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Jacob Dawson

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Authors

Nichole D'Antonio, Jacob Dawson, Rebecca Griffith, Elizabeth Hood, Jennifer O'Neil, Stephanie Drozd, Greg Harrell, Amanda Veale, Danielle Meyer, Stephanie Guyer, Jacob Foster, and Thomas McElwee

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Is This Thing On? -Nichole D'Antonio-

I guess you could say all the positive feedback went to my head. I see this now only after being fired from American Airlines and getting dragged off stage numerous times, frantically collecting my props while I trip over the mic. Being an only child helped with my material. Even as a seven year old I had a more mature sense of humor due to the fact I was constantly around adults. I never wanted to be around people my own age because they never understood my sense of humor. It was too high brow for my peers. I only wanted to associate with serious performers. Before the age of thirteen, I would perform my material whenever possible. It wasn't until high school I would suppress my joke telling until I got home and could perform in front of the best audience ever, my dad.

"I just flew in from California and boys are my arms tired," I would yell while straightening my bow tie.

"Ha! That's a good one Rich! Never gets old," my dad would say between thunderous belly laughs. "Rich, I always say you were born too late! Vaudeville missed out."

Due to this constant encouragement, I took to the stage. All my focus was in perfecting my routine. This left little to no time for friends or a love life. I mean, Brian Dunkleman did not evolve into the great comedian he is today by wasting his time dating. Like Dunkleman, I too devoted all my time and energy into comedy. This also meant that I had been living at home for longer than my parents originally intended. My dad knew that I would pay them back as soon as I hit it big. My mom was ready for me to leave. Her sense of humor diminished with age. Even so, she bought me a new bow tie every week and cut out any articles relating to comedy and put them in a book for me. But after 213 open mic contests, a 38th birthday candle on my cake, a negative bank account and not one win, I realized I needed to get a real job. I thought to myself, where can I work and still be able to practice my routine?

"Welcome aboard to American Airlines..."

Okay, so this is probably the farthest away I could get from the stage, literally. I thought it would be perfect considering how captive my audience truly is after take-off.

I laid low my first few flights. I was very professional. No jokes, no props, not even a smile. I was basically trying to keep the vomit down while still serving drinks and giving out those ridiculous bags of almonds, which was the inspiration for my first in flight routine.

"Ma'am, would you like some almonds?"

"Oh yes, thank you"

"Okay, here you go," as I handed her the miniscule bag.

"Ha, now don't eat them all at once, okay!"

I held on to her seat to support my hysterical laughing. It wasn't until I looked up that she had put her headphones back on and her young son was staring at me with his finger in his nose. It was then I remembered something that I once heard comedic legend Tom Arnold once say: "If they are not laughing, repeat yourself." With this in mind, I removed one ear phone off of her head and said loudly, "Don't eat them all at once!" My mother always told me that nobody laughed harder at my jokes than myself. What the hell did she know? The woman started laughing and I thought this was a good time to exit. Two seconds later I heard her little boy ask what was wrong with me. To this she answered, "Be nice. Remember when we watched that movie I am Sam?"

Occasionally, if the layovers were lengthy, I would call various comedy clubs to see when their amateur night was and register. I'm hardly an amateur. I've done open mic nights all around the world including Australia, Amsterdam (they laughed harder than I expected) and everywhere in the U.S. I've never actually won the cash prize but I know my comedy is a little edgy and people aren't quite used to seeing the neck of a rubber chicken hanging out of a suitcase, which is my best gag.

After the contests I would race back to the airport and prepare another set of jokes for a fresh new audience. Let me tell you something, there is nothing harder than trying to break

through to a nervous flyer.

We had this older gentleman who had some flyer's anxiety and he was also a real asshole. I had tried to crack him but he told me he was in no mood to laugh. I knew that if I could just make him at least smile, I would be able to make anyone laugh.

The flight started off pretty well. I did the whole safety routine and did my usual bit where I get on the intercom and tell everyone to enjoy their flight to Japan. Then I would also do my usual bit of calming them down by telling them I was kidding and that we are headed to another false destination. We were actually flying to Pittsburgh and I was pretty nervous because I had entered an open mic contest at the Funny Bone where Paula Poundstone got her big break. So, I decided to practice my bit in order to warm up.

I went to my suitcase where I carried my props for my shows. I shifted through my rubber chicken, Groucho Marx disguise, flower that squirts water, fake vomit and sour chewing gum until I found my strap on angel wings. I put them on and ran to the front of the plane pretending to be out of breath. I said, "The pilot and co-pilot are both in cardiac arrest, yes, both of them. But don't worry, I know how to fly!" I pointed to my angel wings and before anyone could react Anxiety Man tackled me to the ground and began punching me. My six foot, 140 pound body hit the floor like a wet noodle. I guess this is where I sort of blanked out. I saw my whole comedy career flash before my eyes. The pilot called for an emergency landing in Chicago where I was taken to the hospital where I was later questioned about my "threats." I didn't press charges against Anxiety Man but he did sue me for emotional damage. He won and I was fired from the Airlines. I feel sorry for people who wouldn't know comedy if it bit them in their old fat ass.

I moved back home to Sheboygan and my parents took me in while I looked for another job. I rehearsed in front of them every night. My dad still cracked up while my mom told him not to encourage me but I would always catch her with a half smile while she walked away.

I made some money working in a Spencer's Gift Shop and saved enough to move into a tiny apartment in Chicago. I even got a job at Second City Comedy Club. I was the team leader of all the janitors. There are only two including myself, but hey, it was a

step up. I would hide and watch as the actors prepared for their shows. It came so effortless for them. I had never considered doing improv before because the act I had been rehearsing for the last 30 years was solid. Plus, I had spent quite a bit on my props. I thought about it all night. I couldn't sleep. What if improv was my calling? I thought no, and then I went to sleep.

The End

Hey, I'm just kidding! Actually, I got a great idea from that movie *Good Will Hunting*. After everyone left and I was done mopping, I would write a couple of my jokes on the board. Yes, there was a board. Anyway, when it came out that I was the one doing this, one of the actors invited me to do some sketches with them. I guess they thought I was really original.

I am not one of the main actors but I am needed in quite a few sketches. I have played a coat hanger, ottoman, plant and a toilet. Improv is actually my calling. Pretty soon I think they will let me speak on stage!

So I guess you could say I've been promoted! You should fly to Chicago to see me sometime, that is, if your arms don't get too tired! Oh, there is more where that came from! All day, I'm this funny! All day...

The End

Really

Death Came Knocking

-Jacob Dawson-

Tw'as one day
When winter fell
The last leaf
Touched the ground

Death came knocking
At my door
Knocked once, knocked twice
No more- I found

I answered
After those two knocks
And upon my door
He stood

A hooded figure
Clad in black
No face, no eyes
A hood

Tw'as black as night
Sad as sorrow
Dismal as despair

I wondered
Why he stood there so
And asked him
How he fair'd

He answered me
In a whispered tone,
"Tis you for whom
I've come,

The fates
Have been watching
Your string
Has been undone,

Now if you please
Come with me
I have business
To attend,

You might bring those
Gloves, that hat, the coat,
T'might get cold"
He said.

So doing as he told me
I went and got those things
That hat, those gloves, my favorite coat
Oh the memories

Fourteen steps it took me so
To get right out my door
The funny things you remember
That you never thought before

Twas when I passed
A large red rose
The blood in my veins
Like ice it froze

For upon the ground
It caught my sight
Twas Death's carriage
Black as the night

I crossed the grass
To His chariot of black
And lost all hope
To ever go back

No thoughts, no worries
Just blank inside
That is the Element of Death
I surmised

The door creaked open
With no sound
And so I stepped
Inside

It chilled my fingers
Straight to the bone
No hope of escape
The shadows my Home

But twas that instance
I saw the light
That I turned to Death
And began to fight

He wrapped his fingers
Round my throat
Until in my last breath
I silently choked:

"Tis not my time
To leave this place."
I tore off his hood
To reveal his face.

Such a terror
I wish to never have known
When I revealed his face
To discover my own
I screamed and I hollered
I swore in vain,
"Be gone from my sights
I must be insane!

You demonic ghost
You soul stealing spirit
Be gone, Be gone,
I refuse to hear it!"

And at that moment
I awoke with a fight
No one around
No one in sight

I lay in my bed
In a feverish sweat,
"What a terrible dream,
A nightmare." –I said.

Not two minutes passed
A knock at my door
Knocked once, knocked twice,
Then knocked no more.

Awaiting December

-Rebecca Griffith-

I am a keeper,
A wooden hope chest,
The shelf on the wall where daughters keep dried corsages
And all those dreams that streak across their headboards
while they sleep at night.

Country love songs,
About roses and God the Father
Whisper through my veins.
They are the lift in my chin when the sun sets and the road
is empty,
The lowering of my eyes when I don't want to spill tears.

You've grown accustomed to sitting next to me on the floor
In that spot where the sun warms the carpet around three
o'clock every afternoon.

What could you think of the shoeboxes in my closet,
Full of their envelopes full of notes full of the past,
My sweaters, long outgrown,
But dripping with memories so thick I cannot pack them
away,
My bookshelf, crammed with too many candles and novels
and photos?

And you,
Are you becoming a keeper by becoming mine?
Is it like the intonations of your silly sayings,
Or the calm in your stare,
Things that fall from your eyelashes or mouth onto my
shoulder,
And are not noticed or brushed off,
And thus are mine forever?

You would be oak,
Thick and true,
A striking sachet richly scented with years past,
A hope chest without lace trim.
They could stack me inside of you,
Like Russian dolls,
And we could tell a story without words.

We would live under the eaves in an attic where the windows
leaked in sunlight,
Until night fell,
When we would be whispers mistaken for drafts, for wind,
Remembering when our eyes flirted over winter coffee,
Spiced with a shot or two of peppermint,
In a room full of Christmas lights and ambiance,
Pine from the tree and silver and blue glinting off the gifts.
We will recall that child's wonder
As though a hundred haven't passed since our ardent hearts
were stored out of necessity
And forgotten with time.

(Secretly, he wants her like
But is too shy to say.)

ginamarie
-Elizabeth Hood-

I am a keeper
A wooden box
The shelf on
And all those
while they sleep

She walks barefoot,
tune in her head
rhythm in her feet.
Tip tap wham bap!

Watch her
mesmerize—
About once
Whisper three

male, female, young, old
gay, straight, bi, high—

Opening up the world,
bringing beauty
to the overlooked.

In that spot where
inspiration looks to her
for definition.

Full of their
My sweaters
But dripping
away.

I hear her voice
in my heart,
& I smile.

My bookshelf, crammed with too many candles and novels
and photos?

And you,
Are you becoming a keeper by becoming tired?
Is it like the intonations of your silly sayings,
Or the calm in your stare,
Things that fall from your eyelashes or mouth onto my
shoulder,
And are not noticed or brushed off,
And thus are mine forever?

She Longs
-Jennifer O'Neil-

He looks *at* her, but doesn't see her.
He talks *with* her, but doesn't hear her.
She burns inside, longing to touch him,
To tell him how she feels.

She studies his hands; strong, clean, gentle.
She watches him stroll; confident, upright, yet humble.
His shoulders; broad, lean, flex before her, and she drifts.
Her eyes catch his face; long, bright, sincere.

Square jaw; ivory smooth,
Oceanic orbs set in a kind expression, framed by earthen
locks.
Body of Apollo, flawlessly molded from softened gold,
Forged by Hephaestus himself.
His smile sets fire to the sun each morning,
His sadness smothers it each night...the moon, his teardrop.

She wants the sun to shine forever,
To make his brilliant features soar with joy!
Day after day is torture for her,
As she wants nothing more than to believe
That man of her heart loves her too,
But cannot tell her so.

(Secretly, he wants her too,
But is too shy to say.)

Forgotten
-Stephanie Drozd-

Rusted ribs of the
Metal giants
Discarded pieces of life
7-11

Fences erected by
Cracked streets
Weeds find their way
Through the forgotten

Earth fighting concrete
While it swallows it whole
Grass overwhelms a
Lonely Schwinn

Exhilaration
In a plastic bag
Eyes that never see
Past the silver spoon

Buying and seeing and tasting
Strange tongues with familiar faces
Metal giants rust
Pieces of the forgotten

Art House Woman

-Greg Harrell-

When Susana struts through the art gallery
that hawkish crown weaves about
the shorts ascend her legs
the breaths heave and sink
in her chest
the palms of Christ turn upward
the mariner returns from sea
the poet weeps
the aristocrats look flushed
in their regal tombs
the Sun gets tangled in the scorched bluffs
a rose gets caught in a downpour
stem arched
blade of grass slides into the petals

And then we all slink back into our frames.

Girl 3

by Jenna Smith



Young Woman Older

-Amanda Veale-

I've wanted
to have wild hair
that I cut myself
at odd angles
and let fly loose
in the wind,
loose in the water,
loose in the fire—
yes even the fire—
if it should be so.
But I've learned
to train my locks
straight.
Proper.
Tightly plaited.
I've not even
a desire remaining
to soar about
like a maddened goddess—
untamed—
free.

Man by Jenna Smith



Give Peace a Chance by Megan Mathy



First

-Rebecca Griffith-

The album is the color of piano keys,
With a strip—a long spill of coffee and ink—painted on the
side.

I am a photographer tonight,
A keeper of memories,
A scribbler of speech.

Cut-outs of your easy smile lay slanted across the page.
I've captured the sunlight in my hair that you say captivat-
ed you so.

You crack the cover of my Samuel Taylor Coleridge poems,
And you are scrawling in black pen on the title page:

*In June, we'll lay in the grass,
And watch the sunsets get later and later,
Almost as if they're giving us more daylight
To behold each other in.*

You are trying to be a poet.
It is only May now.

"Do you remember getting off the train?"

Your voice is quiet.

I am twisting the head off of a dandelion,
Painting yellow onto your nose.

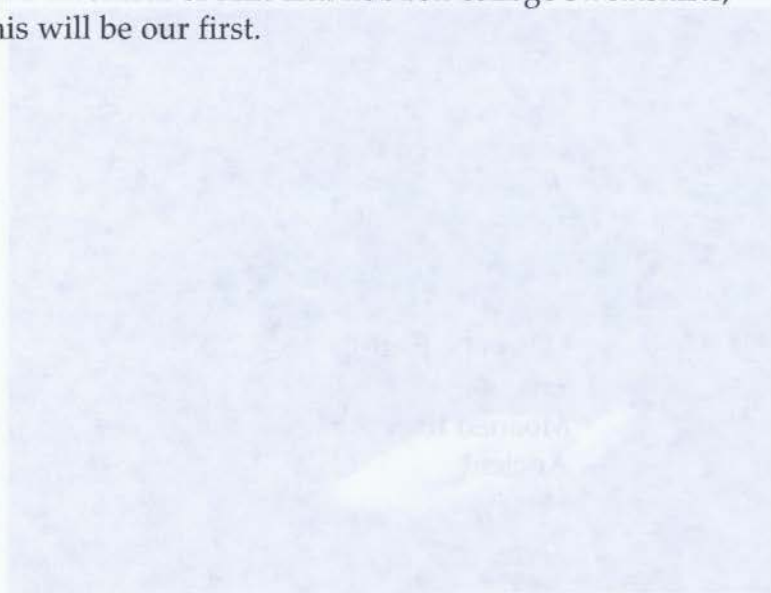
"Yes."

I'll show you that page,

The day I stepped from Amtrak's rail into your warm arms.

Your choice of words that night...
I matched a cornflower blue sheet of paper to them
And wrote on it in calligraphic French
Words I understand only for a moment,
But will remember steeped in beauty long after their mean-
ing fades:

We'll have a page of gold bands and clichéd wishes,
A lifetime of black and whites in a home too small for our
hearts and whispers,
Albums lined along a mahogany bookshelf,
Or leafed through on a honey oak coffee table,
Years and anniversaries,
My hand in yours,
Labeled and recorded in books that remind us of streaking
sunsets,
Or grassy knolls,
And this, my love,
This one I am crafting with you next to me,
On a weekend of rain and hooded college sweatshirts,
This will be our first.



Flow

-Jacob Dawson-

Sweet sounds

Flow

His fingers

Walk

Across

Those ivory keys

His smooth ebony

Hands

Craft

Those sweet

Sexy

Melodies

Stomp!

Goes that foot

The pulse to

The music

His heart beats

Broken Blues

Was every note

That seemed to

Paint

The page

Sorrow

O Broken Blues!

The piano

Moaned his tune

Ancient

Heavy

An Animal Aware

-Danielle Meyer-

A trippin' little froggy covered in mind ooze;
Can't sit still. He wants to explore.
His skin becomes camouflaged.
The psychedelic consumption is welcomed.
Regal and mysterious, he sits on a branch.
His presence is transparent.
The spears of enlightenment twist into his body,
Opening the valves of a thousand new delights.
His purpose is declared: An astronaut of inner space,
Of an infinite universe trapped inside itself.

Grace by Jennifer O'Neil



Geneva 04'
-Stephanie Guyer-

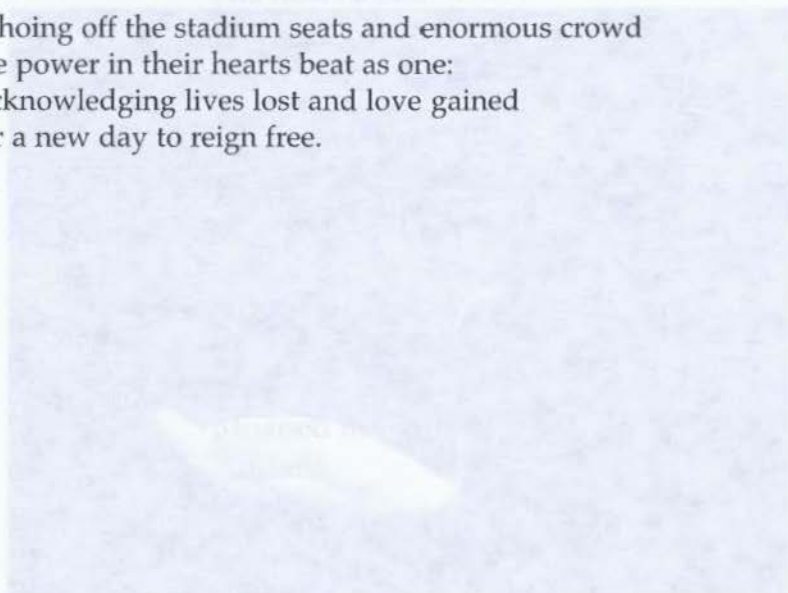
People from different countries flock to the gathering:
where colors red, white, and blue emit from the starry dark sky.
Shouts and screams fill the breezy night air in the heat of July,
like children after winning their first ball game.

Squeezing between people to catch the last glimpse
of the sparkling sensations in the sky
Booms and cracks fill my eardrums
Luscious, familiar sounds unite the crowd with one goal.

Though in a different setting,
Lives lost in war bring a country united.
Colorful tones fill the wood and brass instrument as the universal
feeling is transmitted.
Reaching the ever fine tuned devices everyone possesses.

Once again after a time of silence for our fallen soldiers
roars of thanks raise in the air:
followed by clapping, laughter and sometimes tears.
Messages received in the universal language.

Echoing off the stadium seats and enormous crowd
the power in their hearts beat as one:
Acknowledging lives lost and love gained
for a new day to reign free.



Poland, 1942.
-Jennifer O'Neil-

Ash, rises,
settles on crumbled bones
and charred brick.

Gray snow, hot,
falls on clammy,
terrified faces.

Inhaling the death
of blackened bodies
makes lungs seize.

Wet feet trudge
through tragic snow,
clean tears stain gray skin.

No light, no hope
shines in dreary orbs,
only eternal fear, unease.

Aching cold penetrates
quick-beating hearts
who soon resign themselves to death.

Now no "angel" will come for them,
and they sleep in peace,
their sad struggle over.

Witnesses to the Atrophy of Forests

-Danielle Meyer-

Society creates fallacies
about rational creatures,
Yet their teleological madness ensues.
Nuts are scattered and
Mass population creates stipulations
For a rampant suburban plague.
However, their intentions are foreseen.
Unavoidable at dusk,
The munitions factory will be destroyed
And the innocent lives lost will be proportionate to
The squirrels' teary eyes.
Fire and smoke ravage the biosphere.
The black decay has eclipsed and
Remedial action may come
Too late.

Oh, the Places You'll Go! by Megan Mathy



Helvellyn I -Jacob Foster-

Helvellyn I
Not. In. Kansas.

You know, there's something to be said
for bending over to tie your shoe
amidst the sixty mile an hour winds whipping
those below freezing temps through the thin layers
of fleece and t-shirt to nip the pink, puckered beneath,
all while stumbling up the fog-laden
path-needy slopes of England's third highest mountain.

Don't.
Coffee, please?
Why don't you wait 'til you can get behind those huge rocks ahead.
Next time you climb a mountain, wear the right kind of shoes. You
fucking numpty.
Ohmygodit'scoldohmygodit'scoldohmygodit'scoldohmygodit's-
coldohmygodit'scold
Fuck Wordsworth, dude; I'm going back down.
Somebody take a picture.

None of these quite capture the moment,
but I feel I've made a good start.

Three out of Five Ain't Bad

-Thomas McElwee-

I was elected president of Ford Hall at the end of my freshman year. Ford is a small, two story residence hall that houses both men and women. The building usually houses one hundred and twenty people. My election was a glorious personal achievement; with only twenty people at coming to Hall Council, and eleven of them voting for me, I was elected the sovereign of an independent judicial body with just over 8% of the populace casting a ballot in my name. Only one in twelve residents voted for me, and yet there I was.

When the dust settled at the end of that very long council session, I began planning. What could I do to encourage participation next year in the building? I knew, with the savvy knowledge of a cutthroat marketing genius that I had to lure those new sops in fast. If I waited even a week, the new freshmen would find cliques and friends of their own, and my power over them would be nonexistent. I had to convince anyone who moved in the upcoming year that they had to participate in Ford's events. To allow them other options would be social suicide.

When school finally came around, I had everything prepared. Ford had events set every day; mixers, cookouts, game nights and pizza bashes. During move-in week, I offered it all. I was extending a life line to the lonely, the homesick, the meek and the poor. I was the people's only salvation. The ultimate event, my crown jewel, was a football game planned the day before classes started, a game just for fun, where everyone was welcome. Come Sunday, I deployed my exec board to round up everyone they could find, in the hopes of having a massive athletic masterpiece. My goal was nothing short of the Super Bowl of residence hall football. Anything else seemed a defeat, a failure of my hopes for Ford Hall to take its place as the social center of the campus.

As I walked down to our lobby, I opened the door and looked out onto a sea of faces. Our fliers, advertisements, and rock-the-vote efforts had paid off. Gathered in the lobby were at least forty people, most of who had never met before today. There were the usual attempts at awkward conversation: "I don't even like football, I'm just here because I'm bored," or, "I haven't

eaten since I moved in. Where do I get food?"

Clutching my football, purchased with hall funds for a generous price of four dollars at Wal-Mart, I raised my voice and announced we were going to start, and, leading the way, I walked outside towards the football field. I felt like a king, preparing for battle. My troops were arrayed behind me, arrayed in designer jeans and the occasional backwards helmet. Nothing could conquer this army.

I had one eye on a cute girl that had transferred to Eastern for her sophomore year. She was a red head, a diminutive girl who batted her eyes shyly and seemed to radiate goodness. Suddenly, this football game took on two purposes: one, to bring everyone together in friendly competition, and two, to show this girl just how close to Walter Payton I was.

The teams were divided up, a good fifteen or twenty people per side. It was utter chaos. With no way to discriminate between teams, the game turned into a pattern of rhythmic "Hike!"s, followed by a mass of bodies scattering in every direction, arms waving at various heights to signal for the ball. I was content to sit back and play deep defense, as I love nothing more than to grab interceptions and run all the way back for a touchdown. I can run faster than anyone I know, as long as the distance involved is less than one hundred yards, and I always get a thrill from breaking past five people to score.

I made sure that every few plays my new crush touched the ball. Accompanying each handoff was a girl-killing smile; one I knew would make her swoon with womanly passions. I sensed something good was going to come of this year, an optimism buoyed by three days of endless fun. This had to be what college was about. I felt like I could soar or walk on water. As the lines were drawn for another down, I made up my mind to take part in the most spectacular play ever conceived by football pundits and washed up stars alike.

The quarterback for the other team dropped back, looking around the field. I followed his vision and took off running, pumping my legs to reach his intended receiver. He threw the ball, a slow lob that floated through the air. I took a few more steps then leapt, reaching out with my hands to catch the ball.

I had never blacked out before, which is why the initial sensation was so strange to me. One moment I was reaching,

groping for the steal, then, without any break in time, I was lying on the ground.

The screams started next. As I sat up, holding the ball in my arms, some fool girl started wailing like an air raid siren, stopping only to breathe before she continued. I didn't know what the fuss was about. I looked around, trying to figure out what she was hollering about. It was only then that I saw the damage.

I didn't feel one pinprick of pain. I later learned that it's because the nerves in my nose were damaged on impact, and there were no nerve endings left to tell me that I was injured. There was a river of blood flowing onto my shirt from my face; reaching up, I found it was coming out of my mouth, my nostrils, and weirdly enough, from in between my eyebrows. Reaching my hand up to touch the skin, I was surprised to find my nose wasn't in its proper place. The top half had been snapped off, leaving my nose dangling in the middle of my face.

"Oh," I said. That's where the blood was coming from.

There was complete confusion, as different people were giving me different advice. One girl told me to tilt my head back. "I'm a lifeguard!" she proclaimed, as if that was as good as a medical license. After a few seconds of trying her technique, I realized I was choking to death on my own blood, so I made a mental note to ignore her. Heather, the red headed crush who I would later date for three years, pushed the lifeguard out of the way and came up to tell me a different strategy. I smiled at her, and I'm sure I looked grotesque in that moment, with dripping red fangs for teeth, drenched in my own blood. She smiled back at me and told me what to do. "Squeeze your nose at the nostrils," she said, her hands keeping my head up.

I remember how the ground looked at that moment. I was sitting on a green field, yet the ground around me was already stained red.

Someone had the good frame of mind to call the ambulance right after the collision, so the wait wasn't long, only an unendurable three minutes. It turned out the ambulance crew was already in the neighborhood, answering a call for some lady down the street at a retirement home. It was a good thing, too, because they had to perform a quick fix to stem the bleeding, or else I was going to die.

That was a fact that never really hit me; this injury could be life threatening. I was cracking jokes as I sat, legs crossed, trying to keep everyone from worrying. I didn't want them to feel like I was hurt, because as long as I was strong, so could the others. So I grinned and laughed and poured my life into that dirt, and when the crew pulled up, I waved at them. "Hi guys," I said, but it came out more like, "Hugo."

I had never ridden in an ambulance before. That was enjoyable. They kept asking me questions, what's your name, where do you live, but all I could do was apologize for bleeding in their nice car. When I got out at the hospital, they wheeled me in on a bed through the emergency room doors, and I thought to myself, "Where's George Clooney?"

This is where the fun began.

The crew pushed me into a room, wheeled me about a bit, and then left. I was alone in a room at Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospital, which I later learned is nicknamed Sarah Brush with Death. I'm glad I didn't know that beforehand.

After five minutes of slowly bleeding onto the floor, a doctor came in, looked me straight in the face, and said, "Hi there! What seems to be the problem today?"

I considered him for a moment, then reached up and jiggled my dangling nose. Since I couldn't speak, that seemed to be the best course of action. "Alright," he replied, "let's get you patched up. Can you walk?"

I nodded, stood up from the side of the bed, and promptly fainted.

When I woke up, I was in another room, this time with a few nurses around. My aunt is a nurse, and these women were just as serious about their jobs, so I knew I was in good hands. They were clucking about how lucky I was. I wasn't listening. I was too enthralled by what was happening. According to the Head Nurse Lady, the best course of action was to glue my nose back on. They pushed around a bit then someone whipped out a long, cylindrical tube. Two seconds later, I had a nice shiny coat of Uber-Elmer's attached to my nose. "There, not too bad," they said. I just smiled.

Going to the first day of classes was a riot. My nostrils were clogged with blood, and I couldn't breathe except through my mouth. All I had to look forward to was the sounds of

perpetual snoring, twenty four hours a day. I looked like the monster from The Goonies. My two black eyes had morphed into one bruised face; it extended from my temples all the way down to my chin. My nose was crooked, glued on, and still bleeding. My blood soaked Kleenex were a real treat, especially for all my new classmates. I wanted to shout, "HEY, YOU GUYS!" but I didn't think anyone would get the joke.

I was a celebrity. My brush with death, both at football and at Sarah Bush, inspired the greatest of lunchroom conversations, especially when I bumped into my friend JJ. He had been the one I collided with in midair, both of us reaching for the same interception.

He had a bump on his forehead. He even let me touch it, just to prove that he got hit, too. I thought that was nice.

I had corrective surgeries to try and fix my deviated septum, the bone in the nose that aligns the air passages. I hadn't been able to breathe through my nose for months, and finally, in January, the swelling had gone down and the glue fallen off. I was wheeled into surgery and put under the anesthetic. When I woke, I could breathe. It felt so foreign, inhaling air through my nostrils. It was like learning to walk after a debilitating accident; I felt disembodied every time I found the passageways clear.

Something about life seemed different. I couldn't put my finger on it at first. It took me a full day to realize what was going on. I was whole again, no longer controlled by the tale of how, in my chance of greatest triumph, I caught a ball and hit a forehead.

That wasn't my only realization. It took time, but as the effects of the surgery wore off, I figured out what else had changed in my life. I could no longer smell or taste. The damage from the impact had injured the nerves in my nose. The surgery killed them off completely. Without my sense of smell, my ability to taste disappeared as well.

I never felt angry about any of this, only sad. I missed residence hall chicken strips. A lot. The taste of vanilla ice cream, or the way you can suck on candy until the coating wears off. I had to learn to operate solely on how food felt, the individual textures, and the ghost memory of my senses.

I tried to look at the change in my life as a blessing. I was

allowed the chance to eat healthier than ever before, no longer constrained by the fact that some foods taste like ash. I was down to three senses out of my original five, but I decided, after much thought, that if I had to lose two, those would be the two to go. And, if I found myself missing the smell of women's perfume or the scent of air after a fresh rain, I only had to remind myself that the alternative was bleeding to death over a game of pickup football.

Three out of five ain't that bad at all.

Farce
-Amanda Veale-

I awoke last night
curled against
the curve of a lion's hips.

It is good, I thought,
this lion here,
against me.
It is good.

Above me—
a tree dripping tiny berries—
an astounding sight,
as if they were pearls.
I caught them on my tongue,
in my hair, in my toes and
crushed them,
rolled with them
and that wild thing
next to me—

down the hill,
cloaked in blue-grey night,
until we were both very wet,
running with tiny bits of verse.

I licked these from his mane,
and instantly I was a poet
confessing,
confessing (yes!)
those wicked lies
of mine:

that it was only a breeze
last night
that woke me,
curling about me
with but a whisper
of a roar.

Strength of Emotion

-Jennifer O'Neil-

I know the feeling,
the one that rises in your chest
and makes you strong
or sinks to your knees to weaken you.

Such vibrant emotions, yet one in the same.
both love and hate, so strong, so crushing,
both unyielding emotions.

Both perpetuated by the same...*the same everything.*

I know the feeling that lifts you up and makes you fall,
and plummets you into solitude; makes you want to die.

I know that feeling of unending happiness,
where nothing can go wrong,
and the one that rips heart from ribs.

Such unconditional love that you would
gladly see your heart shredded and set ablaze,
just to know that feeling.

I know that feeling.
I've felt that feeling.
I hate that feeling, and yet...
I long for it.

About the Authors

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"To me, the greatest pleasure of writing is not what it's about, but the inner music that words make."

-Truman Capote

