token station—this was before the CharlieCard, when the T still had tokens instead of a piece of paper to allow you to ride—and I could hear the tokens falling into the slots as they paid their way through. A T security guard sat in the booth facing the street, snugly fit into her blue-gray Massachusetts Bay Transportation uniform, drinking a Big Gulp from 7-11.

I also saw a giant stairwell, with no handicap entrances.

My mom saw the stairwell, too, so we turned around and continued walking, through Chinatown and the Theatre District, past the reddened bricks of the Freedom Trail and tourists pointing up at the gold-tipped buildings.

"Do you want to take a different T?" my mom asked me. I shook my head.

"We're almost there," I said, even though we weren't. She knew that we weren't close to the hotel, and I did too, but she didn't argue. She just kept walking. Or limping.

She didn't complain as much as I would have.

We walked through Faneuil Hall to get to the hotel, gradually making our way through the rotating circular door and inside. The room was air-conditioned and I flopped on the bed, waiting for my mom to make it from the doorway to the couch. She was brave—I knew it then, and I know it now, although I've never told her—and she sat down, her knee slowly folding, creakily, like it wasn't meant to do that. Getting into the passenger seat was the last time it had folded easily, the last time it ever would.

"Do you mind if we order room service?" she asked me, pointing to the menu that was propped up on the table next to the bed. "You can order anything you want. It'll be fun."

We ordered it instead of going out. When the tray came with steaming coffee in big white mugs and grilled cheese with the cheese stringing out of it, gooey, and Diet Pepsi in special bottles that they don't even make anymore, my mom smiled, pulling the coffee table closer so that we could use it as a regular table, and pretend we weren't in our hotel room.

"See," she said, "Look at how great this is."

I smiled but she could tell something was wrong.

"I'm sorry," she said, picking up a piece of toast, "My leg just can't go any further today, Al." Her words were sad, but her face showed creases in her eyebrows, as if wondering why her sixteen-year-old daughter couldn't understand this.

It was then that I looked at her leg. It had been six months since it happened, but I could still see the stitches.

I could still feel the hospital bracelet around my own wrist.

"Isn't this okay, though?" she asked. She motioned towards the window and I looked out, a perfect view of Faneuil Hall, tourists buying lobster hats and taking pictures of the Boston skyline.

I nodded, and ate some toast, but I don't remember what it tasted like. Like toast, I guess—obviously—but for me, the crutches became everything. They were still relatively new, then.

We watched T.V. but my mom fell asleep when we were in the middle of watching something, some stupid reality show that was on. I looked at her as she slept, at the crutches leaning up against the bed, in case she needed to get up in the middle of the night. I hated the doctors in the Plymouth Memorial Hospital for not fixing her leg, at the EMTs for not using the Jaws of Life faster, at the staff at the Balsams Resort for not telling us to be careful on the road, at myself for falling asleep in the car, even though it probably wouldn't have made a

difference. I hated that I didn't remember enough, that I remembered too much. And that she didn't remember it, and I did.

When my mother fell asleep, I shut off the T.V. and sat in the darkness, hotel room sheets pulled up to my nose. They were cold from being in the air conditioning for so long, and I could feel the stiffness from being washed so many times.

The crutches became more familiar as the hotel room gradually faded from my memory.

About a year ago, we were back at the Boylston stop. It was March, and still freezing because Boston had been cool that spring, so we had on winter coats and scarves. I was nervous for a job interview, and my mom came with me. She hadn't used the crutches in a few years, at that point, but she still had trouble climbing stairs because of her leg.

"It'll be fun," she said, "I'll wait for you and when you're done, we can go to lunch."

We took the T because it was too cold to walk, and when we got to the Boylston stop I stared at the stairwell: a narrow, high, inanimate challenge to my mother.

I climbed the stairs and my mom climbed too—twenty-seven dirty, small, intimidating steps to the top. The grit was molded into the stairs, into the grooves, and my mom gripped the grimy railing as we walked up towards the street, wind blowing down from the opened doors. I was wearing a sweater and a scarf, but they weren't warm enough for the cool spring of Boston. My mom walked up the stairs, one foot at a time, like kids do when they're learning to climb the stairs.

"Go ahead of me," she said, gesturing with her free hand, but I stayed next to her, slowing down my climbing to match hers.

Everyone walked ahead of us, Bostonian fast-moving nature, as we treaded up the stairs.

In actuality, we were only a little bit slower than we would have been if it hadn't happened. But I still rolled my eyes as she grabbed the railing, making sure she was on the right side because that was the easier side to lift her leg up. I still told her to walk faster.

I still tell her to walk faster.

"Mom," I yelled a few months later, this winter break—the five year anniversary of when it happened. "Why can't you just drive? Just get in the car. It's not that hard."

I looked outside and it was snowing, but only a little, and I stood in my living room twisting the fabric of my bathrobe in my fingers. It was unraveling at the waist. She stood facing me, next to the flowered couch, looking out past the pink curtains to the driveway and the snow blowing against the window. Winter in New England is usually worse than this.

"I don't understand it," I said, "We've all moved on." My fingers trembled as she stared at me, standing straight up—no crutches.

She walked past me and up the stairs, still grabbing the railing, like she did at the Boylston stop, dragging her right leg up slightly slower than her left.

Even between my tears and the rough pulling at the fabric of my bathrobe, I still judged her for making me remember. She was going up the stairs too slowly.

She hasn't been fast enough for me in five years, and I wonder if she ever will be.

Blogs in Iran: The Creation and Nature of a National Youth Culture

Katherine Fawcett

The creation of a youth culture by definition requires a demographic segmentation along lines of age, rather than using economic, social, gendered, political or other divisions. However, those are all factors that characterize the youth and help form a common lifestyle and identity. Benedict Anderson's belief that nations are imagined communities can be extended to the concept of an Iranian youth identity. However, its imagined and arbitrary quality does not mean that its effects are any less real. The youth population can be further segmented, along socio-economic lines for example, to find an even more unified and cohesive culture. The youth culture can also be defined and explained by how it is formed, the causality behind it and conditions that link the individuals together. I found that the appearance of a cohesive youth culture in Iran is a reflection of a global commodity and popular culture and a response to repressive local conditions.

During my Iranian blog research, I was predominantly exposed to a presumably higher socio-economic youth class, as my findings were contingent upon the individuals' access to a computer and ability to speak English. The attribute of "having a language" is a form of cultural capital, social distinction, and evidence of a certain amount of education (de Koning 59). In Cairo, "having" English usually indicates that the individual attended a private language school, was born into a "better" family, and has a likelihood of working in the upper segments of the labor market (de Koning 60). Thus the online population that I examined does not necessarily represent the Iranian youth as a whole, but offers valuable insight into the concerns, lifestyles, and values of English-speaking Iranian youth online. While the majority of Iranian blogs are written in Persian, English ones are often written by ex-patriots in the Western world, Iranians in the capital (a place more open to global exchange), or bloggers with experience abroad. Also, many bloggers were among the upper echelons of the youth demographic age-wise, rather than in high school or younger. Thus there is a gray youth category, where age divisions are flexible and lifestyle is a greater indication of belonging to a youth culture. For example, while many of the 28 bloggers I followed were in their thirties, not one of them indicated a married status and many still lived at home.

The personal blogs that serve as an outlet for expressing opinions and everyday occurrences best reveal the lifestyles of Iranian youth, and signal to a global commodity culture. While passing comments about coveted or newly obtained commodities often reveal the significance of owning such objects, a car for example, I found a widespread taste in Western popular culture to be evidence of a global commodity culture. Blogger profiles and "About me" sections often include American bands, singers, and movies under interests. Fateme, a 25-year-old "master of software engineering," well demonstrates the integration of Western popular culture in her favorite movies listed on her blog, "My small life." While most of the list contains popular American movies, she does include a

few Persian movies, and claims "classical" and "old Iranian like all ghamar or marzie songs" for her favorite music (Fateme).

Cultural nationalism was an evident theme I came across, but the pervasiveness and ubiquity of Western commodities and pop culture among the Iranian youth is irrefutable. The idea that Western taste is linked with a higher social class and modernization is extremely important for the Iranian youth, who are extremely class conscious in their social and professional lives. Iranians are able to project a certain socio-economic class through their purchases, outward dress, and life style in general, which affects their potential marriage partners, among other things. Usually a tendency towards the West in those categories indicates a higher status on the socio-economic scale. Mahdavi illustrates this phenomenon in *Passionate Uprisings* with cases of Absolut vodka having more status than home-brewed alcohol, revealing dress and Western designer labels indicating wealth, and Western popular music being more à la mode than traditional Persian recordings. As in Cairo, the trend of later marriage and living with one's parents does allow the youth a level of financial independence and personal spending money for such commodities (de Koning 110).

Especially in Iranian cities such as Tehran, the residence of many bloggers, the upper class can emulate lifestyles more similar to those of an equivalent class in a cosmopolitan area in a different country, or even continent, than to the lower class citizens who geographically live next to them. This phenomenon is also evident in Cairo where "new cosmopolitan lifestyles and matrices of belonging come into being through an intricate convergence of local distinctive class cultures and transnational economic and cultural flows" (de Koning 162). In an environment where class-based privilege and the benefits associated with it are often indicated through global (read American) commodities and a level of savoir faire in Western culture, a professed expertise in those things is almost strategic for the youth. From this, a global youth culture is somewhat fostered through popular culture and commodities as an attempt to forge a flattering or modern identity.

Commodities are a physical manifestation of economic status and cultural preference. This is reflected in the emergence and frequenting of coffee-shops based on American counter-parts, which provide a space for an upper-middle class social life. Fateme's blog includes a post about a visit with her friend to a coffee shop in the city, an outing to a social space for men and women. There she describes her conversation with her friend about love and relationships and how she listened to "Hotel California" by the Eagles, an easily relatable scene for an American youth (Fateme). American style is a sort of cultural capital, which is easily accessible through Western music, movies, and certain tastes. Other bloggers, including Alireza Behnam of *Forbidden*, do describe government restrictions on certain music, movies, clothes and other modes of self-expression, often imposed by the strict Ministry of Culture. But with a certain cyber savvy, the youth do not seem to have much problem evading these constraints, which perhaps even provide them with a rebellious incentive to disregard them even more. With the apparent internet access of these bloggers comes an easily available exposure to and sharing of Western commodity and

popular culture, and a means to articulate one's identity with proclaimed interests in such things. There is a clear demonstration by the youth bloggers of knowledge of Western commodity and popular culture.

In addition to the youth's attributes of leisure, they are also often political and nationalistic about their cultural history and traditions as a result of repressive conditions on the part of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Twitter, music videos, blogs, and youth discussion forums are largely political and express suspicion of the government and opposition to its politics. Political debates, especially over recent hot topics such as the 2009 presidential elections, spark up under music videos, on Myspace pages, and all sorts of online venues. In an online newspaper, Kourosh Ziabari interviews young Iranians about the "ongoing unrest in their country" after President Ahmadinejad won the election, and reports the youth's suspicion and confusion about his election and potential fraud, disenchantment with the whole voting process, and claims to never vote again. The report's ample quotes reflect how many of the youth in Iran are critical and aware of Iran's current political situations and willing to speak out, especially under the protection and anonymity of a virtual space. Their opinions widely differ, but they are largely displeased with current events and problems in their country.

One main complaint against the government expressed by the youth is the lack of a private and alternative media. Under the absence of independent radio and TV stations in Iran, many Iranians take it upon themselves to spread news and images of recent events and controversies. Artists on Myspace, Twitter users, and bloggers cite government restrictions that they've had to work past, be it the Ministry of Culture or "Iranian cyber army" hacking into posts, but as previously stated, they usually find ways around these difficulties. What their technological know-how often fails to solve is the difficulty in embedding videos or audio files due to the bandwidth restraint. Thus many bloggers rely on the use of pictures as documented proof for an often political end. With government and media restrictions, blogs serve an almost educational purpose, not only for other Iranians, but for an international, English-speaking community. One Tehrani girl conveys her opinion of the hijab and its local media portrayal in her blog, *Iranian Girl*, stating:

Why and why shouldn't Iranian governmental TV ever ask an IRANIAN lady what she thinks about hijab? those who agree with hijab have told what they think but those who doesn't like it (me for example!) never been able to say their words, if you search all controlled media in Iran, tv, radio, magazines, newspapers, you can find nobody expressed anything negative about hijab though I know thousands of women hate hijab and wear it just and just because they have to...! [sic]" (Fatema).

While there are many views of the hijab and its various forms, the fact that the internet is one of the only unmitigated spaces to publically discuss the diverse views, leads to the proliferation of forums, opinionated blogs and posts on the internet.

As a result of media repression from the government, foreign relations and national opinion are often represented by a limited faction, rather than the "typical" Iranian. This leads to a common conception among the youth that Iranians are misrepresented on an international scale, a problem which they take upon themselves to ameliorate and offer more realistic depictions of their country and population. In an online video, *Answers from Iran to the Questions of Young Americans*, one girl expresses how the President's views are often seen as representative of the Iranian people's views internationally, when really their voices just haven't been heard (Tarik). An example of this is the issue of nuclear politics, which is a forbidden subject for the Iranians, leaving the president as the only spokesperson on the subject (Tarik). Blogs, whether personal, political or a combination of the two, are a diplomatic and didactic tool for young Iranians who want to be heard. With government and media restrictions, and often an outsider's analysis of the country, many of these youth feel a need to create not only an identity for themselves but also of an Iranian. Their blogs show to others (often non-Iranians), the Iran that they see and know.

In conclusion, an Iranian youth culture is driven by an attraction to Western commodities and popular culture as indicators of cosmopolitan and upper class style, and political repression in terms of trust and the media, on a national and international scale. Overall, the youth use blogs as a means of communication and social interaction that reflects their interests and issues they find relevant. Whilst forming an identity for themselves, they create one for Iranians at large and for the youth demographic. In Iran, just as in Cairo, there are many conflicting factors at play and cultural and political "battles over modernity versus authenticity, colonial domination versus national liberation, and Western secularism versus an Islamic modernity" (de Koning 153). It is possible for there to be a strong cultural nationalism and yet the integration of Western and global commodities and cultural aspects. Acceptance of many aspects of an American upper-class lifestyle does not mean that all social and political intentions or actions of America are well-received. Much of the youth are proud of their country's history and traditions, but also acknowledge the effects of globalization and modernity. The youth in Iran have forged a culture of participation in a global youth popular and commodity culture and nonviolent forms of activism online.

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Memere

Alexander J. Champoux

For years my brother and I have expected our maternal grandparents to be the first to go...Beverly and Louie are both infirm, and, after a long life of poverty and work, are barely holding together. While Memere (our paternal grandmother) was active, always traveling abroad, skydiving, and working out, Bev and Louie were cycling through oxygen tanks and a cornucopia of medications, moldering away in their tiny home in Old Town, ME. A year and a half ago, though, Memere began to slip, making little mistakes, names and facts fluttering away like leaves on the wind. She became less cautious, less conscious of the things she did and wore and the limitations of her age. Shingles left her reeling, perceptions more clouded than before, then her bladder prolapsed, and her knee twisted, shattering the brittle struts of her legs. Hospital beds became her second home, and each visit produced a more faded woman—she stopped dyeing her hair, ignored her physical training, more thoughts slipped away unspoken. She returned home, crashed to the floor again, unsteady on a pair of stilettos that would make a model teeter...crushing a decalcified pelvis and laying there silently uncomplaining until her boyfriend found her, took her back to the hospital cot. It became a cycle: stretcher, cot, walker, home, floor, silent patience. Papa began to call more regularly, checking in on a mother that he couldn't trust to share her mistakes. She became like an errant teen, unwilling to admit her blunders because she was afraid of finger-wagging or coddling from her own son. Before one of Phil's lacrosse games, standing up too quickly, she couldn't find the equilibrium she was used to, keeled over again—knee, vertebrae, wrist. In such a short time, she's gone from control to adult diapers, feet to walkers shod with tennis balls, clarity to a thickening fog. She asks us about things that she's always known, tells stories about my father that never took place, wonders about Mama's tennis when my mother hasn't been able to hold a racquet in a year...then sees our faces, wheezes out an airy laugh, and asks for another glass of chilled white wine. Phillip and I, we don't think she's supposed to be drinking any more in her state, with her medication, but it's all so fleeting for her; the world around her has turned ephemeral—she's like a newborn, sensing only pleasure and pain in the moment, reacting to basic sensations, every day a staccato dance through colors, feelings, and flavors—so, staring at her, at each other, Phil and I throw rock, paper, scissors to decide who's going to go get her another glass of Mondavi. Our Memere--once vibrant and vivacious—shrivels, shrinks, slides away from us, fading into a hazy, graying dusk. Her eyes are the last things glittering, tracking the condensation on the glass, and Phil and I wonder if we should cut her off. It's closing time, though. Her bracelet charms tinkle against the glass, and we've already given in. Her lipstick leaves a smudge on the wine and rime, and she smiles as she swallows. We smile too, savoring the moment, then start rock, paper, scissoring again, each praying that we're not the grandson that serves her the final "one for the road."

Full Circle

Mary Ellen Molski

Did you ever want the world? Have the whole thing on a platter, just for you to pick up and grind your teeth into. And it should be delivered, gift-wrapped, even. Made out in your name, a tag with gilt letters, maybe in script or that Olde English-ey font. Official stuff. All tied up in a red bow, sitting out in the driveway one fine morning like they show in all of those luxury car commercials.

So the commercial world awaits you, while you commence the waiting aspect of this delivery-of-the-world scenario, since that's your job. You might as well get a standard-type job that comes with a paycheck, because even waiting can cost a few beans. This job is probably entry-level, barely skilled but getting by slots that no-degree folks can fill on the spot without messing up too much. Maybe you like it. Maybe you find a keen interest in the secular divestment of offshore funds, or discover that underwriting is your newest temporary passion. You move up, find some extra cash tossed your way. Things are good. Still checking for that package, unconsciously, like glancing at the top of your hair in the mirror or using the waiting time at the copier to inconspicuously vouch for the closure of your fly.

Time flies. So do birds. Maybe you get a bird, once you move into your own apartment. Maybe your love interest brings along his or her own quadrupedal equivalent of a child, that you are not so much compelled as resigned to co-opt for the purposes of bliss and harmony. It's not so bad. Lots of days, it's good. Really good. And it's okay that the package hasn't arrived yet. There's not really a place for it unless they leave it down in the visitor lot, and then someone unscrupulous might tear off your gilded nametag and claim the luxury world as their own. That would suck.

But nothing prepares you for the sight of your newborn son suckling his mother for the first time. A chasm opens before you, and the selfish, narrow-sighted person you were sloughs off into it with a whisper of release, like a chrysalis loosening from the folds of your soft, elastic wings. As you breathe you spread yourself out in all dimensions, including the invisible ones, invigorated with a purpose you had not felt since you were three, on the rug in your grandparents' house by the beach, determined to make all the shells line up straight in a row even if the horned-shaped one kept wanting to roll off to another board. There is a concentration in your soul that's been missing so long you forgot it was ever there. Determination renews your step as you take them two at a time, knowing that you will get the last of the department store items tucked away just as they should be before he comes home, to your home.

Your home might be mortgaged for twice its net worth, but it won't matter much. Unless you are "down-sized", like some reverse-McDonaldian venture of backward acquisition. Any clean dress on a pig does not change the genus, phylum, or class of that reeking pig. So one day, over the bills but under the kids' papers with assorted and noteworthy As and stars and stickers, there's an ad for a program, a college thing for adults who Want a Change. The number's toll-free, the website's inviting and promises the courses you thought about taking

but weren't really interested in, just as a dodge to keep yourself somewhere between parental satisfaction and flunking out. They look good. Some of them look really good. So you call. Then you go.

And one day, a couple years down the road, you're looking down the road at this line of kids and grown-ups and teachers all decked out in the pouf de rigueur, satin Black, mortarboard Cocked, attitude Chill. And you think what a fine damn world it is. And you can't wait to get out there and take a huge bite, grind your teeth right into it and pull. And you're so glad you reached out to grab it.

Ogopogo

Kristen Drosch

Lucy slammed the porch door behind her and stomped down the back steps with all the force that her 8-year-old body could muster. No one came after her. No one reprimanded her for making a ruckus. They simply weren't paying attention. Lucy wondered, as she descended the stone steps built into the steep hill behind the lake house, if anyone would notice if she ran naked through the house, wearing only a pair of her father's fishing waders and banging pots and pans on the walls. Probably not.

Lucy arrived at the water's edge and stood still for a moment, digging her feet into the soft mud beside the dock and enjoying the feeling of the slick substance squelching up between her toes.

She stepped onto the dock, the one that her father had had built when the twins were born. Lucy felt a supreme pleasure in making muddy footprints all over the still-smooth wood. She was just glad to be able to make a mark on anything her family did these days.

Her grandmother had warned her that the new babies would need extra attention when they were first born, but the twins were nearly three now, and Lucy could barely get her parents' attention for longer than a few minutes. Lucy knew why. Her aunt had told her everything; she wasn't their baby. They had adopted her when she was a few months old because they couldn't have children of their own. And then, by some miracle, they did have their own children, two beautiful boys, and they had no further need of Lucy. She was often left at school when her mother, deeply engaged in something (anything!) involving the twins forgot that she needed to be picked up. Her father used to take her everywhere with him. Now she was lucky if he bothered to help her with her homework. She could hardly believe that they had remembered to make room for her in the car when they departed for Okanagan Lake, in Canada.

Lucy liked it on the lake. It was pretty, and cool, and there was always mud to play with. She could splash in the shallows of the lake for hours and temporarily forget that there was no adult there watching her, keeping her safe, because no one cared.

And of course, there was the monster.

People had been claiming to see the Ogopogo for almost 200 years, beginning with the First Nations people. Monster-seekers flooded to Okanagan Lake every year, searching for the mythic lake monster. No one had found it yet, but that didn't stop people from trying. Lucy wanted to see the monster. Maybe it would take her away. Oh, wouldn't they be sorry then, if she were gone beneath the waves, where they couldn't reach her even if they wanted to. They would be sorry if she was gone! They would notice her then! But it would be too late; she would already be gone, beyond their reach, and they would only be able to wring their hands and cry. They would moan, "Why, oh why, didn't we pay more attention to Lucy when we had the chance?"

Lucy continued to pace up and down the dock, oblivious to the ripples

moving towards her from the deep, dark waters of the massive lake. She didn't even feel them rock the dock gently as they grew larger.

What would her mother do if Lucy was gone? Would she care? Would she look up from the twins long enough to shed a tear?

Lucy's body felt heavy. Not uncomfortably so, just strangely.

The wind picked up, kicking across the lake and hitting her in the face. Lucy reached instinctively up to brush her soft brown hair out of her face, but there was nothing there. There was only rough, scaly skin. But it had always been that way, hadn't it? Oh course it had. The scales on her head were as natural as the claws that tipped her four-fingered hand.

The ripples were growing larger, and coming in faster.

The dock seemed to sag under her feet. It must not have been as solidly built as her father had once bragged to a neighbor, if it couldn't hold a single eight-year-old. Yes, perhaps she was a little heavier than the average girl her age, but she was also nine feet tall, so didn't that count for something? And those back fins were really very heavy. They were completely muscle after all! She must have gotten those from her biological mother. Despite what strangers said about Lucy looking like her adoptive mother, Lucy knew she wasn't Swedish. Swedes didn't have such long necks. Too bad for them, really; Lucy's neck brought her long, hard-boned head up higher than it had even been before. She must have been having a growth spurt lately.

The ripples grew into full waves. Something large and dark was flying underneath the water, drawing in circles, coming as close to the dock as it could without rising out of the water. It swam in ever tightening circles, hypnotizing Lucy. The creaking in her ears grew louder and Lucy realized what was happening right before the dock snapped in two beneath her and she crashed into the water. The shadow seemed to quiver with happiness. Lucy knew that shadow somehow. She had never seen it before, and it had never seen her, but they knew each other.

Somewhere, someone was screaming, calling out, "Lucy! Lucy!" But it was too late. The creature floating in the remnants of the dock didn't know what the word 'Lucy' meant. Besides, the dark shape was beckoning for its baby to follow.

No one thought to look in the caves beneath the water at Squally Point, because no one believed the neighbor woman who claimed to have seen a small girl transform into a monster on a dock. If they had believed her, and they had bothered to look, they would have found a large reptilian creature swimming happily alongside her miniature counterpart, peaceful in the way that lonely souls are when they finally find a way home.

Proust had his madeleines...

Jan Neuberger

It's that time of year when all of us living things greedily drink up the last of summer's warmth before the inevitable onslaught of winter: late October, to be exact; a perfect Indian summer day in the Connecticut countryside. Well, one of many Indian summer days, really; this particular year, fall seems reluctant to take its rightful place. Absent a hard frost, the leaves still flaunt their green dresses, mocking the busloads of tourists who've come specifically to see them arrayed in red and gold. There have been a few starry, cold nights hinting at what's to come, but the afternoon sun is still strong enough to coax one last dance from the frowsy wildflowers and the drunken bees that attend them. In that warm, slanting, buttery sunlight, the crickets play their scratchy serenade, heedless of the imminent need to high-tail it to the nearest hearth.

As I walk along a quiet back road, it's those crickets that tickle a long-buried childhood memory to the surface of my consciousness. Not a memory so much as a re-visit—no, a *reliving*: of a deep, dark summer night that descended upon a long-ago family outing to the seashore. Of an are-we-there-yet drive home in our 1949 Ford, its interior redolent of cigarette smoke and suntan lotion, salt water and spilled 7-Up. Of that kind of heavy, utterly untroubled slumber that only exhausted kids enjoy, and of the safe, strong arms of my Daddy lifting me out of the back seat, the voices of my mother and sister gently breaking the surface of my sleep. Of the glimmer of starlight registered during the briefest of blinks; and of a hundred thousand crickets singing a *Gloria* to the midsummer night. There by that dusty roadside the present drops away like a burden mercifully shed, and I'm born again to my own innocence—by the crickets. They baptize me with their timeless hymn to the unutterable sweetness of life on this earth, and I remember with my heart what it is to live in Eden. Truth is, I don't know whether this memory is real or just a manifestation of my adult yearning for a childhood that never existed. Truth is, it doesn't matter whether it's real or not; the crickets tell me that it is, and I choose to believe them.

The moment passes almost as quickly as it came, and I'm my adult self again, complete with full set of baggage. But left behind inside me is a tiny kernel of remembered bliss, as flawless and enduring as a diamond. I can't know what trials I'm certain to face as I grow older; I can't know what kind of an end I'll meet; and I certainly can't say with any real conviction that I believe there's a heaven to go to afterwards. But I do know this: if there is a heaven, it feels just like that exquisite memory. And the air there is filled with the music of crickets.

Things I Remember
Lorenzo Sewanan

No one realizes how beautiful it is to travel until he comes home and rests his head on his old, familiar pillow. ~Lin Yutang

Unintentionally almost, I had travelled around the world. Or, maybe, the world ran away from me for a while but now started to come back. I drank my last beer in Australia, last breath, last thought, and last moment. Just a few hours will pass, and I will walk again in New York City. I will go to see my family, home. I started in New York, came to Asia and Australia – to Curtin University, WA- and I return to the start. Then, life will run away with me once again.

I remember arriving in Perth. Australians rode cars and not kangaroos. It was green enough nearby; just a minute away the red sand raged. I remember the beauty of Fremantle on that first Sunday. The harbor was full with ships as cannons called up ghosts of times past. I remember Yanchap where I threw a spear weakly and failed at surfing. Why did the baby gray kangaroo run away when it saw me?

I was there to study abroad at Curtin University and studying hard was the easiest part. Of course, I was really there to be myself in a different place. Some fears arose at first. I didn't want to be a stranger in a strange land, with a heart that no one sees, a voice that no one hears.

I remember Asia when I fell in love again with the world and its difference faces. Had the spires of Angkor Wat been more beautiful in the past? Could Shanghai really pack more people into it? In Malaysia, I learned the meaning of good food. And, in Hong Kong, I climbed to see the great Buddha; did it take me any closer to the gods?

I can't make sense, can't sort out all the moments, the infinite diversity of instants. Times of joy and laughter and happiness abound- finding a true friend by mistake, maybe too late, but then it's never too late. Doing all the things I would never do back home; sometimes, I really just sat and looked at the view (but who complains about nature anyway?).

I remember spending late nights in CV, arguing with a long-haired boy and studying to the break of dawn. What funny conversations people can have, sleep-deprived Americans and Australians. I remember dinners with my mentor Ami, who made me laugh and wonder if I would ever have to grow up. I remember chasing after stories for Ripples, wondering if I'd ever understand Australia's zeitgeist.

I won't lie, for to lie about this, I might as well not write. Many nights I was homesick and just blue, after the sweet satisfaction of being alone and on my

own had passed; even the water was sometimes bitter. I can't complain. I'd turn different every time I thought; was it just all but a dream?

I remember the Outback, the taste of rusty metal in the air, and the touch of flies on my skin. In Laverton, I met some fairies, children one and all, who charmed away my soul and brought me only light. I remember goat curry burning my tongue, but we could not stop eating till the food itself was totally done. In Leonora, I remember a Golden Gift Race, of men and women, not horses. They ran fast, but no matter would they ever escape gravity? After all, it was discovered at Gin Gin, by letting water balloons fall fast and hard.

Twenty was not too young for anything. In fact, to be twenty forever would be immortality. And, coming back, I'm still twenty, unchanged much exteriorly, even though Australian cuisine is really very tasty. Within I know the difference, more able and more real. When I saw the world outside, I also saw me better.

I remember the Ten Day Northwest Trip, the sighting of the mythical Manta, while I flailed out in the sea. The pinnacle rising up out of the desert made a nice dry picnic site. I remember Australian beaches filled with the finest sands and shells and water. It ebbed and flowed under the sun with rays like golden spears- at least, no sharks ate me. I remember staying up all night to go to the beach first thing in the morning. I wasn't first at all; the surfers had long been putting out. I remember many things, but to tell them would be unlawful.

Australia has come and gone, like waking up half way through a dream, a nightmare, and strangely not forgetting about it but craving to know the end. I fill up the blank spaces in my head, but the map grows ever larger. When I went abroad, I came again and found the spirit that I'd never lost.

Hop-scotching among Headstones

Verity Sayles

I spend a lot of time in cemeteries.

I do not wear black robes and dye my hair to match the color of my soul. I do not paint my face white to give the illusion that I have not seen the sun in two centuries. I do not use various types of roots and herbs and thick, creaking books to discover how to cure headaches. I am, in fact, in love with the sunshine. A spray of freckles plays across my nose. In the summer, my hair has golden-red streaks like my dad's and I often festoon the strands with flowers. I have a loud laugh that sounds like a geeky cartoon animal and bubbles up too easily. I whistle on my way to class. I love sour candies and gumdrops. I consider myself a very happy individual.

But, even so, I spend a lot of time among gravestones.

Moving from quaint suburbia to an urban college meant a new need to breath fresh air. Desperately seeking an escape from the city sprawl and toxic car emissions, I began running through Hartford. This is when I discovered Cedar Hill Cemetery.

I began with the campus loop before venturing down Maple Avenue. Discarded McDonalds cups skittered about my sneakers, and I trampled on cigarette butts while trying to avoid dubious looking plastic baggies. At the end of Maple Avenue, when I thought I could go no further, the large cast iron gates of Cedar Hill Cemetery opened wide, beckoning me to avoid the Berlin Turnpike and Stop and Shop and too many traffic lights and come explore headstones and obelisks instead

I slowed to a walk and entered through the gates, turning the volume down on my iPod, as a way to respect this newfound silence. . I glanced down at my bare legs and wondered if it was acceptable to be roving in hallowed ground while showing so much skin. I spied a visitor's information booth and an invitation for walkers and joggers to enjoy the pathways and felt a little more at ease with my bare legs, electronics and endorphins pumping through my system.

I followed the paved road splitting a pond covered in hundreds of lily pads. In the springtime, geese build their nests among the reedy marshes, or at least, I am assuming so because angry ganders protecting yellow goslings never fail to honk when I pass. I usually tell them to chill out. This usually makes them hiss. It's a relationship I am working on. It's difficult to tell how massive the Cedar Hill Cemetery is from the road. Beyond the crematory, the chapel, the pond, and the flag pole, are waves of green hills covered in giant oak trees, twisting pathways, and some of the strangest memorials I have seen. I mark my routes by gravestones or names I remember, like O'Malley, with the giant three-leaf clover gravestone, because I guess he wasn't lucky enough for a four-leaf. I roll my eyes at the towering spires that adorn several plots established in the height of the gilded age, or the bombastic memorials scripted on headstones, because I don't know anyone here. Cedar Hill Cemetery is easy.

I started running the Spring Break of Freshman year. I came home from college to a hospital of a house that I don't want to describe. Illness, like stubborn dust, had settled in the carpets, was polished into the furniture, and infected the home I had grown up in.

I ran to get out.

I started with a mile and it was extremely difficult...I liked theater and reading long novels, not physical pain. However, a mile slowly turned into two or three. By the summer I ran four, five, six, seven, eight, nine miles a day, everyday. I would loop around my small town, finding ways to delay going back home, pushing myself farther, faster, proving a sense of strength to myself.

I felt like guilty coming into the house after running for over an hour straight, while my father was confined to the beige armchair in the library. I wondered if he was upset that he always invited me to run with, I always said no, and now, when he couldn't, there I was strutting around the house in my gym shorts. He used to run marathons all over the country and now he had to hold onto someone else's arm to walk down the hallway. I wondered if he silently cursed his legs, accustomed to pounding the pavement and now bound by tall socks that the doctors recommended to prevent blood clots. I felt like I was rubbing it in. Parading my health, my youth, and my vitality. It wasn't my intention, but I couldn't do anything else. I am positive that he did not want me to dye my hair black, somber up, crouch by his bed, and silently weep for his sickness. I intended to live.

Now, when I am at home, I run the same roads I did when he was alive. The air is colder in Massachusetts than in Hartford and the crusty banks of residual snow make it seem all the colder. I ran down South Bolton to Farm Rod where the rich smell of fresh sawdust caught me by surprise. It was a sign of spring—that the stubborn man on the corner had begun turning the stacks of logs into rough planks, which are arbitrarily stacked in piles that don't seem to go anywhere. Tree trunks lie all over the fields on farm road, in various degrees of rotten. It's been this way since I can remember.

I ran up Old Bay, overlooking the bubbling mountains and rolling fields, down Wattaquadoc through the thawing Apple Orchard, and took a left on shady Berlin Rd. I needed these five miles before I made the stop. It's been a long winter since I have visited the old South Burial Ground. Even though I knew that my mother had probably scooped away the wet snow, I still didn't go. I pressed pause on my iPod and listened to the crunch of gravel underneath my sneakers.

Graves from 1739 give way to the modern deceased citizens of Bolton. He wanted his ashes scattered, but we also felt that we needed a place, and they lie underneath a plaque that was paid for by the government. My mother had placed several fake flowers in the earth—temporary markers until the daffodils, which we planted two years ago, bloom. I sat cross-legged on the cold earth and picked a few pieces of mulch away from the green shoots, barely poking through the chilled earth. In a few weeks they would stretch their yellow necks toward the April sunshine and bloom, bright and cheerful.

I traced the letters of his name, the date of his birth, the date of his death, the words "Air Force" and "Capt.", and the "beloved husband and father" which at once says so much and not enough at all.

I stretched out and lay on my back. From the woods beyond the stonewall, swallows called to each other. I spotted them easily, perched atop bare branches against a bright blue sky. Woodpeckers tapped away at the oak trees on either side of me. The buds on the trees rustled restlessly in the March wind. I could almost hear the crackle of grass as it pushed its way through the packed brown earth. Springtime had slowly crept into the cemetery, breathing life into the frozen world.

It's moments like this when I feel cemeteries are not about death at all. In fact, I will go as far as to say that they are the most life-saturated places on this earth. In a cemetery lie hundreds of lives lived, granted they have also ended, rotted and turned to dust, but in a cemetery they are solidified, remembered.

Sickness is sad. Dying is sad. The few awkward and hectic and fresh and raw days after someone has died can be sad, but usually you are too busy with the doorbell ringing and making sure the font on the memorial program is correct and that you remember to call the people who need to know that a death has happened, so that they don't leave messages on your machine a few days later and ask the person who died how everything is. This last part happened and it was startling to hear a woman's voice address my father as if he was still sitting in the beige arm chair when it was so obvious to everyone in the still, big empty house that he was very much gone and not coming back and didn't this asshole woman get the memo?

The aimless quiet, "now what?" that sets in when the doorbell stops ringing, when the memorial service is over, when the relatives have packed up and gone home, when the pasta salad is nibbled on or thrown out and the flowers given in sympathy begin to wilt, is sad. Poking around an empty room and running your fingers over objects which were once so a part of him—a baseball hat, a marathon medal, a camera, a coffee mug with his name on it, his favorite cd, and a letter opener—and wonder to yourself how they can remain so physical and tangible when he is not, is sadder.

Watching grief creep up on your mother and seize her heart and make her wince and cry while you just hug her and wish you could say something other than, "I miss him too." That's the saddest.

Cemeteries are not sad.

I like to walk through the gravestones and let my heart rate slow mid-run. I like to imagine the lives of the people who lie underneath the ground. I like to subtract the year of birth from the year of death to calculate their ages, though my poor math skills can put me off a half-decade or two. I like the stillness of a cemetery, that it is a place of perpetual and unending rest. Even though when I visit the Old South Burial Ground I cannot help but let a few tears roll down my cheeks, when I read the phrase "beloved husband and father" and miss him so sharply, and when I wish with every fiber of my being that he could just answer me, it's not sad. Not like it has been.

The spell is broken eventually. At some point I'll have my fill of marble and onyx and granite and urns and carved willow trees and weeping angels and quite reveries, and turn up the volume on my iPod. I'll stretch my legs, glance over my shoulder and bound out through the gates, feeling an overwhelming and incredible vitality.

Goodbye to Graduating Senior Associates:

Elizabeth Agresta
Winifred Binda
Ian Brooks
Alexander Champoux
Michael Chung
Julianne Garbarino
Chelsea Hanse
Andrew Janiga
Mary Ellen Molski
Kathryn Murdock
Lara Novak
Alessandra Siraco
Julia Svedova
Cecil Tengtenga
Emma Williams
Yuwei Xie

Hello to Incoming Associates:

Patricia Cavanaugh 2014
Taylor Denson 2013
Madeline Dickinson 2014
Jackie Gottshall 2013
Gabe Hyek 2012
Emily Lee 2012
Elizabeth Merrell 2014
Emily Misencik 2014
Rachel Ng 2014
Elizabeth Preysner 2013
Stephani Roman 2013
Whitney Ronshagen 2014
Abigail White 2012
Lillian Young 2013