

2005

# Origyns: Reclaiming our feminist voices

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## Recommended Citation

Murphy, Kimberly; Ledoux, Jeanine; and Gerhard, Kristen, "Origyns: Reclaiming our feminist voices" (2005). *Origyns: A Publication of the Lehigh University Women's Center*. 5.  
<http://preserve.lehigh.edu/origyns/5>

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reclaiming

our

feminist

voices

# ***o r i g y n s***

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***origyns*** is a publication for the voices of feminists — undergraduates, graduate students, alumnae, faculty, staff, and professors emeriti. Originally published in commemoration of Thirty Years of Women at Lehigh University (1971-2001), ***origyns*** now appears annually.

it is a collection of essays, poetry, and short stories. Some of which were specifically written for this publication, others were written for class or for personal expression, and some were written long ago. In addition to written works, original artwork has been submitted. In its third year of publication, ***origyns*** has consistently increased in number of submissions and authors — many thanks to all the contributors.

***origyns*** is funded by the Women's Center, many thanks to Kristen Handler.

the opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of Lehigh University or the Women's Center, but do closely reflect the views of the authors.

all submissions may be directed to the Lehigh University Women's Center.

note from the editors: *all statements that appear in italics to describe the authors are written by the authors.*

*Cover photograph courtesy of Danielle Rago*

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*reclaiming our feminist voices*

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## HOLLY KENT

### Eavesdrop

I sit in the subway unnoticed, my body lost in the plush embrace of the cracked red leather; my face buried in the depths of the musty, day-old newspaper I am pretending to read. Across from me sit two young men - young men with tanned faces and muscled arms; expensive jeans and predatory smiles. Most people would think them an attractive pair, I think—their white, straight teeth and lean, graceful bodies. But I do not. I can summon no admiration for the beauty of their dark-lashed, heavy-lidded eyes—for I am close enough to see the coldness of their expression. I can take no pleasure in the lush, arrogant curves of their rich, full-lipped mouths—for I am close enough to hear the words, emerging from them.

Eavesdropping on the conversations of strangers is like watching the last few minutes of a soap opera you've never seen before—you desperately attempt to understand the complex personal histories and Byzantine romantic relationships of people you do not know, based on a few enigmatic, imperfectly comprehended words. Usually, I love it—getting a glimpse into a new and alien world, filled with feuding siblings, warring spouses, bickering friends, angry bosses, and rebellious children I will never know.

Usually.

In the present instance, however, I wish that I had cotton wool to stuff into my ears—loud music to pipe into my headphones—anything on hand to drown out the smooth, smug voices of the smooth, smug young men sitting opposite me in the dense, crowded heat of the subway car.

They are talking about women—these slick young men, with their thick hair carefully styled into seeming carelessness—their thick, expensive watches clasped around their thick, powerful wrists. Their voices are filled, not with warmth of friends or the heat of lovers, but with the cold, clinical detachment of scientists, discussing unpleasant, but interesting, specimens of alien life. To them, it would seem, women are nothing more and nothing less than bodies. It is not that they take pleasure in the female form—I hear no words praise for the intricate delicacy of female bones—the subtle curves of female flesh—on their lips. No, instead they speak of the female body as a distasteful thing to be examined and judged—used and discarded—as they choose.

## HOLLY KENT

I have never met these boys, with their lean, elegant hands and mean, watchful eyes. I will never speak a word to them, nor they to me. An yet somehow (and I do not know quite how) they have the power to wound me. I listen to them speak, and I cease to be a daughter, sister, aunt, cousin, friend, lover, artist, dreamer, scholar. I become nothing. Nothing but an unsavory mass of hair, limbs, and flesh, to be despised by others and hated by myself.

The subway stops with a stomach-turning lurch— I, now eagerly edging my way towards the door, keep my balance, swaying to and fro with the practiced grace of a hardened commuter. The boys, on the other hand, are thrown off their feet and back into their seats, amidst cursing (from them) and laughter (from others). As he struggles to get back onto his feet, I meet one of the boy's eyes, and he smiles at me, his smile as practiced and unthinking as the easy motion of my city dweller's body in the crowded subway. He is handsome, and he knows it— his eyes— dark as bruises against his warm, honey-gold skin—are complacent—arrogant—assured. It shows on his face—the conviction that he is irresistible.

But I can resist him. I look at him, and resist the temptation to smile back at him, like the polite and well-mannered girl I was brought up to be. I look at him, and resist the temptation to forget the ugliness of his character in the dark, angular beauty of his body and his face. I look at him, and resist the temptation to believe what he so clearly believes, himself—that he is the sun, and any girl ought to consider herself lucky to move in his orbit—to have so brilliant an object at the center of her universe.

I smile at him, then. Not the smile he seeks—the pleased, admiring, “I can hardly believe my good fortune, that someone like you should deign to notice someone like me” smile. No. My smile is one, not of pleasure, but of relief. Relief that though he has set himself up as my judge—as the judge of all women, and their worth—I need not accept his verdict. I am just as capable of making judgments—of passing sentence—as he is. And—in my judgment—he is beneath contempt—unworthy of notice. And so, I turn my back on him.

And then I step through the subway doors, out into the darkness.

*-Holly Kent, a History M.A. student, is currently completing her master's thesis, about abolitionist women's fiction in the antebellum United States.*

# WHITNEY ALEXANDER

## **Mona Lisa to Twiggy**

Mona Lisa to Twiggy  
How did we get here  
Beauty equals death  
Hollow eyes and a triangle  
Unintelligent smart girls know what's wrong  
Blind to the gaunt girl looking back at them  
Just a fat girl that lacks perfection  
We count the moles, pounds, calories  
I know it's dumb  
But it's a constant battle  
Sad if we do  
Unhappy if we don't  
Mona Lisa to Twiggy  
There has to be a reason there are paintings of her,  
    Instead of now  
The billboards, magazines scream  
I want to scream too  
Stifle it with criticism and an empty stomach  
I'm tired of it  
But who's to stop it?  
Happiness comes not from the outside,  
    THEY say  
But then THEY tell us we can't buy the jeans we want  
Why, because we are the average  
Stuck between Mona Lisa and Twiggy

## ELIZABETH WYSOCKI

**Reflection**

The chilling breeze and smell of fallen leaves.  
A mixture of colors, withholding a plethora of emotions.  
The bright yellow and orange glowing like fire,  
Deep red filled with a raging passion.  
The beautiful bareness of the trees.  
Upon a hilltop, the red laced delicately  
between the seas of green and yellow, teasing me.  
A cold breeze kisses the sides of my face,  
As I inhale the smell of autumn,  
feeling nothing but contentment.  
The bittersweet feelings of the warm sun against my face  
as the sun slowly sets against the blue ocean of a sky.  
Colors dance across the ground  
to the delicate tune of swaying branches  
and the gentle hum of windblown leaves.  
And as the cold begins to pierce the skin,  
leaving cracked knuckles.  
The melancholy of an early sunset,  
a soft sigh and a sweet smile.  
I see the sun as the sky grows darker,  
Glowing, falling into the sea exploding with color,  
Like a volcano of red and auburn against the dark.  
And evening can be so beautiful and still so cruel;  
to watch the colors blend and fade into the deep.  
But I've got a warm heart to face the cold wind,  
and with a warm heart to face the darkness,  
I see the dawn of a new day.

---

*Liz Wysocki*  
2008  
*Undeclared*



## LIZ LONDEN

### Becoming a Boy Scout

"Phil, wake up! I just heard a bear," I whispered to my brother across the tent, my voice quivering. Although I had started the night in my own tent, the imaginary shadows I saw moving across the synthetic walls had sent me hurtling across the campsite into my brother's tent.

This was the first night of a month-long camping and hiking trip across the Alaskan wilderness with my brother's Boy Scout Troop 41. Even though I was only thirteen and a girl, my stepfather, the Scout Master, had dragged me along. He claimed the experience of roughing it for a month without televisions, malls, and phones would teach me a lot about life. I was less enthusiastic, since I had wanted my summer to be carefree, full of days lying by the pool with my friends.

Instead, I was stranded in the middle of the forest, trembling in fear. While my brother's comatose state was not interrupted by my intrusion, my attempts at sleep were useless. Every cracking twig or wind gust sent chills down my spine. I was sure a black bear would take no pity on a defenseless girl, and that this night would be my last.

After surviving the night, I made a decision the next day. Being awake all night made the full day of hiking very difficult. I complained all day long because of my heavy pack. The Scouts spent most of the morning teasing me about my late-night scare. After lunch, I realized that none of the Scouts were hiking with me. They had separated themselves from me by hiking at a pace I could not keep up with. After being shunned from the group, I realized that I needed to change my attitude. From this point on, I would no longer be the difficult, scared girl that all the Boy Scouts thought I was. I would push myself to be accepted as a member of Troop 41.

Each day, I began to contribute more to our community. Over the next three weeks, I learned how to set up tents, wash communal dishes, and carry the gear to each campsite. These tasks were not naturally easy for me, as they seemed to be for everybody else. It took me almost two weeks to finally set up

## LIZ LONDEN

my tent all by myself. The process of assembling eight poles of various sizes and shoving them into their correct holes was difficult for me. The worst part, though, was hammering the eight stakes firmly into the ground as the support for the tent. Whenever I thought I had finally mastered out the art of tent-pitching, my tent would collapse with the first hint of a breeze. Instead of letting this frustrate me, I tried to view each failure as an opportunity to learn something new. As I progressed, my successes in simpler aspects of camping motivated me to try more adventurous things.

Each day, I looked forward to the time after dinner, as the sun was setting. Although it sounds like a cliché, we would huddle around the campfire and tell ghost stories for hours. Normally, these scary stories would have kept me up all night, scared of every sound that came from outside. Now that I was a tough Scout, I joined in, adding my own tales.

My big test of acceptance came about three weeks into the trip. Our day of hiking had brought us to a fifteen-foot cliff overlooking a set of swift rapids. One by one, the scouts leaped off this cliff and fell into the roaring rapids below. Before I knew it, I was one of the last members of the group still standing on the ledge. I realized that my turn to prove myself was quickly approaching. Looking at the powerful water below me, I felt my fear trying to take over once again. Instead of surrendering to my fright, I took a deep breath and jumped, screaming the entire way down.

The rush of cold water surrounded my body as I gasped for air. After a second of thrashing, I realized I was fine. As I floated around a huge dead tree, the Scouts came in sight, all seated on a boulder. They cheered and gave me high fives. I finally felt the acceptance that I had longed for at the beginning of the trip. I was no longer Phil's whiney little sister, more of a burden than a help. I had proven to myself and the other scout members that I was capable of doing everything they could. At this moment, I was just another member of Troop 41. And this was the greatest feeling in the world.

## LIX LONDEN

Now, my sister is thirteen, and it's her turn to face the challenges of the Boy Scouts. As I hear her argue and beg my stepfather to get out of the summer trip, I remember my own reluctance six years ago. I know that it is now my sister's time to explore and discover more about herself than she could possibly know. I smile, thinking that I cannot wait to hear her stories.

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*Elizabeth Londen is a sophomore Psychology major from Phoenix, Arizona.*

## KYLE BEGINA

**What Comes Next**

The brilliance of you eyes looking deep within me,  
The hair on your chin that is barely there,  
The sounds from the screen that I am unable to see,  
I hear the phone and pray for it to be you,  
Your cologne which makes me unable to resist,  
It tastes so pure and beautifully true,  
The warmth of your arms around me which bring eternal bliss,  
The tap of your finger touching my hand and chin,

I now hear the pain of emptiness, yet it is so full,  
I fight yet am unable to win,  
The happiness has ended and you are gone,  
Your fruit was so sweet and so quickly turned sour,  
Fear to show my emotions, I just sit here still on the lawn,  
Secrets which you have rinsed like memories gone in a single  
shower.

## ABBY WILLIAMS

**Two**

helpless, hopeless  
pulled back  
tied down to the quilt of my bed  
the nights are always hardest for me  
when I can't  
sleep?  
read? write? when  
I hesitate taking off my eye liner  
just so  
i look a bit more  
glamorous  
while talking to you in my head  
or  
in my compact mirror  
helpless  
hopeless memorizing  
identifying with  
the cracks in the ceiling  
cracks elongating with heat  
spreading the spaces in the wall  
and in between my fingers  
as I grip for your kind face  
and a future memory of reading  
in bed, or sleeping, making grocery lists  
banter over oranges

## ABBY WILLIAMS

politics of toilet brushes  
fast forward dreams of domesticity and hammocks  
help  
less hope  
less knowing that you don't even know my real  
name  
or how it makes me smile  
to watch you pause in thought or perhaps  
in dream  
or how often I've forgotten my rhythm in breathing  
deep in the starry summer nights  
on top of my quilt  
pulled back  
and tied down.

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The MISSION of our sponsor is to foster a safe, equitable and empowering environment for women at Lehigh by:



Empowering students to create a campus culture that values all women and their differences of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, ability, age and socio-economic class

Providing a comprehensive University-wide sexual violence prevention program and coordination services for survivors of sexual violence

Assessing the climate for women at Lehigh and advocating for the diverse needs of women students

Maintaining a woman-friendly gathering place open to all members of the University community

Providing information, education and referrals about issues that disproportionately affect women, such as sexual harassment, relationship violence, rape, and disordered eating

Sponsoring speakers, performers, events, and activities that address gender issues

Creating opportunities for women's voices to be heard



## KRYSTEL HUBBLE

### Flight of the Phoenix

I found myself in a wood. A wood dark and tormented with sounds that haunted my dreams, sounds that haunted my daily life. I was never alone. Moreover, should I have found myself alone, I did not know what to think about but the sounds that surrounded me. I heard the baying of the coyote and then the rustling of leaves near my head. Was it a snake? Or was it a mere blue jay seeking the Fall's last morsels of seedling before the hard winter to follow? I did not know. I did know that I was afraid and the winter was to come too harshly for me. I would become depressed and sullen, this I knew. People would not find me pleasant to be around and would stop seeking my company. I did not know how to bear my foreboding solitude. I had not been without the comforts and hospitality of people for many years and I did not know how to exist without empty chatter and the warmth of a body near my own. The forest around me would become colder without the company of others—winter was coming—the wooded area that I lived in would become darker and louder without rambunctious chatter to drown out the sounds that frightened me—for the winter was coming.

My future? My future had become bleak. I had been lost for so long. I did not think it possible to find that person I had wanted to become so long ago. She was far from the one I stood as today. My forest was full of others...others I no longer knew, and more, what I wished to remember I had to find a way out but to destroy the woods was to destroy myself in my mind. I could not abandon this vegetation, it was all I knew. And all that I had come to know was disparity and stagnation. It was all I had become. I needed to learn more.

To run? To hide? I knew of these actions far too well. I was a master of excuse and of disguise. I had to find a way out that would allow me to redeem myself to me. Allow me to grow out of the reality that I had constructed of wood upon sinking sand. I had no other way if I wished to find what the long held fire in my belly served to show me. A change of scenery perhaps.

I left the woods for a few days and feeling refreshed, returned to begin the new ways of life I had learned on my short lived journey from the familiar. After some time, I discovered that I could no longer hold my own while in the territory that had forsaken my emotions for so long. I knew what I needed to do. I had to begin again but had to

## KRYSTEL HUBBLE

create an ending before I would be able to start anew. I was in for transition and I was frightened but I could see no other way to come into my own. I had decided what my next course of action was to be. I was ready, finally, to answer the call of my destiny.

I looked up and saw her, beautiful, orange and red and black. She was the most beautiful creature I had ever seen. She was my destiny and she was a part of me. She was all the inspiration I needed and would ever need again. I smiled, reached into my pocket and pulled out my lighter; I struck the flint against the silver safety and lit the branch I held in my hand. Then I raised my hands to the sky and praised the Phoenix in her flight of glory and lit the forest on fire.

## ABBY WILLIAMS

### Because There's Beauty in a Breakdown

I guess it's because my family is so young that after 21 years I can't really say that I've felt a real loss. My grandparents are in their 70's, or just about, and my parents are in their 40's. They got married early on, and had one of those elaborate, old fashioned weddings that are only not tacky because they are young and in love. But to say that out loud, or to write it down: "never felt a real loss," well wow. Is that terrible to say? I guess it is. But I mean, like, those ones on TV shows, where you stay at home from school, and have *that* talk. You know that one. In the living room. On the couch. Card-board parents, holding hands, sitting cross-legged. And afterwards, you just cry in their lap because really where else is there to go and you don't know what the world looks like anymore, or even what grandpa did—all those memories; what do they even mean? Now. And the funerals that follow in next week's episodes: green, green cemeteries by the rainy church, handkerchief mops and sticky Jesuses. (Funny how wedding and funerals are linked in my mind. Mysterious rituals that only my parents went to. I never went to one before; I just knew what they looked like on TV.) "Never felt a real loss." Good to say that now. It makes me feel.

Anyway.

Let's try again.

November of 2002 was an exceptionally nice month. She was always rather fond of autumn, even the word itself. Something about it soothed her like old jazz music usually does and always makes her remember chilly school days growing up. But this particular day was exceptional. A bit sunnier than to be expected and full of wind, the magic kind that manages to sweep up all the resting leaves and mix them up, then, as if by whim, repaint the ground again. Light and air in constant streams funnels through her cracked crank window, and stirs the stiff Trembley apartment air, but it was the phone that woke her up.

The phone was on the floor, it always fell off her TV. She hated that. Too lazy as to fully get up, she reached over the bed and as her hair fell over her face, she caught the phone. It was her mom. Weird hour for her to be calling, she thought. Shouldn't she be getting the kids ready for school? Did she forget a birthday? There aren't any in

## ABBY WILLIAMS

November, except cousin Halley and she's not well liked.

"Hey mom, what's going on? I have class in 10 minutes."

"I know lovey, I'm sorry, but we really need to talk about something."

"Now? Alright, what's wrong?"

"Remember I've been telling you that Uncle John's been sick."

"Yeah."

"Well, I haven't called you in a while because dad and me have been at the hospital a lot for the past two weeks, his cancer escalated to a point where it's extremely painful. He has been heavily medicated and really, he's just not himself. He didn't completely recognize any of us."

"Aren't there better treatments for this? How are Katie and Michael? Is NeeNee alright?" (NeeNee is what she's been calling her Aunt Ann since she was 2, her grasp of alliteration has always been advanced.)

"They are fine, they are just happy he is no longer suffering."

"Jesus mom, so that's how you're going to say it?"

Her mom started crying on the phone. She wasn't a sniffer. She sobbed. "You just don't understand, what he looked like he must have been down to 100 pounds. You didn't know him very well, but he was always such a no bullshit, I'm sorry, no nonsense type of guy. Lying there like that, I never even saw him sit still for that long." (Truth be told she didn't know him very well, time with him would come in bursts, short yet consistent, like breeze from an oscillating fan.)

"How's dad then?"

"You know you're dad. I know you have to go and I'm sorry to throw all of this on you but the funeral is this weekend. I need you to come home."

"Alright. I have class until two. I'll leave Friday after that."

"I love you ok? Call me if you need something. I love you."

"Iloveyoutomombye."

## ABBY WILLIAMS

"I love you, bye."

She hung up the phone and walked out the door. Classes started five minutes ago. Despite an uneasy entrance, inside the class everything looked the same as it always did. The beautiful guys around her were still perfect and beautiful. The beautiful girls around her were still perfect and beautiful. And the professor continued pace and jest as though nothing were different. But isn't everything different? She didn't feel different. As she left class she ran into her roommate from freshman year. She told her. And after that things were different. All of her other friends flocked to her single room on the hill, (definitely the first time they came to her place the entire year) and brought her flowers and flattery with insincere promises of friendship and freshman year glory reborn.

That week, the time went by with unnoticed speed. Suddenly it was Friday. Suddenly she was home. And suddenly she pulled up to the house, got out of her car and walked into her kitchen. There was no one home when she got there. She walked in past the table and into the net room and fell asleep. It felt like a million years and it felt like non, she opened her eyes to meet her mother's. Her mom stroked her hair back out off her face and told her to get changed, it was time to go to the funeral. She stood up slowly and walked out of the room and up the stairs. Everything was the same as it always was. The terrible wall art was the same terrible wall art it always was. The thick blue carpet was still rough against her bare feet as she always remembered it was. But against the wall adjacent from her brother's room was a painting. It was Jack's, her brother. Jack decided he wanted to be a painter around the same time their father decided she had to be some-kind-of-a brilliant student. Maybe he was a painter after all, she thought. The colors were wild and haunting, crimson and orange and yellow, like those November leaves swirling on canvas. It was a portrait of her uncle. He had on his full beard and mustache that always tickled when he kissed her cheek, and a smile that made her remember Christmas. In each stroke, she saw deliberate motion, downward lines, inward circling; Jack's mourning. It was strange. She didn't know Jack very well, they never got along, but somehow this painting made her hopeful of him. He knew pain.

She went in her room and in front of the mirror put on her black clothes. Her black skirt. Her black heeled shoes. Her black shirt. Her black jacket. All in black, just like on TV. She was going to a funeral.

## ABBY WILLIAMS

She went back downstairs and into the kitchen, everyone was there except her little brother Ted. He was still getting dressed her mother explained, "you have to see what Ted has been working on for his art project, quick while he is upstairs." She led her into the computer room and it was another portrait. The same face, but with different eyes. He had been working on a mosaic like work using pencil shading, revealing the different contours and details of her uncle's face. Each piece was a different shade of gray, yet all of them together defining an image of Teddy's grief. Teddy was 12 years old.

In the car, it was quiet. But that was normal, the family never really had a whole lot to say other than complaints in the car anyway. Besides, today was not for complaining and thinking about oneself, it was the day for grieving. But it was only a 10 minute drive of silent mourning and apparently her sister was expecting it to be farther away. They all got out of the car, but Mary Kate, the older of her younger sisters, broke down. The tears matted her long eyelashes together and traced the soft lines of her beautiful face. She clung to her mother, around her neck and within her was a letter she wrote for her uncle. She was so sad, she could sense this, but she felt like she couldn't help her. Or that she didn't need help. What did that letter say? Her sister looked so beautiful, and so honest. Their father took Mary's hand and they walked in together.

The place itself was different than she had imagined; it was small, there was green carpet, there were people in navy blue and green. But as expected there were a lot of flowers. The priest spoke and announced that her aunt was going to speak. It was hard to hear what Neenee was saying so she looked around to check reaction. She watched her own parents, holding hands, sitting cross-legged and crying. Her mother—openly, loudly, pronounced. But she was always rather emotional. Her father wasn't. When she was maybe 8 years old, he had a heart to heart about his life insurance policy. But today was different. It was truly the first time she ever saw him purposefully close his eyes as he did as Neenee spoke, as though the world was too loud, too coarse to look at. And I remember him crying—timidly, silently, powerfully. But she was numb. She stared at the enlarged photo of his face, and then at her cousins and then back to the photo and then at her aunt and she was numb. She tried to remember moments with him. Like when she was little around Christmas time, he'd always pretend he was Santa. Not in the hokey ways like on TV, no

## ABBY WILLIAMS

fake beard, no red suit. His beard was real and white. He wore jeans and patterned sweater. But it was special. Whenever she would talk to him about what she had wanted for Christmas, he'd always nod his head knowingly, omnisciently, and whisper *I know*. But how! He would shrug and begin to quietly clear his throat, like, *coughcoughhohocoughcoughhohoho*. And it was understood, secret-like, between them, that he was Santa and he was magical, and only she knew this. But she was numb.

The sun set. The sun rose. And the next day she took her purse and school books to the car. Both her parents followed her out. Her dad asked if she needed any money...did she need gas? (She was fine.) He hugged her briefly and passed her to her mother. She always looked a bit hurt when she had to go back to school. (God, she was fine.) She kissed her on the cheek hard, making that very odd kissing noise she always makes, held her, and watched her get into her car and drive away.

When I finally got back to school, I threw all of my bags on the ground, and sat on my bed. I guess it was evening. The masses were traveling in packs of 10 and 15 down to the UC for dinner. I could see them all from my crank window.

And then.

You cried. Cried because you hated that you weren't sad like your parents were, like your sisters were, like your brothers were, like Katie and Michael and Neenee, like everyone except you. (Why weren't you mourning?) Cried because you weren't sad about death. You cried because you're just sad about yourself and because nobody said that's okay. You cried about your plain face and body and transparent skin, scars that won't heal—about holes in your heart and weighty tragedy that you feel but don't honestly know where it came from in the first place. (And what are you mourning now?) You cried because there's nowhere else to go and you don't know what the world looks like anymore, or even what your Uncle did, all your memories; what do they even mean?

I stood back up and went over to the wall length mirror, (Funny, sometimes when you look at yourself long enough your face stops making sense. Just shapes and muted light. It looked more like a portrait of who I felt I was that while still wet was spun around until all the colors ran and swirled and distorted together), opened the

## ABBY WILLIAMS

door and walked into the bathroom. I closed the door and locked it, put on the light (When I was little I used to sleep in the bathtub when I couldn't fall asleep in my bed) and sat in the bathtub. It must have been the green florescent lighting, because my eyes streamed down hot and blurred over as I glanced around the room. The door. The towel. The sink. The toilet. The shampoos. And in the far corner behind the pump of bath soap, my Gillette. I reached for it and picked it up, stretched out my idle arm over the edge of tub and.

I watched. Opening up like the buds of miniature roses, the tiny red dots grew on my arm, quite slowly and then all at once. And I watched them grow. And I watched them stream, down, on either side of my arm into a straight neat little line. And I twisted my arm and I traced it, till it fell on the little tiles, without noise, without anyone noticing and.

There it was, like static on a TV screen.

Calm.



# TAREQ BROWN

## **Cream Dream**

I'm an only child of my mind;  
 the only mind that's mine that doesn't mind too often,  
 then a thesis filled with diseases softens, and reaks into my skin,  
 as a child I was taught that the skin was very thin  
 but as I got older I had to realize my very skin was my sin,  
 soon enough the same lotions and creams  
 turned out to be blankets of dreams, transparent ones at that,  
 not even strong smells could ignore cow bells,  
 with the weight of chimes around my neck  
 and with boulders along shoulders, I possessed quite the deck  
 designed to have a heavy heart with a face of glum,  
 I never smiled because all the while had been built-up bile,  
 I hated myself just as much as I hated those around me  
 picture me, presenting this same world to a pickeney?  
 byproduct of the bias, I couldn't buy into any future,  
 preferred to suffer a life alone; no use producing to endure more abuse,  
 but gangly hands can change one's plans,  
 fingers over voice box left little choice stocks,  
 un-admitted intrusion developed into forced fusion,  
 and confusion for the one arriving in the months to come  
 doctor says, I'm gonna have a son,  
 a boy that will grow into a man that will walk this same land,  
 they'll be no exceptions for his conception, twice as much toil will lay on his  
 back  
 and the day will come were he'll look back, and ask-  
 "why?" "Why did I bring him into this awful existence?"  
 levied of his innocence from day one, instead I chose for that day not to come  
 I chose never to ever hear him cry or ask "why"  
 because I couldn't provide the answers and it didn't make much sense to  
 have two people sob  
 so as a Christian woman, I sent him to God  
 to relieve Mateo of the present and possible problems,  
 after 32 years on this Earth, I couldn't solve them  
 so rather than have them revolve back his way, I chose heave for my son on  
 his birth day.

# TAREQ BROWN

## Poor Goals

A dead man's pen is more dangerous than the one's that is alive,  
 so I'll remain incognito; in disguise  
 with tight inscription per scripted for those who heard but never listened,  
 listen up, there's censorship on my penmanship  
 so read quickly while the ink is fresh,  
 soon enough, bullets will hit my words and bring my death  
 and there's been plenty of pragmatics that turned asthmatic,  
 too much exposure to good air left them living in plastic;  
 fake, material world,  
 but one needs to breathe the pollution to find the solution,  
 in the belly of the beast;  
 the antacids must be made in order so the toxins can fade,  
 fixated on dictated words, we've been pinned to hate each other  
 successful tactics by the ones that are in charge,  
 ready and able to bring to the table, or better yet the T.V.,  
 our poor quality,  
 malicious behavior done well, so non one questions social inequality  
 so the poor remain poor while the rich are able to soar,  
 one continues to squabble, while the other gobbles up the dollars  
 education non-existent on today's stratification, don't tell me about the Ameri-  
 can dream  
 an ideology that owes many apologies, assimilation equals termination of self,  
 it must be poor health to agree to a clause for applause, for acceptance  
 and for it all, not even full acceptance is what you get,  
 many end up in the dark and are fed shit,  
 but they see a light that is brighter than the ones below them  
 so they compare and contrast and picture their lives to be golden,  
 bamboozled under this delusion nothing happens, no social change  
 mediocrity mistaken for paradise, a paradise enough to entice the bottom of the  
 barrel  
 and the ones that look up but can never find the top of the ladder,  
 so everyone chases after the same goal, the pot at the end of the rainbow with  
 no gold

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*Tareq G. Brown, Class of 2005, English Major. Left Lehigh so I can find myself in London, back in Brooklyn and still looking. I write so I can remain sane and help myself explain why things are the way they are. Short stories and films are also under my belt. A catalogue of my collected works will be available to the public in the summer of '05.*

## ANONYMOUS

**untitled**

hand print bruises

    cracked lips

buzzed brain

heavy body

    running jokes

self blame

flashback sequences

create

    sickness

sweet lies

punctuate

    Stomach pains

and

Memories

of handprint bruises

## RACHEL FEUERHAMMER

### Enveloping Memory of Summer

My roommate is sprawled across her perfectly made bed, entranced by the 2004 Summer Olympics. I survey the room which is dimly lit by a hanging lamp and the flickering of commercials. Her side of the room is meticulously put together, with extra sets of drawers and shelves under her bed. I lie in the crumpled redness of my sheets debating whether or not I should resume the process of unpacking. I'm filled with malaise as I realize what is in store for me. The floor is strewn with clothing, shoes scattered without their matches, and bags full of personal belongings. Boxes that held my computer, air conditioner, and random keepsakes are thrown in the corner. My eyes rest upon a photograph that seems to have dropped on to the floor.

The night air is hot and humid as we step out of the van from the hotel. We stop in front of a brightly painted townhouse whose entrance appears to be engulfed by lush greenery and vivid flowers. The yellow hibiscus flower I've picked off the vine matches my shirt perfectly. I put it in my hair. Bill compliments me. "You look picture perfect," gets out his camera, and has me pose before the mass of blooms. I smile for him as a lizard runs up the side of the house behind me and is captured in the quick snap of the camera.

Soon, we're on our walk to the pier, to experience the Key West nightlife. Scooters whiz by on the sidewalk and weave in and out of traffic in the streets. Tropical music and the fragrances of salt water and popcorn fill the air. The setting sun peaks through clouds as people are gathered in hoards to witness the anomaly of an east coast sunset. However, the heavy air and billowing clouds seem to issue the forewarning of an impending storm.

A small crowd is formed around a man beckoning for a large golden retriever to walk towards him across a tightrope. People watch in amazement as the dog makes its way carefully across the wire. Children appear delighted and the crowd breaks out into applause. Another group crowds around a man in a colorful jester costume perched on stilts, steadily balancing himself, while simultaneously blowing fire. Hand in hand, we look about the crowd of enchanted vacationers and charming sideshows and realize the sky glowing orange-red like that of the flaming jester's tongue has become increasingly enshrouded by ominous clouds. A clap of thunder

## RACHEL FEUERHAMMER

sounds and the crowd begins to disperse. No sooner do torrents of rain begin to fall. We are stuck without cover, laughing and running for shelter within the pandemonium of the crowd, dashing opened umbrellas and ducking under store awnings. We finally rest, soaking wet, under the alcove of a gift shop portico with sheets of rain closing us in like walls, and Bill plucks the wilted flower from my dripping hair.

Sitting here in the artificial cool of my room, I miss the sultry warmth of the Florida Keys and wistfully wish I didn't have to be back at school so soon. Once I finish cleaning, organizing, and setting up my room for the approaching semester, the picture will be put back in its place and warm memories of vacation will get placed away in the back of my mind. I turn toward my side of the room with the few posters hanging and realize there is much work to be done to make this room seem more like home. The furniture is as austere as dormitory furnishing can be, and it is clear I lack the storage space for the amount of things I have brought, which lie scattered upon the floor. Unopened books are stacked on my desk, as well as empty notebooks that will soon be filled with my chaotic scribbling of notes. A half assembled desk lamp with directions thrown aside sits atop of the book pile. Behind this, my computer is in sleep mode, and I glimpse over and notice that my roommate is, too. I turn off the television, kill the lights, and choose to leave my tasks unfinished in exchange for my first night's sleep back at Lehigh.

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*My name is Rachel Feuerhammer. I am a third year student majoring in International Relations and perhaps minoring in Writing. This was my favorite piece I wrote for Professor Addison Bross's class "Writing for Audiences". Currently, I am studying abroad in Leuven, Belgium.*

## DIOR HEWLETT

### To Choose

*"In less than a month, a second young woman has been charged with murder in the death of her newborn -- despite a state law that would have protected her from prosecution if she had safely abandoned the infant.*

*Selena LaJoy Jones, 16, of Detroit was arraigned on a second-degree murder charge Monday at Providence Hospital in Southfield, where she is recovering after she gave birth to a 7-pound baby girl early Monday. She is charged as an adult. Prosecutors said Jones' mother brought her to the hospital's emergency room Sunday after she complained of stomach pains. A doctor found Jones in the bathroom but was unable to get in because she was leaning against the door giving birth, said Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor Jim Halushka. Autopsy results were not in yet, but Halushka said blood spatters indicate Jones placed the baby in the toilet after the birth. Two doctors tried to revive the infant after seeing an air bubble escape from her nose. 'She could've opened the door and said, 'There's a baby in here,' and that would've been a legal abandonment,' Halushka said. 'She did very deliberate acts to kill this baby.'"*

*[Detroit Free Press]*

\* \* \*

What were this young woman's motives? Why would a sixteen-year-old choose to kill her baby, in a hospital, in a "safe haven"? Despite the "safe haven," or "baby Moses" laws that protect women from being charged with the abandonment of their babies, desperate women are still leaving their babies in toilets, dumpsters, outside unsafe apartment complexes, and even in their own laundry baskets. I assume the answer to these first two questions is that this young girl did not know her rights. She was not aware of her options.

Pro-life activists might argue that the "safe haven" and "baby Moses" laws are alternatives to abortion, but I wonder if

## DIOR HEWLETT

they are familiar with such cases as the one above. These laws protect the babies who are born to women who care to find the information and have the ability to access it. How is this information provided? The Internet, higher education, maybe even by a non-profit organization. A woman's rights are not always common knowledge, and in order to access this knowledge one must make an effort. Women who choose to abandon their babies, or kill them in a hospital bathroom are not concerned with the lives of their children, and therefore do not take the time to find alternatives.

Many women, like Selena Jones, are too young to even know what is best for themselves, or in other cases, they are too concerned with how they are going to eat the following day, or where they are going to get their next fix. Unfortunately we cannot control who becomes impregnated. Every woman with healthy ovaries has the ability to become pregnant even if they are forced, uneducated, poor, or addicted to drugs. If these women cannot choose to have abortions, tragedies occur. Babies are born into homes where they cannot be provided for and are often not even wanted. As a result of this children are neglected and abused, and the cycle continues.

From 1991 to 1998 the number of children within a given year who were neglected, and or abused rose from roughly 863,000 to 903,000. The number of children in foster care, not adopted, rose from 422,000 to 520,000. The number of abandoned babies in public places increased by 62 percent. And the number of infants found deceased rose from 8 in 1991 to 33 in 1998. Regardless of the laws that are created to protect the unborn fetuses, impregnated women still remain desperate and seem to be becoming even more desperate with the changing economy and demands of life.

Some may still say these women have no excuse, believing they should change overnight. Alcoholics would need to stop drinking, drug addicts would have to detox, and smokers would need to quit. Malnourished women would be expected

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to eat well, even if they had not in years, and young women would be responsible for scheduling check-ups. Believing, even for a moment, that this is possible and that such women could get through nine months of pregnancy still does not solve the problem. Women would continue to require the right to choose.

Many women who commit to the birth of their child still face issues when it comes to the logistics of abortion. What is to be said to the pregnant women who lie dying on a hospital bed due to complications? And what about the drastic turn a woman's life would take if she were instructed to be on bed rest for six months? A woman's entire career or life-long dream could be affected by such a case. Should she not have the right to choose in such situations? In the event of complications, every attempt should be made to better the life of the primary patient, the pregnant woman.

In addition, parents may learn that their baby is brain dead, paralyzed, or that the child will die in only a few, short, painful months. Without a choice, both parents would be forced to pay medical bills, and continue to prepare for the birth of their child. The pregnant woman would risk complications, and subject herself to not only physical, but emotional pain. And when the child is born, what kind of a life can be made for them?

Women need to have the right to choose. It is their life, their body, and their fetus. Mothers must decide what is best for their child after the birth and for years to follow. Why is this responsibility for the life of the child taken from the mother in the first nine months? Not only are the woman and child likely to suffer, but our society as a whole will be affected. There are not enough foster homes, very little room in orphanages, and not nearly enough available medical care. Poor, single women cannot support themselves and a child with the benefits they are given, and should not be forced into the gutter with a newborn they cannot care for.

While I, myself, could never have an abortion, I strongly



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feel that abortion is often the only solution a desperate mother and unborn fetus have at preventing two lives filled with struggle. Even if a baby is left at a "safe haven" and survives, that child faces challenges from day one. They may never have a family, and they are not given the option of knowing their medical history. History has demonstrated that anonymity in child welfare and adoption leaves an open door for abuse and corruption. A mentally challenged, disfigured, or drug addicted child, to name a few, faces even greater struggles. In a perfect world there would be loving homes for these unwanted children, but in our world there is not.

Educating all people, both men and women, on the responsibilities that come with being sexually active, and how to prevent pregnancy is the first step that needs to be taken. Sexual education needs to be something that humanity is concerned with, for our own sake and for the generations to come. As reproducing women and men, we are born with certain responsibilities. It is crucial that we have knowledge of the choices that have been given to us. This is where energy, time, and money should be focused. If we have access to such an education, it is our duty as citizens to enlighten ourselves. People who choose to disregard this education should not be easily dismissed. It is because of these people that abortion rights have become such a controversial issue. Accept responsibility, that is my plea.

Should a woman choose to have an abortion, it must be made possible for her to do so within her first trimester. Every effort should be made to quicken the process once a decision has been made. This decision should be made after much thought, it should be made by a woman, or couple who know their rights and options, and still feel abortion is best for both the woman and fetus. This is why educating young people is so crucial. If the decision has been made to carry the baby to term, then a woman must accept the responsibility to do her best to provide a healthy environment. However, if complications should arise, women should still be left the option of abortion.

I feel that if a woman can carry a fetus full term, she

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should. Couples all over the country are desperate for children, and many alternatives to abortion can be found. All fetuses have potential to be a life. Though I do not believe they are actually living for the entire nine months they are carried, women should be considerate of the possibility of life. Whether or not to have an abortion is a choice that women should have the right to make. Abortion is a privilege and a topic that should not be taken lightly. It is the government's job to provide the education, and it is our own responsibility to use this education for the betterment of our society as a whole.

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*I am a senior English major and a Writing minor. While attending Lehigh I've also had the opportunity to take a significant amount of Women Studies courses. Now that I am educated in English, Writing, and Women Studies I feel that it is important to write about the issues women face.*

## NICOLE CIRINO

***Daylight Waning***

I finally realized why  
Earth is a mother  
when I drove past her  
grassy mounds and shallow valleys.

Her wide open spaces  
welcomed me in.  
In the shade of her hills  
she has nothing to hide.

But when night's shade is drawn  
on the streets of some city,  
I'm only a visitor.  
Nobody cares about the bond we once shared.

No one has to tell me  
I am unwelcome here.  
Men lick lips and glare.  
No one has to tell me to be scared.  
I wanted to say  
to you men on the streets  
that I own this Earth too.  
That I'll too be a mother.

That I'm just like you.

## DANIELLE RAGO

### This *and* that

**YOUR LEFT HAND LIVES FOR LOVE. YOUR RIGHT HAND LIVES FOR THE MOMENT. YOUR LEFT HAND WANTS TO BE HELD. YOUR RIGHT HAND WANTS TO BE HELD HIGH. WOMEN OF THE WORLD, RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND.**

We live in a society comprised of binary opposites. A person is categorized as male or female, married or single, tall or short, pretty or ugly. These categories, prevalent in our society, force people to believe they have to choose one *or* the other; they can never have or be both. The attempts to categorize, generalize, stereotype, and classify individuals all accomplish the same thing: unifying and dividing at the same time.

Can we exist outside of the categories present in our everyday lives? If we do attempt to live outside of these constraints, aren't we then classified as an "outsider" – which in itself places us into another category? Do we really want to live outside of this social class system or do we find comfort living within the bounds of a society that values association as a means of disassociation?

All of these questions were sparked upon viewing an advertisement for DeBeers diamonds. The advertisement, one of a four-part advertising campaign, is "The New Diamond Right Hand Ring." The ads can be found in an array of publications such as, *Architectural Digest*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Elle*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *House & Garden*, *InStyle*, *New York Magazine*, *Town & Country*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Vogue*. In our society diamond rings are associated with engagements and marriages. Little girls are conditioned to believe that a diamond ring represents marriage, love, happiness, and security. A diamond engagement ring is typically chosen and purchased for the bride by the groom.

The Debeers campaign declares its separation from this pre-wedding tradition, but does so without totally rejecting it. The ad campaign is for the "new diamond right hand" ring, but wedding and engagement rings are traditionally worn on the left hand. The woman wears this ring, identifying herself as "taken"

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to the general public. Beside demonstrating her commitment to her husband-to-be, a ring on the left hand finger represents union, stability, security, and practicality. Her ring also depicts her love for her spouse and his love for her. The significance that our left hand has over our right hand is immense. Our commitment or our independence can be judged based on what hand our diamond ring is on. Why can't women wear "The New Right Hand Ring" on their left hand? By wearing "The New Right Hand Ring" on a woman's left hand, a woman would ultimately be substituting her commitment for independence. I believe the advertisement is most successful for the single reason that it does not substitute one for the other, it does not ask the woman to choose this or that, instead it relies on a woman's power of choice and her ability to realize that she can be both "We" and "Me" as one of the four DeBeers ads simply states.

DeBeers' ad campaign for "The New Diamond Right Hand Ring" is directed at the female consumer as opposed to the male consumer. "The New Diamond Right Hand Ring" is *not* associated with marriage or commitment. Instead, it is associated with independence, freedom, and self. This campaign represents an enlightened shift in the status quo, signifying a new age where women can do for themselves. Now, men are no longer a mandatory part of the equation when it comes to buying a diamond ring. This shift in the target of DeBeers' ads can be attributed to the number of women who opt not to marry or wait to marry until an older age. Women are embracing their singleness, their careers, and their own self, instead of relying on a man to provide them with all the things they dreamed of. This advertisement is successful in promoting the idea that a woman is not only a wife and a mother; she has an identity separate from her family.

This ad depicts a woman wearing a ring on her left finger (though not diamond) and, although the ring on her right finger is not distinguishable, there is an intense glare gleaming off of her right hand, leaving us to assume that it is "The New Diamond Right Hand Ring." The advertisement does not deny the role of woman as wife or mother. Instead it demonstrates a woman's ability to be versatile – both dependent and independent. The advertisement promotes individual identity as opposed to a

## DANIELLE RAGO

shared identity.

Women today are not content with just settling down, getting married and having children...they want more. They want their own careers, their own lives, and their own money, as well as a husband and family. This advertisement further empowers a woman to reject living in a world of this or that. It embraces the dichotomy between left hand and right hand, married and single, and gives a woman the ability to be both - the ability not to choose one *or* the other. Historically, women have raised their hands to fight injustices, in order to win reproductive rights, employment equity and to put an end to sexist oppression. Now, women are raising their right hand to fight categorization in our society.

# LEIGH PATTERSON

## Human Trafficking

"This human rights violation is modern-day slavery."

*-Vital Voices mission statement*

With Lehigh's new status of Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) come some interesting opportunities for students, especially events involving the United Nations. I found out that one of the main events is a series of weekly briefings at the UN to which a small group of Lehigh students is invited. I looked at the schedule and signed up for a subject that sounded interesting but that I didn't know much about. The briefing was entitled, "*The Persistence of Slavery; A Focus on Human Trafficking.*"

I did some reading to better inform myself before we went to New York on November 4<sup>th</sup> and I was shocked that I had never heard of this damaging social phenomenon. Human trafficking is defined as the recruitment and transportation of humans by use of threat or force, ending in the person in control exploiting their victim without their consent. This exploitation has grown in recent years to include prostitution, forced labor, slavery and removal of organs. These victims, 70% women and girls, are lured by promises of good jobs and wages in other countries, but find themselves in unknown territory, frequently not understanding the language and without their identification documents. This creates a dependency on their captor, who usually provides food, clothing and confined living arrangements.

While slavery and human trafficking have always existed, today it is a rapidly growing, though relatively unknown, global issue. This is due in part to the ever-growing world of big-business and the attraction of easy profit. The growing gap between economic classes contributes as well, driving the poor to take desperate measures to make money, and creating a situation that the rich can take advantage of.

A huge problem in combating human trafficking is the lack of conclusive evidence and information. It is one of the most lucrative and covert forms of international crime and is hard to identify because those forced into labor closely resemble those just working hard. A U.S. Government report estimates that 600,000 to 800,000 people are illegally transported across borders each year. This figure does

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not include trafficking within a country.

Armed with this information, I left early that November morning to take the bus to the United Nations headquarters in New York City. Upon arrival, our group rushed to the briefing room to get good seats. The mini-amphitheater was filled with official-looking adults and reporters with cameras and notebooks. A long wooden table overlooked the room, and at it sat two women, and a man appeared to act as the mediator. The two women were Ms. Marie Yvette Banzon, the third secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations and Ms. Wenchi Yu Perkins, Anti-Human Trafficking Program Officer, Vital Voices Global Partnership.

The crowd quieted as the mediator, Mr. Paul Hoeffel, Chief of the NGO Section of the UN, gave a quick introduction. He explained that this briefing was taking place in observance of the International Day to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and Its Abolition. 2004 marks the 200-year-anniversary of the abolition of slavery. In 1804 slaves in the French colony of Saint Dominica ousted their captors and took control of the island that is now Haiti. Hoeffel then gave the floor to Banzon.

Banzon is from the Philippines, a country with one of the highest rates of female trafficking, usually for the purpose of escort or mail-order-bride services. She began by describing a recent situation in a small Filipino town: A man, claiming to be an American movie director, announced that he would be inviting local young women to his "studio" at a nearby hotel to audition for a movie that would be filmed in the U.S. Women flocked there to apply! He took their picture, did a short interview and then took down their contact information. The pictures were made into a mail-order-bride book and distributed to men in various countries. The chosen women were notified that they had gotten the part. They left their homes happily, dreaming of their movie career in America. But their dreams were shattered when they were transported to locations around the world and forced into various forms of exploitation, namely prostitution.

In response to the increasing frequency of events like this mail-order bride set-up, the Philippines enacted their first anti-trafficking law in 2003. Among other stipulations, the law makes it illegal to in-



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any Filipino woman to any foreign man. The penalty for this is six years to life in prison. Various other related laws have also been enacted to combat trafficking. Banzon explained that this step forward has been helped in part by the growing global network of NGOs and subgroups of the UN. In many countries, such as the Philippines, there are social workers now placed at points of high circulation—like sea ports, airports and bus stations—to supervise young travelers. Several other advancements, such as court procedures, hotlines and neighborhood watches, are also increasingly child-friendly. Banzon ended her report by emphasizing that while they have made progress, their greatest obstacle is the lack of information circulating in the global community. Human trafficking will never be fully overcome unless the public is made aware of this worldwide human rights violation.

Perkins spoke next about her organization, Vital Voices Global Partnership. She began with an interesting comparison: She described her trip to New York from Washington D.C. that morning. She spoke of how completely overwhelmed and disoriented she felt getting off the train at Penn Station. She wondered how much this anxiety would be compounded if she didn't speak English and had been transported against her will. This, she said, is why she is part of Vital Voices.

The organization is described on their website as "...a global partnership that trains women leaders in emerging nations to build democracies, strong economies and peace." It was started in 1997 by former first lady Hilary Rodham Clinton as a state department program called The Vital Voices Democracy Initiative. In 2000, it became a non-profit NGO and has since evolved into a global network that provides skills and support in hopes of advancing, as Perkins said, "women's economic, political and social status around the world."

Currently, Vital Voices has three main strategies for furthering their goal. First, they have started an awareness campaign to educate the public on what human trafficking is and how to identify victims. This is accomplished in three ways: through an electronic newsletter called *Trafficking Alert*, an annual award honoring those who have fought against this abuse and the formation of contacts with the media, members of Congress, NGOs and other governments around the world.

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Second, The Vital Voices Global Leadership Institute, an ensemble of certificate training programs, has been created at Georgetown University to train women in the empowerment of women in business in relation to human rights. And the third part of the initiative is a specialized support network for Afghan women, which focuses on giving them whatever sort of aid they need to help ensure the respect of their rights and their ability to speak out. This program was enacted soon after the Taliban takeover of the Kabul in 1996. Perkins ended by encouraging the audience to visit the Vital Voices website ([www.vitalvoices.org](http://www.vitalvoices.org)) and seriously evaluate the scope of the problem of human trafficking.

The third and final speaker, Howard Dodson, member of the Scientific and Technical Committee of the UNESCO Slave Route, had a slightly different but inherently related issue to present. He brought an interesting and enlightening perspective to the already informative briefing. He said in order to find a solution to this modern-day slavery, we must consider its origins in a historical context. This context is found in the form of 6.5 million Africans who were transported across the Atlantic and forced into slavery between 1492 and 1776, during the European colonization of America. He asserted that, when considering these numbers, we must rethink everything we thought we understood about our past and "rewrite these 6.5 million back into our history or we will be robbed of the true history and consequences of our country." This must be done in two ways: We must consider the impact of African Americans on our culture, geography, economy and politics. Even something as simple as the old building down the street was most likely built entirely by African Americans and we also need to recognize their victimization, while allowing triumph over it to dominate the history of slavery. Dodson reasoned that if we, as a culture, can celebrate slaves' humanity, resistance and struggle, then the enslavers never really had a victory. The emphasis on accomplishing this as an entire modern society is the foundation of the solution to human trafficking today. Its persistence is caused by an absence of universal awareness and understanding; it is going to take an all-inclusive social movement to conquer the modern version of the slavery that flourished unabated, for hundreds of years.

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Overwhelmed by the new information and ideas, I left the UN with a horrible and unsettling feeling. My anxiety was partially caused in part by the sheer numbers behind this horrifying human rights violation that exists *even in our free and democratic country*. I unlocked the door to my house and thought about the women who, at that very moment, were being physically and mentally forced into prostitution with literally no control over their lives or bodies. I felt especially strange because I had never even heard of human trafficking before. So I decided to sit down and write about my day at the UN in hopes that those of you who read what I've written will understand this problem better. I hope you will consider the issue seriously. And next time you make a decision, however small, remember there are women who do not have even close to the same seemingly small liberty.

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*Leigh is a senior from Cranbury, NJ. In her past four years at Lehigh she has written for the Brown and White, been a peer tutor in Calculus and was vice president of her sorority. She will graduate in May with an English and French double major and a minor in journalism. Leigh is unsure what her plans are for next year, but after spending a semester abroad in France, she would love to teach English there for a year or so.*

## ASHLEY BLEAM

Dear New York,

Keep my baby warm tonight. May you let all his dreams come true and wishes prevail. Allow his time with you to be happy, rewarding, and special. Keep your night skies clear so I know that he too is looking at the same stars as I. Allow your stars and night sky be the blanket to comfort him. Your sun and blue skies guide him. Your busy streets and fast paced lifestyle teach him. Be good to him. Let him discover all that he needs so that he will realize it is me he needs to return to. Please, keep my baby warm tonight.

Love,

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## **a c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s**

### **Many thanks to**

the contributors

origyns staff

the women's center

printing services

### **Special thanks to**

kristin handler

heather weaver

steve mcallister

ajita rajan

The women's center staff:

Claire Burchi, Marissa Enrico, Kristen Gerhard, Sarah Jefferson, Farhana Kassamali,  
Marjan Maghbouleh, Alex Milspaw, Annie Rapson, Rachel Sansanelli, Hailey Witt,  
Jessica Wren

and all the people who've asked about...

## **o r i g y n s**