



Fall 2001

The Forum: Fall 2001

Stephanie Rollefson
University of North Dakota

Rosy Esberg
University of North Dakota

Kelly Jane Swenseth
University of North Dakota

Cheri Olafson
University of North Dakota

Jason Signalness
University of North Dakota

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.und.edu/und-books>

Recommended Citation

Rollefson, Stephanie; Esberg, Rosy; Swenseth, Kelly Jane; Olafson, Cheri; Signalness, Jason; Gordon, Casey Maureen; McCleary, Erin; Fowler, Poppy; Eslinger, Beth; Zejdlik, Katie; and Pieske, Christopher, "The Forum: Fall 2001" (2001). *UND Publications*. 53.
<https://commons.und.edu/und-books/53>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Elwyn B. Robinson Department of Special Collections at UND Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in UND Publications by an authorized administrator of UND Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact zeinebyousif@library.und.edu.

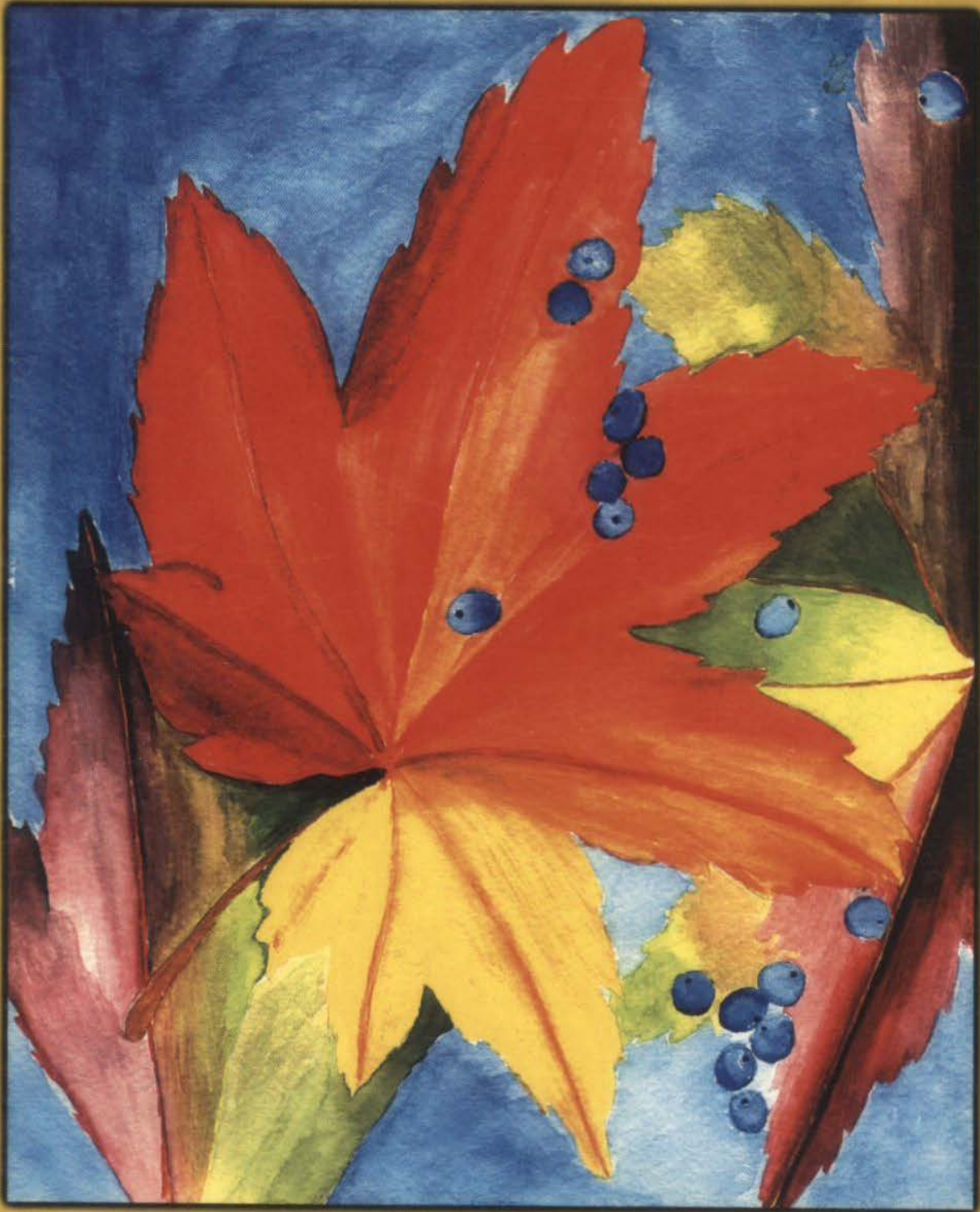
Authors

Stephanie Rollefson, Rosy Esberg, Kelly Jane Swenseth, Cheri Olafson, Jason Signalness, Casey Maureen Gordon, Erin McCleary, Poppy Fowler, Beth Eslinger, Katie Zejdlik, and Christopher Pieske

the Forum

Journal of the Honors Program
University of North Dakota

Volume 32, Issue 1
Fall 2001



Contents

Stephanie Rollefson Watercolor, <i>Maple Leaf and Blueberries</i>	Cover
Rosy Esberg Poetry, <i>The World in Which We Live</i>	3
Kelly Jane Swenseth Chalk Drawing	4
Cheri Olafson Essay, <i>Hate Crimes and Higher Education</i>	5
Jason Signalness Fiction, <i>Almost an Adventurer</i>	9
Casey Maureen Gordon Fiction, <i>When You Leave Your Innocence Behind</i>	11
Erin McCleary Poetry, <i>April</i>	15
Poppy Fowler Photograph	16
Beth Eslinger Essay, <i>Women and Television's Frail Reality</i>	17
Jason Signalness Photograph, <i>Frog Girl</i>	24
Katie Zejdlik Fiction, <i>Queens of the Summer</i>	25
Christopher Pieske Essay, <i>Hop on the Bandwagon</i>	29
Poppy Fowler Photograph	30
Erin McCleary Poetry, <i>I'm Tired</i>	31

Editors

Kristine Kuffenkam
Jason Signalness

Editorial Board

Carrie Dahl
Andrea Domaskin
Sharon Ennis
Beth Eslinger
Rebecca Gunderson
Sara Hansen
Dan Lucy

Editorial Consultant

Sam Gruenberg

Advisor

Jeanne Anderegg

Editorial Policy

The opinions and ideas expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the University of North Dakota, the Honors Program, or its editors. It is the policy of this publication that anyone wishing to have something published must have his or her name attached to the submission, although names will be withheld upon request.

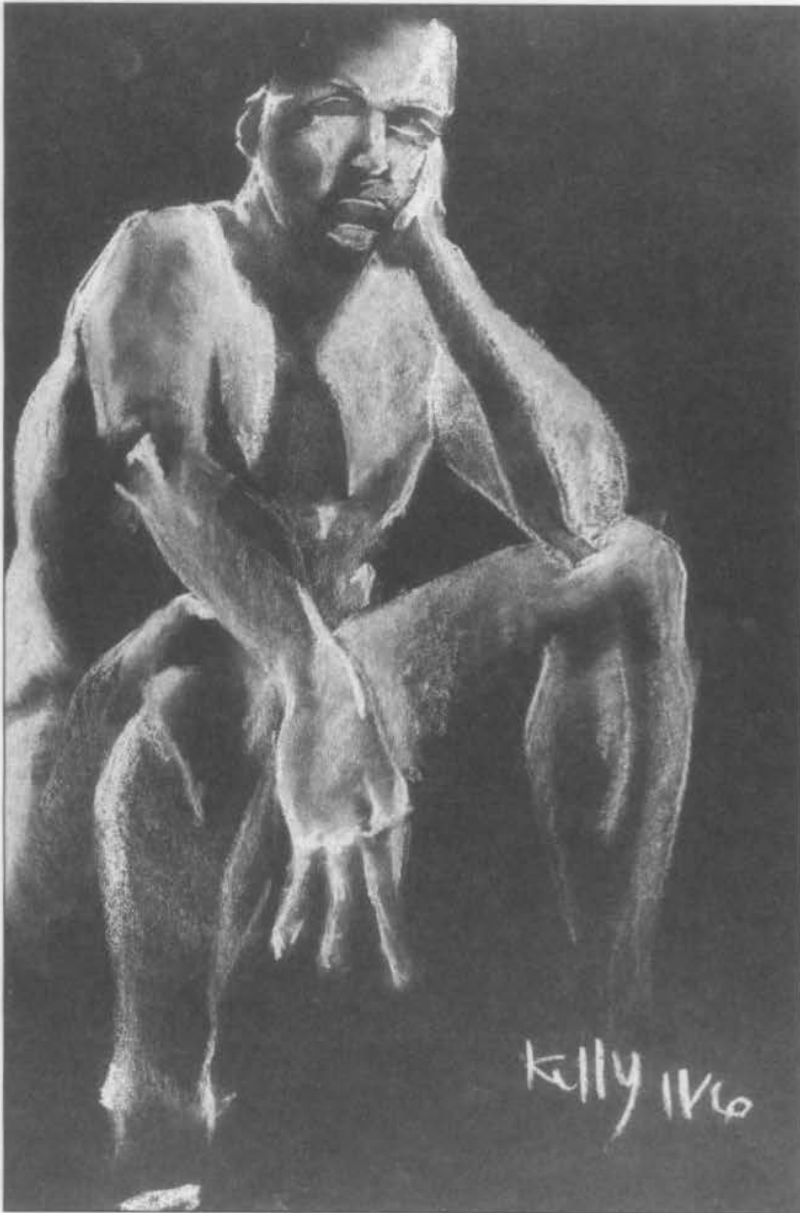
The Board of Student Publications is the publisher and primary fund contributor to the Forum. BOSP is a division of Student Government.

BOSP Chairperson: Lea Hanson
Phone: 777-7432

Rosy Esberg

The World in Which We Live

The newspaper,
Daily events sprawled out on recycled paper
In oversimplified Courier print.
Cracked sidewalks,
Running parallel to annually paved streets.
Designer jeans,
Charging substantial prices for a special stitch
On the left rear pocket.
This is the world in which we live.
We grow up blindly
Being told that all is fair
In love and war.
But broken hearts and bloody battles
Soon prove us wrong.
We are full of empty promises
And unmended feuds,
Forget-me-nots and hoarded spare change,
Half-hearted I do's and even less attempted dreams.
And at the same time none of it is real.
We have been programmed to believe
That this is right and this is the way.
A sunset, glowing truth and beauty.
A tree, sprouting life and liberty.
A robin, singing honesty and hope.
These are right and true.
These are the way things should be.
Forget about the parking fees and the norm.
Open your eyes and see the real world.



Kelly Jane Swenseth

Cheri Olafson

Hate Crimes and Higher Education

October of 1998 brought the reality of hate to the town of Laramie, Wyoming. Matthew Shepard, a twenty-one year old University of Wyoming student, was brutally beaten, tied to a cross-like fence, and left to die in near freezing temperatures. The attack on Shepard was due solely to his sexual orientation. Another attack occurred in July of 1999 when Ricky Byrdsong, a former Northwestern University basketball coach and African-American, was shot and killed while walking with his two children in Skokie, Illinois. That same week, Won Joon Yoon, an Asian doctoral student at Indiana University, was shot and killed. Byrdsong and Yoon's murderer was a former Indiana University student who was completing a killing spree motivated by views of white supremacy.

What do these incidents have in common? Each was a form of hate-motivated crime, and each affected a student or faculty member at an American educational institution. These tragic events, and many others like them, only serve to remind us that there is still a very serious problem of prejudice and violence existing in our country today. The term hate crime was recently defined as: an act or an attempted act by any person against the person or property of another individual or group in which in any way constitutes an expression of hostility toward the victim because of his or her race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, gender, or ethnicity.

Over the past few years, the subject of hate-motivated crimes has been at the forefront of our nation's consciousness. This is due to the fact that the occurrence of this type of crime has increased steadily throughout America.

Even though these crimes seem to be less evident than other types of crime in the United States, the statistics are alarming. According to an article in *Corrections Today*, the FBI's most recent statistics report for 1997 shows that there were 8,049 hate crimes reported in the participating forty-eight states and the District of Columbia, as compared to about 5,000 in 1999. The FBI report indicates that about fifty-nine percent of the reported hate crimes were race-based; seventeen percent were committed against individuals on the basis of their religion; fourteen percent on the basis of sexual orientation; and ten percent on the basis of ethnicity. Someone com-

mits a hate crime every hour in the United States and even more disturbing, these types of crimes often go unreported. Moreover, they are becoming commonplace on the campuses of our nation's colleges and universities. What are our colleges and universities doing to fight this serious problem?

Legislation can make a significant difference in preventing the spread of hate-motivated crimes. However, unless colleges and universities realize the reality of the problem and abide by the regulations against it, efforts will remain futile. Since the introduction of hate-crime legislation, particularly the Campus Security Act, the issue of schools covering up crime statistics has surfaced. Naturally, it is in the school's best interest to portray a tolerant atmosphere for prospective students. This leads to the idea of the "Secret University." According to an article in *The Black Collegian*, the "Secret University" is a system that keeps information regarding racist incidents quiet or at least localized to the student paper. In the article, Senator Robert Torricelli notes "campuses are never anxious to report crime data for fear of jeopardizing recruitment efforts." Senator Torricelli introduced a bill in 1997 that would force campuses to report hate-crimes as part of the mandatory crime report to the Justice Department. This type of bill would be essential in the fight to eliminate prejudice. Covering up the facts is simply a form of denial. If campuses can keep dismissing the problem, diversity and racial tolerance will never really have a chance to flourish.

What is being done to make sure this does not happen at the University of North Dakota? Fortunately, hate-motivated crimes have not been a major problem at this institution over the years. However, prejudice and bigotry exist in many ways and it must be dealt with everywhere. UND has shown that it will not tolerate hate-motivated crime, and it will cooperate with state and federal laws against it. The Code of Student Life for the University of North Dakota is a booklet that is released to all students and employees regarding the rules and regulations at the University. It includes all policies against crimes, including hate-motivated crimes. Crime statistics are listed in compliance with the guidelines of the Campus Security Act for reporting crimes. There is a clear definition of what is considered punishable and what the penalties are for violating the policies. The booklet also has guidelines for students on how to report and prevent crimes.

The University of North Dakota has a police staff that is fully licensed by the state. A Crisis Response Team works closely with the police and deals with situations such as bias crime. Jerry Bulisko, the Assistant Dean of Students, deals with disciplinary proceedings that take place on campus. According to Mr. Bulisko, students who violate rules and are involved in hate-motivated acts are usually faced with indefinite suspension. Other sanctions include Written Reprimand, Warning Probation, Conduct Probation, and Suspension.

The Assistant Dean of Students strongly believes that there is no place

for crime, especially crime that is motivated by bigotry, on campus. Our campus has a duty to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all of its students. At the present time, he is attempting to propose a change to the Code of Student Life regarding violations motivated by bias. The change would put more severe sanctions on violators. This proposal must be presented to and passed by the Student Policy Committee. Although this proposal has been rejected once before, Mr. Bulisko is optimistic that it will not be turned down again. The committee includes five students and five faculty members from the University. Mr. Bulisko also believes that part of the reason our university does not see as much violence is because students have a strong role in the school's government and are able to contribute their ideas on many different issues.

Rules and regulations are not the only things that can fight the problem of bigotry and bias crime on college campuses. Awareness programs and organizations can also make a tremendous difference. National organizations, such as the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League, have been promoting tolerance throughout the country. These groups push for hate-crime legislation, publish newsletters, and fund awareness programs. The Southern Poverty Law Center specifically reaches out to educators and communities.

At the local level, the University of North Dakota has places where people can learn and get involved in the fight against hate. The Cultural Awareness Committee and Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee and Student Services fund and provide programs and educational opportunities for students in order to eliminate prejudice and stereotypes. As a result of their efforts, the Cultural Center, International Center, and the Women's Center were created as a safe place where anyone can go to learn or get involved in these types of programs.

Why is all the legislation and awareness so necessary? Students and faculty must realize that hate crimes are really happening, and that the rate at which they are occurring will not be reduced unless serious measures are taken to prevent them. Martin Luther King, Jr. once wrote: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." Crimes motivated by hate do not just affect the victim, but the whole group the victim represents. They can tear schools, communities, and nations along ethnic, gender, and religious lines, and ignite more of the same emotions that should be channeled. These crimes are also more likely to lead to retaliation and therefore produce more hate. Toni Morrison described what prejudice does in a speech at Howard University. "It can only reproduce the environment that supports its own health: fear, denial, and an atmosphere in which its victims have lost the will to fight."

From slavery to the Holocaust, hatred and bigotry have influenced many aspects of history. Groups and individuals have been abused too of-

ten because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, or other differences. There is no reason why it must continue to be this way. Hatred and bigotry, which grow from fear, threaten and destabilize the very soul of our society. Even though we have seen major progress in the twentieth century in outlawing discrimination, stereotypes and unequal treatment persist. The simple truth is that our colleges and universities are a breeding ground for this problem. This is a truth that can no longer be pushed aside or hidden behind our idea that equality has been achieved in this day and age. If young people are the future leaders of our country, then we must provide safer and more open-minded educational environments. Without learning to respect each other's differences, our leaders will be bigots, or perhaps even more disturbing, people who tolerate a bigoted society.

Jason Signalness

Almost an Adventurer: A magazine ad and an uninteresting life

There it was in the magazine lying before me. It was cleverly hidden between advertisements for "Rapid, Safe Weight Loss" and "The Shorty Jackson Legacy Blues Band." The minuscule black box was placed so inconspicuously upon the page that one could easily miss its important message. Just think of the possibilities, the implications, that turning this page could have had upon my life. The ad called out in bold, white letters: "One adventure after another. Walking, cultural, and natural history tours in Greece, Turkey, Costa Rica, Portugal, Spain, Sicily, and the Alps."

I reach down, along the side of my Lazy-Boy recliner and pull upward on the lever. Sitting up, I bend closer to the lamp that stands on the floor, to the left of the chair. I am very interested in this ad, to say the least. I could use a little excitement. Maybe I'll give them a call.

A trip in the Alps. I can see it now. The snow and wind pounding down upon the bright yellow enclosure that is my tent as I hunch over my small, life-giving kerosene stove and author a true-to-life adventure story in my journal by the light of the flames. I can imagine the words: "Tomorrow our team will make an attempt at the summit. I can't sleep. The anticipation is keeping me awake. I only pray the forecast is right, and the snowstorm will clear out for tomorrow's ascent."

Later, while standing triumphantly atop the mountain, we weep with joy at our accomplishment. I snap a few pictures of the breathtaking view, take the flag out of the pack, and place it on the rock, next to those left by my fellow climbers. We began our descent with a renewed sense of vigor and strength, satisfied that we had conquered Everest, the tallest mountain in the world. We should be off the mountain and handing our packs to Swiss porters at base camp in just a couple days. Then we will really celebrate.

Oh, wait. Is Everest in the Alps or the Himalayas? If it's in the Himalayas, I will have to go to India instead of Switzerland. I guess it doesn't really matter.

Maybe I would prefer a tour of Spain. That would be adventurous. I can see myself strolling along the street, absorbing the local ambiance. I approach a small, stucco building. A faded, wooden sign hangs above the door, its mention of "refrescantes" beckoning me inward. I get a few

strange looks from the locals as I purchase a bottle of water from the man behind the counter. Twisting the cap off my bottle, I inquire about the odd look I'm receiving from a man. He replies, "Va a extrañar los toros, señor. Debe estar en la calle." Despite my rusty Español, I realize the running of the bulls is about to start, and I need to hurry into the street if I don't want to miss it.

I toss my bottle of water aside. The crowd has gathered. Almost immediately, I hear yelling and hooves pounding upon the cobblestones, the sounds advance in my direction. The crowd parts. A bull is headed straight for me, its eyes focused upon my new, white polo shirt. I dodge the beast's advance, but it's not over. He's coming back for another attempt. His horn catches my sleeve and rips the fabric, just avoiding the flesh. I feel invigorated. I savor the adrenaline rush as I pick myself up, waving a fist at the retreating bull. The crowd sighs in relief at the departure of the beast when suddenly a bell sounds. It sounds again! The natives run in terror from the incessant noise, its high-pitched tone very unusual and horrifying—it's the telephone.

I open my eyes. The magazine has fallen to the floor. The sunlight is pouring in between the curtains, forming a bright streak across the floor; the daylight intruding upon an otherwise darkened room. It must be nice outside. The silence is broken only by the continuous ticking of the wall clock, a muffled "thud" from the apartment above, the playful yelling of children in the street, and the whir of the answering machine as it rewinds the tape.

I pick up the remote. The television clicks, and a glowing image appears. I lay back into my chair and relax. I wonder if there are any movies on. I saw a preview for one on channel 23 yesterday. I press the button on my remote, the screen flickers as the channel changes, and my journey begins.

Casey Maureen Gordon

When You Leave Your Innocence Behind

You never wake up one day and think, today I'm going to be a hero. You never look in the mirror and say, I wonder if I'm going to die today. There is no tool you can use to manipulate fate, no hammer to pound your life into a place where it doesn't fit. The truth is, we never know, no matter how desperately we try to figure things out. We're all standing on the edge of a cliff, playing tag with our eyes closed, praying not to be "it."

It was one of those days. Just one of those barefoot, skin your knees, run through the sprinkler kind of days. I was barely nine years old and knew I had the world by the balls. I woke up to a phone call from Bobby. He was a chubby kid who always wore sweat pants and had the classic square-framed glasses that magnified his eyeballs to the size of those super bouncy balls you could get on your way out of the grocery store if you could guilt your mom out of a quarter. He was also my best friend.

Bobby and I agreed that it was a good day for bike riding. After a forced lunch of macaroni and hot dogs, I mounted my bike and pedaled to Bobby's. The wind whispered softly, and I welcomed it. Beads of sweat settled on my upper lip as my legs pumped faster. It had to have been a hundred degrees; at least that's how I remember it. I rode down 7th Street, past the sign that says, "Drive Slowly. We Love Our Children." I always hated that sign. What about the neighborhoods without a sign? Hey, run over our kids, we don't give a fuck . . . is that what they would say? I spat on the sign the way my older brother had taught me. It made a nice gong sound and I smiled. The lady weeding her flowerbed across the street gave me a nasty look, but I didn't care. I just kept on riding, pretending that I was in one of those motocross races, guys crashing all around me. I crossed the finish line just as I pulled into Bobby's driveway.

"Bobby, Rich is here!" shouted his little sister Beth. She was a kindergarten and boy, was she something else. A whiner, a crier, a tattletale, a troublemaker, you name it. Bobby trudged out of the back yard, gave me a half smile, stuck up his middle finger at Beth (something we'd also learned from my older brother), and off we went.

When Bobby and I were together, we were invincible. We swerved at each other, testing who would be the first to move, and called each other

pussies if we did. We were first class daredevils, scared of nothing. We talked about growing up to be secret agents or firemen or fighter pilots. We talked about the heroic tasks we'd perform, life-saving tasks, and both of us knew at the time that we'd be too chicken-shit to ever do anything that we bragged about, but we talked about it anyway.

Bobby wasn't the smartest kid, or the coolest. As a matter of fact, he was the kid who got picked on at recess for wearing his Superman cape to school (which he never wore again). But nobody ever dared lay a finger on Bobby. You see, I was a smart kid, and I was a cool kid, and it was known that anybody who had the balls to pick a fight with Bobby should be prepared to get their ass kicked by me. Yeah, Bobby wasn't the smartest or the coolest, but he was my best friend, and nothing could break that bond.

So we rode down the black pavement towards the edge of town. It was so hot that you could see water mirages on the street. You know, those ones that you can see from about half a mile back, but when you get to where you thought the water would be, it's bone dry, and you ride your bike faster and faster to try and sneak up on them, but they just disappear. I guess it's sort of a metaphor for our friendship. Bobby's and mine. When you examine us up close, look at us individually, peer into our lives, there's nothing there. We're as different as night and day. But when you take a step back, look at the whole picture, you see something that was invisible before. You can see the magical bond between us that wasn't there up close. It was like we were connected. From the first time I met Bobby, I knew I wanted him to be my best friend. There was just something about him. Around him, I was a different person. All my problems drifted to a far off place, and I'm pretty sure the same was true for Bobby. I guess you could say we were like one.

As we neared the edge of town, neither of us knew that we would never ride down that street feeling this same way again. Our innocence was left waiting for us on our front door steps, and we didn't realize that when you leave your innocence behind, you can never quite manage to get it back. We couldn't have fathomed what was to come. That day changed our lives.

We rode our way to the top of a hill that overlooked the town below us. At that moment I had an idea. You could see Dead Man's Point from the hill; it was probably less than a mile away. It was rumored that some guy jumped off the cliff and the body was never found. Neither Bobby nor I believed any of that bull, but we were both scared of the place anyway.

"Let's ride Dead Man's." My voice was somber. I remember the sound of it echoing in my head, like it wasn't my voice or something.

"Ya think we should?"

"You're such a goddamn puss. C'mon. Have some balls, Bobby."

"Fine. Let's go."

For all the times we had talked about riding Dead Man's, we never thought we would. It was just something we'd say and then shrug off and say we'd do it another day. But today was that day. I felt it, and if I felt it, I knew that Bobby would feel it too.

"Rich, I have a bad feeling."

"Jesus, Bobby, go home. Be a puss." I was determined to conquer the cliff. I knew he wouldn't go home, I just knew it. Deep down, Bobby wanted this as badly as I did.

Before I knew it, there we were, staring at the cliff, feeling its breath on our necks.

"Let's do it." I took off down the hill next to the cliff, though you could barely call it a hill. It was more like a slightly angled cliff, one that many had bragged about conquering, but of course, not a single person could prove it.

I wanted to look back to see if Bobby was behind me, but I couldn't. I think I knew he was there all along. Rocks grabbed at my tires and pounded my shins as I flew. Before I could comprehend what was happening I felt water soaking through my shoes. I was at the bottom, and Bobby was right behind me. He had fallen, but not before he touched the bottom. I ran to him, leaving my bike in the lake. He looked up and smiled his half smile.

"Holy shit," he smirked. He wasn't hurt, and even if he was, he didn't care.

"Yes! Ha ha! Yes!" I screamed as I ran towards the cliff. I kicked it. We defeated her.

"Take that you mother—" That's the last I remember. The rest is bits and pieces of what Bobby told me.

As it turns out, the cliff did not take defeat very well. All it took was a couple of dumb-ass punks to ride down it and scream like idiots. She took her revenge swiftly. Luckily the first boulder knocked me out. I was buried under piles of Dead Man's wrath.

You might think that Bobby freaked out, ran for help, cried, or something like that. I thought so too. But he was cool, so he says. He ran as fast as those bruised legs could carry him and dug. He said the first thing he found was my hand. He tried to pull me out, but I wouldn't budge. So he dug. He dug until he'd uncovered me, or, most of me. An enormous stone was crushing my chest. Now, you've heard about those adrenaline rushes that people get when a car falls on their kid or something. Well, Bobby got one. Son-of-a-bitch, did Bobby get one. He didn't just roll the rock off me; he picked the damn thing up and threw it. He started slapping me and yelling my name until I finally came to. I should've been dead, you know, but something saved me. What it was beats the hell out of me, but it was something. I looked at Bobby and was confused, until I saw the

strength in his eyes. I bawled like a frickin' baby. I'd known Bobby practically all of my life, and I'd never cried in front of him. I'd seen him cry, but that was different. For a moment, neither of us knew what to do. And then, for the only time in our lives, we hugged. Not just a pat on the back kind of hug, but a long, deep hug. I can honestly say that I have not felt that feeling since, the feeling of true connection.

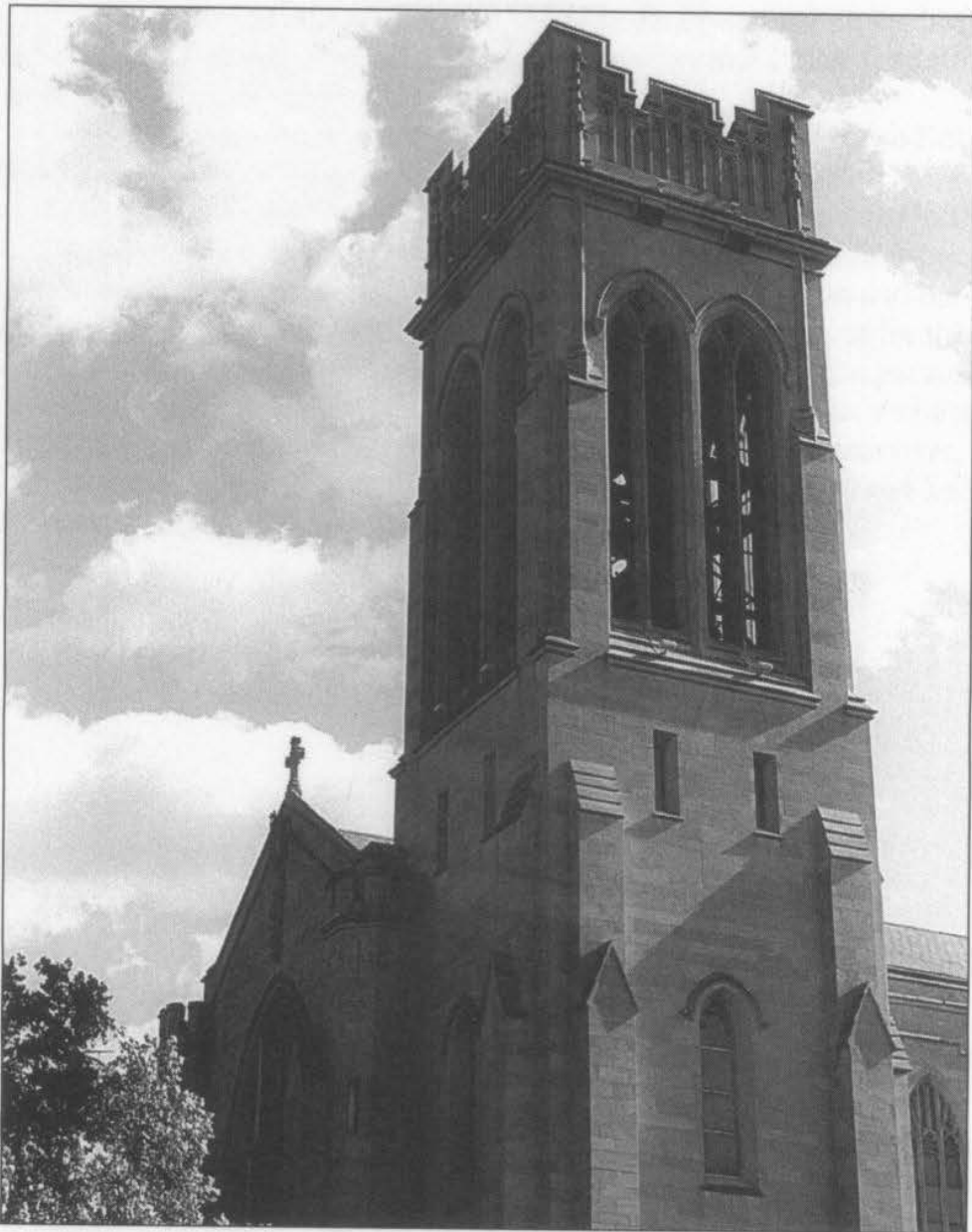
I didn't think anybody needed to know that I cried like a girl, so Bobby and I vowed never to tell anyone about that day.

Years passed and Bobby and I grew apart. Whether it was an effect from that day or not, I couldn't tell you. But we went our separate ways. I went on to be the starting quarterback and the straight A student and the homecoming king, and Bobby, well, he read comics and tried out for the basketball team, but he never made it. I guess we grew apart just because that's what people do. We'd still say hi to each other in the halls and even today our wives send each other Christmas cards, but things were never really the same after that summer. I'll never forget him, though, and he knows that. I know he does.

Erin McCleary

April

I had been playing, after school, in the mud.
Black and Brown.
Taking aim, like a sniper,
I bombarded my brother's head with
 slimy goo.
Ha, ha—I won.
He was tired, and ran across the yard
To Grandma's.
I decided to take a hot bath, with
 mountains of suds and bubbles.
With the modesty of a five year old,
I went downstairs to get a towel.
Blue and Yellow.
Ding. Dong.
The doorbell rang.
Flustered, I grabbed the closest thing,
My mom's coat.
And answered the door.
Standing on my front porch, in his leather jacket,
 was Harley.
He was moving the next day.
He handed me a tape that used to be Metallica, with
 the song recorded on it that would stay forever.
He kissed me. My first.
Never knowing it would be his last . . .
He left in his dad's car.
Gold and White.
And waved good-bye.



Poppy Fowler

Beth Eslinger

Women and Television's Frail Reality

Comforting words like, "it's just a movie" and "that's not blood; it's ketchup," help viewers discredit movies and T.V. shows that make them uncomfortable or scared. But what happens when light-hearted comedies, having just as much potential falsity, tell us what is appealing and funny?

There is no question that television plays a very influential and pervasive role in today's society. Many Americans watch more than twenty hours of television every week. These viewers often look to dramas, comedies, and soap operas for carefree and relaxing entertainment. A seemingly endless variety of television programs depict an assortment of lifestyles, locales, and careers. In many popular comedy sitcoms, producers relate to viewers by focusing on the humor of the supposedly average person's lifestyle. According to researchers Signorielli and Bacue,

Television's role in society is that of a common storyteller—it is the mainstream of our popular culture. Its world shows and tells us about life—people, places, striving, power, and fate. It lets us know who is good and who is bad, who wins and who loses, what works and what doesn't, and what it means to be a man or a woman. As such, television has joined the ranks of socialization agents in our society and in the world at large.

But few viewers bother to question the underlying messages they may be receiving from the mass media via television. The stories about life that are casually absorbed by audiences aren't necessarily accurate portrayals of the broader world and society they live in. The inaccuracy may be found in the presence or in the absence of various elements of reality. Moreover, the filtered reality of television becomes dangerous when viewers assume it to be true and attempt to live by its usually unrealistic standards.

One of the most widespread examples of this filtered reality is the media's portrayal of women. Since the early 1990's, television's reality has shown extremely thin women as the rule, and heavy, even average-sized women have become the exception. Many television viewers would probably have a hard time trying to name a positively represented overweight actress, since many are portrayed as lazy or unattractive. The lifestyle and

attitude portrayed in the comedy *Roseanne* is just one such case. A list of the thin television actresses, however, would be easy for most viewers to produce, since skinny women are lead actresses in *Friends*, *Baywatch*, *Ally McBeal*, and numerous other popular programs.

Increasingly, the figures of television actresses resemble the slender physiques of models. The gap in body weight between the fashion models, a group who used to be thought of as a relatively small and unrepresentative of most American women, and actresses, whose roles supposedly reflect the average American woman's life, has grown very narrow. As the line between reality and perceived perfection becomes finer, women's self-expectations escalate. The prevalence of thin images has increasingly made television producers' and consumers' expectations and definitions of beauty artificial and essentially unattainable. But American women are so bombarded by frail figures in magazines and movies, and on television, that many believe such a shape is desirable and feasible. Since the average American woman stands at five feet, four inches and weighs 142 pounds, and the average model is five feet, nine inches tall and weighs 110 pounds, measuring up to these television images is quite an undertaking. Yet many women continually attempt to imitate their television counterparts. In many cases, this struggle results in lowered self-esteem and the possible on-set of dangerous eating disorders.

Actress Calista Flockhart is the epitome of thin women on screen today. As Ally in Fox's hit sitcom *Ally McBeal*, Calista has quickly risen to stardom. Since the first episode aired on September 8, 1997, viewers have fallen in love with the Ally, "a high-strung, miniskirted lawyer." At the same time, fans have watched the already thin actress lose weight, raising concerns about her health. Calista's scrawny figure has earned her the media's spotlight, as numerous questions and claims rise about her having an eating disorder. The situation escalated when Flockhart appeared at the Emmy's wearing a pink backless dress "that revealed there was somewhat less flesh on her bones than many deemed strictly healthy." Even before the event, Calista was referred to as the "rail-thin actress," the "pint-sized starlet," and the "super-skinny actress."

Calista naturally has a small frame and claims that her metabolism is responsible for her super-slender figure. She casually lists other factors of her weight loss, including fourteen hour days on the set, a cutback in junk food, and less time put in at the gym. The media's persistence has frustrated Calista, and she fears the negative attention may threaten her career. In an attempt to dispel the rumors, she's publicized her daily diet in *People* magazine, appeared at Game 1 of the World Series munching on junk food, and even politely stated, "I would like to take this opportunity just to tell the press to kiss my skinny white ass" on the David Letterman show. Flockhart has even refused to appear on news and talk shows whose pro-

ducers reject interview restrictions concerning her weight issue. Despite continuing media pressure, Flockhart and her colleagues have consistently and adamantly denied the claims of Calista's eating disorder.

The truth of Calista's anorexia rumors seems insignificant against the fact that Ally, like it or not, has become a role model for numerous girls and women in America. In a society where people take drastic and sometimes dangerous measures to be thin, Ally's publicized appearance creates and proliferates unrealistic standards. Although Flockhart's figure itself is not responsible for the development of our fat-fearing society, it is definitely a contributing factor.

Virtually all women are ashamed of their bodies, including those who actually embody the idea of physical perfection. The desire to be thin runs so deep in our culture that the women of television themselves are rarely satisfied or confident with their figures. Even Calista Flockhart sullenly stated that, lacking exercise, her thin body had "changed from being muscular to softer." Movie director Joel Schumacher, who has worked with actresses Demi Moore, Julia Roberts, Sandra Bullock, and many more, claims, "I have never worked with a beautiful young woman who thought she was a) beautiful or b) thin enough." Even more unfortunate is the fact that actresses' insecurity is not without reason. The performers are constantly in the public and media's eye, having their physical features critiqued and analyzed. Perceived imperfections are often brought to light in judgmental and cruel ways. For example, nineteen-year-old actress Alicia Silverstone recently gained five or ten pounds, and her appearance in public was met by crude and damaging comments from the media. Aware of Silverstone's upcoming role in a Batman sequel, tabloids read, "Batman and Fatgirl" and "Look Out Batman! Here Comes Buttgirl!" These tasteless and crude comments were no doubt hurtful for the actress. Such publicized and destructive criticism of the attractive young woman indirectly speaks to numerous movie watchers and magazine readers, many of whom are women. The harsh criticisms of Alicia's new and average body size may cause some women to question their own bodies and feel hopeless as the standards for physical beauty stretch farther out of their reach.

Whether female viewers are aware of the intense work and discipline that goes into famous women's physiques, and whether they know that many actresses use body doubles for nude or seminude scenes appears irrelevant. Women are determined to strive for the level of attractiveness and success they see on T.V. Despite increased awareness of eating disorder symptoms and consequences, and alarming statistics, the incidence of both anorexia and bulimia has doubled since 1970. Often the women who develop these disorders are obsessed with the images they see in the media. Concerns about physical and emotional damage are usually pushed aside and anxiety about appearance and desirability are considered most impor-

tant. The body, for many women, the ultimate expression of self and an announcement of identity to the world, has become an object, being appraised and in need of constant improvement.

Today, the question of this epidemic dissatisfaction's origin is much less of a concern than is its continued acceptance and growth. Why are we so stuck, knowing the dangers of media's depiction of women, yet unable to tear ourselves away from the screen? The blame can be placed on a number of factors, ranging from the most intimate thoughts of individuals to the widespread ideals of society.

The most simple and direct approach is to place the fault in the hands of the media producers. After all, they have the power to choose which actresses are put in front of the camera and how these women will be portrayed. The producer is held responsible for the fact that the percentage of under-weight women on television strikingly contrasts with the actual percentage of such women in society. This overrepresentation, seen and internalized by millions of women on a regular basis, presents an unrealistic picture of women's bodies. Competition between television stations and between media industries keeps average-sized, and especially heavy women, for the most part, out of the public eye. These industries must produce what sells: beauty. Having established the successful "skinny is beauty" idea, producers tend not to stray from it, as such a move would be different, and therefore, economically risky. Attempting to keep viewers' favor, members of the media industry are apprehensive to admit that viewers' well-being is rarely considered a priority over financial profits. So the blame is passed in an endless circle as modeling agencies blame fashion magazines, and movies blame television. Television executive Darren Star dodged the bullet claiming, "people have always looked at movies and television to create their myths. To confuse fantasy and reality is a mistake." Star's one-dimensional explanation suggests that television is neutral and innately harmless, and that it is the viewers who determine its effect. Blaming individual viewers for their misinterpretation of television seems quite unfair. It is true, however, that the public's reaction is a major factor in the success and failure of these images. If carefully considered, this universal fault may be revealed as the result of a larger social dynamic.

According to Bridget Dolan and Inez Gitzinger of the European Council on Eating Disorders, "most people derive satisfaction and security from the social acceptance best bestowed by the attainment of ideal cultural standards, which are promoted via the mass media."

In other words, the problem of media-induced eating disorders resides in the complex interaction of the individual, the mass media, and society. To completely understand the interaction between these elements, it may be helpful to break them into three relationships and examine the logic behind each.

An individual's ideas and interpretations of the world are largely affected by the society in which he or she lives. Since ours is a society that is very dependent on the media for information and entertainment, television plays a major role in forming interpretations of the world beyond our own familiarity. Television is a contributor to the process of socialization, whereby individuals learn the basic rules of behavior and beliefs of their society. This identity-forming process establishes how we perceive our world, how we interact with others, and ways to deal with circumstances. As a contributing factor, television shows viewers how to treat people who are different from themselves. It exemplifies society's definition of morality, sexuality, happiness, and success, and it provides guidance toward achieving these aspirations. Socialization continues throughout a lifetime and changes to accommodate society's fluctuating ideals. The success of *Ally McBeal* indicates society's most recent shift: thin is in. By identifying television as a mere supporter, one of many mediums for larger sociological ideals, it's difficult to believe that the producers of television shows are solely to blame for America's problem of eating disorders. Obviously, at least part of the problem has to do with the way individual viewers react to media content.

The second and most complicated relationship is the one between the individual viewer and the mass media. Authors Dolan and Gitzinger proposed two socio-psychological theories on the possible ways that media may affect viewers. These theories are more focused than that of socialization. Rather than focusing on the broader connection between society and the individual, which uses television as a medium, the social identity theory and the social comparison theory concentrate specifically on the relationship between the individual and the mass media, using society as an objective, sought after goal.

Society represents the vague desires of individuals, which often include social acceptance via appearance and actions. The social comparison theory assumes that these desires are the result of pervasive television images and messages being seen as truth, and internalized by individuals. The theory claims that in order for people to assess (if necessary, adjust) their own characteristics and attitudes, they need to find reference points of social trends. Using the example of body image, women refer to the images of the mass media for personal comparison. Since television portrays the most positive aspects and idealistic picture of body shape for viewers, the current trend of seeing extreme thinness in women as attractive has obvious potential for depression in women who cannot fit the ideal. This danger is especially obvious in the case of Calista Flockhart. Few of her fans have the small bones and fast metabolism she claims to have. Nevertheless, many women look upon Flockhart's body with envy and admiration.

The social identity theory further explains the effects of media on the

individual by breaking the complex and obscure identity into two parts that focus both on the individual and the connection between individual and society. These parts are the personal identity and the social identity. The individual produces the personal identity, whereas the social identity is formed through interaction with groups. It's important to note that, in this theory, society does not act *on* individuals, as it does in socialization, instead society is more clearly acknowledged as a goal set by the individual to create his or her identity. A positive social identity results with "increasing social desirability of the group of which one is a member." In this context, society, or social acceptance is the goal. "The media present images that promise or imply social acceptance for thin females, thus rendering this body type highly desirable." Again, the *Ally McBeal* scenario of social success via appearance emerges. Having established the fact that individuals are socialized in part by the media, and having examined the complex development of identity via media's influence, it can be assumed that both the media industry and the viewers are to blame for the prevalence of eating disorders today.

Although this solution may seem sufficient, it is not quite broad enough to explain the full scope of the image problem. The idea that beauty and success accompany thinness stretches beyond the vast media industry and has become a reality for all of society. The social construction of reality consists of human-created ideas and knowledge that become truth and form "the world taken for granted." This theory, which is both confirmed and focused by the social identity theory and the social comparison theory, explains the relationship between society and the mass media by suggesting that media both creates and spreads society's ideals. Today, it is a cultural norm that a thin figure is much more attractive than a full figure. Just as television socializes individuals, it is also a basic element in the creation of reality. The way women are portrayed on television suggests what is attractive and unattractive, and it shows the positive and negative results of these appearances. The change in America's perception of beauty and desirability is one drastic transformation our society has recently encountered. For example, a comparison between the unforgettable Marilyn Monroe, who wore a size twelve, to the now popular size two of Calista Flockhart, shows an incredible disparity in widely accepted beauty ideals. Television's portrayal of thin, successful women suggests that appearance determines the amount of success and acceptance one can expect from society. Unfortunately, in the reality we've created, this picture is quite accurate. The earlier mentioned stereotypes of heavy people being lazy or selfish suggest that we, as a society, have internalized the reality that we've created. In doing so, we've moved on, forgotten our roles as co-creators of this fat-fearing society, and assumed its universal truth.

The mass media may be so effective because it is often underestimated.

By collectively excusing certain negative aspects of the media as "not real life," the physical aspects, situations, characters, lifestyles, and locations are all deemed untrue. This over-simplistic, rejecting view is dangerous since it ignores television's driving force: the powerful underlying messages and ideals presented. While some of the "not real life" assumptions may be accurate, there are certain fragments of an idealized reality that intrigue viewers. Accessible perfection, the socially successful, physically attractive women of television, is spoon-fed to viewers. Those who get the most satisfaction out of the media can separate the good from the bad, reality from fantasy. Only by recognizing the bombarding influences of society and the mass media, and by establishing a strong individual self, can American women fight a message, an idea that distorts reality.

Faint, illegible text at the top of the page, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side.



Jason Signalness

Faint, illegible text below the photograph, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.

Katie Zejdlik

Queens of the Summer

It was our kingdom, our realm, the land over which we ruled. The park was the domain that we called our own. The little red slide with the white roof over it served as the throne from where we distributed orders and watched to see that everything ran exactly as we wished.

For many years during the winter months, my grandma's job was to oversee the going-ons at the local warming house. Day after day we sat on the metal benches of that old warming house with a cherry Pepsi in hand just being kids. My cousins and I spent endless hours there playing games we had invented, shoveling the new fallen snow off the hockey rink and the pleasure rink or just talking. But when at last the snow had melted and the warming house was locked until Jack Frost came to visit again, we found our way to the playground on the opposite end of the park. For in the park during the summer months, when adult rule was no longer restrictive, was when we reigned supreme.

Having grown up in and around the park, it became our summer home. While the adults went off to work each day we kids meandered down to the park. Since Grandma operated the warming house in the winter, we felt that while she was home for the summer, we, as her grandchildren, were the protectors of the park. The authority was ours and we could do as we pleased, especially those of us that were lucky enough to be the oldest.

Mindy and I were not only cousins but best friends and as the oldest we were in charge; the queens you might say. So as the summer days began to roll in we were quick to ascend our thrones. Unfortunately, the younger three cousins weren't so lucky. While they weren't given a status that was as lowly as the other children that came to play in the park, they held very little authority and were subject to the demands of the queens above them.

Everyday the five of us met at grandma's house and began our two-block journey down the shaded, cement sidewalk to the park. Equipped with the snacks that Grandma had sent we were ready for a day of adventure and fun.

Upon reaching the curb, the line that separated reality from fantasy, we stepped into our kingdom and the sovereignty began. Immediately we made our way to the little red slide with the white roof. That was the throne. It was from there that the royal order was decreed and plans were

made. From this place of power, Mindy and I could survey our kingdom and all that it had to offer.

The park had all the necessary elements needed for a successful reign. The "big slide" served as a watch tower. The younger cousins were randomly placed at the top to keep watch for intruders. In the event that there was a threat of invasion, they quickly slid to the bottom where they landed in a pile of dust and got up to sound the warning.

The next element of the park was the monkey bars, another valuable part of a powerful kingdom. It was on the bars that we tested our bravery. On occasion all five of us would climb to the top and dare each other to jump off. It was a test of courage not only because it was high but also because once you had reached the zenith of the metal mountain the ground turned to flames. The game was to jump into the lake of fire and save Joey (who was the new baby in the family at that time). The first one off was held in a place of honor and revered greatly by the other four.

Another sector of our realm was the swings. The swings were beneficial in a few ways. First of all, swinging on a swing is the closest thing we could get to flying. Back and forth, higher and higher until our toes touched the clouds and the birds flew effortlessly below us. We seemingly escaped reality for a minute and took flight. Even in the fantasy world that the park represented, the swings allowed us to go one step further and escape the laws of gravity and science. The swings are also where we connected with each other; queen and commoner, older and younger. Five of us in a row swinging happily and sharing our dreams and fantasies.

The final element in the park was the merry-go-round. In our kingdom we had a throne, watchtower, bravery tester, and a tool for enlightenment, so what about fun? That was what the merry-go-round was for. We never went to the park and skipped a day of "got it, dropped it." This game required the merry-go-round, the energy to push it and a stick. The way to play the game was to hang our heads and arms over the edge of the merry-go-round so that we could see under it. With everyone spaced apart, a stick was dropped somewhere in the dirt around the bottom of the merry-go-round. The goal was to try to pick up the stick as we passed it. When someone got the stick that person would yell, "Got it." When the stick was released back into the sand and dirt that person would yell, "Dropped it." This game was loads of fun and took up many a sunny afternoon in the park.

With all of these useful components, Mindy and I had all that we needed to rule and regulate. Our daily ruling usually started off with the snacks that Grandma had given us. Excited to dig into the treats, Mindy and I would eat happily in the shade of the covered slide while being served our picnic lunch by our younger subjects.

Sipping on fruit punch juice boxes and eating gooey, peanut butter

sandwiches, we ordered the younger cousins to sit under the slide. In this domain was a whole other sphere of black spiders, red ants, and bothersome mosquitoes—a world of the dead the dark and the creepy. It was the only place in the park that the lawn mower never dared to challenge, resulting in grass that was taller than we were and forever damp. It was the underworld. A place existent in every kingdom, where the evil and the deceased haunted and fear pervaded the air, where you could never predict what was living in the dark recess under the metal steps and what might happen to you as a result of venturing into the unknown. Why we temporarily banished them to the underworld on a daily basis I do not know. Perhaps it was to enforce the power we had, or just a case of morbid, childlike humor. Either way, banishing our younger cousins to the underworld was a use of our power and the authority did not end with those that we knew.

The children who came unescorted by their parents to the park were also subject to our imaginary power just as the younger cousins were. To our advantage, the kids that came to the park also realized that we were in charge and fell under our ruling. As queens we initiated games such tag, changing the base or who was “it” whenever we pleased. We also engaged the other children in our game of “got it, dropped it” but never released the stick when we picked it up. More often than not we were protective of our kingdom and frightened the other children away. With games like “pirates” and “cowboys and Indians” the cousins united, under the command of Mindy and me, to reclaim the park as our own.

I never understood how we managed to accomplish our goals of total supremacy. Maybe, because the other children didn't realize that our power was imagined and only real to us or perhaps because we were too intimidating to ignore. No matter the case, we lived those sultry summer days as royalty ordering those smaller than us around as if they were our subjects.

Although we made rules to the games and refereed them too, we were never especially mean to those whom we felt were below us, for as soon as we left the park we were equal once again. But it was something about the magic of the park, the knowledge that as soon as we stepped over the curb into the lush green grass we had entered another world. A world all our own where we ruled over all we surveyed and knew that with a little bit of imagination anything could and did happen.

The summers continued on like this until age called for maturity. I think we slowly got too busy and caught up in making something of ourselves, that we soon lost the world we once inhabited. We didn't understand that you are never too old to swing on a swing or glide down the slide and land in the dust and dirt at the bottom.

Over those long gone summer days we didn't learn that “absolute power corrupts absolutely” nor were we ever dethroned. But we did dream

our dreams as we flew through the air, got courage as we jumped into the fire, created fun as we picked up sticks and dropped them again, and relished the companionship of friends. We learned that it took another person to stand watch at the tower to keep us safe. We learned that no two people can rule an entire park and that no matter what situation you encounter in life be it children invading your park or the loss of a friend or job, you need those other people behind you to get you through.

It has been about ten years since I've stood on that slide and declared myself queen, but I still hold the truths I found during those summers. Truth that the simplicity of the sunshine and the joys of being a kid are never ending; truth that friends are forever as I continue to hold Mindy close to my heart, we are still queens in my mind; truths that I will take with me forever. And on a sunny day I find my way back to the swings, the slides and the monkey bars. I sit and think about the joys that the simple things in life bring, I reminisce, and I smile.

Christopher Pieske

Hop on the Bandwagon

People around the country have always seen North Dakota as backwards and behind the times. Well, we're proving them all wrong. We are now the trendsetters in America. We're on the cutting edge. Pretty soon everyone will be following our lead and hopping on the intolerance bandwagon.

State legislatures all over the country will be clamoring to pass their own anti-cohabitation bills. What's that you say? You think we should let people lead their lives however they see fit? Every right-minded person knows that the government has no business letting unmarried people live together. First amendment be damned. And why stop there? Why we might as well let landlords deny renting to interracial couples, because some people don't think that's right either. And what about gay people? We certainly can't have them living in our midst. Same-sex roommates should also be told there's "no room at the inn," lest they be undercover homosexuals. They often look and act just like you and I, you know. In fact, nobody should be allowed to live with anyone else. That will eliminate all chance of sexual impropriety in our great state. Nobody should have pets either, because . . . well . . . you can't be too safe.

There are some types of history in North Dakota that matter. For example, the history of the Sioux. The hockey team, that is. The Fighting Sioux hockey team has a great tradition that all North Dakotans should take pride in. Even if you aren't on the team, don't go to the school, or don't even watch the games, you should still be proud. Some people think the Fighting Sioux nickname is offensive and racist. How can they be so naïve? The University of North Dakota adopted the nickname to honor the Sioux people. It certainly wasn't because "Sioux" rhymes so well when we're trying to make up cheers. That's just a side benefit. The Native Americans talk about genocide, land stealing, and oppression by whites, but I think they're just ungrateful. How dare they not be honored by our stealing, I mean using, their name for something as important as our sports teams! Well, we're going to honor them whether they like it or not.

Not everyone may agree with the new trail that North Dakota is blazing. Those people should wake up to reality. Stop living in the past and get in the 21st century. The intolerance bandwagon is traveling at break-neck speed towards the future, or is it the past? Never mind that, we're right and the rest of the world is wrong. At least, that's what we keep telling ourselves . . .



Poppy Fowler

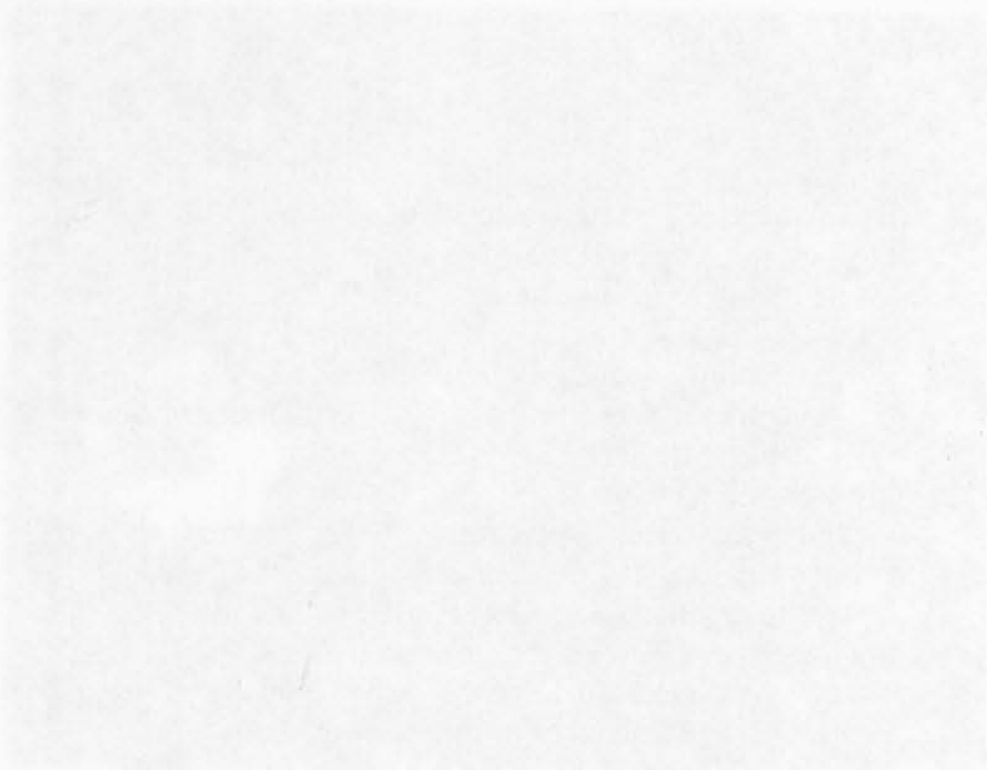
Erin McCleary

I'm Tired

i'm tired
my eyes become laden—upon the tribulations of life
held open merely by pure will
ever faltering, i stumble through the white
ignoring the pain of glass embedded in my feet
 their soles torn and ragged they carry on
 bringing me ever closer to my destination or damnation
 to which i do not know
my body screams.
seeking release from the constant . . . ever apparent
muscles that ache leave me stranded among the desolate
 scathing humanities barely worthy of their title
my fingers, swollen and abused, search for the want
 the needed melodies—unable to be found in this frozen land
 this place where all ceases to breathe
a face which has nothing ahead nor behind fails to glow
 one which falls slack and lifeless
this is what i've become
an entity bearing no soul
a cup from which is delivered emptiness
 no longer filled with blood
as coldness takes over,
 i know i shall be tired no more

The first part

The second part



The third part
The fourth part
The fifth part
The sixth part
The seventh part
The eighth part
The ninth part
The tenth part

the Forum

**University of North Dakota
Honors Program
Robertson-Sayre Hall
Box 7187
Grand Forks, ND 58202-7187**

Address Service Requested
9223-0066