



5-2005

## 2005 Literary Review (no. 18)

Sigma Tau Delta

Follow this and additional works at: <https://poetcommons.whittier.edu/greenleafreview>

---

### Recommended Citation

Sigma Tau Delta, "2005 Literary Review (no. 18)" (2005). *Greenleaf Review*. 16.  
<https://poetcommons.whittier.edu/greenleafreview/16>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship & Research at Poet Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Greenleaf Review by an authorized administrator of Poet Commons. For more information, please contact [library@whittier.edu](mailto:library@whittier.edu).

A Sigma Tau Delta Publication

2005

# Literary Review

Number 18

ΣΤΔ

May 2005



"Inside Out Image" by Kristin Oase

A Sigma Tau Delta Publication



2005

LITERARY  
REVIEW

Number 18

May, 2005

## Table of Contents:

Foreword by Jessica Stowell and Katie Hunter ..... 5

### Newsom Award Winners Poetry:

<i>First Place: Butterfly Photograph</i> by Danielle Orner.....	6
<i>First Place: A Childhood Sacred Space</i> by Danielle Orner.....	7
<i>First Place: Breakfast</i> by Danielle Orner.....	8
<i>Second Place: Eating</i> by Shannon Phillips.....	9
<i>Second Place: For the Penis I Don't Have</i> by Shannon Phillips.....	10
<i>Second Place: I Couldn't Leave Him</i> by Shannon Phillips.....	11
<i>Third Place: Capitalist Pilgrimage on Gold Stilettos</i> by Vanessa Giovacchini....	12
<i>Third Place: Sing Loud</i> by Vanessa Giovacchini.....	13
<i>Third Place: Hungry</i> by Vanessa Giovacchini.....	14
<i>Third Place: Monkey Prayers</i> by Vanessa Giovacchini.....	15

### Poetry:

Lady Who Lay by Kaitlyn Collier.....	16
Hitler's Mustache by Joseph Fontana.....	17
Eighty One by Rebecca Rehfeld.....	18
Ode to My Brother by Rebecca Rehfeld.....	19
White Hallways by Rebecca Rehfeld.....	20
My Empty Little Heart by Rebecca Rehfeld.....	21
Stony Ground (a song) by Ashley Young.....	22
Like a Huntsman by David Laine.....	23
Worry by Rebecca Lybrand.....	23
A Tragic Poet by Aaron Jaffe.....	25
Unprotected by Aaron Jaffe.....	25
Translation by Justin Goldberg.....	26
A Piece by Justin Goldberg.....	27
A night on your couch (resting my head in your lap) by Justin Goldberg.....	28
Maybe Tomorrow by Russel Der.....	30
Finally Done by Russel Der.....	30
Two Broken Windows Intact by Jason Jenkins.....	30
Phone Calls from the Long Forgotten by Kristin Adolfi.....	31
Grandpa's Basement by Kristin Adolfi.....	32
Karma by Jennifer Lang.....	33
I. Potential by Sarah Razor.....	34

II. Anything Can Breed by Sarah Razor .....	34
III. And I will give boys to be their princes by Sarah Razor .....	34
Till the Next Fix by Phoebe Feng .....	35
After the Showers by Phoebe Feng .....	35
Perfectly Unique by Phoebe Feng .....	35
Sand and the Coffe by Kaylee Carrington .....	36
Version by Kaylee Carrington .....	37
Love by Cassie Wright .....	37
Driving Down the I-5 by Vanessa Giovacchini .....	38
Lovely Sugar by Vanessa Giovacchini .....	39
Relations by Eric Mattys .....	39
Fragmentation by Eric Mattys .....	40

**Newsom Award Winners Fiction:**

<i>First Place: Ashes to Dreams, Dreams to Ashes</i> by Danielle Orner .....	42
<i>Second Place: Ma Vie en Noire</i> by Katie Hunter .....	45
<i>Third Place: The Plagiarist</i> by Aaron Jaffe .....	52
<i>Honorable Mention: At the Wedding</i> by Adam Witten .....	59
<i>Honorable Mention: The Goblin</i> by Justin Goldberg .....	65

**Fiction:**

Holding It by Josh Sovell .....	71
Rest by Josh Sovell .....	72
Elbow Dimples and Other Factors of Glamour by Cassie Wright .....	75
Forty Bucks Eric Mattys .....	79
Nevermore by Adam E. Ekbohm .....	82
Desperate Tactics of a Ten Year Old Chimney Sweep by Katie Hunter ..	94
Practically Perfect by Jessica Stowell .....	98
Excerpt From by Greg Bone .....	100
A Strange Bird by Justin D’Angona .....	101
Stolen Car by Lindsey Hawkins .....	103

**Freshman Writing Prize:**

Transforming the Nation With Overalls and Architecture by Julia Tyack .....	108
---	-----

**Freshman Writing:**

Analysis of “Daddy” and “Rape” by Rebecca Rehfeld .....	111
“Next, Please”: A Closer Look by Eric Rivera .....	117
Creating the Dream: A Brotherhood by Sean Kark .....	120

**Scholarly Writing Prize:**

*First Place:* Realism, Reform, and the Metropolis by Katie Hunter ..... 124  
*Second Place:* Baby Tuckoo Writes a Journal by Christina Gutierrez .... 140  
*Third Place:* The Musical Language by David Laine ..... 156

**Scholarly Writing:**

The Ascent of Piety by Joshua Batts..... 168  
The Father, The Son, and The Holy Sophia?: The Bridge Between  
Hebrew Thought in the Old and New Testaments by David Laine ..... 177  
Dante: A critical analysis of selected passages from The Divine Comedy by  
Chris McKeon..... 185  
A Trinity of Images in the Commedia by Christine Hill ..... 194  
The First Feminists: Women in the English Epic by Cathy Johnson..... 198  
Tolkien’s Leaf by David Laine ..... 203  
The Great Enemy: Hemingway’s Portrayal of Gertrude Stein by Adam  
Ekblom ..... 210  
It’s a Jungle out There: An Argumentative Look at Social and Economic  
Realism in Upton Sinclair’s The Jungle by Josh Lowensohn..... 215  
Oh Hey, Power! Foucault, Discipline, and Hope by Greg Prieto ..... 227

## Foreword

Do I contradict myself?  
Very well, then I contradict myself,  
(I am large, I contain multitudes).

Dear Readers,

We are happy to present to you the 2005 Literary Review.

The best part about the Literary Review this year is the incredible student writing.

The second best thing about the Literary Review this year is that it is the 2005 edition, and it was actually put together *and* produced entirely in the year 2005.

Success!

It has been our great honor and pleasure to read and compile this volume of impressive work created by our peers. This edition holds special meaning to us because it is an example of the challenging intellectual questions that Whittier College consistently asks of its students.

This edition represents the continuation of a Sigma Tau Delta tradition that was briefly interrupted and is thankfully now, once again, a yearly tradition.

We want to say thank you to Christine Hill for her assistance in putting this together and going before Publications Board for us. In addition, we would like to thank Kristin Oase for her art, along with Eric Mattys and Cassie Wright for their help choosing all the submissions. And finally, we would like to thank Anne for all of her support, because without her this Publication would not have happened. Not only did she open our home to us but she gave us sweet rolls and coffee too!

And finally, remember the words of our good friend Walt:

Viewed freely, the English language is the accretion and growth of every  
dialect, race, and range of time, and is both the free and compacted  
composition of all.  
Walt Whitman

Sincerely,  
Jessica Stowell and Katie Hunter

Poetry by: *Danielle Orner*  
**First Place: Newsom Award**

## Butterfly Photograph

Outside on the backyard's wooden porch  
my brother and I snuggle  
into separate sleeping bags  
mine orange, his blue  
wiggling with excitement  
like giant floppy caterpillars  
as Mother catches us  
in the flash and whirr  
of the camera.

Our father stands in the background  
with a head of thick, black hair  
and too small college running shorts.

He roasts marshmallows  
on straightened wire hangers  
over the fluttering flames of a red barbeque.  
His young, proud smile  
matching our missing-teeth grins.

He is still thinking he can do it  
build a world of magic  
to cocoon his children in.

The setting sun colors  
the suburban camp ground  
making it as fuzzy as  
a dusty red dream.

## First Place: Newsom Award

### A Childhood Sacred Place

God came down on a dusty ray of light  
in the late afternoon, after my homework  
was done but before Mom called for dinner,  
when my mind was blank and itching,  
while falling sun smudged the horizon.

I met God beside the tree  
behind the small, white gazebo  
where a red plastic swing hung  
and ferns grew tangled with ivy  
where the dog liked to nap in the shade.

I stood on the flat rocks surrounding  
the tree that served as gravestones  
for family pets. I tried to image them,  
fur, feathers, and scales fading,  
buried in shoeboxes invaded by roots.

I circled the tree with a hand  
on the trunk for balance. Bending under  
branches and carefully stepping on each rock,  
I asked God, as he sat cross-legged on the lawn  
watching me and twirling a strand of white hair,  
whether or not He did, in fact, exist.

## First Place: Newsom Award

### Breakfast

The late-morning sun  
overpowers the thin blinds  
and roasts our naked bodies beneath  
the comforter

In a haze  
I grope for hands, arms and chest  
finding your body hot and solid  
careful not to wake you  
I like the circle of your dark nipple  
and taste last night's sex on your lips

We slept intertwined, stomach pressed to back  
legs overlapping  
on the too small bed

You're awake  
and wrestle and wriggle out of twisted  
sheets and tangled limbs, free  
you pull on yesterday's jeans  
and find mugs for tea

Laughing, cheeks creased with pillow kisses  
and pink with warmth  
I refuse to dress

Poetry by: *Shannon Phillips*  
**Second Place: Newsom Award**

## **Eating**

I've always admired peanut butter  
For its adhering qualities.

And the apple for enduring despite the bad  
Rap it received as the forbidden fruit.

And bananas for preserving their dignity  
Even after Freud.

And the pomegranate for conspiring with  
Hades to trap Persephone.

And tomatoes for maintaining a binary  
Identity in the Fruit-n-Veggie universe.

Berries and grapes also have their virtues  
Except they often get made into spread,

Relinquishing their identity, their form  
That's about as good as a woman

Who melts in a man's arms,  
Oozing through his fingers,

Nothing to grasp, no tangible resistance;  
No satisfying pierce and chomp for the teeth.

That's another reason to admire peanut butter:  
Because it puts up with jelly.

## Second Place: Newsom Award

### For the Penis I don't have

Penis Envy?

I don't think so.

Come on, let's face it,

It likes me better than you anyway.

When it's in me, it's as good as mine;

Therefore I retain part ownership.

Even when it's not in me all I have to do is  
get on top and it sprouts from my pelvis just as surely

as from yours, squished ecstatically,

all that puppy enthusiasm.

And the best part?

I don't even have to deal with the drawbacks either.

You know...blue balls, occasional mid-sleep

eruptions, inconvenient hard-ons...

Not to mention, the freedom from having to fumble excuses  
for any of the following: "refractory" periods, conspicuous  
spooj stains, and a weakness for just about any warm, wet place.

Yep, I can have that thing anytime I want

because of what I have. All of the time.

## Second Place: Newsom Award

### I Couldn't Leave Him

We simply *slept* well together.

I'd lie tucked under one big heavy leg  
Solid as a concrete pillar, skin a  
Hot sheet of linoleum  
Stretched tautly around it.

The bottom of one foot on top of his,  
Snug as if in a stirrup, or sometimes  
All four feet warmly wedged together like  
Slices of cheesecake.

I'd practically unhinge my shoulder and  
Fold it as near to my body as possible  
Just so we could be molded closer against  
Each other.

But the best was when we'd lay like  
Tectonic plates, convergent boundaries at  
A fault, one beginning to submerge  
Beneath the other.

Poetry by: *Vanessa Giovacchini*

**Third Place: Newsom Award**

## **Capitalist Pilgrimage on Gold Stilettoes**

Underneath a vast sky polluted by light  
I watch it all shine

each light bulb glowing in my tiny eye  
and lighting my face in red and gold

underneath signs rising enormous  
like neon prophets and the giant temples

ripping into the blackness of the desert—  
my shoulders heavy with glory

like the plaid flannel shoulders  
of men with gold rings on each rough finger

guarding their life's chips—  
I hear the rhythmic click

of an ashy blonde's orange fake  
nails against the pearly buttons on the slot machine

She sits far away and distant  
right next to me

We've taken a pilgrimage to pay tribute—  
each person with glinting green folds and chips

clanking like gems ready to give and hoping to  
receive the divine grace that will double their faith

Purring, wrinkled eyed women bring me sweating  
drinks at the craps table and call me 'Honey' for a dollar

Cigarettes smoking in the awake air  
cloud the lighting that says stay, and I do,

I stay here and stay—  
staggering on gold stilettoes

## Third Place: Newsom Award

### Sing Loud

It's those nights

where we sit in the heat

drinking dripping Mexican beer  
out of the bottle and with your arm

out the window you smoke cigarettes  
lying on the bed and I strut around

in cotton undershirts, shorts  
and heels and you laugh at me

and squint your eyes and look over the bottom  
of your cold bottle and we sing loud

with The Dire Straits and Willie Nelson  
and play the furniture along with the beat and I say

that I'm having fun and as I set my hand on your chest  
you smile that way

that still looks sad underneath  
and the city outside flickers and moves in orange—

quivering dots, pulsing  
on a sprawl of canvas,

the air pushes around itself and we  
forget about everything

that could ever change and laugh.

### Third Place: Newsom Award

## Hungry

It's never good  
to go grocery shopping when you're hungry—  
walking into the vacuum sealed  
cool air— it seems like florescent heaven  
And you pushing your cart,  
the broken back wheels wobbling and spinning,  
will grab at anything as your tongue  
dreams about slobbering all over it  
And you'll remember each product's  
commercial as you navigate over  
the scuffed floors— singing to yourself  
with a smile as you squeeze something  
new and improved  
In there everything is so shiny  
and perfect— flawless packaging—  
like a new friend  
The produce fresh in your nose,  
you think— as you seize a grape  
and push it between your lips—  
smells like America  
Price checks on checkout four and tinkling  
music echoes over the shoppers' heads and you,  
with frayed coupons in your hand, bounce  
your eyes from markdown to discount  
You mechanically buzz around,  
a simplified hunter gathering,  
and filling your cart with more,  
struggling with the temptations  
thrown in bright colors that program the want,  
the need, the more  
It's never good to go grocery shopping when you're hungry—  
But have you ever felt that hunger  
that heaves and aches, your distended stomach  
growling for something it doesn't remember  
The hunger, that if there were a spill on aisle two  
you would leap to the floor and press your lips to the mess  
At the checkout, your food sliding forward  
toward the register, you pull out your checkbook  
and sign for your kill, elegantly hunted  
Outside, you look back while pushing your cart and see  
the oasis of food, a safe cement cube  
with windows glowing,  
enclosing a trusting consumer consuming

## Third Place: Newsom Award

### Monkey Prayers

Before I fall into sleep I lie

stoned, caged in my head with seventy thousand different  
thoughts, thoughts I thought already the day before.

Before I sleep they attack me—

scratching and molesting each other, they thrash around,  
swing from the top of the cage and shit  
on the bottom the same way night after night— a monkey prayer.

My mother had a quote on our fridge that said:

“Don’t let the monkeys in your head  
drown out the music of your heart.”

In the gray dark, I think of this

and focus on my beating heart

but I think it skips or pounds out little tunes

like my father’s used to—

my cage starts to rattle.

The monkeys beat their fists

upon each other’s backs and grin

yellow smiles.

I curl my fingers in the sheets as I listen to the plotting  
monkeys pick at matted fur—

the shriek as one pulls at a tender tangle.

You say I’m always in my head—

you don’t see the cage is littered with hairbrushes and razors,

unread books, sound bites and jingles,

birth control pills, and stupid things to say— all fingered and fondled,  
shoved in a monkey’s mouth, saliva dripping to the floor.

Fed to the monkeys are those forgotten things, lost on the day.

They crow the same crows and spit

and slap the same dance every night.

Your sleep-breathing next to me and twitching off

to sleep makes me jealous and I lie,

head on pillow, and the monkeys chatter my prayers to me,

reminding me of all those noisy

imperfections I can’t seem to clean out of the cage.

As the last thoughts thought whisper to a hush,

monkeys quiet and prayers said, with my heart skipping melodic beats  
I slide into sleep on a banana peel.

Poetry by: *Kaitlyn Collier*

## Lady Who Lay

lady who lay  
like a summer drive,  
through some sea of grass  
like words spilled out on the ground  
they are aching for meaning.  
in my arms a feeling of good distant strength.  
now i may drown in the sound of my voice.  
how can i tell that i know the way,  
if i know that violence is legal against girls smaller than me and against  
grandmothers much more carefree?  
when will i learn to live,  
no discourse provided,  
when will i eat the bread of sorrow  
and drink from a pool of our common blood?  
my life so multiplied, on actions, on actions  
like the time that i licked my dad's felt cowboy hat  
and noticed grey stuff on my tongue.  
that grey is still on my tongue.  
and i brush it off in the mornings,  
because that is what i am supposed to do.  
it is what is healthy.  
i wouldn't want any hat residue in my system,  
no plaque to crud up my tubes.  
that is why i smoke,  
so maybe i can laugh.  
and also so i can smoke when people ask me if i want a cigarette.  
"yes, that would be great... i am over this shit anyway"  
"yeah me too, just need a break you know?"  
but we are both here, talking about it.  
when i was little i cried when i wore a dress to school on the first day of second grade.  
i fucking hated that dress.  
i said piss that day and a girl wanted to tell on me, so i cried again because i  
thought i would get detention.  
i never had detention before that,  
i thought she was such a mean girl,  
i hate the name amy because of her.  
PISS PISS PISS  
it sounds alright  
and it feels fucking good to do,  
so why the fuck should i get in trouble for saying it.  
yeah you can touch me there.  
because bitter never looked so good.  
PISS. I NEED TO PISS,  
but maybe you could make me come first?  
"yeah thanks, sure i will have another cigarette."

Poetry by: *Joseph Fontana*

## **Hitler's Mustache**

"I hate you", I said leaping into the moment,  
before she could reply again with another compliment.

"You don't hate me", she said, smiling.

"Yes, I do", I replied.

"No you don't", she said, drawing out the sounds like a child.

"That's a good point", said I, "Except for one thing."

"What's that", asked she.

"I hate you."

"You hate everything", she said.

"No, I hate a few things, of which, you are one", I said, unfairly,  
in the flat tone I use for telling jokes.

"I love you", she said.

"You love everything", was the obvious response, and mine.

"I do", she said, "I love everything."

"Why", I asked, regretting the question as I asked it.

"Because I see God in everything", she said, chastely, without a hint of sarcasm.

"What about Hitler's mustache? Do you see God in Hitler's mustache?"

"I love you", she said.

"You and what army", I replied.

Poetry by: *Rebecca Rehfeld*

## **Eighty One**

Call me when you want me  
you know I'll be home  
watching flowers die through winter  
hoping for the snow in California  
pain is only nerve endings  
compared to this lap around the track  
breathy whisper  
after torpedo rides  
through the black sea  
to hear your voice  
and what'd you do with the blood  
just dispose of it  
like your couch  
or watch my molecules jump rope  
as they made friends with yours  
isn't it funny  
all the girls who only see their reflection in your eyes  
watching the hands tick  
waiting to be just another entry in your book  
maybe we should have a club  
and I could be treasurer  
and we could get boozed  
and laugh about what we burnt  
to have our perfume mingle with your sweat  
yes you took my heart  
but I have so many useful organs  
for other boys to ruin  
one day you'll be just another name in my phonebook  
to make up the number eighty one  
but I will never laugh at the smell of green tea again

## Ode to My Brother

You have no idea how cool you are  
standing lanky  
in your all black matrix get-up  
chafing amber cigarette  
blooming from between your lips  
your eyes paint with their gaze  
flowing across the room  
opposed to starting and stopping drastically  
like mine  
your skin is tanned with experience  
the way Native Americans  
are wiser with each wrinkle  
when the sun blows out  
you live in the world of Peter Pan and Robin Hood  
living lonely  
in order to hold up your flag  
sustain realism  
in the hands of white men  
with green faces  
for a lifetime I've watched you  
behind office doors  
heard whispers of burning bathrooms  
and swollen knuckles  
stolen glimpses of French braid mug shots  
and smirking flaxen mermaids  
to me, Tori Amos will always mutter  
the epitaph of your broken seams  
but through all the  
cigarettes and Nintendo games  
totaled cars and flooded hearts  
no blonde will ever love you the way I do

## White Hallways

You stopped me in white hallways  
holding me back from what lay on  
the other side  
being freedom  
to speed down wet highways  
and dye my hair red  
and never come back to you  
putting my shoes on  
was just a step closer  
to watching me shrink  
into the distance  
while the head on your shoulders  
became too heavy to handle  
and you crumbled to the ground  
next to the butts of our cigarettes  
to lick every trace  
of my precious saliva  
off the dirty yellow paper  
the same color of the stars  
as the night sky smothered you  
without me as your oxygen  
and you knew it would be more than  
3 minutes  
before you could breathe again  
and yet  
you didn't see the irony  
in how releasing me to liberty  
I had become cold titanium bars  
and you just a prisoner.

## My Empty Little Heart

This awkwardness is filling  
  
swimming in whipping cream  
heavy silence  
I breathe in my own lonesome  
swallow it down  
to live in-between my vertebrae  
only to be released with the fluids  
of my cracking joints

forgiveness seems so comfy  
such an easy fix  
to mend this messy situation

your hand felt so sincere  
resting on my twitchy knee  
under the polluted night rain  
it was hard not to fall into  
your unblinking brown eyes

and I remember the night  
your hands breathed life  
into this hearse of a body  
and all the stars seemed countable  
when we looked at them together

I made so many pointless attempts  
at not being infected  
by your contagious affect  
so we spoke like adults  
about things that seemed to matter  
and in that moment  
I remember feeling  
that I mattered too

and you needed me

but these days  
there's such a twisted line  
between need  
and want  
and perhaps you needed something I had  
but I in totality  
was just a whim

with the exchange  
of so many kisses  
came the assumption  
of so many promises  
and out here  
dripping with navy blue raindrops  
I feel all of them breaking

and with them  
my empty little heart

Poetry by: Ashley Young

## **Stony Grounds: A Song**

I sit and wonder,  
About the fire burning in the edges of these  
So-called heroes...  
Whose victory belongs to him,  
Though carrying nameless casualties  
Confessing someone else's sin.  
Whose lives are these who've been taken?  
Children mistaken...  
And you know darn well, someone's pockets are shaken.  
Digging the graves for a better tomorrow  
Shovels in their hands on a distant land.  
Stony ground, walking on stony grounds  
Please tell me why we're walking on stony grounds.  
Who's been taken, children mistaken  
Counting dollar bills instead of lives  
Who's been taken, children mistaken  
Counting dollar bills instead...  
No questions asked. Talk of war, the silenced  
Say, "I'll pass"  
Oh are heavens eyes burning for us to realize...  
Who's been taken, children mistaken  
Counting dollar bills instead of lives.  
Stony grounds...stony grounds.

Poetry by: *David Laine*

## Like a Huntsman

The Amoretti by Edmund Spenser  
Sonnet 67

*(Original)*

Lyke as a huntsman after weary chace,  
    Seeing the game from him escapt away,  
    Sits downe to rest him in some shady place,  
    With panting hounds beguiled of their prey,  
So after long pursuit and vaine assay,  
    When I all weary had the chace forsooke,  
    The gentle deare returnd the selfe-same way,  
    Thinking to quench her thirst at the next brooke.  
There she beholding me with mylder looke,  
    Sought not to fly, but fearelesse still did bide:  
    Till I in hand her yet halfe trembling tooke,  
    And with her owne goodwill hir fymely tyde.  
Strange thing me seemd to see a beast so wyld,  
    So goodly wonne with her owne will beguyled.

*(Southern Version)*

As like a huntsman, bone-tired after chasing  
    A fox that his best pursuit did elude  
    Sets himself down in the shade resting,  
    His hound-dogs panting, sore to lose their food  
So I all tired and with a comment lewd,  
    Fixing to leave and get some 'shine right quick,  
    Did see her come back, now that I'd changed my mood  
    To get herself a drink down there at the creek.  
Seeing me sit there, not bothering her a lick,  
    Thought not to run, but sat down on my lap.  
    So I did run my hand through her fur thick  
    And all tuckered out, she closed her eyes to nap.  
How strange I thought to see a beast so wild  
    Right goodly won with her own will beguiled.

*(Approximate pronunciation)*

As lahke uh huhntsman, bowne-tahred a'er chas'n  
Uh fawx tha' his best puhsuit did elude  
Sets hissself dahn in the shade a-res'n,  
His hown-dawgs pan'n, soar tuh lose they' food,  
So ah awl tah'ed aynd with a cawmment lewd,  
Fixin'uh leave an' get some 'shahne raht quick,  
Did see huh come back, now't ah'd change' mah mood  
Tuh get huhself uh drink dahn theh't thuh crick.  
See'n' me set theuh, nawt bawth'rin' huh uh lick,  
Thought nawt to ruwn, bu' set dahn own mah lap.  
So ah did run mah hand through huh fuh thick  
Aynd awl tuckuhed out, shuee closed h'reyes tuh nap.  
How straynge ah thunk tuh seey uh beas' so wahld,  
Raht goodly won with huh own will bee-gahled.

Poetry by: *Rebecca Lybrand*

## Worry

Elbows propped against  
Yellow, musty tile bordered in white  
Palms of hands resting on forehead  
My eyes open slowly only to notice  
The steady droplets of water  
Streaming from the tip of my nose  
Somehow mixing with the strangely  
Damp rivers ruttled deeply in my cheeks  
Creating a cooling sensation that is indescribable to most

If only scalding beats of water  
Could burn off and rid me of  
The pointless spheres of worry  
Surrounding my aching skull  
Spheres that I cannot escape  
By merely shaking my head  
And telling myself that I am  
Thinking too much about  
The future to properly enjoy  
The present; spheres that  
Cause me guilt, pain, anguish  
That I do not want to feel  
Acknowledge or accept  
As my life for years to come

Poetry by: *Aaron Jaffe*

## A Tragic Poet

I sit down, ready to write my first poem  
and place my fingers cautiously over dusty keys,  
but before I can create something truly my own

I must decide what kind of poet I will be.

Should I write love poetry, I muse,  
beautiful sonnets that follow metrically?

But in the end I decide love is of no use  
and that I am better suited to write tragedy.

But even in this I am cursed,  
as I have no tragic event from which to start,  
so I conclude that before I write I must first

find a fickle girl who will break my heart.

But before I leave to find my troubled bride,  
I call home to see if any relatives have died.

## Unprotected

I sat on the operating table, waiting for the doctor to begin,  
protected only by a thin, white hospital gown.

He came in followed by a trail of assistants, and they circled me  
preparing for the operation.

And as I sat there watching them test the silver needle  
that eventually they would plunge into my spine,

I thought to myself,

People need more than just a thin white hospital gown.

Poetry by: Justin Goldberg

## Translation

I don't need drugs,  
I inherited my mother's emotional catalogue.

*(Shimmering blonde curls bounce off sandy wooden floors,  
reaching for a ceiling made of milk. While windows smile,  
letting the sea's breath caress my earlobes and harpoon my tongue...  
...Filleting the veins of Virginia's snotty yellow wallpaper.)*

I flutter. Flutter from time to-time, from space to-space.  
I soak up, and release energy that doesn't exist.  
I smell burning when my feet are frozen,  
I collect dust even though my lungs were removed years ago,  
I bleed, as I don't have lips.

*(Ashen clouds paint my roof, with curdled rain drops.  
Operatic frogs curse the ground and incite a riot of incestuous rage.  
Incensing the roots of the surrounding oaks, and forcing the slain recorder,  
to rise. He spits out delicious crimes and sweet criminals...  
...The rain stops and the worms retreat to their slimy empire.)*

I stop, it stops.  
The earth quits revolving and the tide solidifies.  
I sit and wave to the steamer, drifting out towards a stable sea,  
which would regurgitate me, anyway.  
And I cry inside like a clenching five year old.

*(Licorice black timber hits the soft pearl skin of a touched child.  
Smacking, and slapping, and splitting his curled back, making sure,  
he buries, the gold glints, the bright champagne sparkles, of a happy sun...  
...And embraces the cobalt requiem that streams out cracked concrete.)*

## A Piece

I picked up a piece of consciousness, someone's reality-  
I shoved it in my pocket to keep it warm and safe, humble,  
so no one could see the piercing shines of its foil.

Walking, I tried to make out the messages scrawled in long dainty script  
but nothing was complete, for the piece was but a piece-  
three hints per.

I went to my table,  
and gave a concentrated effort of decoding,  
But the crystal would not break, it only gleamed it's gleam  
to stare back at me, full and refracted.

I felt its texture, ran my fingers over the precious indentations,  
trying to feel what "they" felt, trying to grasp what "they" died,  
yet, there was nothing to feel and nothing to grasp, only something to reach for,

And that something was beautiful and neat, effortless and cool,  
simple and symmetric, open and brief.

I looked at the torn piece of mind...

..and I understood. I understood to cherish, this crumple,  
this gift, the gift of a piece. I understood that this piece is scripture,  
this piece is soul incarnate,  
this piece is clean.

I understood that, in this piece there is hope,  
for the suspended grief of minds so fragile and dry,  
hope of essence.

It says, "I can see myself...through thick matter...I care about...feeling...I have...  
no one..."

## A night on your couch (resting my head on your lap)

I've gone away,  
never to return,  
to the soot of civilization.

I've gone somewhere,  
quiet and warm,  
somewhere crisp and bright,  
somewhere I can pick my nose,  
and sound trite.

I've gone with my girl,  
my sweet baby,  
to make,  
sweet baby boys,  
and sweet baby girls.

Golden children,  
that stain  
by a pure sun  
-like when I was young.

We'll eat guava  
drink guava,  
and, shit and piss guava.

We'll ache our own songs,  
laugh our own games,  
and, hug our own love.

I'll be the "patriarch",  
and she'll be the "Matriarch",  
he'll be damien,  
and she'll be the earth,  
and that monkey right over there,  
it'll be Socrates.

We'll pray to Baudelaire,  
because I brought him in my pack,  
and we'll pray to the rain  
and salt  
and crabs

and toenails  
and, that cloud that looks like Virginia Woolf's nose.

And when the time comes,  
me and the Goddess,  
will send  
he and she devil,  
out into the "world"(Lord, Old, Word, Row, Low, Dow),  
with the money I stashed in an altoids box.

And they'll cart themselves to,  
America,  
or Europe,  
or the East.

We'll never hear from them again,  
and as the years pass  
and all our tears have been eaten,  
our arms and legs will slowly grow into the sandy blanket of our land,  
and our brains will liquefy and  
be shat,  
and sneezed  
and, spit out.

Poetry by: *Russel Der*

### **Maybe Tomorrow**

I sat down to write you this letter  
because I have something to say.  
The page is white and empty.  
my pen is out of ink.

### **Finally Done**

He wore his heart on his soles.  
The tattered brown leather, worn through on the sides  
tells the story of his life.

They sit now, on the corner  
of the red brick fireplace finally warm,  
and getting their chance to rest.

Poetry by: *Jason Jenkins*

### **Two Broken Windows Intact**

I'm sitting snugly in a plush two thousand  
and three plastic chair. Three fingers for  
one hundred and thirteen keys. To my right  
giant panes of glass that are double thick

sleep coolly and jealous. Six are motionless  
but two are shattered, designing their visions  
as they choose. Showing everyone what they  
are thinking. How they have decided to let

me see the oak or the green sidewalk or  
the brown grass or the opaque figure of  
a child holding a balloon in one hand  
and his mother's heart in the other, so

careless with both. He's like the driver  
who moved his cart into the building  
claiming the full walls of glass as his  
own. He didn't know if he hit them just

right, he could give them life, where they would stay up and let everyone see through them in the prettiest way. Soon, without explanation they will be replaced, with new transparent panes

just like mom. She won't understand when he leaves for school or falls in love. She longs to hold him and tell him stories, just as the two panes have done for you and me. If the child,

or the mother or the balloon could see me at this moment, would they feel like we do? Would they sing a lament for these poor and happy windows and pray that the repair men would take an extra week?

Poetry by: *Kristin Adolfi*

## **Phone Calls from the Long Forgotten**

Until your number showed up on my caller ID  
I had forgotten your existence.  
My memory had you tucked  
safely away in the tidy filing cabinets  
in the back of my thoughts.

Then the phone rang and you crawled in my ear,  
opening envelopes sealed with disgust,  
allowing pictures and arguments and sticky note  
reminders not to call you  
to flood the inside of my clean cranium.  
I even found one stuck  
to my cheek this morning when I woke.

Thanks for the reminder.

## Grandpa's Basement

Open the cool aqua door and step inside.  
escape the humidity and chlorine coated air,  
instantly flush with the lonely dampness  
of that place. Feet dripping heat into the wooden  
stairs, as eyes adjust to the darkness.

The air is sweet and soft, reminiscent of  
dryer sheets and dust. Descend into the basement  
running fingers along the bumpy brick wall,  
liquid with lacquered pear paint.

Steel objects hang from its slick surface,  
surgically sharp and sneering in the gloom.  
Go deeper. The muffled laughter is swallowed  
by the distance. In the shadows ahead  
something silver and huge is lurking,  
Dormant now, powerless in this sunken place.

Creep closer and rest skin against it,  
breathing in the faint scent of rosemary,  
and dead swine.

Poetry by: *Jennifer Lang*

## **Karma**

He's really good at baseball.  
With three swings he took out my knee caps,  
one more dislocated my left shoulder,  
and two smashes for each hand  
cracked my fingers like peanuts.

He sang "Take me out to the ballgame"  
as he hijacked my chest,  
making sure to crush each rib  
with it's own intensive blow.

He started to get bored but just for kicks  
he thought he'd get inside my head  
for one last time,  
and with a single swing  
my brain flew twenty feet in front of me.  
I could see the square root of 244,  
John Milton's *Paradise Lost*,  
and my mom baking cookies on Christmas Eve.

On the way out the door  
his cleat slipped in the splatter of brain  
and like a fallen angel  
he crashed to the ground.  
I still had my mouth so I laughed  
"Ha! Karma."

Poetry by: *Sarah Razor*

I.

**"Potential"**

I want to be your poet,  
I do not want to carry the child, nor do I want to keep her; How burdensome such stretch marks.

II.

**"Anything Can Breed"**

Dozens of children in procession,  
At this distance they're so special, little nobodies squirting about; Keep your distance,~ I'm not that kind of girl.

III.

**"And I will give boys to be their princes"**

-Isaiah 3: 4

It's raining

More like onions than bullets or soggy trousers.

The tires stop screeching,

Out juts the blond one,

Shove goes the shotgun seat: Let Freedom Reign!

Out jumps one, two, three shaggy headed mops;

Away scamps three back go two, one: unsardined.

Slam goes the shotgun seat,

Thump goes the blond boy, clutching his cell phonology. "Shotgun!" Bastard, (Mission Accomplished). It's raining onions, They should have prioritized better!

He'll probably vote for W, They'll all probably vote for W. W would call

"Shotgun!" Bastard.

Poetry by: *Phoebe Feng*

## **Till the Next Fix**

It entered from every pore.  
Speeding up the inner percussion.  
Warmth kindled inside,  
growing with every breath that was taken  
until it was consuming,  
wrapping her up like her lover had once done,  
until she was far more vulnerable than before.  
As she kicked the butt,  
his butt  
she swore,  
never again.

## **After the Showers**

Through the yellow light I crept.  
The rays of blue seared my eyes  
Causing them to water  
Yesterday's static life is gone  
Today the world is shown in  
Technicolor.

## **Perfectly Unique**

I didn't order the tits featured in People.  
They didn't speak to me,  
so I kept the smaller ones.

I didn't subscribe to the same face everyone else has.  
Their cover is prettier,  
but mine has content.

I didn't buy the smaller stomach.  
I needed more storage,  
so I kept my expanded model.

I didn't ask anyone for approval for my appearance.  
But the critics say I should have.  
Who cares what the critics say?

Their job is to critique.

Poetry by: *Kaylee Carrington*

## Sand and the Coffer

Her wayward presence yielded to the ceiling  
as if nothing else was godlike.

Born momentarily is the hero who whispers to her the  
candescent thrill.

On an rainy July morning she arises and her feet  
brush the damp white floorboards.  
Gazing out the framed sill, she sees the cold;  
water crashes on a bog, a twig snaps, crickets chirp.

Now it is silent and stagnation fills her airs. She gazes at him  
lying on the cotton sheets next to her  
and looks to her wiry arms and salient wrists then back to the damp floorboards  
which suddenly appear bruised with splinters standing on end.

Heat rushes from the exhausted patches of wood which frame the window,  
under whose pressure of humidity, the ceiling creaks  
when suddenly the torrid whiteness of wall is blurred and with a procession,  
a mocking, a pull and a leap the splinters enter her soft heels as she leaves the room.

She confirms the sand and then the mud by letting them seep slowly into  
the arch of each narrow foot.

Treading and making her way faster and faster over various rocks and tumbles and barbs  
and stones she finally arrives at the abandonment of her feet as the waves touch her toes.

Etched lines are traced onto the earth as she turns back and re-enters where she  
tells herself to lie below the electricity and just listen listen to his steady breathing.  
Relieved when her chest finally moves in time with his she cannot fail to notice the  
balm clinging to her toes.

## Version

Focusing intently on the soft spot between his eyes,  
He vows that summer placements will make affixations approximated.

Soft swooping billows of green hills ultimate undulation  
And it is with their presence that his feet touch the ground.  
As hooves of body and soul crack the earth he knows:  
Out of a man, please, put it in a man!

Astir and resplendent for brevity, he serves drinks to an  
Ebullient crowd of cheer; a rightful bounty of plenty  
In which smiles, bosoms, swollen echoes of laughter  
And rosy cheeks fill the swept floors and furnished walls of together.

The ragged ends of his pants falter in covering his sandaled feet against  
The winded hill under cloaked indigo shards, broken here rustled there  
By a shaking bush. Lights under two sets of feet on a plummeting hill and a rise-  
With her a rise.

Arriving at one tribunal, folds of gray lettering, balmed with care, worn with ease,  
End his day. Fingertips tired from keys and wrists lovingly wracked from observation,  
He retires for now, leaving the lamplight on, shedding humor upon efforts and guile.

Ancient study of visages has told him that this magpie won't crack, won't tell or say  
a word. In this gathering he relaxes; green drapery and a tincture of pink float and  
poise alongside his smile as he leans back in an unruffled prime.

Poetry by: *Cassie Wright*

### Love

The crossing guard in the day-glo vest  
Makes Granny's heart stutter inside her chest.  
I feel her pulse quicken when she holds my hand  
As we cross the street with her heroic Stop-Man.  
She never says "Hi," or "I love you, Dear,"  
But he knows, so he smiles whenever we're near.  
Granny smiles back shyly, and pats her silver hair.  
If she'd only bring him cookies, I know that he'd care.

Poetry by: *Vanessa Giovacchini*

## **Driving Down the I-5**

through the weeded spine of California  
I see, next to an expanse of field—  
blue and white paint curling at its sides,  
a boat, abandoned on a trailer.

It rises, massive over the swaying grass  
which seems to dance and undulate like waves—  
I wonder to myself in the lonely capsule of my red car  
if the wind was doing this  
to make the boat feel less out of place.

Who left this old boat here, surely it wouldn't float  
and where had it been going?  
Miles from the ocean, in its dry grave,  
would the owner come back for it?  
Why did they leave it?

When I was eight years old, my dad bought  
an old boat at an auction, and the next morning  
I played pirates and cranked on the wheel.  
It had cracked blue and white paint, I got a splinter.  
That was the only time I went on that boat,  
it never made it to the water.

I don't remember what happened to our sad boat,  
I think we donated it the next year to the same auction  
that my dad, fueled on red wine, had bought it.  
And someone we knew bid on it and won,  
and we all laughed at the thought of it sitting in their yard  
with a flaky blue tarp covering the buckling seats.

Maybe that person fixed it up and covered it with new paint,  
repaired the stalled engine and split vinyl, made it seaworthy.  
Or maybe it became more abused by heavy rain and the slow ache of damp,  
returned again to the auction as a joke and bid upon by another man  
full of optimistic dreams of repairing it,  
driving it fast out over the soft ripples of water.

The boat becomes small in my rearview mirror,  
I halfway wish I could take it with me  
but my car is small and has no hitch.  
I go back to thinking of you,  
you would be the kind of person  
to leave a boat on the side of the I-5—

To forget all the great times,  
smiles and laughs, the glistening jade of water coursing  
behind— you would leave something all alone in a place so foreign  
and keep driving down the straight stretch of road  
staring ahead at the green nothing, blurring as you pass

## Lovely Sugar

I see everything in tangerine—  
our bodies sprawled over flat, smooth

rocks on the beach. Melting sun glowing  
your black hair amber, seeming to shine

through your skin. The citrus stink of sweat  
tossed between us as cigarettes smoke

in our fingers. Floating in sunset  
ocean, saturated in salt, looking up and seeing miles

of gorgeous orange. I never ate a tangerine in Spain—  
never peeled away that easy skin

or pulled apart each piece, never bit into that  
lovely sugar. I never sprawled over your salty

skin, fingers never raked your black hair.  
Our hands always clinging to each other, our lips

always kissing without tongues. Saturated in sunrise light,  
our amber skin glowing, I remember

looking up into your blue eyes before our tongues  
tossed between us. Something always seemed to shine through

everything in tangerine— everything becoming  
whittled down, concentrated to a perfect shape, memorized

in a certain light. Glowing gorgeous, in the secret center of the brain, hugged tight by everything else.

We were drunken gypsies pounding over uneven stones, winding between the old city, arms like shawls over each other's shoulders and laughing.

Poetry by: *Eric Mattys*

## **Relations**

"Hey you want to go out with me for a bite to eat?"

Lion's yellow tinged teeth inject themselves into flesh.

"That sounds very nice."

He dives headfirst, not thinking, only consuming.

"You only live once right."

He eats because he is youthful.

"My place or yours." "Check please."

Thoughts and identities are irrelevant.

"Oooh yes! That's the spot."

He eats to feel alive, to stay alive somehow.

"Call me."

Flesh is protein is long amino acid chains broken down gradually by amylase and hydrochloric acid in the stomach.

"I don't want to see you ever again."

Bonds form and break releasing energy.

"Well, I hate you too."

Electrons choose new masters to revolve around, this time thinking more carefully whom they can satisfy best, panic stricken by second guesses and lonesome fears.

"I do."

Intestines squeeze out each and every beneficial nutrient until nothing is left except uric

acid and isolated methane compounds with no where else to go but out.

"I'm leaving you."

A sun-baked solid, barren earth does not soften the landing for this wasted waste, where a dung beetle climbs this newly formed mountain of foul.

"How much for a blow job."

A domesticated rooster pecks and catches the beetle in its beak, the beetle and bird both twitching mechanically, one digesting the other. The sun comes up and the rooster crows.

*"Love is a dunghill, and I'm the cock that gets on it to crow."*

*-Ernest Hemingway The Snows of Kilimanjaro*

## Fragmentation

What do you do when you find yourself fragmented in the morning? Parts of your own in seven different places at once. Your right arm holds a scalpel somewhere on the East Coast. There's an old man behind your miraculous floating arm, watching ever move you do and don't make. "Cut gently through the sternum, the mediastinum, then pry the ribs apart in order to view the heart. Be cautious, but remember that it's only a cadaver. You'll have to use your other hand to get to the heart." But your other hand is in a grungy apartment in Denver, making guitar chords but stuck silent because there isn't another arm around to strum the cords. A joint is passed carefree your way and your left hand stops playing silent chords long enough to take the joint up to your mouth, but your mouth is sitting passenger seat in a car headed for Vegas, eloping with that rich girl you met whose parents openly hate you because it's only your smile that their daughter loves. They're right. So you keep smiling while your lips keep saying "I do," but nobody hears you because your vocal cords are talking back to your mom. "Look. I don't care what you want me to do with my life. I'm making good money in Cripple Creek each weekend hustling the old fogies who don't know any better. Poker is just as much a profession as anything else as long as you treat it like a profession. And I don't care if I'm living like a low-life as you like to call it." Your vocal chords are tired and without your mouth a buzzing noise is the sound emitted. Your brain is buzzing too, but not at your mother. It's in a laboratory trying to understand the way beta-amyloid peptides congregate to form fibrils that cause neuronal death and Alzheimer's disease and how to stop those fibrils from forming. Your legs are sitting on a suburban couch decaying into hairy, pasty cottage cheese, opening too many beers with overgrown toes, but never able to pick them up and spill them in the hopes of some of the alcohol absorbing through apathetic skin. Your wife comes and stands in front of the television and asks you to stop trying to drink and do something constructive. You're not interested in what she says because part of you that would stand at attention for her stands like the Washington Monument on an isolated beach making tantric-sex instructional videos for those couples who haven't figured out how to get each other off, are too timid and bored with each other or just not very creative. You really shouldn't complain, but you're not fully functional. Put yourself together and you give up rapture.

# Ashes to Dreams, Dreams to Ashes

## First Place: Newsom Award

*Danielle Orner*

*I am sorry.* Sarah barely whispered the words to her folded hands. She had stopped crying but her dark eyes were still raw from tears. The flickering light from a dozen prayer candles cast shadows on her pale face. She wasn't wearing any make-up and her long, brown hair was tied back. A simple wedding band shone on her slender hand. The evening mass had finished an hour ago and she was the only parishioner left in the echoing church. Her knees were beginning to ache from kneeling with her elbows propped up on the pew in front of her. Looking up at the altar, she relaxed her body and ran a hand across her stomach. She held her breath and tried to feel a sign of the life that had begun to grow inside her. But nothing fluttered beneath her flat stomach. She took a deep breath and grasping the pew, hoisted herself up. The weight of fatigue pulled on her delicate frame and her muscles itched from being in one position for so long. She slid her black-bead rosary in her pocket.

Her husband, James, came home to find the apartment dark. He wasn't worried. Sarah occasionally went to the bookstore on her way home from evening mass. She loved to flip through travel guides and read sections of autobiographies. If she was there tonight, then perhaps she was feeling better. James breathed a sigh of relief and the tension he had been holding in his shoulders for two months eased a bit. Sarah hadn't left the apartment since she had found out that she was pregnant. The silence that had descended around her had frightened James. He wasn't used to starting conversations or doing most of the talking.

The smell of a burnt-out fire lingered in the apartment. James flipped a light switch. The glass doors of the fireplace were open and a pile of thin ashes lay inside. A mug with a dried tea bag inside sat on the coffee table. James walked into their bedroom and began peeling off his sweaty work clothes. Dropping his hard hat and canvas gloves on the carpet, he wiped dirt from his cheeks. Heading toward the bathroom, he noticed that the antique desk in the corner was bare. The desk had been his present to Sarah for their wedding. He crossed the room and stood staring at the clear oak top. The desk looked naked and unused like the first day he bought it. A small choke off panic caught in his throat and he began rummaging through drawers. His hands dug through the scraps of paper, fingers yearning for a recognizable texture. He yanked the drawers out of the desk and dumped their contents on the carpet.

Sarah had kept journals ever since she was seven. James had seen her write in them every night before bed, sitting at the desk with her hair pulled

back and a thin nightgown clinging to her body. Pretending to read in bed, he would look over his magazine and watch her bending over her pages—shrouded in contemplation and washed clean of the day's troubles. James had wished on more than one occasion that he could keep her there. But the moment was always broken and she would crawl into bed next to him. Then he would be thankful for her solid waist to wrap his arms around.

He had asked her once, while they were lying in bed, what she wrote in her journals. Smiling, she had murmured *my dreams, my secret dreams* and then pulled him down to kiss her. At the time, he had thought that she was being mysterious and playful. But he couldn't help noticing how intense she looked when she wrote. Occasionally, tears would leak from her eyes and splatter on the pages. He would watch from the bed, slightly horrified. But he wasn't supposed to be watching, so he didn't say anything and she would always wipe the tears before coming to bed.

He ripped another drawer out of its space, the metal tracks grinding and wood scraping. He felt his shoulders tense and a trickle of sweat streamed down his spine. Throwing the last drawer aside, James stood over the mess of pens and stationary looking at the ravaged desk. He thought of pulling the whole desk away from the wall, when suddenly he remembered the fireplace brimming with ash. *Shit*, he whispered to the empty room. He pressed his hands to his forehead, trying to comprehend what the two occurrences could mean. He ran into the living room and dropped to his knees on the brick before the fireplace. Sticking his fingers into the ash, he tried to riffle through the pile. The cold ashes crumbled at his touch. He tried again. Finally, he stood and dashed back into the bedroom. Grabbing his shirt, keys, and shoving his shoes back on, he burst through the living room barely pausing to slam the door and began running down the street toward St. Mary's.

Sarah bent down and picked up her small suitcase from its place beside the pew. Making the sign of the cross with her free hand, she bowed slightly to the altar. She walked through the large, oak doors pausing to dip her fingers in the holy water. On the street, she met the cab that she had phoned for before mass. The driver put her bag in the trunk as she clumsily crawled into the backseat.

"The clinic on Jacob Street, right?" The driver checked a clipboard. Sarah nodded. The cab pulled away from the curb and into the flow of traffic. Sarah looked ahead. She remembered the first journal had been red with a gold, heart-shaped lock. It was a birthday present from her mother. She recalled her mother whispering *keep your secret dreams safe in here until you're ready to let them out*. Her mother had never had a dream journal. She thought of her mother with her long, red nails and curled brown hair clutching a picture

of a man Sarah had never met and weeping. Her mother had died soon after in the bathtub.

As the cab turned the corner, Sarah concentrated on the memory of the fire. She had lit it before going to mass that evening and carried all her journals out into the living room. It took her three trips. Then, without opening them, she fed them one by one into the growing flames. She made herself a cup of tea and sat on the couch. The pages curled and the ink blurred. She imagined the smoke raising out of the chimney and fading into the sunset – free from the bindings, covers, and locks.

As James ran, he tried to remember exactly what Sarah had said the night she found out she was pregnant. It had been a simple statement, just four words: *I never wanted this*. She said it in a matter-of-fact way like he had picked out the wrong color curtains or an expensive gift that didn't fit their budget.

Sarah pulled her rosary out of her pocket and her ring from her finger.

James reached the church and hauled the door open. His footsteps echoed in the empty sanctuary. Candle stubs smoldered before the altar.

The cab parked in front of a clinic. Sarah paid the driver and got out. She left the ring and rosary on the seat.

James sunk down in a pew. He had secretly read a few journals this last month.

Sarah walked in and up to the receptionist, who verified her appointment.

The entries were nothing but lists, page after page of Sarah's dreams.

The doctor fastened a mask over Sarah's mouth and asked her to count backwards.

Dream number 5,000 was to travel to India. Dream number 4,204 was to marry James.

100, 99, 98, 97. The bright room and busy doctors blurred.

They had talked about this. He had told her it was the last thing he wanted.

Lying on the operating table, this is what she wanted.

He sunk down in a pew, covering his face with his hands. The ash on his fingertips smeared on his cheeks.

**Ma Vie en Noire**  
**Second Place: Newsom Award**  
*Katie Hunter*

It was 3:00 a.m. when I learned he was dead. I'd just fallen into bed not an hour before and death was the last thing on my mind. Christophe was laying there next to me with my sheets entwined round his legs like seaweed around driftwood. His gentle, intoxicated snoring was steady. He didn't wake when the phone rang, or when, in my stupor, I answered, or when I let out a loud cry. His deep breathing was my only companion as I silently placed the receiver back in its place. I slid from the bed, into my worn slippers and pulled the sea green blanket from the foot of the bed around my shoulders. I slumped to the floor and wrapped the blanket tighter around my shivering frame as I gazed out my window to the city below. "La Vie d'Amour" they call it, but I felt no love, no light, nothing but a dull, aching emptiness that left me shivering despite the warmth of the room.

Dad had been setting the table for dinner when Mom heard him fall to the floor. His granddaughters, my nieces were due in twenty minutes for dinner with their father. They got there just as the ambulances were pulling away. My brother reported all of this to me with the methodical succinctness of a history textbook, no inflection of voice, no hint of compassion. I guess I deserve it. I look out my window to the market street below. It's nearing six and delivery trucks are lined up and down the Rue Mourir in the rain as crates of vegetables, fruit, and fish are unloaded onto the stalls below. Dad loves to fish. Loved to fish. I hate it. But as a child, some of my earliest memories are of him, standing knee deep in the ocean, with his big straw hat flopping over his ears, a fishing pole in one hand, and the other placed lazily upon his hip. I remember one particular summer afternoon when he caught nine fish. Despite my hatred of them I was proud and ate his fish that night.

The alarm goes off and I rise from my seat on the floor to turn it off. Christophe still sleeps as I turn on the shower. The water is coursing down my face, my neck, my shoulders. I don't cry. I scrub as hard as I can, scrub away all the dirt, the grime, the hurt, the hate, I scrub till I bring tears to my eyes. I step out of the shower with my skin tingling and pink but still not stained by tears. Wrapped in my towel I pad back into my room and pull my suitcase down from the top of the armoire. It's March. Will I need sweaters or t-shirts for California? I can't remember, so I choose a couple of each and throw in a tank top for good measure. I pull out a simple, elegant black dress I wore to last summer's formal dinner at Hôtel de Ville and gently place it on top. Twenty-seven minutes later I'm clothed, packed, and putting on the finishing touches of red lipstick. I was twenty-seven the last time I was home. I didn't

need so much make-up then. I leave Christophe a cold, empty space in bed and a short note to awaken to. I think I hear him moving when I shut the door.

Somewhere around Chatelet our métro picks up a singing duo. One is tall and lanky with blackened nails that glide over the accordion keys to the barely decipherable tune of "Ma Vie en Rose." But I watch only the second performer, with a nose that would put Cyrano to shame, he closes his eyes as he plays along on harmonica. I dig in my pocket for spare centimes to give to "Nose" because my mother paid for my new nose when I was sixteen. Dad never noticed the difference, he got good at not noticing things. Instead, it's "Lanky" who walks by me with plastic cup extended and I shove my hand back in my pocket. Nobody pays them. At Gare du Nord they jump from our car to the next where I faintly hear their chorus start once more. I softly sing along but change the words to "Ma Vie en Noire." Edith Piaf was one of my Dad's favorites.

I hate to fly, more than I hate to fish. I inherited the phobia from my mother, always high on valium during every family vacation. Always high on valium at any time for that matter, but especially on airplanes. Unlike my mother, I make it through the eleven hour flight valium free, thanks to my expensive bottle of cheap merlot. In the super shuttle I lose my nerve and give the driver my brother's address. My brother's cold, unaffected manner I can deal with, it's predictable, it's safe. She is never predictable, especially now that Dad's not there to balance her out.

It's raining, I didn't count on that. I forgot that it could rain here, and I forgot how ugly the palm trees look in the dreary gray setting with their trunks long and skinny like Dad's fishing pole, bending and swaying as though fighting with a fish. I'm the only one left in the shuttle and so the driver attempts to make conversation, asking the reason for my visit. I don't know why, but I tell him my mom had just drowned. Only my mom's not dead, she's probably off swimming in a sea of gin. My dad is dead and I'm making the journey home to bury him. I gaze back out the window at the never ending sea of gray, concrete buildings, shops and homes, one of them my brother's.

No one is home. So I sit on the porch to wait. Suddenly I'm dreaming of a long strip of beach, and a place I haven't seen since the last vestiges of my childhood slipped away beneath the waves. I'm at the tide pools, standing on the edge of the barnacled slab of rock looking out at an approaching storm on the horizon. I am alone and the sky is dark and threatening, yet I continue to stand at the water's edge, daring the waves to splash higher and envelop me. I watch one huge wave gather strength as it approaches me, crashing down upon my head, causing me to slip and lose my balance. I begin to fall towards the churning, turbulent water eager to engulf me. I hit the sea with a splash and

slip beneath the surface when strong arms suddenly grab hold of my shoulders and bring me back up.

I open my eyes to behold the face of my brother staring down at me, his hands upon my shoulders. "You wouldn't wake up" is his matter-of-fact welcome to the sister he hasn't seen in nine years. I offer up a small smile in greeting and he lends me his hand to pull me from the ground into a stiff but welcome embrace. For the first time I notice his two little girls standing shyly at the other end of the porch and I'm struck by how much the eldest resembles me. I look up into my brother's eyes and arch my brow, he shrugs his shoulders in return and motions for Emma and Hailey to come and meet the aunt they haven't seen since infancy.

I'm chopping vegetables as Daniel makes pasta. We don't speak, our silence hangs thick in the air like the heavy morning fog off the sea. As it nears the dinner hour I casually ask him when Caroline will be getting home. He stops stirring for only a brief instant before he continues and replies that she left him and the girls three months ago. "Oh." I look down at my vegetable medley for several minutes before I can look up at him and simply say, "I'm sorry." In part I mean I'm sorry she left, but more than that, I'm sorry I left, I'm sorry I never visit, I'm sorry I never call except on the occasional holiday, I'm sorry I don't know your girls, I'm sorry I left you to deal with Mom, I'm sorry Dad is dead, I'm sorry we don't talk anymore like we did when we were kids. He looks up at me and shrugs, "It's ok." We bow our heads once more and continue in compatible silence.

The next morning we're minutes away from mom's house and I'm seconds away from forcing Daniel to turn the car around and drive me straight back to the airport. But I keep my mouth set in a grim line and prepare for the worst. He pulls into the drive and shuts off the engine, we have forty-five minutes to burn with Mom before we're due at the church to go over funeral details with the priest. Daniel opens his door first and then comes to open mine, offering me his arm and a faint smile, I gratefully accept. The door opens just as we are about to unlock it and there stands my mother, smaller than I remembered her.

"Well Jena, I must say it's a surprise to see you here. I was beginning to wonder if anything could drag you away from Paris and that French boyfriend of yours." She stands blocking the entrance to the house, daring me to give her one good reason to let me in.

"Hi Mom." She blinks, once, twice, not yet acknowledging my presence. I take a deep breath, "I should have called, I'm so sorry. I came as soon as Daniel told me about Dad. I wanted to see you," I add tentatively.

"How was your trip? What is it, a ten hour flight?" She blinks again and I can see her counting how many valium it would take for this one-way trip.

“Eleven.” I reply faintly, glancing at Daniel, but he’s looking at the ground. I continue, “You’ll have to come and visit me there sometime. It’s beautiful this time of year.”

“Hmph.” She replies. “So I take it you’re here for what, four, five days? We want to have the funeral as soon as possible.”

“Well, Mom, I was thinking about staying a little longer, getting a chance to see all of you, catch up a bit... if you want.” Daniel is looking at me quizzically now, this is news to him. Well, it’s news to me as well. I hadn’t until this very moment planned on staying any longer than five days, but I could see that option would just make things worse than if I hadn’t come at all. Mom nods her head slowly, chewing the idea over a bit. I can tell the last few days, hell, the last nine years have taken their toll on her and she gives in easier than I’d anticipated. She steps aside and I come in.

The drive to the church is faster than I’d remembered it, perhaps I’d always dreaded mass so much that it had merely felt like an eternity. Father Sam is younger than I’d expected, younger than me in fact, sporting a goatee and a tiny silver earring. Times have changed here at St. Luke’s since I left. While Fr. Sam is wearing the standard black shirt and collar, he’s also dressed in faded Levi jeans and worn tennis shoes. His office bookshelves are not only stuffed full of theology but display Moses, Peter and Jesus action figures. He’s a far cry from the stuffy old priests of my childhood and I begin to like the guy despite myself as I settle into one of the well worn chairs in his office.

Having good faithful Catholics as my parents, who attend mass every week and confession once a month, I’m certain Fr. Sam is no stranger to my mother’s less than charitable feelings towards her estranged daughter. But although I may be the prodigal daughter, he doesn’t let me feel so in the least. In fact, I feel more included in this conversation, more a part of my family than I have in years. We work out the final details for the funeral to be held in four days, and I leave for the first time feeling good about my decision to return home.

On the third day I call Christophe. I haven’t been able to bring myself to return his calls until this time. I feel as though I left my present life back on the Paris métro with Nose. He’s not there, so I leave him a brief message at his apartment informing him of my plans to stay a week or two longer. I haven’t seen Mom since the day we went to St. Luke’s because, despite the brief respite from awkwardness, I’m still scared shitless by the prospect of sitting down and actually talking to her. But today contact with her is inevitable. I drive Daniel’s car after dropping him off at work, and it’s strange to be by myself, making this drive again as natural as if I were coming home for the weekend from school. I park the car and sit there for several minutes, gathering my thoughts, taking several deep breaths before exiting the vehicle and making my way up the walk.

Again, she opens the door before I have a chance to knock. "So is it so hard to come and talk to your own mother that you have to sit in your car ten minutes before coming in?"

I smile down at her, "No Mom, I just wanted to finish listening to a radio program before I turned off the engine."

"Oh. Well, come in, come in, we've got a lot of work to do!"

For some reason unbeknownst to me and my brother, Mom has decided she wants to have the reception at her house following the funeral, so here I am, helping her make food, clean, set out tables and chairs for the next day.

We are quite civil to each other and even share several moments of fond recollection before she breaks out the gin somewhere during mid-afternoon. This is the moment I've been dreading. By four o'clock she's so far gone I know there will be no chance getting her back for the rest of the day. I mumble some excuse about a headache and go upstairs to the guest room, my old room, to lie down for a few minutes. I'm thirty-six, haven't lived at home in eighteen years, haven't even been back home for nine of those years, yet the pink and white pinstripe wall paper with little pink rosebuds still hangs on the walls. It has faded and yellowed a bit and in one corner there is a loose strip hanging down, but it still looks the same. It makes me sad. Everything has been rearranged to fit in a shelf for excess books, but all of my old furniture remains. I don't like the silence, so I turn on the radio. Edith Piaf is singing "Ma Vie en Rose." I open one of the drawers next to my bed and find a stack of pictures.

They are photos of my family's last summer together, our last summer at the beach house. The top photos are of me and Daniel in various rooms of the house, out on the beach, or standing in the tide pools. Some of my old friends even make it into a couple of the photos. There's Mom on the deck sunning herself with her token glass of gin, and though you can't see it, I'm certain a bottle of pills is on hand nearby. Then there is one of Dad, standing there with his ridiculous floppy hat and fishing pole, grinning like a kid on Christmas, his aging skin bronzed by the endless stream of afternoons in the sun, away from Mom and her drinks. I look at the next picture, again of Dad, but in this one I'm there with my arm around his waist, smiling at the camera. Only he's not looking at the camera, he's looking at me, smiling down in complete adoration. I never even said goodbye, not before I left and not before he died. I begin to cry, finally. First slowly then with gathering strength until I bury my face in the pillows. There is this ache, this pain, this searing pain that I don't know will ever mend and I feel as though it's ripping me apart, threatening to tear my body in two. I sob like I haven't done in years until, exhausted, I fall asleep.

It's dark when I wake up and I realize I've forgotten to pick up Daniel. I race down the stairs and out the door, stopping to peek in the den at my mother who is asleep in front of the TV with an empty gin bottle lying next to her on the floor.

Daniel's a bit pissed at me when I arrive forty minutes late, but when he takes note of my red rimmed eyes and ashen face he shuts up. As we're driving, I'm suddenly struck with by idea. "Daniel?" I ask tentatively.

"Hmm?" he replies, glancing over at me.

"What are we planning to do with Dad's ashes?"

He pauses for a moment before responding, "Uh, I don't know, I guess we hadn't really gotten that far in thinking about it. Mom may have some notion of what she wants. Why? Do you have an idea or something?"

"Well, yeah, I think so." I've now got his full attention. "What if we were to get one of his old fishing buddies to take us out on a boat and steer us up in front of our old house at the Cove? Then we could let the ashes go there, in front of the spot Dad loved most."

I alternate between looking at the road and at Daniel. I'm anxious to hear his response but he's silent for several minutes before speaking. I can tell he's replaying a hundred memories of that beach. He begins to nod slowly as he looks at me. "Yeah, you know Jena, you might have something there. I'd thought of a million other places, but never there. I even think Mom might go for it." I smile, pleased with myself for the idea.

"Should I bring it up with Mom, or should you? I think she might be more likely to accept if it were your idea rather than mine."

"You're right, I'll bring it up. But not until tomorrow is over. We need to survive that first."

Survive it we do, although barely. It is a small gathering of people, taking up only the first ten or so pews of the sanctuary. There are people there I haven't seen since childhood, mainly my parents' friends, dwindling in numbers but still a lively bunch. There are a few relatives who flew in from Ohio, cousins I've met once or twice and an elderly aunt. Most surprising are my three childhood friends who grew up on our block, each with husband in tow. As Mom has a history of outbursts, the doctor prescribed sedatives for her, so she sits placid and calm there in the front row with us, occasionally mumbling something to Daniel but refusing to acknowledge me. I don't fight it, at this point I figure it is for the better. Emma and Hailey are on either side of me wearing white dresses with rose colored ribbons. They told Daniel black made them too sad. Emma, the older of the two, bravely gets up to say a few words about her grandpa, as does my brother. I remain in the pews and stare at my hands. Dad is carried out to the tune of "Amazing Grace" played on the bagpipes which makes me cry. Only, I cry not for my father but for some

bizarre reason, I cry instead at the thought of “Nose” on the Paris métro. I pretend it is his funeral instead of my father's.

Daniel talks to Mom, we were right, she never would have accepted the idea had it come from me. But arrangements are made and the following Saturday morning the six of us, Mom, Daniel, Emma, Hailey, Fr. Sam and I, find ourselves on Harold King's small fishing boat. It's cold out and the sky is streaked with silver and pearl, while the sea is as calm and clear as glass. I lean over the edge of the boat and dip my fingers into the frigid water, retracting them quickly. It takes us about half an hour to make it out to the Cove. We're silent for the ride there, Emma and Hailey sense it is not the moment for conversation as they gaze contemplatively back at the shore. We round the peninsula and the Cove suddenly comes into view, unchanged and as beautiful as ever, a blast back to a different era. An East Coast-like gathering of small, wooden, weather worn bungalows on the West Coast. Daniel is pointing out our old house to Emma and Hailey, while Mom is taking pains to explain to Fr. Sam about Dad's favorite fishing spot just to the left of the second set of tide pools. I let it all sink in, relishing the heavy smell of sea and salt as it permeates my nostrils.

Moments later, Fr. Sam glances at me and Daniel, we nod softly and he produces the small silver tin containing our husband-father-grandpa-friend. The lid is popped open and Fr. Sam says a brief prayer over the ashes. Mom starts to cry. Suddenly, she reaches towards Fr. Sam and the tin, trying to grab hold of it, keep him from being gone from us forever. In her fervor, she knocks the tin from Fr. Sam's hands and it flies through the air like the string from Dad's fishing pole, landing with a small splash, and bobbing only an instant before slowly sinking below the surface. Within seconds the only trace is a small patch of bubbles in the spot where the ashes sank. We watch that spot until the bubbles stop.

Fr. Sam's voice breaks the silence as he reads from his prayer book, “Thou only are immortal, the creator and maker of mankind; and we are mortal, formed of the earth, and unto earth shall we return. For so thou didst ordain when thou createst me, saying, ‘Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.’ All we go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.” And we reply “Amen.”

I now have my eyes on the horizon, and if I strain hard enough, I'm almost certain I can see where the gray clouds end and blue sky begins. But I'm not positive.

**The Plagiarist**  
**Third Place: Newsom Award**  
*Aaron Jaffe*

There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. No watching television. No playing video games. He knew he would be lucky if he had enough time to take a decent length shit.

Mark let the door to his room swing closed behind him as he collapsed exhausted, in a heap on his couch. It was not the dead-tiredness that comes through brief and excessive effort, from which recovery is a matter of hours; but it was the dead tiredness that comes through the slow and prolonged strength drainage of months of toil. There was no power of recuperation left, no reserve strength to call upon. It had been all used, the last least bit of it. Every muscle, every fiber, every cell, was tired, dead tired. In fact, one might even go so far as to say that he was the complete and polar opposite of well rested.

He had worked more than ninety hours in five days. So had everyone else in the Ministry, the community outreach program he headed. They restored community buildings in the greater New York area that had fallen into disrepair and he had spent the last five days rebuilding a soup kitchen that had been ravaged by fire. The work was rewarding, but he knew he had let it get in the way of his academics. The fall semester at Mercy College was drawing to a close and Mark's senior thesis paper was due in his professor's office by nine the next morning.

He kicked off his shoes and rolled his head from side to side, trying to relieve some of the tension in his neck. Each time his head rolled to the far left or right, a series of pops emitted from deep in the tissue. He sank back into the couch for a moment fantasizing about the service of a private masseuse, but quickly the thesis paper intruded into the daydream like a black shadow emerging into sunshine.

He stood and began pacing in circles until the process sickened him. There was nothing that could be done about it. He sat down at the desk and vowed to write without interruption.

No sooner than his fingers touched the keyboard the phone rang and Mark got up, suspicious that some maniacal sitcom writer had intruded into his life.

"What?" he grunted.

"Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?" It was his friend Eddie.

"My thesis paper is due tomorrow," Mark told him.

"You start it yet?"

"Of course I started it."

"What's it going to be then, eh? You want to hang out?"

"I can't. I'm exhausted and I have another forty pages to write."

"You should take a power nap," Eddie suggested.

"A what?"

"You know, when you take a quick nap, but you don't get into REM sleep...or wait, maybe you do get into REM, but then you wake up right after. Well, I can't remember, but you should try it anyway, it will help clear your head."

"Thanks, I think I will. By the way, what is REM sleep?" Mark asked.

"You know, I haven't the faintest idea," Eddie replied.

Mark shook his head wearily as he hung up the phone.

When Mark awoke it seemed to him that he had been asleep for a thousand years, and he felt sure that he had opened his eyes upon an unexpected world. As it turned out, he was still in his dorm room and according to the wall clock he had only been asleep for six hours, which is considerably less than a thousand years. It was nine o'clock. That left twelve hours. Four pages an hour, with time for a two hour break.

He sat down at his computer again and looked at the only line he had written: "This paper will serve as the summation of my undergraduate education." That was an awful beginning he thought. There was probably more than just an outside chance that after being a teacher for twenty years Professor Shaw would be aware that senior thesis papers serve as the summation of their author's education. He hit the backspace key, slowly erasing the sentence. He began to type again, pecking out a letter at a time, as if his fingers had suddenly forgotten their way through the avenues of the keyboard. "In this paper I will demonstrate that a rift formed in English literature by making a careful examination of some its most prominent authors," now read on the screen.

Much better he thought, sitting back satisfied. He opened the computer's calculator function. The sentence he had just written was twenty-five words. Three hundred and fifty words per page multiplied by forty pages came out to fourteen thousand words. Fourteen thousand divided by twenty-five was five hundred and sixty. He only had to write five hundred and fifty nine sentences of a similar length, but he had broken the seal now. Soon the words would come flooding down like the splash of the rain to lengthen out into the long swash of the sea waves.

He worked, and worked, and worked, in silence, and words fell on him as they would have fallen on an echoless wall, or on the air. They keyboard resonated with a painfully slow, rhythmic tapping as he carefully outlined the breadth of his thesis. Five hours later he had written seven pages. His eyesight was shaken and dazzled by the tension of thought and muscle.

"I'm not going to make it," he thought frantically. It was like trying to squeeze the last bit of toothpaste out of a tube that had already seen too many mornings.

He could see his entire future slipping away. He already had his dream house picked out. It was a cheerful red-and-white Georgian Colonial mansion, overlooking the bay. The lawn started at the beach and ran toward the front door for a quarter of a mile, jumping over sun-dials and brick walks and burning gardens~ finally when it reached the house drifting up the side in bright vines as though from the momentum of its run. He had envisioned himself curled up in some back alley with a three-dollar jug of wine, sheltering an abandoned refrigerator.

No way! He had to finish. He had to make it. In what he would later describe as a fit of delirium, he did the only thing he could think of. He logged into the library's Internet database and stole like a thief in the night. Paragraphs here, pages there. He molded them into his argument, quickly molding them into a cohesive train of thought.

Three days later Mark received a note in his mailbox from Professor Shaw, instructing him to meet at his office at four o'clock.

The following day broke gray and dull. Mark stood outside the office at 3:55, staring intently at the door. He pictured Shaw in his office, thumbing through his thesis paper, which was now marked mercilessly with red ink. He could see Shaw's lips forming the word, "expulsion" in slow motion.

"Hey, are you alright?" asked one of his classmates who was passing by.

"Yeah, I'm fine. I get the willies when I see closed doors," Mark replied, pointing to Shaw's office.

He took a deep breath and walked up to the door and rapped on it timidly.

"Come in," Shaw's voice echoed from the other side.

Mark walked slowly into the book-cluttered office and sat down in a chair facing the desk. Shaw stared at him curiously for a moment, before pulling the thesis paper out of the desk's top drawer. His face with its long mustache was serious as always, only his eyes were brighter than usual.

"Now what I want is Facts," Shaw said slapping the paper down on the desk. "What in the world was going through your head when you decided to turn this in?"

"Well," Mark replied, saying the first thing that popped into his head, "when I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor in a house which I had built myself."

"Don't bullshit me. That's gotten you in enough trouble as it is."

"I'm sorry," Mark mumbled. "I don't know...I was tired. I'd been working all week at the Ministry outreach program. If we didn't complete five projects this month we'd lose our government funding."

"This is the saddest story I ever heard," Shaw said dismissively, "but the fact remains you have stolen from Bronte, W. Somerset Maugham, Ford Madox Ford, Anthony Burgess, Joseph Heller, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Dickens...

"Twice," Mark added.

"Jack London," Shaw continued, "George Orwell, Virginia Woolf, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Mark Twain, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Tolstoy, James Joyce, and Stephen Crane."

"All this happened more or less," Mark said bowing his head.

"Is there anyone I missed?" Shaw asked.

"Vonnegut and there will be more later."

"What, where?" Shaw rifled through the pages.

"Just now...never mind."

"Regardless, the patchwork you turned into me is a mockery of academia. You failed to cite a single source and you plagiarized some of the greatest canonical authors."

Mark slowly shook his head. "I just don't get it," he finally said.

"What exactly don't you get?" Shaw asked irritated.

"Citing sources, plagiarism...the whole thing. One way the period goes in front, another it goes behind. I mean what does it matter anyway?"

"We use set forms in order to establish academic consistency," Shaw told him.

"And it's exactly that type of mindless uniformity in the education process that drives out any kind of creative thought," Mark said, his voice still rising. "And as far as plagiarism goes, well the ideas were all mine. I mean I borrowed here and there, but I connected them. I provided my own spin. That's all academia really is anyway, right, just rehashing old ideas."

"Maybe," Shaw said, "but you used other people's words."

"Are you blind?" Mark shouted, jumping from his chair. "Other people's words? It happens everywhere. Newspaper writers use the exact same phrasing to describe an event. Businessmen use the same repetitive wording to write memos. You even said in class that good writers borrow, but great writers steal, which, correct me if I'm wrong, isn't your line!" His breath was now coming in ragged gasps.

Mark could feel a wave of dizziness wash over him. He started to pitch forward, reaching towards the desk for support. He caught his balance at the last moment and pushed himself back into the chair, his body shaking involuntarily.

Shaw was silent for along time, carefully stroking his mustache before he finally spoke.

"I'm sorry Mark," he said quietly, "but that may be the most juvenile argument I have ever heard."

"Oh," said Mark, almost choking on the word.

"Believe me when I say I don't want to fail you, or call for your expulsion, but you've really left me no choice."

Mark being somewhat more mindful of the probabilities of the case, only nodded in reply, and walked away, stopping as he reached the door. He inhaled deeply and turned around.

"I'm sorry too, professor," he said, his voice cracking. Shaw blinked several times and chewed on his lower lip.

"Do you blame me for flunking you, boy?" he asked.

"No, I suppose I brought it upon myself," Mark replied. "But you know, somehow I feel like this isn't completely my fault."

"What-what are you saying?" cried the professor.

"I don't know," Mark said. "Sometimes I just feel like I don't have a single original thought in my head, like maybe we're just all repeating the same things from books and movies over and over...like we're in this world where the same ideas and phrases are just spinning around endlessly in a giant mental void." The phrases came back to his memory, and he repeated them over and over to himself.

"That is not only very ridiculous of you, but very wrong," Shaw told him.

"You really think so?" Mark said.

"Absolutely," Shaw told him. "Do you realize how many brilliant, creative people there are in the world?"

Mark stared at the ceiling as he slowly began to count on his left hand. "I don't know, a lot," he finally said.

"Exactly," Shaw said. "And with all those brilliant minds there is no room for unoriginality in the academic community, let alone the creative one." There was another long silence as the idea settled in.

"I suppose it is pretty thick, now that you mention it," Mark said at last. He sighed heavily as he slipped out of Shaw's office for the last time and walked wearily back into the void.

There was no possibility of taking a walk that day.

- Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre

It was not the dead-tiredness that comes through brief and excessive effort, from which recovery is a matter of hours; but it was the dead tiredness that comes through the slow and prolonged strength drainage of months of toil. There was no power of recuperation left, no reserve strength to call upon. It had been all used, the last least bit of it. Every muscle, every fiber, every cell, was tired, dead tired.

- Jack London, Call of the Wild

He had worked more than ninety hours in five days. So had everyone else in the Ministry.

-George Orwell, 1984

...like a black shadow emerging into sunshine...

-Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter

He began pacing in circles until the process sickened him.

-Virginia Woolf, Night and Day

“Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?”

-Mark Twain, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

What’s it going to be then, eh?

-Anthony Burgess, A Clockwork Orange

When the youth awoke it seemed to him that he had been asleep for a thousand years, and he felt sure that he had opened his eyes upon an unexpected world.

-Steven Crane, The Red Badge of Courage

...splash of the rain to lengthen out into the long swash of the sea waves.

-Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

He worked, and worked, and worked, in silence, and words fell on him as they would have fallen on an echoless wall, or on the air.

-Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities

...a cheerful red-and-white Georgian Colonial mansion, overlooking the bay. The lawn started at the beach and ran toward the front door for a quarter of a mile, jumping over sun-dials and brick walks and burning gardens~ finally when it reached the house drifting up the side in bright vines as though from the momentum of its run.

-F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

His eyesight was shaken and dazzled by the tension of thought and muscle

-Steven Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*

...like a thief in the night.

-James Joyce, *Ulysses*

The day broke gray and dull.

-W. Somerset Maugham, *Of Human Bondage*

I get the willies when I see closed doors.

-Joseph Heller, *Something Happened*

His face with its long mustache was serious as always, only his eyes were brighter than usual.

-Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy, *War and Peace*

Now, what I want is Facts

-Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*

When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor in a house which I had built myself.

-Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

This is the saddest story I have ever heard.

-Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*

# At the Wedding

## Honorable Mention: Newsom Award

*Adam Witten*

The wedding had gone well. Quite lovely vows actually. With a nice Celtic interlude and prayer. It was a pity there were so many dry eyes in the place. We had expected a little more from the gathering.

From the ceremony to the reception the wedding party progressed in a shower of white petals. In the chilled afternoon the buds and blossoms could have been snow upon the cement landing. It might have been better if there had been snow.

All the tuxes stood and toasted the bride; the dresses stood for the groom. The glasses they held could never be drained even with the never-ending speech making, well wishing and the occasional blessing.

The cake was cut. The songs were sung. Even a few cigars were smoked by the older men while the women sipped their beverages. In a shower of rice the wife and her husband departed for the nuptial bed, vanishing into the hotel. But the reception was not to end until the cases were dry.

One of the groomsmen, hot from his coat, walked into the cool air. The black suspenders gave the allure of a broad back. He was small framed. From his vantage point a light turned on in an upper room. In the window was the groom pulling the blinds closed. The groomsman has never felt more alone.

Away from the hotel towards the small town was a dirt road. His feet moved over it slow enough that no dust ruined the black polish of his shoes. After a small distance he walked back with his eyes fixed on the solitary rain cloud in the sky.

No one was outside the party when he returned so he took the only bench. He laid down on it looking up.

“Snow you bastard. Snow.”

“I certainly do hope that you are talking to that cloud. Otherwise you will be terribly disappointed.” One of the bridesmaids had walked up to the bench and stood at his feet looking down.

“Of course I wasn’t referring to you,” not looking at her.

“Brilliant. Well we seem to be off to a splendid start.”

“It would seem so.”

He swung his knees off the bench and allowed her to sit down. Gathering the trails of lavender fabric that flowed from her arms and waist she sat lightly on her end. She withdrew a pack of cigarettes from her sleeve, a lighter from her bosom.

She lit the cigarette and offered it to him. There was a smudge of lipstick on the filter.

“No thank you. I don’t smoke.”

The packet was placed deliberately between them with the lighter right alongside. She was looking at him.

“Just in case you change your mind.” She smiled before she took another drag.

“What do you think of it?” He was looking at his shoes.

“So far I wouldn’t give us a chance.”

“No. The wedding.”

“Ah! Delightful. And those vows. What were they German?”

“I believe they were Irish Gaelic.”

“They sure were pretty.”

“Yes. They were.”

They were both looking at each other. He gave a faint smile and looked away. She kept looking until she finished her cigarette and snuffed it out against the cement landing.

She stood to leave. “Well, chap, its been nice. But it is time for this lady to get a drink. See you around, I guess.”

“If you give me a moment to fetch my jacket I would like to get you the first round.”

“As long as you do not take too long I would be glad to accept.”

“t will only take a second.” He vanished into the reception.

He finally noticed how beautiful she was when he returned with his jacket over his arm. Her hair was down and dark.

They walked a few steps together before she extended an arm.

“It would be all right if you to take my arm.”

He smiled timidly as they locked their limbs together. With his other arm he moved alongside her wrist until he felt long fingers. They grasped his. They were warm.

“Tell me about Shay’s Rebellion.”

“I don’t remember anything about it.”

“You seem like a smart boy. What do you study then?”

“Nothing of content. Are you in school?”

“Massage therapy. And please don’t start telling me about that sore joint or this strained muscle.”

“Don’t worry. I feel fine.”

“Really? You feel fine?”

“I am great actually.”

“It is rare to feel that way.”

“Believe me. I know.”

They walked down the small hill and were descending among the posts and signs with their electric light. It was not dark but the unnatural colors managed to gleam on the dry light colored sidewalk.

They were outside of the PBC, the town's brewing company. It was obvious that she was waiting for him to open the door but he was reluctant to take his hand way from her fingers. Eventually he released and moved to open the door.

"Would you like to go for a walk first?" she asked. In her eyes there was a gleaming.

"Yes. Very much."

Entwined again they journeyed across the street to a park. The lights from the holiday season were still up and in the growing darkness some had started their display.

A few paces forward there was a tree whose trunk was covered in ivy except at one hollow where a limb had been shorn. The white clusters of blossoms were heavy on the all too thin branches. In the breeze the weaker petals had fallen. White circles with a dimple in the middle, the ground beneath colored with them.

"Let's sit here." She said, lifting the skirts of her dress to gather her legs.

"Let me clean it off for you." His jacket was sweeping away the petals.

"No. Leave them be. It was so beautiful."

"Then we shall have them come again." The boy was shaking the tree limbs. The petals spiraled down.

They sat together for a moment before she reached for her cigarettes. Putting his hand over hers he took them from her and held an empty hand forward. She produced the lighter.

The flame was weak. The paper caught and quickly charred. With the thin smoke spiraling upwards he handed it to her. He took the opportunity to remove a few circular petals from her hair. She kissed his cheek. She took a deep pull on the filter.

It was silent under the tree. Awkwardly he looked up to spot the cloud. In the fading light it was barely visible. The air was growing chilled. He wished to put on his jacket but was certain he looked better with it off.

She finished smoking and snuffed it out against the petals. They curled under the heat. The smooth ash turning their color. Taking his hand they stood and made their way back to the brewery. The filter standing end up among the flowers with its yellowed tip.

Inside was warm and loud. A cloud of tobacco smoke clung to the ceiling boards. But it was clean and lighted well. The waitress asked for identification to sit in the bar. The girl produced a card that could only have been fake. After checking the numbers the waitress turned to the groomsman.

"I didn't bring it," he lied.

From across the table the girl looked at him. "He is from out of town for the wedding. If you like we can go get the photocopy of the ID from the bartender at the reception. We would be right back."

"Don't bother yourself," said the waitress, "He looks twenty-one to me."

"Brilliant."

"What will you both be having?"

"Bring me something dark," she said as she lit another.

"And I would like a Hefeweizen with lemon."

"A pint will be fine?"

"Yes, just a pint."

"How old are you?" She asked, producing trails of smoke as she opened her mouth.

"Twenty. You?"

"Seventeen." He almost choked.

"That was stunning back there."

"I was brilliant wasn't I?"

"Yes, you were good. And there I was getting ready to leave."

"But we couldn't have had that," she said with a coy smile.

"No. I suppose not."

She extended her arm. He took it by the wrist and slowly moved his fingers up onto her fingers. When he got to the cigarette he took it. Staring down at it he saw the slight lip marks on the paper. Trying to match them with his own he took a pull. After he exhaled he placed it back in-between her fingers.

"I thought you didn't smoke."

"Only when I drink."

"You aren't drinking yet."

"I will be."

The waitress brought the beaded glasses. His was set on a cardboard coaster. The bridesmaid took hers right out of the waitresses hand.

"Can I get you both anything else?"

"In five minutes I will want another."

"Sure. And for you sir?"

"When you bring hers can you bring me a whiskey and soda, please?"

"My pleasure."

He took a sip of his beer and looked down at the table. There was the package of cigarettes. On the pack was a Native American with a white and red feather headdress. He held a peace pipe. He face was stern, agonized.

"He's an Indian. You look like the kind who would call him a Native America. But he's not. He's an Indian."

"You really think you have me nailed down to a type?"

"You bet."

"It was Sherman."

"What was?"

"It was Sherman, General Sherman that ended Shay's Rebellion."

"See. I told you, you were the smart kind."

"Yah. You did." He was looking off into the distance.

"Finish your round. Here she comes with the next."

The waitress deposited the drinks on the table and turned to leave. Her apron was stained with spilled beer.

"Ma'am. Before you go can we order our next round?"

"What will you have?"

"I'll have another of the same. He would like a Long Island."

"Five minutes?"

"Make it ten."

"If I didn't know better I would say you were trying to get me drunk."

"I am," she said over her beer.

He finished his first round and started on the whiskey.

"So. Since you are such an adept at reading me, what else do you know?"

"Lots." She lit another. "But let's not go there."

The waitress brought their last round and the bill. They finished their drinks quickly. He covered the charge and left a healthy tip.

"Thanks for the drinks."

"It is my pleasure." He stood and the alcohol hit him. He felt flushed.

Ambling back they made no contact. It was too cold. The slight hill up to the hotel felt steep. Before the doors of the establishment she stopped and looked at him.

"Goodnight," she whispered.

"Sleep well," he replied. She vanished into the lobby.

His shoes would not take him to his room yet. Instead they found their way back to the dirt road. There they stumbled on small stones and bent into the holes of the earth. A layer of dust accumulating on the black shoes.

The warmth of the liquor left him. In front of the hotel she was smoking. Her lavender dress exchanged for an orange hooded sweatshirt and a loose pair of jeans.

"What happened to your shoes?" she exhaled.

"You couldn't sleep either?"

"I needed more fresh air."

"So did I? May I?"

"By all means." She handed him the cigarette. He smoked the rest and lit another. Half way through he passed it off.

"Seems we've made a smoker of you."

"So it has."

"You're not trying to impress me."

"It's only when I drink."

She stabbed the cigarette out on the bottom of her shoe.

"Goodnight, then."

"Yes, goodnight."

He stood to leave her. She caught his arm.

"There's no need to hurry." She kissed him lightly. "Something to leave you by." She smiled. She walked into the lobby.

Even though it was cold he remained outside for a while longer. He made a few futile glances towards the door but the movement he sensed was only the night man. Wiping off his shoes he stood and went inside.

The door of his room was locked and he could not find the key. A pillow he made of his jacket, a bed of the floor. It was warmer lying there on the floor than standing up. A few minutes later he was asleep.

He had been driving a few miles when it hit him. At the next stop he pulled off of the road and parked at the gas pump. Inside of the service station it was dark and unkempt. He approached the counter.

"Give me a pack of cigarettes."

"What do you want?"

"Anything is fine. No. Wait. I want the kind with the Indian on the front. You have those?"

"Yah. These the ones?"

"Brilliant."

He paid and took a book of matches. Outside he lit one as he took a look around. There was still one cloud in the sky, heavy and dark.

"Snow you bastard. Snow."

# The Goblin

## Honorable Mention: Newsom Award

*Justin Goldberg*

I got a goblin. It sits outside my door. Saliva oozing from its hideously jagged mouth. Green skin that looks as if it peeled an alligator bare and pasted the leathery strips to its body. Feet with only three toes and long sharp talons; overridden with fungus and grime. Hands always clutching and gripping for some piece of fresh flesh in the darkness. Eyes skittering in jolts of madness. Its whole exterior reeks of rotting meat, of old fat, all it is, is a foul heap of revulsion.

This goblin, he's real. He's outside, outside the door to my house, crouched in a springing position, eyeing the darkness. How a goblin came to my isolated and plain home, in the dreary backwoods of a Northern town, I don't know? The one thing I do know, is that he won't go away. He won't remove himself from my front porch. He just stays out there, doing...whatever it is that goblins do. I don't interact with him, really. I don't bring him food or drink, or any other amenities that could, well, make his stay more enjoyable. He's not a pet. And anyway, I'm not quite sure what items a goblin would need or if a goblin needs at all. In my view of things, they just prey upon whatever comes their way, turning that poor catch into disgust.

I'm not really sure how long ago he arrived.

I remember wanting to go outside to fish (I have this pond connected to the property of my house. I go and sit on a log that I shaved down nice and flat for comfortable sitting. I sit there with my fishing rod and a coffee can of worms, some cold beers beside me, and a cigarette drooping from my lips. It's nice, I rather enjoy it. It's one of the most serene things in the world that I can think of to do. And one of the only things I can think of to do. There's isn't much action in these parts.) I walked down the stairs to the front hall. Slipped on my boots. Took my glued together fishing rod from the corner of the doorway. Picked up my Folgers coffee can, put both the rod and the can in one hand, and picked up my six pack of Pabst (cigarettes were already in my pocket).

As I went to open the door with three straining fingers from the beer hand...I see what at first looks like a statue of some kind. Looks, looks like a gargoyle that you see on cathedrals in big cities. I then looked closer, because who the hell would put a statue on my front porch. I smudged my nose and cheeks against the window pane. My eyes pulled back to focus on the object, trying to catch a hint of the why's and what's of this thing. I tilted my head either which way surveying it from different angles. And it moved!!! I mean it

seemed to move. I wasn't sure if I had strained so much that I was seeing things. So, I stayed alert, I kept watching and it's fingers wiggled. I stepped away from the window and stood there in awe. How could such a thing get here? Why would such a thing perch here? What the hell is such a thing? What could it want?

What the hell could be its intentions? There must be intentions? My front porch must have some kind of advantage for this thing? I quickly turned back to the window, I peered out fiercely at the beast. And slowly it creaked its neck, its head began turning towards me. I couldn't believe that this was happening. And I couldn't wait to see what its face looked like? When its head finally turned completely facing me, it glared at me, with intention. It had eyes, big and protruding from its brow, yellowish slits emerging from swamp green irises. We just stared. I was too fascinated, scared, horrified, and delighted to move. After it stared at me with a seemingly wise look, the look you would think a prophet or oracle would give you, it casually returned its head to the forward position.

I didn't know what to do. Should I call someone, the Sheriff, the Hospital, Town Hall? Does this happen all the time, and I just don't know about it because I don't read the papers? I've never seen anything on Television about it. No one at the store has mentioned these types of things perching on their porches. Ahh...what is anybody gonna do anyways? I'll just solve this myself. Maybe it wants food? Should I give it food? What kind of food? My brain was reeling. Ok, food. Food it is.

I went collect some chunks of meat from the refrigerator, some left over steak and some fish I had, and began throwing them out of the mail slot into the goblin's general direction. I threw, he didn't move, didn't flinch one bit, just kept on looking ahead crouched, springing on his toes, salivating and clutching. I pulled a chair up to the door and peeked through the slot every now and then. He didn't eat, didn't even address the meat. I admit it wasn't the freshest meat, but this is a goblin, they can't have strict preferences as to the conditions of perishable goods. Having such preferences would mean that they intellectualized things past need, and such a grotesque animal, if you can even call it an animal, knows nothing of conditions. This thing wants from the fact that it must survive and from those drives comes pleasures, not the other way around. It doesn't enjoy simply from enjoying, it enjoys from prolonging its own life. Right?

I sat and waited, thought maybe if I counted to a certain number and then looked the chances of the goblin eating would increase. He didn't eat. For it was not till I got up to get a glass of water that he ate, well I assumed he did. When I came back no traces of the meat were left, which would lead one to believe that the food was consumed. Yet, I hadn't been gone longer than 15 seconds, and he wasn't still chewing, nor did he have any in his hand. Could

he have eaten that fast? Maybe he doesn't like meat? Maybe he smelled the age of the meat, became infuriated by my rude intentions, and swiped the pieces onto the yard. These are all possibilities. But, goblins aren't picky, they eat what's there, they eat what's in front of them. Right?

After the food trial had failed. I wondered what the hell this thing actually was. I mean I kept making these inferences about its mindset and I didn't even know what it really was. So, I took out my trusty Webster's Dictionary, Ninth Edition, and I looked up the word goblin. I used the word goblin because it was what first thing that came to mind. I saw this beast and instinctively I said goblin. But what truly is a goblin? What is the essence of a goblin? Here it is. "an evil or mischievous sprite, ugly or misshapen in form." What the hell is a "sprite?" A sprite is, "an elflike person." And then it had, "a ghost." From what I'd seen and extracted so far, the thing is definitely evil and mischievous (there isn't any or about it), as well as ugly and misshapen, while also being elflike. But a person? A ghost? This creature, this goblin, is no person. A person is...a person has...well, a person is, "a human being, esp. as distinguished from a thing or lower animal." Right. Exactly. A goblin is no human being, look at the way it's body is shaped; the skin, the hands and feet, fingers and toes, the stature, the revulsion. A human being is a higher animal because it is able to think beyond food, sleep, sex, and, and, shelter. Human beings are rational, they have the ability to problem solve in difficult situations. We can intellectualize and go further in thought, go to depths that no slimy clutching creature can. So, no he is not a sprite, he's a goblin. And for the whole ghost thing, I mean come on. He's right there, I could see him, I can see him. He's real. There's a goblin outside my door.

That night, as the crickets had began to sing and the air began to thump like a heart beating, I sat on the floor tired of thought. Beaten by the unknown aspects of this whole situation. Maybe if I try and talk to it, I thought, maybe it will respond in a positive way? Maybe it's just lonely and needs some guidance through, what probably is a strange new land for the creature? He probably didn't eat because he was scared. I mean most animals or uh, creatures, are more afraid us than we are of them. Right? So, maybe tomorrow I'll jut my head out the door and talk to it like I'd talk to a dog, you know encourage it. I mean, it can't come inside, but maybe I'll make it more comfortable by being nice to it. Yeah, that's what'll do. I went to sleep right on the floor of my living room.

The next day, although I had remembered my serene, hopeful thoughts about some kind of interaction with the goblin, they came to me as drunk contemplations. My conclusions seemed hazy. I mean what good is it gonna do to talk to the thing? Why the hell would I do that? It's not gonna answer back, it's gonna try and rip my head off. I decided to ignore the goblin. Ignore his presence, ignore the fact that I have no idea why it's here, nor how I'm going to

get it off my front porch, and maybe, just maybe it will go away. Animals have a way of just vanishing sometimes. Right?

But, he didn't he stayed right on the porch. Salivating and clutching. My ignorance turned to worry. The thought of this thing planted on my porch, not moving, and not understanding brought about paranoia. A soft whisper of "*forever...forever...forever*" billowed through the tissue of my mind.

I was also bothered by the fact that I didn't know my limitations. I didn't know if I could get anywhere near the beast. If I could, maybe, shew it away with my hands, or tap it with a broom stick, or kick it, you know to startle it? I didn't know any of this stuff. I was so afraid that trials such as these would lead to severe physical harm. Maybe, I should get some protective armor, you know make some out of...whatever? Or get a weapon that I could really hurt the creature with, like a baseball bat, or a rake (the metal kind), or an axe, or knives (short and long). Then I thought, the sight of such a tool would enrage the goblin, so maybe I'll just try and go outside. Yeah, I'm a big man, I thought. I can take a goblin.

You know it had previously occurred to me to use the back door as a means of escape, but it might have some supernatural sense of awareness that allowed it to pinpoint my exact location at all times? Right?

So, I prepared myself to walk out the front door, thus preparing to come into full contact with the goblin. Here's how I saw it.

I was going to open the door at a rather moderate speed, step out and close the door so he couldn't hop in. Then in an in-between moderate and slow speed slide up to him while keeping a close watch on his movements. I would kick him, not a soccer kick, more of a kick push. And then step off the porch onto the lawn and quickly sprint to the back of the house. This was the plan, now the doing.

I stepped up to the front door, palms clammy and sticky, one trickle of sweat on each temple sliding down in a dramatic race to my chin, armpits breathing a rambunctious fire. I clasped my hands into prayer form, and said a ditty...then I opened the front door.

As I opened the door and the hinges creaked, he immediately jerked his head to the side!!! He shot out a glance that made my bones freeze. I instantly closed the door and ran to the living room. I was stunned, what could I do, obviously he was warning me not to open the door or come outside. But this is my house, this is my front porch.

I sat down. I found myself...my whole body, totally worn out. I couldn't move. Everything felt heavy. Like someone had injected liquid metal into my veins, and as of right now it had become solid. My head was swirling like I was teenager drunk. My eyes felt like jelly, like jelly flesh globbing up and dripping down my cheeks. What had happened? These events, these meanderings,

taking place within a short span of time, time, during the last three days, with the creature on my porch with his foul, I mean, the surprise of discovering an unusual beast on my front porch, combined with figuring out what it was, dipped in the worry of what its intentions were, and finally swallowed by the convolution of inductive reasoning, had made time pass slowly. And now, I was paying the price for his presence, I had become glued to the infinitude of my mind.

Sitting there, hunched over and listless, I looked up from my blank watered down stare, and looked in the mirror on the wall in my hallway. The angle was funny, and only a sliver of my face could be seen. The image made no sense to me, like I had lost contact with the recognized me, I looked foreign. I suddenly picked myself up from my slump, and approached the mirror, scanning, looking at my features and coloration, bone structure and texture. I looked alien...strange and grotesque. What was 5 minutes ago my comfortable safe haven, was now a slimy swamp breeding a putrid smell. My face was not right, my home was not right and...I was not right. I felt the windows to my vessel start to cloud. I could feel the purest human emotion, paranoia, setting in, burrowing a hole in my juicy sponge. It made me question whether or not I had been dumped into some sensory deprivation chamber, letting my mind run wild and creating the goblin. Was it a sprite, was it a ghost? What was I? Then, I looked outside, peeked out the window, to see...to see, if this thing was really...really, if I was really...and I saw it...right there, salivating and clutching. He's real. There's a goblin outside my door.

I had to take myself out of the scene. I had to pull myself out of what seemed to be madness settling into each corner of my head. Waiting for a weak point, at which time the madness would open its flood gates and release a rapidly spreading mist. The mist would turn into a thick fog, light would be absent, oceans would curl, and all would be lost.

I decided to watch some T.V. Yeah, it will be good, I thought. I can get involved in the mundane happenings of our civilization, I will be entertained by simple droning humor; a fictional family will brighten my hopes for what surely is an uncertain future.

It didn't work out. All I could feel was awkward silences, I couldn't really even hear the T.V., I couldn't make out words or tones. What T.V. made me do was think. I thought about my present condition, I thought about the twisting in my stomach, I thought about the strain, the clenching in each heartbeat, I thought about that thing outside my door; what the hell made a goblin perch on my front step?

I'll read a book!! Books make me calm down. The artful rendering of reality and the smooth warmth of nicely placed words will sedate me, hug me and massage my bursting lobes. Romance, War, poorly developed characters,

Philosophy, Comedy, rhetorical questions of god, Happiness, Death, and Social Conditions...Silence. Again my attempts to thwart the enemy's prodding and poking became futile. Suddenly...I felt light. Like my head was a balloon...a quick change of temperature and a weird sensation came over me. My throat suddenly became parched, and a tickle developed, I began coughing. With each cough the feeling became harsher and the sound more robust. Drier and drier it got, and so harder and harder it was to cough. I began heaving like I was collecting particles of hair in my throat for one big slimy hair ball. All the blood in my body ran to my face, I could feel the vessels in my cheeks ready to pop. My limbs seemed to swell and ached with pinching at the joints. I could feel my body draining of all moisture, becoming totally desiccated. I fell to the floor, squirmed into a fetal position and began twitching, furious manipulations and quakes. I thought I would burn a hole in my floor...and then they stopped...I stopped.  
And I slept.

I awoke to find myself on the floor in the living room, with drool seeping down my chin. I felt better, I felt relieved. I stretched myself out on the floor made grumpy "mmm" noises and stupidly gazed at the ceiling, like I was a child who was totally comfortable being mindless. I hadn't forgotten about the goblin, I could feel that he was still out there. But now I knew, not thought, not assumed, knew that he was going to stay, which meant that I was going to stay. I was fine with that. Well, fine, until I find another way to get rid of him.

## Holding It

*Josh Sovell*

I don't know how it happened. It's always been something that I just do; I don't pay that much attention to it. Wherever I am, at a restaurant or a friend's place, even alone at my own home, if there is a knife within reach I'll start fidgeting with it. I've never cut myself, or anything else; it's not about pain. I mostly just turn the handle over and over in my hand, watching how the light falls off the blade.

I think that this attraction all started when I was a kid. I distinctly remember staring at my mother cutting up carrots for my lunch. She would try to get me to go play with my toys or watch cartoons in the other room, but I was mesmerized by the smooth noon light sliding off the blade. It seemed too perfect: how the light entered the kitchen and spotlighted the polished blade and my mother's pale hands.

Whenever I had the chance I asked my mother for a knife: while I was eating my cereal in the morning, when she was cutting up carrots, right before dinner. She wouldn't even set a knife for me at dinner for the longest time; even after my friends all could have them. I think she was concerned about what I would do with it; afraid that I would slice my wrist or carve into the hardwood floors. But I just wanted to hold the knife, to feel it.

Even now I rarely touch the blade. And when I do it is only to lightly run my finger across the grooves. Never hard enough to pierce the skin, but hard enough so you can feel that it could. Like I said it was never about the pain, it's more about having it.

But today, right after I made my lunch, I slid my finger down the grooves and back up. I didn't notice it at first, but a drop of red tainted the burnished knife. I couldn't figure out where the red had come from, seeing how I was cutting up carrots. It wasn't until I looked down that I realized it came from me. I didn't feel it enter me, or maybe I thought it would feel differently, but this was the first time that I had ever been cut.

I stood there with the knife lowered, watching the blood. I had no idea what to do. At first it was just a spot, confined and out of place. I tried to wipe it clean, but then it started to spread. Red coated the blade, giving it a sheen that I had never seen before. The light seemed to swim through the red, and illuminate it.

I couldn't believe that this had actually happened; all I could do was stare at it. Never did I expect to be cut. My hand didn't even feel it, there was just blood. Even after I washed the knife and saw all the red drain, I couldn't be sure about it. I just stood there, holding it.

## Rest

*Josh Sovell*

Penny Mortimer, Penny Mortimer, Penny Mortimer. I am positive she is around here somewhere. I know I came in over by that tree, and walked towards the hill. I was running, so it can't be much farther than this. I think it might be more to the right than this. No, no, it was definitely over there. She has to be around here somewhere. Penny Mortimer, Penny Mortimer, Penny Mortimer.

It is about time that he showed up again. One night he just turns up and gives me this box to look after. If it is important enough to hide with me you'd think he would miss it, but no I stuck with it for four years! Oy! And all he says to me is: "Watch over this for me Penny Mortimer, I'll be back for it soon." At least he has come for it now. I don't know how much longer I could have handled it. All I want is to rest. Besides, who wants to look after someone else's stuff for four years?

Come on, Penny Mortimer where are you? You have to be around here somewhere; I need you to be here. I feel like I am losing my mind. All I want is to rest. The tree, the hill, it has to be right here. No, that's Brian Atwood, not Penny Mortimer. I'm beginning to feel that this whole thing was a bad idea. Andy, are you having any luck over there?

Ted I got no Penny Mortimer over here, just a Richard Brooks, Julie West, Joshua Dallman. No Penny. Are you sure she is over here and that this is the right place? I still can't believe you talked me into this. I am in the middle of a graveyard at 2:47 in the morning trudging through the mud looking for the grave of some dead woman, who I have no connection with what so ever. Because four years ago you hopped the fence, found a fresh grave and buried something with her. Now you don't even remember where her grave is and you refuse to tell me what we are digging up, but you still need my help. Does that about cover it?

Yes Andy. Just keep looking, it'll mean nothing to you anyways. I didn't bury gold or jewels or anything that exciting. It's just something that I couldn't deal with at the time; I needed to get rid of it. But I want it back now.

Fine, fine, fine. But I am not staying out here all night. I have to go to work in the morning, and I am already going to be out of it. Like most sane people, I do need sleep. Besides I barely have feeling in my toes anymore. I am

too good of a friend to you sometimes, this better be worth my time. All I want is to rest. If the only thing we get out of this is a wasted night of sleep I am going to be mad. Is there anything we should be looking for besides the hill and the tree, like a big Jesus or crazy sculpture thing?

They're two feet from me and they can't even find me. No wonder it took him four years to come for it. He probably couldn't remember what cemetery he left it in. This is no good Jewish boy, like my Barry. This joker only picked my grave because it was fresh and easy to dig. Some flowers now and then would have been a nice thank you. And he would have known exactly where my grave was. But he just disturbs my grave to give me this box.

Her's was nothing like that, just a simple metal grave marker. Just keep looking at the names. I am sure it is around here; it has to be. Penny Mortimer, Penny Mortimer, Penny Mortimer. Wait. It's over here! I found it! I found Penny Mortimer! I knew it was over here. Hurry up and give me the shovel, this wouldn't look too good if the cops showed up.

Thank God, we are almost out of here. I don't know how much longer I could have handled this. You know this is the last time that you talk me into anything. I have followed you into too many situations that I never needed to be in. I thought the night of the meteor shower and that convoy of hippies was bad enough, but you reached a new low tonight. 'Just come and help me find this box I buried'... there was no mention of a graveyard. Here, let me do it, at your rate we will be sleeping in a jail cell tonight.

All I wanted was to rest in peace, which is really all they promise, but this guy decides that I don't get that luxury. He disturbs me not even a day after I get laid to rest. I don't know why he buried this in the first place. Then he waits four years and comes to do it all again, with a friend! Oy! At least I get rid of this joker and his box tonight.

Why did you have to bury it so deep? I thought this would be like a foot and half, two feet deep, not all the way to the coffin. What were you smoking that night? Cause it had to be some good stuff to get you to bury something here and this deep. Hold on, I think I just hit something. Let's hope it's not Penny Mortimer. Doesn't look like it. I assume this box is what we are looking for.

Here, hand it to me, let me see it. That's it! I don't know how much longer I could have handled it without this. It's in great shape, too. Better

than I imagined it would be. I need to remember this trick for the future. Give me the shovel, too; I'll finish up.

I hope he forgets where I am again, so he cannot give me any more crap to look after. This was enough for all eternity I'll be grateful if I never have to think of him again. Just rebury me and leave me be. No flowers, no nothing, I'm done.

I'm done with this. And I miss having feeling in my toes. It doesn't have to be perfect; the hole just needs to be filled. I can still grab a couple of hours of sleep before work if we leave now.

Fine, fine, fine. Just let me smooth it over and I'll be done.

Thank you, Penny Mortimer.

## Elbow Dimples and Other Factors of Glamour

Cassie Wright

It was reading *Anne of Green Gables* that finally brought it to my attention. After a particular passage, I crept into my mamma's dressing room where she kept her full-length mirror, and after unbuttoning my blue long-sleeve blouse, I dropped it on the floor. Then, in my undershirt, I turned around and examined my left elbow in the mirror. First I bent it, then I unbent it, and then I turned it at every angle I could muster. Finally, I let my arm drop, and didn't even bother with the other arm. I was already melanchollier than any melon I knew. I had discovered the truth and there was no turning back. My arms were knobby sticks. Just like Anne, I had no elbow dimples to speak of.

Of course I had always known I was skinny, I suppose. From the day I was born, Daddy called me his little flapper. I had always thought it was because I was born in the year 1926 and wore my blonde hair smartly bobbed. Now, ten years later, I was starting to realize his real reasoning. My silhouette was just like the boyish silhouette that used to be popular. Namely, I was a twig.

I brought this to Daddy's attention, and he said, "Princess Jocelyn, the year you were born, your mamma would have given anything to have your figure." Whenever Daddy calls me Princess Jocelyn, it makes me feel prettier than Carole Lombard, who I just saw at the pictures in "The Princess Comes Across" and Shirley Temple, whose movies I don't see.

Shirley Temple is my arch nemesis. These may seem like dark words for a girl my age with my upbringing, but really, she is. My claim to fame, and the reason Daddy calls me Princess, is I beat her in the Little Miss Princess of the Park Pageant when I was 4 years old and she was 2. I think she would've won, (even then her talent was probably suffocating, I mean spellbinding) except the age requirement was 3 to 5 years, so she lost on default. It makes me feel good when I look back on this, until I remember that her mamma was so mad that she dragged Shirley to Hollywood. A year later she was in her first picture, and I was in kindergarten. What a change of events! I guess you could say I encouraged Shirley Temple to try Show Biz.

Of course Shirley Temple has dimples everywhere, which is another reason to dislike her. If I had as many dimples as she does, I'd feel beautiful all the time, instead of just when Daddy called me Princess Jocelyn.

I asked Mamma why the Little Miss Princess of the Park Pageant was my first and only beauty pageant I entered. I had won, after all, and looking back, I know we could've used the prize money. "Well," Mamma said, "You didn't like everyone looking at you all the time." You see what I mean? Even

then I must have been aware deep down, that I was a skinny twig with knobby stick arms. When she told me that it was my vanity that kept me from entering any more prize-winning pageants, I felt terrible. To think that because I had so much pride at the age of four, we couldn't afford to buy more than two pairs of shoes per person each year! To put it simply, a deep heart-wrenching guilt took over the very core of my being. And so I resolved to put aside the vain monster in me and see about becoming a star, like I could have all those years ago.

I already had a bit of experience with Show Business, seeing as how I went to see the pictures every week, at least once, sometimes twice. And the key to being a success at anything, is of course being glamorous. And the only way to become glamorous is to have a manager to make you glamorous.

Who was my manager going to be? Well, Daddy was out because he thought flappers were still in style. Mamma was out because she thought little girls didn't have to be in style. Susan, next door, was out because even though she's at the sophisticated age of thirteen, she's dowdier than a nun who's on vacation. My only choice was Timmy, who lived on the other side of Susan. He and I often went to the pictures together because we both got our allowance on Thursday morning. He was the only person who knew as much as I did about Shirley Temple and all the other glamorous people.

The thing about Timmy is his Mamma subscribes to every magazine you can imagine. When I met up with him that day, he was sitting on his front porch reading the latest issue of *The Saturday Evening Post* and gnawing on a Hershey's bar.

"Does your Mamma mind that you're reading her magazine?" I asked him in my haughty, I'm-better-than-you voice that I only save for him. Our friendship could be considered charity on my part, though I suppose at this point in my life I did need Timmy's help, so I was being overly polite to him.

"Hi, Josie Lynn," he answered, setting the magazine aside. "She don't mind if you don't tell her." Now that I had his attention, it was time for me to go in for the kill. The thing about catch phrases like that is you don't mean it. But what I said next, I did mean.

"How would you like to be my manager?" I asked him, tossing my hair in my best Greta Garbo maneuver. Timmy loved Greta, even if she was too old for him. In fact, a lot of the women Timmy loved were too old for him. I think it was the only thing stopping him in life.

"Manager for what?" he asked, his eyes narrowing slightly. I knew that look, of course. It was his I'm-not-convinced-that-you're-sane look. But I could change that. So I explained to him what I've spent this whole time explaining to you.

"Well, I am going to become a star, and I need a manager to make me glamorous," I said, staring at him pointedly.

“You’re kidding.” To be honest, I thought he knew me well enough to know that I wasn’t kidding, but drastic times call for desperate measures.

“No I’m not, Timothy Smith,” I said through teeth clenched so tight, I almost swallowed my chewing gum. Thank goodness I didn’t because choking would have been very unglamorous. Then, I did an about-face. “Everyone knows you know more about glamorous women than any other kid on the block. Please, Timmy? I think if anyone can make me a star, you can.” I gave him a smile sweet as saccharin, sweeter than Shirley Temple in “Baby, Take a Bow.”

It was a bout between feminine allure and masculine endurance. But I knew who would win the match. I knew going in. No male -not even a ten-year-old in knickerbockers with a cowlick who reads his mother’s *Harper’s Bazaar*- can endure the batting eyelashes of a female -especially from a ten-year-old in gingham.

I was aware that my wrath with Timmy had probably caused my cheeks to flush and my lips to pout, but everyone knows from the movies that the only thing prettier than a pretty girl is a pretty girl who’s angry! And so it was at this point in the story that I was completely convinced that the boy in front of me would do nothing but my every last bidding.

He stood up from the porch, seemingly aware that his was an important task, and slowly began to circle around me, to assess the probability of my becoming a star. He made little noises in his throat -like the big producers do, I’m sure- only I wasn’t sure if they were noises of approval or disapproval. Finally, his procession ended and he stopped to face me. I lowered my head slightly to look into his eyes.

“Well, Josie Lynn,” he said. “With those lips and eyelashes, you have a face made for close-ups. Even Shirley Temple’s eyelashes aren’t as lavish. But-”

Now it was my turn to make a sound in my throat, halfway between a choke and a sob.

“But, you’ll never make it in anything other than close-ups. You’ve no dimples to speak of, not even on your elbows. So if you’ll excuse me...” I watched him turn and walk up the porch steps and towards his front door. Then stopping, he turned his head over his shoulder and called back to me, “Feel free to finish my chocolate. Maybe it’ll add some meat to your bones.”

And so he left me, slamming the screen door behind him in the act of arrogance that all big directors probably feel when they’ve had the pleasure of turning down a particularly pretty aspiring. I sat down on his porch, glancing to the cover of *Saturday Evening Post*. At least Norman Rockwell didn’t draw Shirley Temple.

After a sigh, I picked up Timmy’s leftover Hershey bar and nibbled the corner. The first swallow was hard. Then I bit into it with a bit more gusto.

Josie Lynn or Princess Jocelyn? I was the same girl of course. But whether I subscribed to the fate of being a twig, or tried to mold divine Providence, it was completely up to me. And I was going to choose molding divine Providence, one candy bar at a time.

## Forty Bucks

Eric Mattys

“You ever smell yer own farts? Those kind of people who’re always interested in bein’ polite’ll tell ya it’s disgusting, but I like it. I’m proud of it. Gotta be proud of somethin’ right? Uheh. If I let one go I’ll tell ya, ‘Smell what I did!’ I don’t *give a fuck*. That’s been my sayin’ ever since I moved to Texas. I see a girl with big tiddies, I’m gonna go talk to her. I don’t *give a fuck*. I’m tellin’ ya man. That’s the way ya gotta be when it comes to the ladies. But I’ve learned man. As a bouncer ya get to see it all, and ya gotta learn. Ya can’t just go up to a well-formed woman mumblin’ ‘boobies, boobies, boobies.’ That does *not* work. It *does not* work. When ya approach a woman ya have to talk to her knowin yer makinanass outta yerself. Once ya do that yer as free as a bird. Here’s what I do when I’m not on the job. First, ya gotta choose a girl who’s perceptive... ahh I mean receptive. Uheh. You don’t really want her too receptive. Uheh. Use your eyes. If she’s with friends you probably won’t be goin’ home with her that night unless they’re *your* friends or if you’ve got friends for her friends. If she’s by herself there’s probably a reason and it’s your job to find out. So, ya got a girl picked out, right? Now here’s what ya do. Give her the cheesiest, lamest line you can. The one I like ta use is ‘Was yer daddy a thief because somebody stole the stars outta the sky and put’em in yer eyes.’

Now, the key is not to say it with any kind of seriousness. As ya say it just smile real big and dumb. If she giggles then you introduce yerself and ask if you can buy her a drink and then its all down hill from there. If she’s not interested then find a different girl.”

Q:

“No man. It doesn’t matter if she’s smart or not or what kind of girl she is. That’s why ya use a cheesy line so that she knows yer not in the game for anything serious. You gotta get yer priorities straight before you start the night. Ya know? Yer not gittin’ hitched to this girl, yer just tryin’ t’have a good time. Ya can’t expect much either. Ya take a girl home from a bar the odds are she’s done the same thing before with somebody else.”

Q.

“Well you keep yer method I’ll keep mine. Did I tell you I got shot in the face?”

Q?!

“Yeah. It kinda looks more like a pimple now that it’s healed up for the last few months. It came through right here by my cheek, grazed my gumline and came out the other side. I was pretty lucky. It could’a been a whole lot worse.”

Q!?

“Forty bucks. This girl was droppin’ me off at my apartment after a night at the bar, and she drives this real nice firebird, all black, chrome rims. Real nice. I

guess too nice. Well, I'm gittin' out of the car and three black guys come up to me wavin' these freakin' hand cannons in my face. Tellin' us ta get outta the car. I said, 'I'm already out. Don't shoot me.' The girl gets outta her car all scared and the three of them pile into the firebird. I was thinkin' that's that. I got my cell phone out to call the cops, but I noticed something odd about the way the car was pullin' away. It was awfully jerky. Next thing I know the car stalls and the three of them hop back out the car guns once again flailin' around like a bunch of monkeys. They couldn't drive a stick shift. It's kinda funny thinkin' about it now, but I was really fuckin' scared then. I put my hands up with my cell phone in my hand. One of them was yellin', 'Gimme yo' money! Take it outta yo' wallet and throw it on the ground.' I did exactly as he asked. All I had was forty bucks. I even threw down my wallet, but for some reason I was still holdin' my cell phone. They grabbed the money and they were backing away still with the guns pointed at us. I'm so nervous my hands are all jittery. I musta pushed one of the buttons on the phone accidentally because the phone lit up. One of'em saw it an' he was walkin' right at me real fast and I'm looking right down the barrel of a .45. I'm pleadin' with him more than I want to admit. 'Please don't shoot me! Please!' All he says is 'You fuckin' idiot,' just under his breath as if I already didn't exist. As sure as I am that God doesn't mingle in the happenings of people, I sure as hell was prayin' right then. He pulled the trigger. There was a flash. I threw my head away to try and dodge it. I almost did. He couldn't a'been more than four feet away. I don't know how he didn't put that bullet deep in my brain. Makes me think I must still have some reason for bein' around ya know? Maybe God does get involved sometimes or maybe I just got good reflexes... I spent a lotta' time thinkin' about it... All that...takin' a life... for what? ... fuckin' nigger."

Q.

"I know man. You don't like even hearin' that word, but I'm tellin' ya, things are different down in Texas. It ain't the happy suburbs down in Galveston and it ain't some hippy school where everybody gets along. I'd never think of sayin' that word back home, but things are different now. I was scared, man. Anytime I even saw a black person after I got shot I would get all jumpy. I still get really scared. I mean the apartments where I live are really nice, but just across the street are the projects, and these aren't your typical projects. These have been here for ages. You've got third and fourth generation kids that all they've known is life in the projects. I'm afraid to get gas after dark. I tutor this little black kid that's from these projects. He wants to be a runningback. It's all he talks about. I care about him you know. I know he's not a bad kid. But I didn't even want to see him after I got shot. I'm tellin' you there ain't many options besides crime for these kids from the projects."

Q.

“I’m not giving up. I’m just not takin’ any more chances.”

Q...?

“It’s not just economic background. In Galveston, yer race is yer background. If yer rich yer white. If yer poor yer black. Look. You know I’m not a real racist. I’m just sayin’ things are different down there. And after gittin’ shot in the face I can say I understand a little more than you about racism.”

Q?

“No man. I’d tell you if I farted. I’d be like, ‘Smell what I did!’”

Adam E. Ekbom

# Nevermore

## Acclaim for Adam Ekbohm's *Nevermore*

"[Ekbohm] is the truest storytellers of the next . . . generation."

- *Los Angeles Times Book Review*

"*Nevermore* is the first true love story of the twenty-first century."

- *Vanity Fair*

"What a colossal act of imagination, sexuality, and death"

- *The New York Times Book Review*

"Poetic verse far surpassing Homer's *Odyssey* or even Virgil."

- John Updike (in *Bookforum*)

"Amazing . . . a great read . . . a modern classic."

- Salon.com

"Ekbohm's ambitious debut will leave you breathless."

- *The Times* (London)

"*Nevermore* will find its way into the hearts and minds of America. We see the new literary horizon and its name is Adam Ekbohm!"

- *The Washington Post*

PICADOR  
FARRAR, STRAUS AND GIROUX  
NEW YORK

NEVERMORE. Copyright © 1994 by Adam Ekbom. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews. For information, address Picador, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010.

www.picadorusa.com

Picador® is a U.S. registered trademark and is used by Farrar, Straus and Giroux under license from Pan Books Limited.

For information on Picador Reading Group Guides, as well as ordering, please contact the Trade Marketing department at St. Martin's Press.

Phone: 1-800-221-7945 extension 763

Fax: 212-677-7456

E-mail: trademarketing@stmartin.com

Portions of this novel appeared, in different form in *The New Yorker*.

Designed by Jonathan D. Lippincott

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ekbom, Adam

Nevermore / Adam E. Ekbom

p. cm.

ISBN 0-982-43215-6

1. Norwegian Americans-Fiction. 2. Los Angeles (Calif.)-Fiction 3. Murder and Suicide-Fiction 4. Urban life-Fiction. I. Title.

PS355.U4 M53 2004

814'.53-dc24

2002019921

First published in the United States by Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Published simultaneously in Canada by Alfred A. Knopf Canada, a division of Random House of Canada Limited, Toronto

First Picador Edition: November 2003

Second Picador edition: October 2004

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For my parents,  
who have put up with me all these years.

The author would like to thank the Pulitzer Prize Awards, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Library of Congress, the Los Angeles Urban Studies Grant, Whittier College, Ralph E. Peters, PhD, Teofilo Gauiter, M.D., Elizabeth Shutter, editor for Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Amanda Vines and Joseph Lester, advanced readers of the work.

#### AUTHORS NOTE

It amazes me that the journey that I started four years ago would end with a Pulitzer Prize winning novel. A novel you are holding right now. There are so many people who helped me on my way to greatness, they know who they are. Who knew noir fiction was still in! Anyway I hope you enjoy *Nevermore* as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Adam E. Ekbohm  
Los Angeles, September 2003

Adam Ekbon was born and raised in Scottsdale, Arizona. He is currently studying for a degree in independent studies at Whittier College in California. This is his first novel. *Nevermore* has won the Pulitzer Prize as well as other scholarships and awards. Adam Ekbon currently lives in Los Angeles, but hopes, someday, to not live in Los Angeles.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acclaim for Adam Ekbon's <i>Nevermore</i>	i.
Title page	ii.
Copyright information	iii.
Dedication	iv.
Authors Note and biographic information	v.
Table of Contents	vi.
Quotation	vii.
Chapter 1: The Tea Party	1.
Chapter 2: After the Party	2.
Chapter 3: Samantha's Apartment	3.
Chapter 4: Sal's Dinner	4.
Chapter 5: A Murder and Two Suicides	5.
Chapter 6: The Funeral	6.

*Here should be a picture of my favorite apple.  
It is also a nude & bottle.  
It is also a landscape.  
There are no such things as still lifes.  
- Erica Jong*

## CHAPTER 1: THE TEA PARTY

Reader's Instructions:

Samantha is a beautiful red head who often talks about philosophy and minimalist paintings. She has a beautiful lazy eye.

Jonathan is in love with Samantha but due to his injured leg and shyness, he cannot convey his love. He normally spends nights drinking alone.

Samantha and Jonathan, along with many other characters are at a tea party at Sir. Wingate's estate. Using these character descriptions create a dialogue between Samantha and Jonathan. The conversation continues until the butler accidentally spills tea onto the lap of Jonathan's pants, Samantha says something sexual, and Jonathan blushes.

## CHAPTER 2: AFTER THE PARTY

Reader's Instructions:

Create a conversation between Jonathan and Samantha as they leave the party together across the garden path. The garden is (a. Japanese Zen, b. English countryside, or c. is not a garden at all but a dingy urban alleyway.) Please Choose. They seem to laugh a lot and they kiss. The kiss is touching. Continue to create dialogue that causes them to go to Samantha's apartment. A Mysterious Man, who looks a lot like the Butler who spilled the tea, observes Jonathan and Samantha as they enter the apartment building.

## CHAPTER 3: SAMANTHA'S APARTMENT

### Reader's Instructions:

Create a sexual act for Jonathan and Samantha to do. Afterwards Jonathan's injured leg feels worse and Samantha now has to buy more whipped cream at the market. They make casual small talk, insert dialogue here. They get dressed, in each other's clothes and then they changed back. They agree to continue this relationship but not to tell anyone, especially Christopher, Samantha's husband and Jonathan's best friend. As Jonathan leaves the apartment building the Mysterious Man who is at a sidewalk café drinking a tall cappuccino with skim milk observes him.

## CHAPTER 4: SAL'S DINNER

Reader's Instructions:

Christopher is a young advertising executive in his mid thirties. He always has something funny to say. His right pinkie finger was cut off in a \_\_\_\_\_ accident when he was eight.

Christopher and Jonathan meet at Sal's Dinner to have lunch together. With his injured leg Jonathan has difficulty sitting down. Christopher says something funny. They chat about the weather and what the world would be like if cats chased dogs. Their coffee comes, Christopher, with his missing finger, has difficulty grasping the coffee cup. It spills, Christopher says something funny. The coffee spill is in the shape of (a. Richard Nixon's silhouette, b. a funny clown and a kitten, c. Both.) Continue with dialogue. Christopher leaves the dinner outraged at what Jonathan had just told him. The Mysterious Man watches the whole scene unfold from his window seat. He pays the check with a ten-dollar bill, receives \$5. \_\_\_\_ in change, and leaves the dinner. Jonathan begins to cry into his French fries which are in the steak house style.

## CHAPTER 5: A MURDER AND TWO SUICIDES

### Reader's Instructions:

Jonathan returns to Samantha's apartment but is too late. There is a lot of screaming as Christopher points a gun at Jonathan. Jonathan begs for his life, [what would you say in such a situation], and tries to leave but is gunned down by Christopher near the kitchen, which is in the Country French style. Shocked by what he has done Christopher says something funny then shoots himself in (a. the head, b. the heart, c. the head and the heart, d. in the foot). Samantha, horrified by what has happened, reaches for the (a. blue, b. orange, c. choose another color) pills in her bedside table, ingests the tablets and dies. The Mysterious Man is mysteriously absent.

## CHAPTER 6: THE FUNERAL

Reader's Instructions:

For reasons of economy Jonathan's, Samantha's, and Christopher's funerals occur at the same church at the same time. The funeral is well attended. The Priest's eulogy is very moving. The Priest says an off color joke about a Japanese Golfer, a Priest, and a Rabbi who are (a. drunk on a Tuesday, b. naked on a Friday, or c. engulfed in flames bi-weekly.) The audience responds to the joke with (a. applause, b. silence, c. does it really matter?) The Mysterious Man leaves his pew before the priest has finished. He takes the first train out of Los Angeles. On the train he speaks the horrible secret that he knows. As he gazes out the window a tear falls down his mysterious cheek.

THE END

If you would like to continue the journey of the Mysterious Man please do so in box provided.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying most of the page below the text. It is intended for the user to write their response to the prompt above.

# Desperate Tactics of a Ten Year Old Chimney Sweep

Katie Hunter

Fifth grade brought not only a new school but one of the worst days I've experienced in my ten years of existence~ even worse than the day my guinea pig got eaten by the cat. I was invited to play with my new friends at Lizzie's house one afternoon last month. Her mom was at work, so in her place was some fifteen year old lazy bum who only wanted to watch stupid soap operas that we weren't supposed to see. I watched a soap opera once and all it seemed to be was a bunch of stupid grown-ups either crying or kissing a lot. I don't get what the big deal is with those shows; I don't like it when grown-ups cry and kissing is icky. So anyways, the babysitter was planted on the couch like the sweet potatoes my Grams lumps onto our plates at Thanksgiving, which meant the three of us had free range of the house.

Here's when it all started to go wrong. Colleen, like always, decided she was hungry so we poked around the kitchen trying to find something good to eat. There was just health food which none of us wanted to touch, but then Lizzie remembered where her mom hid the secret chocolate stash. She walked into the pantry, climbed up on the washer, reached up onto the top shelf, pulled down a box of laundry detergent, and opened the lid to reveal mounds of chocolate. I think if I were to have a secret stash of something, it wouldn't be chocolate, it would be something way more exciting, something that I'm never allowed to have, something like pixie sticks, or Cookie Crisp, or Willy Wonka's Everlasting Gobstoppers.

Now I'd been watching some cooking show with my mom the week before and they'd been teaching us how to make chocolate-covered leaves. It seemed easy enough, so I piped up, "Hey guys, I've got a great idea!" I made sure to pause and see that they were listening, after all, there's nothing worse than coming up with a really cool idea and no one's there to listen to it! My parents never listen to my cool ideas and they tell me that my little sister isn't allowed to listen to my ideas anymore. How was I supposed to know that the finger paint wouldn't come off the wall? It's ok though, little sisters are lame anyways. I continued, "We should make chocolate-leaves!" It was brilliant. I smiled back at them, waiting eagerly for them to share in my excitement. They didn't seem too delighted yet, so I decided to tell them how *easy* it would be. "Listen, all you have to do is melt some chocolate, then dip a leaf in the hot liquid, and *then* after letting it cool for a few moments, you peel the chocolate off and Voila, a perfect afternoon treat!" I was certain they'd be impressed, but they still didn't seem too excited. Finally, after they looked at each other and did that best friend talking-without-speaking thing that I hate because I don't

have a best friend to share secret looks with, Lizzie shrugged her shoulders and said, "Well, I guess we can give it a try, we've got nothing better to do."

Collecting the leaves was the easy part, we just plucked them from the Camilla Bushes in back, but when it came time to figuring out how to melt the chocolate we were at a bit of a loss. First we thought about using the stove, but since none of us are allowed to use one we decided the microwave was the next best thing. I thought I remembered something about the chocolate needing ten minutes to cook, so we set the clock, grabbed a couple of Diet Rites and went to Lizzie's room to wait for the buzzer.

I think remember someone telling me once that if you drop a soda on the ground, you're supposed to wait a few minutes before you open it. Mom's always telling me to take people's advice, only it's hard to remember all the advice that people try to give me sometimes. We were climbing up onto Lizzie's top bunk when my soda fell. I hopped down to get it and made my way back up the ladder. The girls had already popped open their sodas, so without thinking I snapped the lid back. I didn't know soda could shoot up that high! I also didn't realize just how much liquid is in one of those little cans. I guess that's why I always have to pee so much right after I drink one. Colleen and I had to borrow two of Lizzie's shirts.

But that was only the first shirt I had to borrow because there was also the lemon fiasco, which all started because of a tiny dead squirrel that I like to call Mr. Fluffers. I have always wanted this stuffed squirrel that sits on the top shelf at the toy store named Mr. Fluffers, but people always seem to buy me dolls instead of stuffed squirrels. Is it because stuffed squirrels come from dead animals? I wonder.

People sometimes tell me I'm a squirrel, I should make them call me Mrs. Fluffers, especially after the new friend I made. You see, I thought it would be a funny joke to pick up the dead squirrel I'd seen earlier lying in the middle of the road. I picked up my furry friend by the tail and ran back up the driveway. Just as I was opening my mouth to recite some road kill joke I'd read about the chicken that didn't quite cross the road, Colleen and Lizzie saw Mr. Fluffers in my hand and started shrieking. By now I thought it would be really funny if I charged them with it. They didn't think so. They just got real mad, like the time my dad caught me trying to make my own candles by burning a box crayolas. Only instead of a spanking, Colleen and Lizzie started throwing lemons at me. I think I preferred the spanking. Lizzie threw one that hit me smack on the forehead and burst open, spraying lemon juice in my eyes and hair, causing me to drop the squirrel. I never knew a girl could throw so hard. I know I sure can't because I'm always picked last for the team in PE.

Only I wasn't thinking about PE at this point because the lemon juice was really starting to sting my eyes and the more I tried to wipe it off, the more I rubbed it in. Another lemon smacked my shoulder. Colleen threw it. I

don't think I would have gone after her with the baseball bat if she hadn't thrown a third lemon that hit me hard in the stomach. I didn't think, well, I did think, just not the right thoughts. I saw the bat lying on the grass next to me and next thing I knew I'd whacked Colleen right smack on the butt. Colleen and Lizzie glared at me, and the like Mr. Fluffers moments before, I let the bat fall from my hands. They were so mad at me, even madder than when I had burnt the chocolate chips!

So yeah, about those chocolate-leaves. We'd changed into clean shirts because ours looked like my sister's when she puked all over it last month when I got her taste my potion I'd made, at least this time it was just soda on the shirts. It was then we heard the timer go off. But something didn't smell right and when we opened the microwave a cloud of steam rose from the black, hardened mess that was supposed to be our nicely melted chocolate. We ate apples after all. I guess maybe next time I watch the Cooking Channel I'd better write down the recipe. I wrote down a recipe for fresh squeezed lemonade this summer, but I don't think I'll be wanting to go near any lemons for a while! But I like lemonade, so maybe in a little while I can drink some, just not today.

But I don't like roller-skating. I've never liked roller-skating, especially after Lizzie's house, so it's really alright by me if I never see roller skates again! Since the girls really wanted to roller skate, I decided it would be better if I kept my mouth shut and didn't tell them I'd never skated before. Lizzie's garage is like Ariel's cave of treasures in *The Little Mermaid*. It's stocked with everything imaginable, so we even managed to find three pairs of roller skates that fit us all pretty well. Lizzie's driveway is one steep hill, and the only way down is to roll. The two girls took off down the hill and raced back up again before I'd mustered up the courage to even stand up. They dragged me to my feet and started off down the hill once more. I closed my eyes and pushed off. Half way down the hill I opened my eyes, only to realize I was headed straight towards Colleen and Lizzie and I had no idea how to stop. I screamed and squeezed my eyes shut, praying for a miracle. I guess it was a miracle none of us broke a bone. We just landed in one great heap at the bottom of the drive, kind of like the guys my dad likes to watch playing football on TV only I think it hurt more because we weren't wearing any of their big helmets and pads. Besides, those guys are fat, so they have a little extra cushion to fall on, I sure don't, I'm all skin and bones, according to my Doctor. In soccer they don't wear pads, but I can't really play soccer either, because during P.E. I usually pick dandelions instead of pay attention.

In the backyard we played around on the rusty swing set for a while, but then decided that was kid stuff and we should find something better to do. It was then Lizzie brought out her brand new black and pink soccer ball. We

were passing it back and forth on the patio next to the house when disaster struck once more. Colleen passed the ball to me and for some reason, I decided to kick it as hard as I could. I made contact and the ball flew from my foot towards the patio chimney like David's rock flew from his slingshot towards Goliath's head. Ha! My teachers can never say I don't pay attention during Sunday school, I remembered David and Goliath! Well, honestly, I only remembered them because there's a picture of them on the wall in the Sunday school room and I always look at that when the teacher's going on about some Bible people that were dead even before my Grams was born. We all watched as the ball landed squarely in the chimney. I guess it was the last straw. David became a hero, I became a loser~ again. The rest of the week I sat by myself at lunch.

After a week of being resigned to loner duty during lunch and *both* recesses, it was finally the weekend. Only Saturday was Lizzie's birthday, and since my mom had RSVP'd before the playtime catastrophe, I had to go. When I arrived, the party was already bad news because Lizzie had invited the Hamlettes, the fifth grade's most popular foursome who wanted only to play with the new soccer ball now firmly lodged in the chimney. Without a thought for my own reputation, I scaled the patio wall, hoisted my scrawny self up onto the chimney and lowered myself down. By now the party had moved from the rusty swing-set to the patio and all eyes were frozen on me. With my feet, I somehow managed to nudge the ball up around my knees then carefully brace myself against the brick walls to reach down and grab it. Triumphant, I threw the ball to the crowd below and then made the slow ascent up the chimney then back down its side the ground. Colleen and Lizzie were beaming as the Hamlets gathered round me to ask how I had done it. I shrugged my shoulders and told them it was nothing, while secretly I wondered how Santa Claus made it down so many chimneys, and with all those presents! Moments later once the crowd around me had thinned a little, Lizzie cut the first slice of birthday cake for me as a peace offering. I grinned and walked towards it with my hand outstretched. I really wish I'd seen the chair leg in front of me, because as I neared Lizzie, my foot caught and I went flying, knocking the legs out from under myself and the cardboard table supporting the cake, punch and presents. In slow motion I watched everything fly into the air and hover there a minute like flying saucers before it all came crashing down on top of me, Lizzie, Colleen and the Hamlets. My shining moment in the spotlight had come to an abrupt end.

# Practically Perfect

Jessica Stowell

If Bert forgets again I'm just going to die.

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

Last week I waited in an absolutely *torrential* downpour and my umbrella was chattering on and on about the horrible weather and the dreadful person who subjugated him to be outside of the house on such a nightmare of a day. I had to hit the thing to make it shut up. I mean, so what if I'm a little snappier than usual? I'm all out and we're going kite flying after tea today. Bert better get here soon. I do so much I *deserve* that spoonful of sugar.

They think their kids are so damned cute: Jane with her little braids and Michael with this ruddy little face.

"Take them here."

"Take them there."

"Keep them clean."

"Make them be good."

Sure, sure Mrs. Banks: your precious kiddies are in good hands.

Does she actually think that I *like* being run ragged every day? The life of a nanny is no dance in the park. I have to be creative, energetic, and positive at every moment. Honestly, who is naturally that *positive* all the time? Lady, sometimes you just have to let a little bit of the negativity in your life shine through!

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

Even my meditation words aren't calming me down today.

Okay Mrs. Banks. You want kids so that your life will look complete. From the outside of those sparkling windows you've got a happy family; so happy the neighbors are jealous of your big house and your big smiles. But then what happens? You and your husband decide that, *nah*; kids aren't all they're cracked up to be. That's where I come in. Does anyone in this rainy hellhole see what a dysfunctional family I deal with?

Yes ma'am, those precious little ones are my top priority. I'm the perfect nanny. Well, practically perfect anyway.

Last week the Banks were really nagging their offspring to clean their toys up in their room. It was an absolute disaster. Kids are messy little buggers. Well, I hate to see people do unnecessary work, so I showed Jane and Michael the easy way to clean. I had never given them any of my stuff before,

so I wasn't really sure how they would react to it. Luckily, they really liked it. We sang, "a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down" and cleaned. With all that excitement, it didn't take long for them to finish the room, so I took them over to the admiral's house for a visit. We had a lovely tea party on the ceiling. Ever since then I started giving Jane and Michael some of my stuff every time I take them out. It makes the days bearable.

After Bert gets here I'm going to take the kids for a walk in the park. Maybe we'll take a stroll though some of Bert's chalk drawings before we go kite flying. We'll pick one with a festival in it; that way the little ones can run ahead and play and Bert and I can take our time and do some playing of our own. Just thinking about it makes me excited. *Where is he?*

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

## Excerpt From:

*Greg Bone*

Papers of His Excellency  
Nicolai Bennictio III, Duke of Arma  
Ambassador to the Blackwater Nation  
On the behest of King Arabus Lalup IV  
Southern Kingdom

March 20, 1877 AF

I have traveled to Mount Saint James. It was more of a trivial thing. That was all.

The Blackwater Nation may be civilized in the face of the other powers of the globe, but here, in the shadow of Mount Saint James, it is not. Everything seems to be under the shadow of the Mount Saint James. Gore crows are the size of a carriage. Giant wolves run through the woods, about the size of an Ajocki foal, and the eyes of He Who Shall Not Be Named.

It is wild here. My guides outright refused to venture a league within the mount, citing the 'creep' of He Who Shall Not Be Named. In lieu of such visitation, my guides did point out a glowing light on the top of the mount, forever glowing during the night and always going out at sunrise.

I have noticed that all the trees are either willows or are bent away from the mount. You can certainly see the boundaries between what is near the mount and away. There is no name for that land—it is usually told through the behaviors of the locals, which range from the nervous to outright fear in the discoloration of the face.

The locals have no explanation of who built the strange building on Mount Saint James. During the daylight I was able to spot several features of the building through my spy glass. It is built as a hall but in the fashion of the Northwest, with high walls, small narrow windows that curve on the top, and a high tower in the rear. There is some growth near the walls, but the plants seem sickly and are reduced to bare stems.

I know this may sound trivial, but I have seemed to acquire a rash on my right hand. I do not know how or why it came about. It has been bothering me ever since the trip to that area. My fellow companions have acquired coughs—sinuses—but we did boil our water before we drank, so I see no reason why we have these symptoms...

# A Strange Bird

*Justin D'Angona*

He fell so gracefully. He did not wheel his arms wildly, or scrunch his eyes up against the wind as it rushed by, and he rushed closer to the canvas. His eyes were wide open. He was still and composed in flight, but as the ground sped closer, the air tore harder against his sides and he broke form. However, it didn't matter. His masterpiece would soon lie below, one hundred and seventy pounds of blood and sweat and tears painted on pavement, a work of genius he would never see.

Down below, a young boy sat cross-legged on the sooty sidewalk playing with trampled litter while his mother waited in line to use the ATM machine across the street. A wind blew by and scattered the flattened cigarette filters he had spent the last five minutes trying absently to stack into something like a Lincoln Log cabin, but he managed to grab one of the butts before they all scuttled off the street into the rusty grates of the drainage ditch. He contemplated it for a second before flicking it into the grate with the rest. Then, looking up, he saw what he thought was a bird. It was a very large bird and not like any other he had seen before. He wondered if he was the first person to see this new bird, and if he were, would he be in the papers and would Mrs. Crenderson read his name in class and would she tell all the other children about his discovery, and if she did, what would they think?

Above the ground, time began to expand. A moment became an hour, then a month, then a year, exploding exponentially into infinity. To the strange bird every second of this infinity felt better than the last. With every inch he sped closer to the ground he felt more alive, which he had never felt before. The instant before his final brushstroke he felt more alive than he had ever felt before; and just before his eyes closed for the last time, they filled with horror.

The boy found it odd that the bird didn't flap its wings. He had begun to fear that his new bird might be a baby bird that hadn't yet learned how to fly, but this thought confused him because he didn't know where baby birds learned how to fly. He turned his head towards his mother, wondering whether birds were home schooled or if the whole flock learns from one master, or if his mother was almost done so they could be on their way. But before he could wonder about any of these things sufficiently his thoughts were cut off by a loud scream. He turned back and saw the bird was now dangerously close to the ground, flapping its wings furiously, but not flying. It screamed again, then hit the earth with a tremendous thud.

The bird landed down the street, but the boy could see now it was just a man. The next few moments were all muffled, like the boy was in the eye of

a hurricane and none of the sounds could reach him through the roaring walls of wind around him. His mother ran back from across the street and grabbed him up off the ground. Everybody else just stood there in shock, not knowing how to react. His mother turned his head away, so he couldn't see.

The man lay crumpled and broken. His eyes were closed, but his head was open. Pink brains peeked out from his split skull. Gray fluid leaked out his ears. His shoulder had dented the bars of the rusty grate through which his paint now dripped down into the sewer below, mixing with the dirty water and swirling into the labyrinth of pipes that snake beneath the city off into eternity.

## Stolen Car

*Lindsey Hawkins*

Patty was seventeen and sat behind him in French class, writing folded up notes with perfect little hearts drawn over the folds in blue ink. Her notes were filled with resounding promises and Bobby would slowly unfold and look at them feeling his eyes shut and his cheeks rise with joy. After the bell rang, the teacher stood by helplessly as students slammed shut their textbooks and bolted, but Patty and Bobby walked out peacefully together, his arm around her shoulder, her thumb stuck in one of his belt loops. Ever since she had broken her left ankle and right femur falling from her favorite childhood tree, she had just felt better with Bobby's body next to hers. They walked down the checkered floor hallways lined with lockers, linked together as if in a trance, looking into each other's eyes for strength; he in his dirty jean jacket and leather boots; her in a short skirt and a button up shirt with the first and last ones undone.

He would lean into her, back against her locker and ask, "Do you love me Patty?" and she responded with a closed-lip kiss and solemn nod. He told her that he would settle down and buy a pretty little house for them to live in. He promised to marry her right after graduation and as he spoke, he looked straight into her wide blue eyes. She looked back at him, eyes sparkling, open and clear. At every football game, crowded party and mandatory school function, they were a unit, unaware of envious looks escaping the corners of the eyes of their peers. Their friends turned to each other and said that those two would be together for the rest of their lives.

"This town's too big to suffocate us and too small to get lost in," she told him. The features of his face sunk towards the center. He didn't know what she meant, but he knew that he wanted to stay in Ketterston for the rest of his life, raise kids in the same town that he grew up in. They were lying in the bed of his truck, the heat of the night glossing their skin, all of the stars spread out before them. She shifted uncomfortably and said, "Don't you know, Bobby?" Bobby didn't know, he didn't think that it mattered. He knew he would be content to lie on his back with her against him like this for the rest of his nights. He said, "Honey, you've got my love." She sighed gently and they lay there like that, listening to the creek move so fervently that it was as if they were riding down it on a raft. She moved in closer and pressed her pelvis to his hip, wrapped her thighs around one of his and squeezed. He moved the arm around her shoulder down her back and pushed her closer into him. Bobby felt her face contract into a smile against his neck and he moved his hand under her panties, grazing between her buttocks and pressing. Then, he grabbed her by her hips and lifted her onto him. She was small then, but

strong, and as she rocked back and forth, she squeezed the skin of his chest into her fists and he felt the ridges of his truck bed knead his back. A breeze spun her long brown hair and made her skin prickle. She stopped moving and glanced around through the trees. Her eyes landed on a pair of ducks on the edge of the water, sleeping with their bills buried in their fluffy backs. "My science teacher told me that ducks mate for life. I think that that is so cute. Are we going to mate for life, Bobby?"

"Yeah, baby," Bobby exhaled and lifted his pelvis. Patty's eyes were squinted shut, her upper lip curled and she moaned to the dark sky before slumping forward onto Bobby's bare chest.

Just as everyone expected, Patty and Bobby were married two weeks after they graduated high school. Their friends and family applauded and hooted as they said their vows and kissed each other. At the reception, Bobby and Patty just smiled and smiled, gazing at each other eagerly. When Patty danced with her father to "Stand by Me," Bobby watched from his seat, his eyes glued to Patty's lacy white dress swishing the wooden floor of the local Presbyterian church. Patty tensed when wrapped in his arms, between his hands, his lips near her neck. He whispered breathily, "You'll always be my little girl, Patty-cake." Patty swallowed hard and looked over to Bobby. So handsome in a tux, she thought and smiled. She said, "Thanks, daddy," and extracted herself before the song was over.

Some friends from high school got together and gave patty and Bobby the gift of a luxurious week long honeymoon in Hawaii. Neither had ever left the state and they felt that this trip was the beginning of their new laid-back but adventurous lifestyle. On the smooth white beach, Bobby watched Patty lie on her stomach in the sand, tanning her body and believed himself to be the luckiest man in the world. He laid his hand on the small of her back, feeling her warm oily skin curve and he sighed long and contentedly. They slurped sweet drinks and ate exotic foods, gazing at the sunset and into each other's faces, feeling blessed and basking in their commitment. Every time that they touched, they kissed and giggled.

They moved into a tiny apartment while Bobby attempted to find work in construction. Next, he tried painting houses, janitorial work for a while, and finally settled full-time as a bouncer for the strip club on the edge of town. He tried hard to not watch the girls while they danced. He honestly tried. The club was dark and dingy, the carpet black and the stage lit only by black light and strobe. He dreaded his time there, always ending the night with a sense of being unclean and a vague feeling of regret. Still, as the girls danced and knelt on the stained hardwood stage and swayed hips to bass, Bobby watched enthralled.

Patty stayed home and cooked, cleaned, watched soap operas. She began to think about kids and scan the real estate ads while she cut coupons.

But, each night Bobby returned home late, reeking of an inexplicable mixture of perfume, sweat, cigarette smoke and something darker, something lustful and ashamed of itself. Patty gained weight and started picking up romance novels. She caught herself compulsively stepping into maternity stores and buying baby clothes.

One of the dancers at the club had gone to the same high school as Patty and Bobby. When they were both on a cigarette break, she approached Bobby exhaling steam, two inches taller than him in her clear plastic platforms. She stood wrapped in a tan overcoat that left her bare calves goose-bumped, but, looking smooth and lush to Bobby. He felt nervous at the sight of her, remembering his early crush.

“Hey Bobby, remember me?”

“Of course. You were just a year below me, right?”

She nodded and smiled. He looked at his shoes. She said, “I always wanted to say hi to you in high school, but of course, you had a girlfriend.”

“Yeah, but you still could of said hi. You were so confident. You still look like you don’t need a single thing from anybody.”

She smirked and looked up at him bashfully. He saw now, with surprise, that she had actually aged in the last five years, tiny wrinkles filled with clumpy makeup around her eyes. She looked tired.

“Aw bobby, you and Patty were such a great couple. I used to watch you guys and wish that I could find a guy to be as devoted to me as you were to her. All of us were jealous of you guys.”

Bobby was shocked now. “Are you kidding?” He said. “Everyone was fucking obsessed with you in high school. I mean, you had a crowd of football players permanently following you around the halls and at parties. You could of had your pick of any guy in the whole school.”

“Yeah, but all the good ones were already taken,” she said with a deep sigh that invoked a haggard cough. Bobby looked at her with concern. He touched her arm lightly and said, “Are you okay?”

She looked up at him and put her hand against his cheek. They stood there looking at each other for a few moments and then she wrapped her arms around his neck and hugged him tightly until he said, “It’s alright, it’s alright,” and rubbed her back gently. Her chin dug into his shoulder, she said feebly, “It ain’t no good, Bobby. It ain’t no good.” He held her for another minute without responding, kissed her forehead softly and she thanked him before going back inside.

Patty lay in bed in the dark, watching the ceiling and waiting for Bobby to get home. She left a vanilla scented candle burning by the bed and closed her eyes. When Bobby walked in, assuming she was asleep, he blew out the candle and heaved off his boots. Patty felt her nostrils fill with the sinister smell as he sat on the edge of the creaking bed, hunched over and looked out

of the tiny window with tattered floral drapes. He looked at Patty and his throat filled up. He whispered, "I'm so sorry, baby," and silently heaved, the walls and objects of the room blurring into a moonlit and desolate haze through his tears.

Bobby started stealing then. He stole TV sets and cameras, purses and precious jewels. He shoplifted from convenience stores and parking lots. He drove stolen cars. Patty started going to church and spending time with the people that she met there. Sunday services at 9am, she left the house while Bobby snored and looked back at him with slit eyes and tight lips before closing the bedroom door. Wednesdays were Bible study meetings at church members' houses that she knew from high school. Plenty of food, plenty of time, no alcohol, and nobody asked her where Bobby was. She realized that she had never paid much attention to these people in high school and felt regret when she saw how warmly they welcomed her. At first, she felt uncomfortable when they criticized Bobby, but then she began to wonder if they might be right about him.

"You were so young, then Patty," Rebecca firmly told Patty. "How could possibly know what you wanted for the rest of your life?"

"We were both young. Maybe we needed each other then, but I don't need him anymore."

"He took advantage of you when you were so vulnerable," they said to her as she nodded her head and stared into the paper cup in her hands. "He doesn't respect your individuality, Patty."

"If only he would come to church once in a while," Patty said hopelessly. "My God, I feel like I've been falling for so long."

"He's too ashamed of himself to come to church and he takes it out on you by neglecting you all the time," Rebecca said with finality. She leaned over and hugged Patty's large Bobby, bosoms squishing against each other and Patty started to cry into Rebecca's soft shoulder.

Patty's doctor told her that she couldn't have a baby. He placed his hand on her shoulder for a moment after he saw her back hunch in her seat. Then, he handed her colorful adoption pamphlets and information about infertility support groups. He awkwardly included a pamphlet for Overeaters Anonymous and mumbled that she should really start thinking about her health. Patty lowered her eyes and shut off her hurt. From the doctor's office, she drove to the creek and ran her fingers through the dusty beach. The tears fell onto the ground and mixed with the river. She let herself sob and thrust her hands into the muddy water.

When Bobby drives around his town now, he is calm and he cruises, slowly, past the old movie theatre, Dinah's Diner, along the old creek. He squints through the windshield up at the darkness closing in and turns a corner. Patty walks to a pay phone and places an anonymous call. The night is

clammy and she feels her thighs sticking together under her skirt as she dials the Ketterston police with information regarding a stolen car. Bobby is smoking a cigarette when he feels the spotlight pour into his car like an auspicious blessing. Before he looks into his rear view mirror and sees the bright lights, he smiles. He breaths a deep sigh of relief as he turns the wheel and pulls the car over to the shoulder. A stolen handgun rests on the seat next to him. Bobby has never used it, but he reaches for it now, checks the barrel and raises it to his temple. Somewhere in the distance he hears a voice say, "Step out of the car NOW!" But, he'd been waiting for this for so long that it seemed like he was born for this moment alone. He pushes the accelerator as hard as he can, screeching down the pavement and leaving only tire tracks on the streets. His eyes roll back and he sees the stars disappearing from the sky, Patty's body peeling away from him.

# Transforming the Nation With Overalls and Architecture

## Freshman Writing Prize

*Julia Tyack*

I remember the sunshine and serenity of those daily drives to Phillips Farms this past summer. The wide-open fields and vineyards bathed in light that surrounded my chugging, rusty old car transformed my mourning sourness into pure joy. I spent my summer working with international agricultural students and fellow high school students selling produce from the fruit stand at local farmer's markets, serving food in the café, and working on the land myself. Phillips Farm is a major tourist attraction in my area because it offers people a chance to once again get in touch with the land and feel more alive. Children come and play with the animals, adults taste wine from our vineyards and step back to a simpler, more appreciative time. Because of my experience I have to agree with Frank Lloyd Wright when he says that open space, a connection to the land, and his style of "organic architecture" has the power to change the nation, how we perceive democracy, and the world.

Democracy to Frank Lloyd Wright is the idea that a person has the freedom to chose his own living situation and take charge of his own life. He believes that true democracy can be taught and acquired and that eventually a Utopia, wherein citizens are motivated to do good in the world out of their own free will, can be reached by embracing organic architecture. In this democracy, a citizen will be transformed by open space and will recognize his own potential.

Wright believes that a true American is like that of the Midwest, one who owns his own home and lives off the land. He has a wholesome sense of discipline and duty and values the ideals first presented by America's forefathers. When Wright introduces an ideal community of "Broadacres" it is representative of the farming ideas he grew up with in Wisconsin. The future architect learned to value the space and freedom of a farm and now believes that this situation is ideal in creating a citizen who lives a life true to the "democracy we preach" (272). Farms require communication with the earth and could help a Broadacres resident to understand the land and appreciate it for its beauty, as Wright did. He is confident that his buildings and their ideals will inspire transformation of regular people into citizens who make good leaders to change the nation and the world.

Getting in touch with nature lies high on the ladder of importance to spiritual and mental rebirth. When we take the time to hike in the woods or even laze in a garden, we reach back to our primitive roots when we survived in the wild. In Wright's "organic architecture," he chooses to eliminate restrictions and confinement, taking out traditional physical walls and

replacing them with screens to simulate the freedom of the out-of-doors. He concentrates on spaciousness and nature, reflecting further his past in a farming community and his belief in its benefits to the spirit. Wright's buildings are formed in smooth and geometric designs that often reflect the surrounding terrain. Prairie homes are long and low to the ground; homes on hills are built discreetly into the hillside (like the famous Fallingwater). Nature is key to creating the right citizen for our democracy.

"I am seeing and saying that organic architecture is the only true architecture for our democracy" (261), says Wright. By this, he means that those who experience his style of architecture will experience a transformation so great that "all of life, love, and the pursuit of happiness is no longer a phrase. It is the architecture of his soul" (268). The architecture, which values a connection to the land and acknowledgement of one's desires in design, will create a man who feels truly free. This freedom becomes a part of the citizen's core values and as a result, he will encourage it elsewhere in the world, helping to create a much stronger global situation. He also says that the "home should especially cherish free choice" in architecture, "as well as in the daily uses we make of Science and Art" (263) and religion. By understanding his free choice, the citizen of Broadacres would have confidence in his individual importance and would learn more easily to take charge of his actions, striving to make them good ones.

The ideal citizen to Frank Lloyd Wright is like him in his ability to resist control and take charge of himself. The "Awakened Citizen" of this society has a wholesome discipline that he has learned from the architecture in which he lives. This discipline in himself means that no force is needed. Wright takes this concept further when he says that "he is the only safe man because he is the man now disciplined not by the government (the police) but from within himself" (270). Who has not been influenced by the calm and discipline of organization in a library or the spaciousness of a cathedral? These buildings inspire through their architecture. Because of the actions associated with such places, people tend to be more subdued and use greater discretion in their actions. Libraries inspire quiet and study, while cathedrals inspire meditation and wholesomeness. One also becomes aware of himself and his insecurities (wearing overalls in a beautiful synagogue feels improper and disrespectful). Given the proper, natural setting and design of a home, a citizen could very easily feel inspired to be better.

The ideals of "organic architecture" most definitely inspire new life. One needs only to stop and think back to the last time they were in a building that did not inspire them. Most people have spent time in a drab, low, almost-windowless fluorescent-lit portable school building, or in a dreary neighborhood in shambles, with houses crammed together like crowded teeth in a clenched jaw. It is quite difficult to motivate oneself in that kind of

portable building, or to feel at ease in that kind of neighborhood. In these instances, people feel naturally antsy and irritable. Understandably they may take on traits that are undesirable for society. It is not hard to see how easily a person can become affected by architecture and space.

If we Americans are to truly live the democracy that has been invented for us, we must be inspired to exemplify it ourselves. By living the life inspired by a place like the Phillips farms, or Frank Lloyd Wright's childhood home and using organic architecture, we could indeed become the ideal citizens of the democracy of America.

## Analysis of “Daddy” and “Rape”

Rebecca Rehfeld

Sylvia Plath and Adrienne Rich are two original and influential poets whose work and lives have shaped the writing world for women. The poems “Rape” by Adrienne Rich and “Daddy” by Sylvia Plath are two of the writers most popular and controversial works, and each poem reflects a large facet of their lives and work that they focused on throughout their careers.

Sylvia Plath was born on October 27, 1932 in Boston, to Otto and Aurelia Plath. Otto Plath was a German immigrant and professor at Boston University who studied entomology and wrote a book called *Bumblebees and their ways*. He was a rigid man, idolized by Sylvia who did everything for his attention, memorizing Latin at a young age and excelling at school to win his respect (*Method and Madness*, p.8). Otto Plath died nine days after Sylvia’s eighth birthday from complications with diabetes, a disease that many thought he could have prevented if it wasn’t for his pride. Otto’s death left Sylvia feeling betrayed, angry, and lonely, a feeling which she would carry with her the rest of her life and which greatly influenced her writing. Aurelia lived with her two children after her husband’s death until 1942, when she moved Sylvia and her brother Warren to Wellesley, a very respectable community that emphasized education (*Encyclopedia of World Biography*, p.2). Aurelia was a very submissive and quiet woman whose parents (like Otto) had been Austrian immigrants. Because of this she worked hard to provide the best for her two children and live up to the American dream.

In 1950 Sylvia Plath entered Smith College on a scholarship. At Smith Plath excelled academically, worked hard on her writing, and was looked up to by her peers. In 1952 Plath went to New York after winning Mademoiselle’s fiction contest, which gave her the opportunity to edit the magazine for June 1953. Plath’s experience in New York exposed her to a less wholesome middleclass world than she had grown up in, causing her to be “depressed and in conflict with her hard-won image as the All-American girl...” (*Encyclopedia of World Biography*, p.2) When she came home from New York, Plath had a mental breakdown and attempted suicide.

After recovering from this incident and graduating from Smith, Plath won a scholarship to Cambridge where she met her husband Ted Hughes. After earning a masters degree at Cambridge, Plath returned to America to teach at Smith College. After a year of teaching Sylvia quit her job to focus on writing, and met Robert Lowell and Anne Sexton, two poets who mentored her and helped her work on deeper more personal subjects in her poetry.

Plath’s first collection, *The Colossus*, was published in 1960, the same year her daughter Frieda was born. *The Colossus* obtained many good reviews,

although it was “criticized for its absence of a personal voice” (Alexander). Her next work *The Bell Jar*, an autobiographical novel, was published in 1963 under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas. Plath’s life was filled with tragedy throughout the early 1960s. She had a miscarriage in February of 1961, and then fell ill and had her appendix removed in March. In 1962 Plath gave birth to a son, Nicholas, and soon after Ted Hughes had an affair and moved out, leaving Plath depressed and ill, with two small children depending on her (*The Woman and her Work*). With all of these tragedies weighing down on her and worsening her depression and mental instability, Plath committed suicide on February 11, 1963 by asphyxiation from oven gas. Many of her greatest works include *Crossing the Water*, *Winter Trees*, *The Women* (a verse play), and *Ariel*, her most acclaimed and successful book of poetry.

Adrienne Rich is known not only for her writing, but also for her political and feminist activism. Adrienne Rich was born in 1929 to Arnold Rich, a medical professor, and Helen Rich, a composer and pianist. She was raised in a white, middle-class family that encouraged her to read and write, going so far as to home school Adrienne and her sister until fourth grade because her parents felt they could educate her better. Rich began writing poetry in high school, and published her first work, *A Change of World*, the year she graduated from Radcliffe College, 1951 (*Encyclopedia of World Biography*). *A Change of World* was praised for being well constructed and conventional, which gave Rich motivation and courage to write more controversial works later in life.

In 1952 Rich began studying in England on a Guggenheim fellowship she had won, and met her Husband Alfred H. Conrad, a Harvard Economist. The two of them moved to Cambridge, MA, where they had their first child the same year her second volume, *The Diamond Cutters and Other Poems*, was published. Rich had two more sons in 1957 and 1959, and began to worry that she couldn’t concentrate on her art because of her children. Because of this concern, Rich felt she was losing a grip on herself (Werner). In the 1960s her work began to change from traditional rhyme to freer form and bolder language. Poetry became an outlet for Adrienne Rich to show her outrage with politics and society, and her reputation changed from ‘poet’ to ‘activist’. Her work in the early 1970s, *Will to Change*, *Diving into the Wreck*, and *The Dream of a Common Language* displayed her interest in nature, social change, and feminism.

In the late 1970s Adrienne Rich became more confident in herself and her work, and began writing more open, honest, and sexual work such as *Twenty-One Love Poems*. In 1986 Rich won the Ruth Lilly Poetry prize, which awarded her \$25,000, the most given to a poet in the U.S. at the time. Adrienne Rich shocked the public in 1997 when she refused to accept a

National Medal for the Arts, saying “When growing numbers of people are being marginalized, impoverished, scapegoated, and beleaguered, I don’t feel I can accept an award from the government pursuing these policies.” (*Encyclopedia of World Biography*) Adrienne Rich’s poetry reflects the experiences she has had as a feminist, political activist, mother, lesbian, and poet, and Rich has been successful in influencing society through her talent, passion, and dedication to what she believes in.

The poem “Daddy” by Sylvia Plath is a confessional poem, with a girl who Sylvia Plath claims is a persona but is also very likely to be Sylvia Plath, speaking to her father and comparing him to a Nazi. The poem’s tone is harsh, accusing and often ironic, and it is full of vivid dark imagery, and sharp often onomatopoeic words. “Daddy” is a lyric poem because the subject is emotional and closely related to the author. It is written in five line stanzas and includes a lot of rhyme and nonsense words, which ironically contrasts the serious subject of Nazism. Rhyme is perhaps what “makes” the poem. As it is put in *Ariel Ascending*, “In “Daddy” the compulsion to rhyme becomes obsession. Perhaps never in the history of poetry has the device carried so electric a charge. Breathing love and hate together, it coos and derides... Over half the lines end in the “oo” sound, and of these nearly half are the one word “you”. This is rhyme with-and for!-a vengeance.” (p.52) There are also sarcastic lines in the poem, such as

...Every woman adores a Fascist,  
The boot in the face, the brute  
Brute heart of a brute like you.

“Daddy” is a poem of revenge for past betrayal, and the speaker clearly resents her father. The sarcastic remarks in the poem emphasize the speaker’s criticism of her father by condescending him, as if in her father’s death the speaker can finally treat him the way he treated her. What really brings the poem to life is the rhyme, assonance/consonance/alliteration, repetition, and rhythm. Lines 42-38 show a good example of alliteration, assonance, consonance, repetition, and neologism:

“...I have always been scared of *you*  
With your Luftwaffe, your **gobbledygo**.  
And your neat mustache  
And your Aryan eye, bright blue.  
**Panzer-man, Panzer-man, O You-**

Not G-d but a swastika  
So black no sky could squeak through...”

In the above passage I put assonance in italics, underlined words with alliteration, and bolded words with repetition and neologism. The use of rhythm, rhyme, and repetition, makes the poem almost song like and brings a sense of sarcasm and irony into the entire poem by presenting the Nazi references and fascist representation of her father as fun and childish. The metaphor of the poem is quite large and obvious, comparing the speaker's father to a Nazi, but there are also many smaller metaphors and similes. For example in line 30 the speaker compares herself to a Jew, which her father would hate most, being a Nazi:

“... An engine, an engine  
Chuffing me off like a Jew.  
A Jew to Dachau, Aushwitz, Belsen.  
I began to talk like a Jew.  
I think I may well be a Jew.”

“Chuffing me off like a Jew” is a simile, while her directly calling herself a Jew is a metaphor. The metaphors in this poem are very strong, especially since Sylvia Plath was knowledgeable about Germany, having German heritage, and incorporated German words into her poem, as well as specific names of concentration camps (Dachau, Aushwitz, Belsen) making the situation seem quite possible, instead of imagined.

It is, I suppose, possible that the speaker in “Daddy” is a persona, but it is much more likely that it is Sylvia Plath talking to her father, through the poem, expressing resentment, pain, and anger that she carried with her even in her thirties. There is evidence that points to this. Lines 7-10:

“... You died before I had time-  
Marble heavy, bag full of G-d,  
Ghastly statue with one gray toe  
Big as a Frisco seal.”

Here Plath is describing the Gangrene her diabetic father had on his toe, which spread and was the cause of his death. Another reference vividly describing her father is made in lines 43-44 “And your neat mustache/And your Aryan eye, bright blue.” Her father had black hair and a small mustache, but bright blue eyes like that described in the poem (*Method and Madness*). “Daddy” is a shockingly brutal poem that has become infamous for its honesty and snappy rhythm and rhyme, known today as one of Sylvia Plath's best poems.

“Rape” by Adrienne Rich is (like “Daddy”) a lyrical poem in five stanzas, that has a narrator (perhaps Rich herself) describing to the victim how it will be to tell the story of her rape to a chauvinistic cop who will judge the victim and make her rape his fantasy. There is rhythm to the poem, although

there is no discernable iambic pattern. There is little rhyme in the poem, but a lot of alliteration, consonance, and repetition, such as in lines 1-6. Consonance is in bold writing, repetition is in italics, and alliteration is underlined:

“There is a **cop** who is both **prowler** and **father**:  
He comes from your **block**, grew up with your **brothers**,  
*had* certain ideals.  
You *hardly* know *him* in *his* **boots** and silver **badge**,  
on **horseback**, one **hand** touching **his** gun.

*You hardly know him* but you **have** to get to know **him**...”

There are a lot of hard “kuh” and “puh” sounds throughout the poem, contradicted by many soft “H” sounds which almost creates a quiet hissing effect to emphasize the cop’s seeming harmlessness. The poem has a factual tone, as if the narrator is explaining without emotion what is to come, although it does allude to some of the horrors of rape, for instance in lines 12-13 with “the maniac’s sperm still greasing your thighs,/your mind whirling like crazy.” The poem’s real purpose is stated in the last line, when the narrator presents the rape victim with the choice of either punishing the rapist, or staying quiet about the rape, almost accusing the victim of the latter: “Will you swallow, will you deny them, will you lie your way home?” This line makes it apparent that Adrienne Rich wrote the poem in order to encourage rape victims (or women who are victims of other abuse) not to stay quiet and let men get away with their crimes, but to stand up and make it clear to society that crimes against women are not acceptable, and should not go unpunished.

Sylvia Plath was never a feminist activist, like Adrienne Rich, but both women wrote very feminist poetry, often speaking out about the injustices of a patriarchal society and oppressive men, at a time where it was still outrageous to do so. The poem “Daddy” by Sylvia Plath is a lyrical poem written in 5 line stanzas as is “Rape” by Adrienne Rich. Both have one word titles that, in a word, state the subject of the poem before it is even read. Both “Rape” and “Daddy” have a lot of repetition, consonance, and alliteration, although “Daddy” has far more rhythm, rhyme, and assonance than “Rape” does. In “Daddy” Plath is comparing her father to a Nazi using creative and vivid metaphors. “Rape” compares a cop to a rapist using less metaphor, and more explicit imagery. The biggest similarity with “Daddy” and “Rape” is that both poems are creating an image of a powerful man and victimized woman in a patriarchal society. Both send out the message that it is not acceptable for men to dominate women in personal relationships or in society; as Plath puts it, “Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I’m through.

## Bibliography:

Butscher, Edward, Sylvia Plath; Method and Madness. New York: The Seabury Press, 1976.

Encyclopedia of World Biography, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Gale Research, 1998.

Alexander, Paul. Ariel Ascending; Writing About Sylvia Plath. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1985.

Butscher, Edward, Sylvia Plath; The Woman and the Work. New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1977.

Werner, Craig, Adrienne Rich; The Poet and Her Critics. Chicago and London: American Library Association, 1988

## “Next Please”: A Closer Look

*Eric Rivera*

Philip Larkin was born on August 9, 1922 in Coventry, England. His parents were Sydney and Eva Emily Larkin. Larkin was born at a very sad and unfortunate time. Already ridden with poor economic status, Larkin had to battle financial insecurity, and on top of that, get through a war. By the time he turned twenty, World War II was in full swing. Coventry was an industrial city that ended up being the target of much of the bombing late in the war. Despite all odds, Larkin was accepted to Harvard and graduated with the class of 1943. It was there while attending college that Larkin began to draw inspiration for his poetry. He quickly formed a network of friends and poets that were essential to his publishing. Later, he became an enthusiast and critic for jazz music. Larkin was very reflective of his years as a child. Deprived of most joys, he associated his childhood with despair and melancholy thoughts. These depressing thoughts brought a unique and necessary drive for Larkin to write poetry inspired by his pessimism.

The first thing that must be addressed is the poem's visual structure. A poem's appearance can say worlds about the author, his or her thought at the time, the theme of the work, or life in general. In the case of “Next, Please,” what the reader sees strongly underscores what the poem emphasizes. Every stanza contains four lines. These four lines, however, are not equal. The first three appear to be of regular length, normal for a poem. The last line is almost cut short. After reading the entire work, we find that the speaker knows death is coming because it is always imminent. These three longer lines preceded by one single short line represent the life of a human. The first three lines are a person's life, a building up of sorts. Then when death comes, that life is cut short. The most interesting thing about the last lines of each stanza is that, looked at separately, they form their own poem with a parallel meaning.

The title of this poem, “Next, Please,” might have something to do with the large metaphor of ships. In Britain, boating is a lot more popular than in the United States. Many tours are given on boats and most people frequent the ferries. The only reason this pertains to the title is because when the ship's crew collects tickets, they say “Ticket, please... ticket, please.” The crew will say this to everyone and collect his or her ticket. They do this much in the same way that death comes around to everyone eventually and takes life from them. “Next, Please,” is extremely similar to what the crewmen would say. This implies that death is very official and fair to everyone. When it does come, everyone does their part and a polite man collects everyone's ticket. In this case, the ticket is probably the soul.

There are several stylistic elements in "Next, Please" that make it a well-written formal poem. It becomes glaringly obvious in the first stanza that Larkin is going to criticize humans for being too eager: "Always too eager for the future, we / Pick up bad habits of expectancy." He is the wise and knows that nothing can stand in the way of death. This is no doubt a perfect beginning to this dark poem. As we move along, it is hard to ignore the large clever metaphor, which will be addressed later. The best image drawn from lines in this poem occurs in the fourth stanza: "Flagged, and the figurehead with gold tits / Arching our way, it never anchors..." We also have beautiful alliteration happening in the first line. The anxious, slow moving ship is clear in view, but it will never dock on land. But there is one looming black ship that is aimed right for the land. This ship is dark and mysterious and it represents the end of life: "Only one ship is seeking us, a black- / Sailed unfamiliar..." This intimidating ship is lifeless and has only one intention: to get to land before the beautifully gilded ships do.

After becoming familiar with Larkin, it is easy to identify that the speaker in "Next, Please" is most definitely him. We can tell this because Larkin was a depressed man who often employed pessimism into his work. The poem revolves around the eventual coming of death, a very pessimistic subject. It seems that Larkin is addressing everyone in the world. His message applies to the entire human race, and all who listen to it will learn how Larkin feels about this universal binder: death. Larkin's attitude towards the human race is almost condescending. It is as if he is scolding everyone for not realizing that death is the only sure thing in life. Everyone waits for rewards and the fulfillment of promises, but they can and should only expect death. From the imagery in the poem, the poet addresses the human race from high up on a bluff. The setting for this message is certainly outdoors. This outdoor bluff sets the stage for the enormous metaphor of death as a fleet of ships.

Philip Larkin chose to cram one long metaphor into the substance of "Next, Please." This long, extended metaphor is an armada of ships that come and claim the life of the poet. Larkin's use of one large metaphor, rather than a chain of shorter ones, reinforces the fact that death is a powerful thing. Whether or not we are ready, death comes by and takes us away. Much can be said about the meaning Larkin wanted to get across, and he makes it quite easy for us to identify that meaning. The diction he uses illustrates that death is always approaching, constantly. No matter what, death is always on its way, getting closer and closer every day. Larkin's diction includes: "leaning," "near," "approach," "heave," "waiting," "devoutly," "towing," "arching," "expectancy," and "sooner." The fact that death is inevitable comes right across in this particular diction as well. All these descriptive words give the reader the impression that death is pushing toward everyone. Death almost wants to

arrive. Words like “waiting” especially let the reader know that death has only one job and it is waiting to do just that.

They rhyme scheme of the poem is, consistently, AABB throughout all the stanzas. This pattern reinforces the consistency of life and the cycle that all humans go through, from birth to death. The meter changes from trimeter to dimeter in every stanza. This goes hand in hand with the foreshadowing of death coming. The three longer lines are trimeter, with the fourth, cut-off, line being dimeter. This says a lot about how abrupt and possibly unexpected death can be. It isn't always easy to tell when someone will die, but when they do, nothing can be done. The lines are, for the most part, dactylic. This unique voice pattern, when read, produces a very musical sound. As far as Larkin is concerned, death is a very playful thing. This is only because death is polite. In no way is death rude, only impersonal, for it simply comes and does what it must do to everyone.

Overall, I think Larkin's view of life itself is quite clear. He paints a picture of what most humans see as life, and then correct it to reveal the true reality. Perhaps Larkin is saying that we never deserve what the hopeful golden “armada of promises” brings. Maybe humans only deserve one thing: death. After all, it is the only thing truly worth being patient for, because it is the only certain thing in all of life. Larkin does, in some way, complement us on our “devout” patience. This idea that we, as humans, are doing something right says a lot. We are patient for some things, they just happen to be the wrong things because they are not certain. Promises, happiness, and love are not certain to come, but death is.

### Bibliography:

Andrew, Swarbrick. *Out of Reach: The Poetry of Phil Larkin*. London, England:

MacMillan Press

LTD, 1995.

## Creating the Dream: A Brotherhood

Sean Kark

“Mama Pearl was everybody’s grandmother” (*Dreamer*, 30).

In *Dreamer*, Charles Johnson artfully creates a character, Mama Pearl, who represents what each person must strive to be if our nation is ever to be peaceful. Only by learning what Mama Pearl has learned through her family and their desire to be self-sufficient, can we learn what true selflessness is and what care for others can create out of a violent society. Mama Pearl is an important and instrumental character in Johnson’s novel because she literally embodies the ideals Martin Luther King preaches – the ideal for a world with or without segregation. He preaches that as citizens we must learn, like Mama Pearl, to “work together, to pray together, to struggle together” and ultimately to “stand up for freedom together” (“I have a Dream,” 3). All of these desires require that we understand and care for each other, which Mama Pearl demonstrates is possible.

Mama Pearl is described as a woman who, although 78 years old, gives her life to the cause and teaches Amy the lesson her father taught her: thinking of others first. It is easy to understand how she could be so egoless and thoughtful of others when we read that while growing up her father demanded that she and her siblings do favors for other people just to practice selflessness. He described this process as the finest opportunity anyone could have for “giving to others day in [and] day out” (*Dreamer*, 90). Her character is further explained when we read that her father believed “family and friends came first” and that the family was always willing to share what little they had and owned with others. Mama Pearl continues this caring for others, which her family instilled in her, when she meets King and the other freedom fighters. Just as if she had known them her entire lifetime, she treats them to her homemade rugelach and listens to their plans for the civil rights movement. We find out later that she has given Martin Luther King a quilt that she worked on for two years—simply another selfless gesture in a world of white on black brutality, a world full of death threats and bombings of the homes of people seeking racial equality. Such gestures show us that the world would be a better place if more people acted with caring for others.

In terms of Charles Johnson’s novel, Mama Pearl serves as a perfectly planned minor detail in Johnson’s complex and provocative novel. Mama Pearl’s existence demonstrates that Martin Luther King’s dream of equality, of people of all races judging each other only by their character, is achievable. Although King’s dream is frequently drowned out by vicious and relentless

hate crimes, Mama Pearl represents a selfless human being in a world brimming with hatred and selfishness. Her presence in this novel—which ends almost as full of hate as it began with—provides a glimmer of hope and an example we must follow if we are ever to live in a world closer to the one King imagined: a world in which we put aside our differences to solve our collective problems.

Mama Pearl's existence also proves that individual people—even those who are old and frail—can make a difference and change the world they live in. Mama Pearl's wheezing up the stairs and the sound of “cracking cellophane” at each labored breath prove not just her age, but also her generosity and caring (Dreamer, 29). Her existence forces us as readers and citizens to ask ourselves what we are capable of doing to make the world a place we can be proud to live in, and challenges us to make a more significant positive impact on the world—as this seventy-eight year old manages to do despite her age and physical capacities. By choosing to create a character embodies King's dream, Johnson forces us, like Amy, to emulate Mama Pearl's selflessness.

Like King, Mama Pearl and others in the movement also provide examples of people unwilling to accept their present conditions, determined to make the future more promising. This novel, like a true gospel, in many ways demands that we also be willing to incur horrible losses, and go to great efforts to voice our opposition to injustice. It clearly illustrates what hate and discrimination can cause: a nasty world of violence and death. Unless we want to accept a world of violence, we must learn to create a world where we can work together to solve problems, rather than create problems through hate and lack of understanding.

One of the few times we actually meet Mama Pearl, we are told that she taught Amy she could use “a piece of string and an old tin can for fishing” just as easily as a fishing pole and line (Dreamer, 30). Although on the surface this comment seems to be just something she learned during childhood when her family was low on money, this story teaches us to create the best possible world we can with what we have. Juxtaposed next to Mama Pearl are clearly enough white people disposed to “ritualistic hatred” when they are in fear of losing their place in society, but not enough who focus on making the best possible world out of what they possess (Dreamer, 117). Mama Pearl, unlike the white mob, demonstrates that with a little ingenuity and thought, we can create seemingly out of nothing, something that accomplishes our goals. In this way, Mama Pearl has chosen to take the path Cain neglected when he killed his brother Abel. Unlike Cain and the white mob, she takes the advice of the Lord, and chooses to “do well” despite the fact that she has not been accepted into the white society (Genesis, 4.1-18; 23) Mama Pearl demonstrates that despite what she is lacking, envy—the cause of hate and violence—is counterproductive. Committed to the ideal of nonviolence, she instead goes

about creating the world she envisions. Her choice suggests that a world of nonviolence and understanding cannot be created by people who focus on what they are lacking, but instead by people determined to make what they do not possess.

In complete opposition to envy, in fact, Mama Pearl is determined to see the world in terms of teleological love. She understands that true teleological love by definition means that we must see ourselves in everyone who surrounds us, and thus can no more hate them than we hate ourselves. She is willing to see “everything as a process not a product, and [see] beneath the surface to a thing’s potentiality” (Johnson, 108); she accepts that “We [others] are not yet what we shall be/ but we [others] are growing toward it” (Johnson, quoting Luther, 195). If anything can express her views, it is these words that we must learn to embrace; we must understand that envy is only the response we have when we are unwilling to see ourselves and our process of growth in the people who surround us. We must learn to embrace teleological love—the direct opposite of envy—to create a society free of the envy and hate that has so deformed our world.

Mama Pearl also suggests that we can change the world by teaching other people our belief in equality. Even vastly outnumbered at Yahya’s Black Power meeting, Amy is able to confront Yahya and tell him that a race war doesn’t have to occur “if people of goodwill, white and black, do everything to make things better” (Dreamer, 173). Yahya is clearly another person like those in the white mob: intent on focusing on what he doesn’t possess and can imagine obtaining only through violence. Even Yahya is a little taken back that someone could confront him about an issue he has been so sure has to be solved violently. Partially out of the fear that she could convince other black radicals that the problems of inequality could be solved non-violently, Yahya allows Amy to leave the meeting and loses some of his overwhelming control over people who listen to his rhetoric. This proves Mama Pearl’s lesson that by voicing our opposition to people who would like to blow up the world, we can preserve it.

Martin Luther King states, “Hate is too easy. Non-Violence may be asking too much of people” (Dreamer, 223). And in many ways King is correct. We are all too willing to find ways we are different from others; we tend to look at certain racial groups and generalize about their characteristics from a few individuals. For example, since September 11, 2001, many people believe that all Muslims hate America and would prefer that it were destroyed. Obviously this is a generalization and is not true, but many people believe such statements because of their lack of understanding of other people and other religions. As much as any character in the novel, Mama Pearl’s existence urges us to notice that we create a better, less hateful, world if only we refuse to acquiesce in the face of hatred and misunderstanding.

*Dreamer* sets forth two options for our future. We can live in a world of useless murders, beatings, homicides and hate crimes where we thoughtlessly destroy the world, or we can follow Mama Pearl's example and learn to see ourselves in the people who surround us, and therefore love them as we love ourselves. Although hers may be a difficult example to follow, the alternative is horrible. Mama Pearl reminds us that by sharing one rugelach that we can begin to create a society we can be proud to live in, a society in which we solve problems of humanity that exist regardless of race. Only through this process of caring and understanding can we become what Martin Luther King spent his life creating: a brotherhood.

# Realism, Reform and the Metropolis

## First Place: Scholarly Writing Prize

*Katie Hunter*

What does it mean to see a social ill and want to rectify it? I know that in my own life, I have believed since high school it is my duty as a fellow human being to do everything in my power to lessen the suffering of those around me. It can be a daunting task, because with so much misery, how does one even begin to make enough of a difference? This was one of many problems Americans were facing during the turbulent years at the turn of the nineteenth century. Never before had Americans experienced such rapid transformation. The changes which took place between 1865 and 1914 were remarkable both for their completeness and the rapidity with which they occurred. Jay Martin explains that “institutions, systems of belief, ideological and social assumptions, ways of feeling at home in the world...now passed away in this fifty year period. Confusion, resulting from feelings of personal alienation amid the loss of social stability, became more and more apparent” (Martin 1). During this time literature emerged as an important tool both for revealing the plight of the marginalized, immigrant working-class and for critiquing various efforts of reform. Out of the confusion the rising middle class, particularly women, arose as leaders of an expanding reform movement. In order to understand the origins of social reform and its ultimate effectiveness, it is necessary to study the various problems the immigrants and reformers encountered, together and separately, in the developing urban landscape reflected both its literature and various historical texts.

Duis' *Challenging Chicago* explains that those who faced the trials of life's problems attempted to devise strategies that involved several steps of action that individuals and families could take. Usually, they “begin with the discovery of the symptoms of a problem, then move on to verifying its existence, informing (and sometimes confronting) other people involved, then mapping out a plan of action” (Duis xi). Like any illness, before it can be properly treated it must first be diagnosed. So it was with the emerging reform movement at the end of the nineteenth century; before the various problems could be alleviated, the social ills had to first be recognized. In this case, the particular necessity for reform stemmed from three powerful social forces which transformed American society, particularly during the transitional years of the 1890s. These forces were urbanization, immigration and industrialization, or, the city, the worker, and the factory. The three forces are almost interchangeable because without one the others would not have had the same impact.

To be sure, cities were not unfamiliar to Americans before the Civil War, but they had been little more than good-sized towns comprising no more than a small percentage of the overall population. By the turn of the century, “Josiah Strong’s declaration that the ‘new civilization is certain to be urban; and the problem of the twentieth century will be the city’ echoed in many minds and made necessary a reevaluation of the American pattern of agrarian ideals” (Martin 244). Indeed as late as 1850, only thirteen percent of Americans lived in the cities, of which only nine constituted more than 500,000 people. However, after 1865 the rate of urbanization noticeably multiplied so that by 1920 the census could report for the first time that over half the American citizens lived in the cities. This rapid growth brought with it many benefits, but inevitably it had numerous draw backs as well. Nowhere more than in the city were the contrasts between poverty and wealth so appalling; but “nowhere else did they hold such fascination...the city symbolized and seemed to embody evil...but at the same time it offered more intense opportunities for human life than possible anywhere else” (Martin 4).

The increased population was not merely a result of agrarian flight but can also be accounted for as a result of one of the largest waves of immigrant migrations in the nation’s history. From its inception, people have continuously flowed from the Old World to the New World for various reasons, but the hundred years between 1820 and 1920, particularly those years following 1880, mark the greatest wave of immigrants to enter American, 38 million. A new peak was reached in 1882, when 788,992 immigrants entered the country. By the early twentieth century the annual influx passed the million mark a total of six times and in 1907 it rose to 1,285,349. Thus the immigrant was intimately involved in the growth of the city. In the latter half of the century, “immigrants, mostly Catholics and Jews from the unfamiliar countries of Southern and Eastern Europe, poured into America in record numbers to work in its expanding industrial economy” (Diner 5). In fact, while most contemporaries are aware that “the typical new immigrant was a city dweller...he was more than that: he was a dweller in a big city” (Degler 315). At the turn of the century, over one half of all the foreign born lived in the 160 cities with a population of 25,000 or more. Invariably this created a whole new set of issues because before the Civil War the immigrant was able to adjust to the pattern of rural society with little difficulty. But in the city “the problems of adjustment between immigrant and native were more and more intensified” (Martin 5).

Indeed, the transition for these immigrants into their new urban life was not easy, it was often met with various forms of suspicion and distrust, thereby heightening a range of social tensions. Arthur Holden’s *The Settlement Idea* explains that there are three attitudes with which the immigrant was met.

First, there are those “who believe that doors should be open because America is the land of the free and all men should be given equal opportunity...There are others who believe that a ready supply of cheap labor is necessary for industry and that immigration should be kept active so that a constant supply of labor may be always available.” Finally, there are those who “hate the foreigner and seek to exclude him because, as they declare, he is ‘ruining America’” (Holden 110).

The reason most immigrants moved to America was for increased economic opportunity; and just as the city would not have thrived without its immigrants, nor would it have flourished without industrialization. Between 1865 and 1914, the population of the United States tripled and the number of workers in manufacturing increased five and a half times. In addition, the value created by manufacturing rose almost twelve times and the capital invested in industry multiplied twenty times. In 1890, “for the first time the value of manufactured goods surpassed that of agricultural commodities...By the turn of the century, the United States was already an industrial nation” (Degler 259).

Post-War America witnessed a shift in nineteenth century work ethic from that of an agrarian based society to an industrially based. These changes include a shift from skilled to machine labor, “from the small workplace downstairs or near home to a large factory, from sales involving local markets to global balances of supply and demand, and finally, from a world of animal and water power in stone and wooden work places to one of steam and electric energy in giant factories of steel, cement and bricks” (Duis 245). Consequently, this shift increased the demand for cheap, unskilled labor. The majority of the immigrants who arrived in the American city were unskilled laborers searching for any opportunity at work, and by the end of the nineteenth century most of them had become industrial workers.

While the complaint of many native born Americans was that the immigrants would displace them from their jobs, it was usually a displacement which benefited the native-born. “Before the native worker could move up in the occupational ladder of the national economy, his place had to be taken by new workers coming in at the bottom- and these new workers were the immigrants” (Degler 308). However, when these new immigrants took jobs in factories and mines they exerted an economic influence beyond merely supplying labor. It follows that the employers who were unable to hire enough skilled labor were willing to depend more upon machinery so that they might make use of the supply of unskilled labor. It was a cycle because, “once the machines were installed, the employer acquired a vested interest in continued use of such unskilled labor, and so expanded his use of machinery until the whole cycle spiraled up to maximum mechanization” (Degler 309).

The combination of these three new forces, urbanization, immigration and industrialization, created in American society a newly urgent need for reform that was evident in many aspects of life. For the immigrant, these areas in need of transformation could be separated into home life reform versus working life reform. It is evident that there were numerous problems and so, “making a science of reform, clergymen, civic organizers and men of letters from the ‘70s onward joined as never before to probe and reveal the diseases of the social body” (Martin 6). Out of the common confusion of the era and its many tribulations, writers emerged as public figures who “undertook the task of preserving culture and accommodating change to human uses by clarifying, deepening, and intensifying the contents of consciousness for their age” (Martin 1). For this reason, a method of revealing these various social ills was through popular literature because it could reach the masses. Most often, these authors sought to portray that which was true and to instill in their readers a sympathy for the plight of the marginalized in hopes it might inspire change.

Stephen Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* examines the life of a working class Irish immigrant girl in the New York tenements. It was on the Bowery, Crane once said, that he got his “artistic education.” He slept in tramp’s clothes in Union Square, listened to the talk of the homeless, and even stood all night in a blizzard in order to watch men wait in a bread line. As a result, *Maggie* contains many realistic impressions of tenement scenes: the chaos of backyards, the side-doors of saloons from which young boys emerge with pails of beer, and the sweat shops and soup-kitchens in which Maggie grew up.

Eventually they entered a dark region where, from a careening building, a dozen gruesome doorways gave up loads of babies to the street and the gutter. A wind of early autumn raised yellow dust from cobbles and swirled it against a hundred windows. Long streamers of garments fluttered from fire-escapes. In all unhandy places there were buckets, brooms, rags and bottles. In the street infants played or fought with other infants or sat stupidly in the way of vehicles. Formidable women, with uncombed hair and disordered dress, gossiped while leaning on railings, or screamed in frantic quarrels. Withered persons, in curious postures of submission to something, sat smoking pipes in obscure corners. A thousand odors of cooking food came through the street. The building quivered and creaked from the weight of humanity stamping about in its bowels (Crane 15).

Crane’s descriptions convey a world of violence, poverty, dirt, squalor, discomfort and despair that is virtually impossible to escape from. His words reveal that one of the distinguishing features of urban living was the high density population, “a fact which must have been painfully apparent to anyone who walked along the crowded streets and saw the closely packed tenements bulging with humanity” (Degler 340). In 1890, the average number of persons

per dwelling was 5.45, but for New York the average was 18.52, for Cincinnati it was 8.87, for Boston, 8.52 and for Chicago, 8.60. Warehouses, factories, breweries, and residences were adapted as multifamily dwellings in post-War America. New tenements were erected on sites where previous buildings had been razed or where earlier frame structures had been moved to the rear of the lot as alley houses. These poor areas “increased their population densities by filling in every privately owned square foot of space” (Duis 96).

In the tenements the lines between home, work and personal space all blended together. Holden’s description of an actual New York tenement district notes that business and industry cluttered up the streets, the sidewalks, the doorways, the halls and even the bedrooms of the over-crowded tenements. “A pungent vegetable smell pervaded the air. The signs carried inscriptions in strange languages. There were dark doorways and long dark halls with a vista at the end of a drab back yard...the rooms inside were reached by long flights of wooden stairs, then more dark hallways illuminated sometimes by a faint ray of daylight from the foot court” (Holden 34). His words are mirrored in Crane’s description which follows Maggie’s family “into one of the gruesome doorways [where] they crawled up dark stairways and along cold, gloomy halls” (Crane 16). The crammed living quarters were only one of many problems among immigrant families in the cities. Crane points out that health, sanitation, food and work were all additional concerns intricately connected with living quarters often unfit for human habitation. Similarly, Duis suggests “there was an interconnection between social ills and the way in which slum conditions contributed to squalor, discomfort, intemperance, filth,... chronic disease,...family disruption, growth in immorality and vicious habits, and the creation and fostering of crime” (Duis 98).

Furthermore, Crane painfully reveals that, particularly within Irish family life, violence and alcoholism were prevalent. Both of Maggie’s parents are alcoholics who erupt in drunken nightly feuds which both she and her brother witness. “Above the muffled roar of conversation, the dismal wailings of babies at night, the thumping of feet in unseen corridors and rooms, and the sound of varied hoarse shoutings in the street and the rattling of wheels over cobbles, they heard the screams of the child and the roars of the mother” (Crane 20). Indeed, family life among these immigrants and their children was ravaged by a whole range of problems, “a high rate of domestic violence and discord, the frequent desertion of the male breadwinner, and a high rate of industrial accidents that created many a widow and orphan” (H. Diner 55).

The depictions of reformers in Crane’s *Maggie* are no less harsh than his startling depictions of tenement family life, thereby emphasizing the great need for more organized reform efforts. There are only two instances where the topic of reform efforts are raised and both leave the reader wanting more.

While waiting for soup-tickets, a minister exhorts his starving audience, “‘You are damned,’ said the preacher. And the reader of sounds might have seen the reply go forth from the ragged people: ‘Where’s our soup?’” (Crane 25). While this first type of aid is mostly ineffective and goes unrecognized by the immigrants, the second example of reform demonstrates the indifference of the potential reformer. On her last leg, Maggie had “heard of the grace of God and she decided to approach this man. His beaming, chubby face was a picture of benevolence and kind-heartedness. His eyes shown good will. But as the girl timidly accosted him he made a convulsive movement and saved his respectability by a vigorous side-step. He did not risk it to save a soul. For how was he to know that there was a soul before him that needed saving? (Crane 78). For both Maggie and her brother, reform is nearly non-existent. Yet the very fact that she chooses to approach this man suggests that Maggie is perhaps conscience of another world someplace better than the one in which she is trapped.

While work is indeed an important aspect of Maggie’s life, the majority of Crane’s descriptions expose family life, housing and morals. In contrast, Rebecca Harding Davis’ *Life in the Iron Mills* spends a short time recounting the living conditions and instead chooses to reveal the damaging effects of industrialization upon the working class.

The slow stream of human life creeping past, night and morning, to the great mills. Masses of men, with dull, besotted faces bent to the ground, sharpened here and there by pain or cunning; skin and muscle and flesh begrimed with smoke and ashes; stooping all night over boiling caldrons of metal, laired by day in dens of drunkenness and infamy, breathing from infancy to death an air saturated with fog and grease and soot, vileness for soul and body (Davis 4).

The descriptions in this book precede Crane’s by thirty years and, unlike later works of social protest, they do not rely upon “gloomy philosophical abstraction relating to the more animalistic elements of human nature” (Donaldson 21). Instead, the descriptions are meant to highlight the inhumanity of the immigrant worker’s plight and advocate more humane treatment. Davis’ images even go so far as to suggest that the living and working conditions themselves are what render the workers inhuman. It is in the factory that “crowds of half-clad men, looking like revengeful ghosts in the red light, hurried, throwing masses of glittering fire. It was like a street in Hell” (Davis 9). The majority of these workers were unskilled laborers who, unlike craftsmen who exercised a greater deal of judgment and independence, performed a single, easily learned task repetitively. Employers typically paid

their operatives piece rates, and as one manager bragged, “we keep rates so low that they have to keep right at it to make a living” (Diner 55). In addition, managers fined operatives for poor-quality work and infractions of shop discipline, and sometimes paid a small bonus to workers who produced well above average.

In order to continue surviving in their tiny tenement homes, it was necessary for every member of the family to contribute financially. This meant that both women and children were added to the ranks of the working force and thus played crucial roles in securing immigrant livelihoods. Education was of secondary importance to immigrants who took their children out of school in an act of economic necessity. “In a crude cost-benefit analysis, most [immigrants] determined that children needed to read and write, but further study did not compensate for the lost income” (Diner 95). Women often worked double duty, by either working out of their home while tending to the needs of their family, or by day working at the factory while by night attending to domestic duties. Therefore, Davis’ hunchbacked Deborah was one of many women who at the end of the day was “weak, aching from standing twelve hours at the spools. Yet it was her almost nightly walk to take this man his supper, though at every square she sat down to rest” (Davis 8). And while Davis’ portrayal has little more to say in regards to women laborers, studies and surveys of sweatshop like conditions where women and children sewed in their homes in a dozen cities of the late-nineteenth century abound in the details of poverty, dirt, poor wages and instability. In addition, “the factories, which gradually came to encompass more and more of the garment labor force, operated under unhealthy, unsafe conditions, paying women workers pitiable wages” (H. Diner 78).

As with Crane’s depiction of immigrant family life, Davis comments upon man’s failure to establish any viable reform for these workers. However unlike Crane, the issue of reform is a more prevailing topic which manifests itself in several instances and addresses the problems of frustration and apathy among the comfortable middle class. After describing the workers’ bleak situation the narrator asks, “is that all of their lives?—of the potion given to them and these their duplicates swarming the streets to-day?—nothing beneath?—all? So many a political reformer will tell you,—and many a private reformer too, who has gone among them with a heart tender with Christ’s charity, and come out outraged, hardened” (Davis 6). Indeed, while there had been efforts made to give aid to the impoverished, many of these middle class attempts had failed. Later, the conversation between the factory owner and his friends reveals in part why such attempts may have failed and why there was so much work yet to accomplish. Upon taking in the working conditions at the factory, Mitchell exclaims, “God help them! What are taste, reason, to creatures who must live such lives as that?...God help us! Who is responsible?” (Davis 18).

And while Mitchell shows a bit of concern for the factory workers, his fellow businessman responds with indifference to the poverty surrounding him and replies, "I wash my hands of all social problems,~slavery, caste, white or black. My duty to my operatives has a narrow limit, the pay-hour on Saturday night. I am not responsible...What has the man who pays them money to do with their souls' concerns, more than the grocer or butcher who takes it?" (Davis 18). Such an outlook merely affirms the notion of an individualistic society concerned only with the pursuit of individual gain and not social welfare or moral obligation.

Davis not only condemns her characters for failing to yield to the virtues of compassion, she also challenges each reader to himself consider the plight of the marginalized. The narrator not only describes "the slow stream of human life, creeping past, night and morning, to the great mills" (Davis 4), but invites each reader to make the journey individually and not simply view it all from the outside. The narrator demands for us, the audience to "stop a moment. I am going to be honest...I want you to hide your disgust, take no heed to your clean clothes, and come right down with me,~here to the thickest of the fog and mud and foul effluvia" (Davis 5). Therefore, Davis challenged her nineteenth century readers to take in all the misery and promote some form of change because it is their responsibility to recognize the humanity in these workers. The narrator acknowledges that this challenge will perhaps seem "as foul and dark as this thick vapor about us, and as pregnant with death; but if your eyes are as free as mine are to look deeper, no perfume-tinted dawn will be so fair with promise of the day that will surely come" (Davis 5).

Realist and Naturalist authors were not the only ones who recognized a need for reform in the decades following the Civil War and, to be sure, many people acted on the needs which Davis and Crane identified. Reform tackled every facet of life in the nineteenth century and although Progressivism is not credited with beginning until the 1893 Depression, the basis of the movement was underway by the 1870s. This movement termed Progressivism flourished as Americans struggled to come to terms with the disruptions brought on by massive industrialization, rapid urban growth and immigration. In its most complete form it was "a complex, sometimes contradictory amalgam of social criticism, popular protest, political restructuring, economic regulation and social welfare legislation" (Dye 1). The public outcry tackled numerous issues associated with American society and was supported by people regardless their gender, race or class.

As the literature previously highlighted, there was a desperate need for assistance among the ranks of the immigrant classes and previous attempts at charity had done little to alleviate the problem. However, beginning in the 1880s a new form of aid developed in the heart of the tenement neighborhoods, it was the settlement house. The settlements had originated in

England where the Original Purpose of 1884 explained how “the main difficulty of poor city neighborhoods, where the toilers who create our national prosperity are massed apart, is that they have few friends and helpers who can study and relieve their difficulties, few points of contact, with the best thoughts and aspirations of their age, few educated public spirited residents” (Holden 13). The settlements attempted to provide the working class with such helpers. In America, the poor neighborhoods were teeming with immigrants who brought with them an entirely new set of problems besides poverty. In 1888, middle-class reformer Jane Addams visited the settlement houses of London and returned to Chicago where the settlement she established in 1889 adopted several of its features. Addams describes the area in which Hull House was situated:

The streets are inexpressibly dirty, the number of schools inadequate, sanitary legislation unenforced, the street lighting bad, the paving miserable and altogether lacking in the alleys and smaller streets and the stables foul beyond description. Hundreds of houses are unconnected with the street sewer...rear tenements flourish; many houses have no water supply save the faucet in the back yards (Painter xxiii).

In this area, Hull House was established by Jane Addams and Ellen Starr in 1889 as the first social settlement. According to Addams, Hull House resulted from three trends: “first, the desire to interpret democracy in social terms; secondly, the impulse beating at the very source of our lives, urging us to aid in the race progress; and, thirdly, the Christian movement toward humanitarianism” (Schlereth 257). These reformers recognized that charitable handouts would provide only temporary relief and damning sermons would save few souls; therefore, they immersed themselves deep within the slums and offered their services while working conjointly with the people of the neighborhood to provide more permanent solutions. The most important aspect of the settlement was that it provided a space where the middle class and the working class could encounter one another and jointly work towards reform. Above all, they advocated cooperation and provided a forum for constructive discussion regardless of race, class, or gender.

Where the settlements differed greatly in opinion and method, they united in sympathy, in common aims, and universally stood for “service through neighborhood cooperation” (Holden 182). The settlement was a home composed of a resident group of socially minded persons eager to learn the problems which their neighbors faced and to join with them in seeking durable solutions. The settlement worked to give help where it was wanted in a constructive way, so that, besides providing immediate assistance, progress

would be made towards eliminating the social need for the particular aid in the future. Most settlements provided classes, clubs, nurseries, recreational programs, summer campus and other services to their working class neighbors, but a few became major centers for reform and social research. These reformers believed that ignorance was more harmful than anything else. Thus, the settlement developed “from the preconceived conviction that social justice is possible only through complete social understanding. Understanding is possible only through knowledge, and knowledge may be achieved only through contact with existent social facts” (Holden 176). For this reason, the leading settlement residents, such as those working at Hull House, initiated extensive research on their neighborhoods. In addition, they publicized the plight of the poor, and established organizations which “lobbied to expand government’s support of economic security and human welfare, pointedly challenging the Gilded-Age’s Darwinism and commitment to limited government” (Diner 22).

Indeed, these reformers were pioneers in social improvement. The settlements were experiment stations where new proposals in education and public health were tested. The first kindergartens were established here, and the yards of the houses were often used as playgrounds. Growing out of the experience of the Henry Street Settlement were the beginnings of medical inspections and school nursing. “The evils of dark, unsanitary tenements impressed themselves upon the first Settlements who were among the early leaders in housing reform” (Holden 184). In addition, the social research that so many of these settlements focused on helped to change the public’s opinion of immigrants as the “unworthy poor.” They determined that poverty, instead of resulting from moral defects in personal character, was a result of “low wages, employment, ill-health, and accidents” (Schlereth 258). In this way, these reformers did a great deal to change the public’s view of poverty and had “a wonderful power to open the eyes of those who do not know what it is to have a social conscience” (Holden 86). Finally, they were able to transform the immigrants’ opinion of reform by allowing them to make decisions and participate in helping to better their own situations.

The immigrant working class struggled not only to exercise a degree of control over their living conditions but their working environment as well. In 1915, Benjamin Parke De Witt described the effects of industrialization when he stated that “men became economic slaves...Slowly, Americans realized they were not free” (Diner 6). Working class immigrants refused to accept their lot and so they organized and banded together in order to transform the work place. Although industrial operatives were for the most part unable to prevent changes in technology and work organization from diminishing their autonomy in the workplace and threatening their economic security, they still found ways both informal and through unions to contest their employer’s

claim to hegemonic control of the factory and its labor force. Both workers and managers contended violently and repeatedly over “every aspect of the spreading wage-factory system of production: work hours, work day, the place, safety, machinery, conditions, security and wages” (Schlereth 34). Indeed, the working-class immigrant was an integral part of labor reform movements at the turn of the century. Workers formed unions and went on strike over wages and hours, work rules and control of the shop floor. They changed jobs readily, took days off at will, and slowed the pace of production. “In this uneven contest in which industrialists held most of the power, workers still fought for economic security, challenged managers’ control, and protected the autonomy of their families” (Diner 50).

Not only were the immigrants concerned with working conditions, but again middle class reformers played an essential role in changing the face of labor, although at times they faced this task with differing or opposing ideals than the workers. Like with the settlements, while men participated in reform, many leaders were middle class women who applied similar techniques to transform working conditions as they had to living conditions. This is because increasingly, “middle-class women came to the realization that in modern industrial society, the doctrine of separate spheres no longer held: the home and the community were inexplicably bound together, and those concerns once defined as the private responsibility of individual housewives and mothers were in actuality public and political” (Dye 3). Pointing the community’s need for “municipal housekeeping,” these women organized around the improvement of working conditions, especially for women and child wage earners.

At times, these reformers used labor tactics and worked with their fellow women regardless of race or class. Socialists and settlement leaders such as Addams organized the Women’s Trade Union League (WTUL) to advance the interest of women within the union movement. In 1909, a shirtwaist-manufacturing industry went on strike in New York City and both drew the attention and support of such middle-class reformers. When these women joined the picket lines, “the city’s practice of arresting the strikers, hauling them to court, and slapping them with large fines backfired” (Painter 249). But stories of successful cooperation such as this are rare. For the most part, the WTUL and various other labor organizations succeeded somewhat better in its other aims, “especially lobbying for the passage of its protective legislation, educating women of all classes to the value of the labor movement and of unions for women” (Painter 245).

There were various other tactics these reformers resorted to that did not require the difficult task of organizing across classes. There was the National Consumers’ League which, through boycotts of various stores, could exert pressure for the provision of decent wages and working conditions. But

perhaps their most important action was at the local, state and national levels where they worked to pass important labor laws. At times these new policies, such as child labor and home manufacturing laws, were in contention with the immigrants who felt that the laws compromised their economic security. But for the most part, these new policies were met with acceptance and appreciation. By the second decade of the twentieth century women who had begun "their social welfare work in women's organizations--such as the WTUL and the Consumers' League~ and women dominated institutions like the settlement houses, were exerting an important influence upon the role of public policy" (Painter 252). As a result of taking action at all governmental levels, women helped secure pure food, factory inspection, and health care. To a great degree, women's institutions "laid down the agenda for the public health and social welfare reforms that in the twentieth century softened the impact of industrialization on working people" (Painter 252).

But what of these efforts at various reform movements? Can we not also turn to literature for interpretations and varying opinions of such movements, because what is literature but a reflection of the historical moment? Were they considered successful, did reformist authors think there was any hope, or was there only despair? Writers had a difficult task before them because they "had to account not only for the uncontrollable forces of change that were altering American culture, but also for those purposeful visions of change that reformers were proposing and seeking to have realized" (Martin 6). What is evident is that there were two belief systems at work during this period which reflected opposing views of human nature and, therefore, opposing views about the ultimate success of reform. For some, human nature is innately bad and incapable of any genuine reform, while others held fast to the notion that humans are fundamentally good and redeemable.

Naturalists such as Stephen Crane and Frank Norris held fast to the deterministic notion that human nature was corrupt, and each person's lot already cast. This view of a predetermined, uncaring world is reflected in Crane's poem: "A man said to the universe:/ 'Sir, I exist!'/ 'However,' replied the universe,/ 'The fact has not created in me/ a sense of obligation.'" Such lines portrays a relationship to the world determined only by outside forces and therefore beyond human control. In the introduction to *McTeague's* Eric Solomon explains how naturalists employed the Social Darwinism theory where "humans retain animal qualities; God is absent, and natural forces (usually negative) prevail; chance and violence are omnipresent as causes. All of which, in fiction, diminish the possibility of lyric healing nature in which individuals have free will" (xiii).

There is no hope of redemption for naturalists, so for characters like Maggie or McTeague there is only death. In Maggie's descriptions of immigrant life, Crane understood, "in city and country, that the cry of rage and frustration was the human condition~ that life was not simply, as the older Americans had it, earnest; but savage" (Martin 62). Both Crane and Norris symbolically trace human nature into its very depths. Norris follows McTeague to Death Valley where he is "locked to the body. All about him, vast and interminable stretched the measureless leagues of Death Valley" (Norris 347). Similarly, Crane chronicles Maggie's descent into the darkened city by the "deathly black hue of the river. [Where] the varied sounds of life, made joyous by distance and seeming unapproachableness, came faintly and died away to a silence" (Crane 81). Thus, these authors living through the depression of the 1890s surveyed their society and recognized the necessity for social awareness but decided that its success was an impossibility because humanity's fate was predetermined.

Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* presents an entirely different view of humans as innately good and reform as the ultimate expression of such goodness. Bellamy was an idealist who had a deep faith in the natural goodness of man. "He was not a politician, not an economist; he wanted, simply to search out the responsibility for an economy that was producing so much poverty and suffering. He felt that man could not be as cruel and unjust as his competitive behavior made him seem" (Parrington 69). The result was his utopian novel that was one of the most popular and influential books of the late nineteenth century. In the story, Julian West's metamorphosis is dramatized by the contrasts between present and the future, the real and the ideal, poverty and progress, self and society, "in short the division in his identity between a chaotic, competitive nineteenth century and the harmoniously cooperative twentieth century" (Martin 222).

There were still certain ideals of naturalism and animalistic descriptions are evident in Bellamy's portrayal of the nineteenth century. Looking back from the year 2000 his characters conclude that, "if you would see men again the beasts of prey they seemed in the nineteenth century, all you have to do is to restore the old social and industrial system which taught them to view their natural prey in their fellow men, and find their gain in the loss of others" (Bellamy 180). But Bellamy isn't a naturalist and therefore, unlike the naturalists who would contend that there is ultimately no hope, Bellamy argues other words. Dr. Leete ultimately condemns the naturalist philosophical outlook as he explains to West that society's profound pessimism and cynicism perpetuated the conviction that "men lived together solely for the purpose of overreaching and oppressing one another, and of being overreached and oppressed" (Bellamy 184). In addition, the deterministic belief that it "was not

the crime of man, nor of any class of men that made the race so miserable, but a hideous, ghastly mistake, a colossal world-darkening blunder" (Bellamy 214) kept nineteenth century society from cooperative reform because they were incapable of recognizing humanity as innately good. For Bellamy, "human nature in its essential qualities is good, not bad, men by their natural structure and intentions are generous" (Bellamy 187). To him, the utopia he is proposing capitalizes on the true characteristics of human nature and allows its citizens to prosper equally from this knowledge.

Bellamy's novel is perhaps the most politically charged call to social reform because, not only does he take great care to point out the injustice in modern day society, he simultaneously proposes a method of reform for the system. West contrasts his opinion of the poor before and after his enlightenment. Before, West was exactly like Davis' men in the iron mill as he "witnessed its sights with feelings of disgust mingled with a certain philosophical wonder at the extremities mortals will endure" (Bellamy 211). But once the possibilities of reform are revealed, he sees in these same people his "brothers and sisters, [his] parents, [his] children flesh of [his] flesh, blood of [his] blood" (Bellamy 211). Nevertheless, the applicable reality of this utopian society remains debatable. Both Mr. Barton and Dr. Leete argue that once humanity was cognizant of their inherent goodness, not evil, they recognized that change must be brought about. In this respect, *Looking Backward* suffers from the same inherent mistakes as many utopian visions. "It assumes a perfectibility in man. It assumes a race that could control and minister to a machine civilization, who could remain peaceable and contented with prosperity" (Parrington 75). Despite its faults, Bellamy's attempt must be given due credit. His utopian vision helped to define the social consciousness that Americans were perhaps for the first time in their history developing. He was able to give to the confused social consciousness of his time "not only justification, but life and wholeness" (Martin 225).

Ultimately, these authors and their opinions were products of the historical moment in which they were writing and are, therefore, not representative of any ultimate Truth. What then can be learned if none of these authors captured an absolute Truth? In his *A Call for Realism*, Howells says that "we must ask ourselves before we ask anything else, is it true?—true to the motives, the impulses, the principles that shape the life of actual men and women?" In the end, it is up to each individual to decipher the various truths and events of the late nineteenth century for himself. I tend to be a moderate, incorporating naturalist and utopian ideals into my interpretation of reform. I find the most truth in the words of Howells and Davis. In many respects, Davis was a determinist. For with Wolfe ideas aren't enough to change his circumstances and in order for there to hope of controlling our own fate, the

reform movement must constantly move past being merely a nice idea and manifest itself as something substantial. Despite the story's bleak circumstances, there remains a glimmer of hope because "God has set the promise of the Dawn" (Davis 38). The reformers of the late nineteenth century, despite many bleak predictions had to believe that the work they were doing was going to serve some ultimate good, that it was going to change things. Life is still bleak in many aspects, but I believe these reformers managed to make life a little better. But in order for its effects to survive we need to continually renew our visions of reform so that we can move closer towards the Dawn.

### Bibliography:

Bellamy, Edward. *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*. New York, NY: Signet Classic, 1887.

Crane, Stephen. *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. New York, NY: Fawcett Premier, 1893.

Davis, Allen F. *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1973.

Davis, Rebecca Harding. *Life in the Iron Mills*. New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 1861.

Degler, Carl N. *Out of Our Past: The Forces That Shaped Modern America*. New York, NY: Harper Colophon Books, 1959.

Diner, Hasia R. *Erin's Daughters in American: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.

Diner, Steven J. *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era*. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1998.

Donaldson, Susan V. *Competing Voices: The American Novel 1865-1914*. New York, NY: Twayne Publishers, 1998.

Duis, Perry R. *Challenging Chicago: Coping With Everyday Life 1837-1920*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998.

Dye, Nancy S. (ed), Frankel, Noralee (ed). *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era*. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1991.

Holden, Arthur C. *The Settlement Idea: A Vision of Social Justice*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1922.

Martin, Jay. *Harvests of Change: American Literature 1865-1914*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967.

Norris, Frank. *McTeague*. New York, NY: Signet Classic, 1899.

Painter, Nell Irving. *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987.

Parrington, Vernon Louis Jr. *American Dreams: A Study of American Utopias*. Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University, 1947.

Schlereth, Thomas J. *Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publisher, 1991.

Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1889.

**Baby Tuckoo Writes a Journal:**  
**The Marriage of Linguistic and Personal Development in**  
*Portrait of the Artist*  
**Second Place: Scholarly Writing Prize**  
*Christina Gutierrez*

James Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man traces the early history of Stephen Dedalus' life alongside his linguistic development. The trend is toward a unification of signifier and signified into coherent signs. Ferdinand de Saussure, the most influential critic in linguistic criticism, defined "signified" as the idea or concept of a thing, the mental picture of the object itself so to speak; "signifier" as the name, the actual sound image we give to the thing; and "sign" as the unification of signifier and signified into a word with meaning. Thus, language becomes "a system of signs in which the only essential thing is the union of meaning and sound images, in which both parts of the sign are psychological" (Saussure 61). For Stephen, personal development is inextricably tied to linguistic development, and the story of his early life becomes the story of the joining of meaning, concept, and name.

Saussure also posited that the state of a language is "a projection of the [historical] facts at any moment" (64). In this conception, each phase of Stephen's life provides a new superstructure, a new frame of reference for the signs he is learning how to use and interpret. Eventually, when he decides to leave Ireland, he has progressed enough to understand significance on his own, in diary form, without any outside structure to base understanding on. His linguistic development is thus a metaphor for his personal development; indeed, it cannot be separated.

The first image of Stephen is that of him as a very small child at his family's current home in Dublin. He is in the process of learning how to speak, which corresponds sharply to his discovery of himself as a being and an independent entity. We seem to have met Stephen just as he enters what Lacan refers to as the "mirror stage" of development. This phase occurs when a child sees his image in the mirror and recognizes it as himself, rather than an outside entity. With this realization comes the understanding of the self as separate from others around him, and distinct from his environment. In Stephen's case, however, the mirror stage occurs in linguistic terms rather than in psychological terms. The first speech in the book comes from his father, who tells him "once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down the road and this moocow that was down along the road met a nicens little baby boy named baby tuckoo'...he was baby tuckoo" (3). There is no separation here between the words he hears and himself. He can grasp the

concept of “baby tuckoo” only by understanding that *he* is the referent. In order for this to happen, he has to realize himself as entity, distinct from the world, but not from his father’s words. He has not yet separated himself from language.

At home, he is not exposed to any overarching system of meaning. There is no superstructure, such as he will encounter later in school and the Church, from which he gleans meaning. Thus, the only frame of reference he has is himself. In a sense, “words have not yet collided with the world, so that nonsense and significant language are not recognizably antagonistic opposites” (Singer 470). There can be no unified system of meaning yet because there are no boundaries of sense outside of his interaction with his family. He can thus connect himself to a story of a “moocow” because he has no reason to suspect anything nonsensical. After he has been at school and has returned home for Christmas he grasps this difference: “why did Mr. Barret in Clongowes call his pandybat a turkey? But Clowngowes was far away” (23). Home thus functions as a shelter from unified systems of meaning, a place in which he does not have to worry about the larger implications of language. At home, there must be a baby tuckoo because his father mentions one, so baby tuckoo must therefore, be himself.

Piaget makes a distinction between social speech and what he terms “ego-centric speech” (9), characterized by Stephen’s above deduction. These two categories make up the extent of early childhood speech, with Stephen’s speech patterns as no exception. In ego-centric speech, children do not need to assume a listener for their utterances. When he hides himself under a table from the neighbor girl, for instance, his father says —O, Stephen will apologize. Dante said: —O, if not, the eagles will come and pull out his eyes.” (4). From these utterances, comes the verse

Pull out his eyes,  
Apologize,  
Apologize.  
Pull out his eyes (4)

which seems to be Stephen’s own linguistic creation. As Piaget would argue, “this is ego-centric, partly because the child speaks only about himself, but chiefly because he does not attempt to place himself at the point of view of his hearer” (9). Stephen does not make any connection between the sense of his father and Dante’s statements and realistically grounded frame of reference; he simply connects them together in what seems to be idle repetition but can actually be seen as his first attempt, primitive as it is. At what he will later discover as his life’s vocation: poetry. As he imagines no listener, young Stephen is under no obligation to make his utterances intelligible.

However, as de Saussure points out, language is the “social side of speech” (59). Stephen must learn how to communicate with the members of his family in order to understand the and to become an active participant in familial life. To accomplish this, he must connect meaning to words that refer to his family instead of himself. He begins to name things in order to distinguish them from himself and his experiences, going further to understand the implications of his separation from those around him. Saussure designates this practice as a very primitive concept of the purpose of language. Although “a linguistic system as a series of differences of sound combined with a series of differences of ideas; the pairing of a certain number of acoustical signs with as many cuts made from the mass of thought engenders a system of values” (70). It is still far too early for Stephen to concern himself with these “values,” so language becomes a tool for the separation of concepts and items or actions.

Thus, a word like “heartburn” for which Stephen has no personal connection signifies “when Dante made that noise in her throat after dinner and then put her hand to her mouth: that was heartburn” (7). This is language outside that which refers to the goings-on of Stephen’s own consciousness, moving toward a more social function. As Singer writes, “Here, Stephen shows that he has learned the meaning of ‘heartburn,’ and by extension the rest of his vocabulary of pain sensation, not by the appearance of an inner sensation to which he afterwards applies a name by a private ostensive gesture, but in the public realm, where it is subject to publicly verifiable criteria” (468). “Public” here taken on the significance of a superstructure of meaning, albeit a very vague and general one. All Stephen grasps by this point is that other people have inner lives similar, in theory, to his own and as result, they use words other than the ones he uses. Still, he has progressed from strictly egocentric speech. Moreover, he has a broader concept of “meaning,” for he has learned that there is the possibility of words, like “turkey” for Mr. Barrett, that function in systems he is not familiar with. It is these outside systems that will eventually become part of his personal conception of meaning.

Once Stephen enters primary school at Clongowes, these outside structures of meaning begin to take on significance. He finds himself in a new linguistic context, subject to vocabularies and concepts completely removed from his sheltered home in Dublin. Jonathan Culler’s conception of language revolves around changes of context like Stephen’s. He argues that “[signs] do not have essences but are defined by a network of relations, both internal and external” (56). In certain instances, words take on wholly new meanings. Clongowes is one such context for Stephen.

The school, and the network of students and educators in it, provide a large-scale frame of reference for linguistic meaning. It is only in a very specific frame of reference that a statement such as “Rody Kickham was a decent fellow

but Nasty Roche was a stink. Rody Kickham had greaves in his number and a hamper in the refectory. Nasty Roche had big hands. He called the Friday pudding dog-in-the blanket”(5), has any meaning Here, Stephen is able to make simple declarative statements that carry their meaning in their utterance. There is no definition of terms; meaning seems pre-determined and accepted in a rather controlled context. There is the sense that making these distinctions about his peers makes Stephen a part of a group, a sub-culture with its own system of terms, wherein “big hands” can signify strength, power, and a boy in possession of a temperament to be feared.

Stephen has been inserted into a system of meaning that was established long before his participation in it. Like he does at home, he occasionally questions the meanings of the signs he encounters, but he does so consciously knowing that meaning here is far from arbitrary. He has to learn to function within Culler’s notion of context. When he hears the other boys refer to Simon Moonan a “suck” while referring to his amiable relationship with the prefect, he ponders, “suck was a queer word...the sound was ugly. Once he had washed his hands in the lavatory of the Wicklow Hotel and his father pulled the stopper up by the chain after and the dirty water went down through the hole in the basin...It had made a sound like that: suck” (7). Here, he employs the same egocentric technique for making meaning that he used at home in Dublin, but in a more mature manner. He already knows what the word means in reference to a story about him and his father.

In reference to the “suck” passage, David White writes, “the point to be noted here is the intimacy established between word and experience, even a childhood experience later grafted onto the word” (White 91). However, here Stephen is not using the personal experience to find the definition of the word, but to explore a new concept of the word. He knows that “suck” can be used in his present circumstances, but he understands different shades of meaning and must consciously decide to ignore the meaning he is used to in order to function in this new system.

A similar instance of Stephen’s testing the Clongowes linguistic boundaries arises in relation to the ever-present reminder of priestly authority: “Was that a sin for Father Arnall to be in a wax or was he allowed to get into a wax when the boys were idle because that made them study better or was he only letting on to be in a wax? It was because he was allowed because a priest would know what a sin was and would not do it” (39). Stephen’s questioning is not of the term “wax” itself. The implication is that he knows full well what the word means, but he is not sure how it fits into the superstructure of school and priests. He wonders only the degree to which the term can be applied, and seems content enough to simply accept its existence. As Culler argues, “in studying signs, one must investigate the system of relations that allows meaning to be produced and, reciprocally, one can only determine what are pertinent

relations between items by considering them as signs” (56). To Stephen, a “wax” becomes a sign not only of an ill temper, but also of the authority of the priest to judge right from wrong. That Father Arnall becomes upset thus becomes only a reminder of his power, and indeed perhaps even divine right, to do so.

It is at Clongowes that Stephen learns that a linguistic system can create an entire world, that “language, properly ordered, is fully capable of indicating Stephen’s referential connections with all levels of spatial reality. However, language remains subservient to the objective stability resting in these levels” (White 96). This concept is similar to Saussure’s idea that language functions on one level as a gage for the happenings of the world. Clongowes represents the first unified structure Stephen has encountered. There are too many contradictory elements and frames of reference in his homelife for him to find any comparable structure. At home, he must listen to Dante and his father’s heated Christmas dinner argument about Parnell’s politics and attitudes toward Ireland’s priests. While school may seem linguistically alien and removed from Stephen’s experience, at least this rather rigid structure has some degree of stability to it. It is only after he has been at school that Stephen can articulate his place in the Universe using simple words and a categorizing method:

Stephen Dedalus  
Class of Elements  
Clongowes Wood College  
Sallins  
County Kildare  
Ireland  
Europe  
The World  
The Universe (11).

This is the second instance of Stephen’s “poetry” in the novel, the first being the repetitive “pull out his eyes.” Linguistic development is evident through the progression of the poems themselves; the above list is centered around names instead of repeated sounds. He has created a hierarchy using a system of signs learned in school. In essence, although the Clongowes’ universe of language vastly predates him, he has learned to create meaning within this system.

Once Stephen is removed from the structured primary school environment, when his father falls upon hard financial times, he still yearns for a system of signs. However, at home now in Blackrock, he is no longer part of an organized system. Still a fairly young boy, Stephen is not ready to set up his own system of referents; he does not have the experience or the education. Instead, he turns once again to outside sources. This time however, left to his

own devices, he chooses the most obvious source of linguistic meaning: literature. He allows the stories he reads to stand in for his own experiences, and attempts to plug himself into the worlds of the various authors he encounters.

The most prevalent of these is Dumas' The Count of Monte Cristo. While reading the book, Stephen suffers "unrest which had sent him wandering in the evening from garden to garden in search of Mercedes" (56). The idea, or sign, "Mercedes," with its referent of the beautiful love interest in Dumas' work, comes to signify Stephen's own search for companionship. However, he takes the work literally, actually adopting its language and environment as his own, and seems to look not for a woman with the allure of Mercedes, but for Mercedes herself. When he meets Emma, she immediately becomes his fictional obsession, and he is paralyzed by his awe of her, unable to take any successful action. He has, as Paul Jay observes, failed to "acknowledge the inherent disjunction between the [himself] and the subject of its text by fictionalizing [his] life" (Jay 1051).

As at Clongowes, his apparent understanding of the terms of a system make him feel a part of it. Jay contrasts this approach to the autobiography Stephen essentially writes in journal form in the final part of the novel. At this juncture, however, his use of language completely devoid of real-world referents is a reflection of his immaturity. Indeed, "language must be considered as an essential part of the reason why reality is indeed real—the way we apprehend the nature of the 'external' world is partially constituted by the way we talk about the 'reality' of the world" (White 84). Stephen does not feel any anchor in the "real world" at home.

That Stephen chooses to take refuge in literature is an early sign of what he will eventually recognize to be his vocation: writing. On a visit with his father to Cork, for example, he is horrified by the poverty and general squalor of the town. Viewing the men in the bar in which his father is, to his extreme embarrassment, also drinking heavily, "his mind seemed older than theirs: it shone coldly on their strifes and happiness and regrets like a moon upon a younger earth...He repeated to himself the lines of Shelly's fragment. Its alteration of sad human ineffectualness with vast cycles of activity chilled him, and he forgot his own human and ineffectual grieving" (81). The words of a poet allow him to intellectually transport himself from his surroundings. He feels as if he has a secret store of knowledge; that he is part of an older system than these men. It is the same "in" feeling he received using the jargon of Clongows, or plugging himself into his father's nursery rhyme.

Eventually, he attempts to emulate the craft of these writers he finds so reassuring, realizing, albeit on a subconscious level, that "it is only with the conscious rejection of this mode that the problem of the subject...comes, as it were, into its own, that it begins to embrace a new content in the very act of

embracing a new form" (Jay 1051-2). The "mode" Jay refers to is Stephen's heavy reliance on using others' terms to explain and understand his own situation. It is on this trip that the first signs of Stephen developing his own linguistic system emerge. Walking down the street with his father, still not comfortable in the poor surroundings, he thinks, " -I am Stephen Dedalus. I am walking beside my father whose name is Simon Dedalus. We are in Cork, In Ireland. Cork is a city. Our room is in the Victoria Hotel. Victoria and Stephen and Simon. Simon and Stephen and Victoria. Names" (78). Again, Saussure argues that the use of language merely for naming things, for distinguishing objects and places from each other and eventually from the self are functions of a primitive, early understanding of language. This is the way children think.

Stephen is not only still literally considered a child, he is also a newborn in the area of art. He has seen that art can create entire systems of meaning, and is beginning to desire his own. However, De Saussure also argues that, in constructing signs and ultimately, systems of signs, "the word arbitrary calls for comment. The term should not imply that the choice of signifier is left entirely to the speaker...I mean that it is unmotivated, i.e. arbitrary in that it has no natural connection with the signified" (62). The very names themselves are arbitrary signs. Stephen could not simply decide that he wishes the term "Cork" to refer to Dublin, or that his father should not be called "Simon" but something else if he truly wished to use the names to understand his present circumstances. Although he is indeed working with words to slowly construct his own reality, he is still somewhat bound by the pre-established meaning of the terms he uses. Stephen overestimates his mastery of language and meaning however, and attempts to use them to create a code of conduct for himself that is completely removed from any standard system around him.

As Kenner points out, however, "each chapter closes with a synthesis of triumph which the next destroys" (46). After an extended stay at home, his father and uncle are able to secure him a place at the Belvedere secondary school. Also run by priests, the hope is that he will become adept at theology and further his training in the church, ultimately culminating, in the ideal situation, of his taking up the cloth. His early days at the new school, however, can hardly be described as holy. He translates his fervent desire for finding "Mercedes" from an obsession with the beautiful Emily, to a lust for women in general. He resorts to visiting prostitutes, relishing the allure of sin and wickedness. Intellectually, he understands that his increasingly frequent visits to brothels are sins: "He had sinned mortally not once but many times and he knew that, while he stood in danger of eternal damnation for the first sin alone, by every seceding sin he multiplied his guilt and his punishment" (88). This knowledge does nothing to stop him. Indeed, it encourages his deviant

actions, because he knows that he is functioning very much outside the new system he finds himself in.

This deviance can be partially explained by the break in Stephen's formal education. His time at home has allowed him to construct his own system of meaning, and he has not been at Belvedere long enough to let the system absorb him. That is, until the retreat in reverence to Saint Francis Xavier, the patron saint of the school. It is in this annual three-day bout of preaching that Barthes' theory of the relationship between myth and language becomes pertinent to Stephen's development. Father Arnall's aim in the retreat is to frighten the boys into repentance and avoidance of future sin by describing in graphic and lucid detail the fate that awaits sinners in Hell. He constructs a vision of Hell that is completely all encompassing, and so grand in its scope that it functions as an independent myth in the system of Christian theology. The rhetoric is astounding. For instance: "[Hell] is a never-ending storm of darkness, dark flames and dark smoke of burning brimstone, amid which the bodies are heaped upon one another without even a glimpse of air. Of all the plagues with which the land of the Pharaohs was smitten one plague alone, that of darkness, was considered horrible" (102). The reference to the Biblical plagues makes the universe of Hell seem even more complete and eternal—it has origins in the early stories of the Bible that the boys would have been very familiar with.

The function of language in myth, as Barthes explains, is an unusual one: "myth is a peculiar system, in that it is constructed from a semiological chain which existed before it: it is a *second-order semiological system*. That which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, merely becomes a signifier in the second" (81). Words (signs) constructed of signifiers and signifieds, become signifiers for the ideas of the myth, thus creating a layering effect that seems to make the myth seem larger than itself and simultaneously lend credence to the themes and images of the myth. In Arnall's "mythical" Hell, the sign "sin," which Stephen has heretofore understood simply as the sum total of his deviant actions, becomes the signifier for the idea of eternal suffering. The two concepts become inextricably linked. For Stephen, this secondary construction translates to the certainty of his banishment to Hell for his previous actions.

At the beginning of the seminar, Father Arnall instructs the boys, "And remember, my dear boys, that we have been sent into this world for one thing and for one thing alone: to do God's holy will and to save our immortal souls. All else is worthless" (94). He has assumed that they are as involved in his system of myths as he is, and that the stories he will tell will ring true with them. This automatic inclusion in the structure is what torments Stephen. He is not given an alternative system to participate in. the sheer mass of Arnall's

speech is so overpowering that it shatters all hope of alternatives without even mentioning them. Unlike Barthes, Stephen is no longer able to separate a “language-object,” which the linguist defines as a “language or the modes of representation which are assimilated to it,” and “metalanguage,” comprised of “the language which myth gets a hold of in order to build its own system...it is a second language in which one speaks about the first” (82). His worldly understanding of terms like sin, repentance, Hell, and guilt can no longer stand on their own, but all function in the larger system and point to his doom.

Even concepts like “companionship” or “knowledge” become absorbed in the myth, for, as Arnall himself articulates, “things which are good in themselves become evil in Hell” (112). The idea of other souls sharing eternal punishment is no comfort because of Arnall’s description of the mountains of rotting bodies giving off a foul and under worldly vapor. The only possible knowledge in Hell is that of the folly of sin, and the certainty that it is far too late to repent. Nothing is sacred in this vision, not even that which should automatically be included in the tradition: “the hair-splitting categories of pain...is cast in a brainlessly analytic mode that effectively prevents any corresponding Heaven from possessing any reality at all” (Kenner 45). Not even the Biblical system of Heaven holds any idea of relief. Indeed, the idea of Heaven lacks even a referent in Arnall’s vision.

Not surprisingly, then, Stephen is sick with his hurry to repent, and afraid that even “repentance” will not stand up to this new construct. On his journey to a local church to purge himself of his sin and attempt to salvage his mortal soul, he attempts a mental exercise in hierarchy reminiscent of the catalogue of names that gave him a sense of peace in Cork, but it fails. He thinks, “There were so many flagstones on the footpath of that street and so many streets in that city and so many cities in the world. Yet eternity had no end. He was in mortal sin” (119). Finally confessing, giving his sins verbal expression in language, however, he feels completely safe and refreshed. A few items of significance here: he has participated in the Church’s system completely by seeking refuge in it for its own dangers, and he had demonstrated the release he will come to feel through the manipulation of language in poetry. For a time, he feels the old sense of completely absorption in the system, and takes great care to follow its guidelines to the strictest degree. Indeed, “his daily life was laid out in devotional areas. By means of ejaculations and prayers he stored up ungrudgingly for the souls in purgatory centuries of days and quarantines and years; yet [this was not] wholly rewarded since he could never know how much temporal punishment he had remitted by way of suffrage for the agonizing souls” (127).

The sheer degree of his newfound devotion prompts the director of the school to suggest the possibility of his becoming a priest, a full participant in the Church’s system for the rest of his life, reminding Stephen that the choice

of the cloth is a lifelong one, bestowed only upon the most pious. This suggestion leads Stephen to a long period of soul searching, trying to discover if, at heart, he could ever be content functioning as a cog in a wheel so removed from his own urge to create. His musings cause him to wander to the beach, where the natural beauty around him fills him with awe. Again, he turns to Shelly for the expression of his feelings of sublimity, and considering the poem, finds that "The phrase and the day and the scene harmonized in a chord. Words. Was it their colors? He had allowed them to glow and fade, hue after hue: sunrise gold, the russet and green of the apple orchards, azure of waves, the grey fringed fleece of clouds, No, it was not their colors: it was the poise and balance of the period itself" (143). Stephen cannot separate the majesty of his surroundings with the words used to describe them, the very words then become infused with a sense of inherent beauty, a phenomenon he had never fully experienced before.

Although the reader has been exposed to the inner workings of Stephen's mind from the very first section, this marriage of words and concepts, the final formation of "sign" in Stephen's brain, also functions to unite the workings of his brain with the narration of the novel itself. As John Paul Riquelme argues, "the effect is to align the teller's voice and the character's, if only temporarily...while some distinctions can be made between teller and character...the passages ask us again and again to consider the relationship of the two voices" (Riquelme 58). It is only once Stephen has understood the profound effect of uniting words with their referents, and the beauty inherent in the act, that he begins to take some agency in the narration of his own tale. In this moment, "His soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood, spurring her grave clothes. Yes! Yes! Yes! He would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul, as the great artificer...a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable" (146). He has realized his calling as a writer. As an "artificer," he will not be functioning in the systems of others, but in a personalized one which he will create himself.

Words have become a part of Stephen's internal life, not simply arbitrary vehicles for description. Indeed, "language is no longer merely an instrument of consciousness, the latter existing somehow apart from the language; rather, the nature of consciousness is now located *within* the peculiar character of words, now understood as employed by consciousness for purposes of defining the very structure of consciousness"(White 100). Priesthood would not only disallow the flourishing of Stephen's new passion, it would make the "artificing" Stephen longs to do all but impossible. He has finally become independent of the various superstructures that have been imposed on him since Clongowes, and serving the Church would force him to conform to strict rules and regulations, no only of conduct, but of doctrine and mode of

expression. It is thus no surprise that he describes his inevitable departure from Belvedere “as though he were slowly passing out of an accustomed world and hearing its language for the last time” (156). Linguistically, then, he has broken free, although there is still much room for growth.

The next time the reader encounters Stephen after his decision is in school again, but this time at University College, where he can study not the teachings of the Church, but those of varied disciplines that help him to construct a theory as to what it is he will be doing as a poet. The mode of expression he uses at University is similar to that which he used at Clongowes and at Belvedere in that it is specialized for a specific group of people. This time, however the sense of belonging that the language affords can only have significance to highly educated minds, to people who are capable of making complex distinctions and connections. Stephen’s is a language composed of complex and co-dependant referents; he constructs theories of beauty, philosophy and art that require a wholesale re-definition of terms. A discussion with friends produces, for example, “pity is the feeling which arrests the mind in the presence of whatsoever is grave and constant in human sufferings and unites it with the human sufferer. Terror is the feeling which arrests the mind in the presence of whatsoever is grave and constant in human sufferings and unites it with the secret cause” (176). Thus, he has taken “pity” and “terror” and raised their status from merely “terms” to signs and defined the concepts that are the signified. Stephen’s definition of the two terms relies heavily on Saussure’s conception of linguistic difference.

For Saussure, with any given sign “Its value is not fixed so long as one simply states that it can be ‘exchanged’ for a given concept, i.e. that it has this or that signification... with other words that stand in opposition to it. Its content is really fixed only by the concurrence of everything that exists outside it” (Saussure 67). This is a much more advanced Saussurian concept than the idea of the use of language for naming, which Stephen displays growing fondness for in earlier sections. He has thus been able to progress not only beyond the use of simpler language; he has developed theories about the language that function independently from the words themselves. As an aspiring poet, it is crucial that Stephen develop a sense of how language reconciles itself with art, and how the manipulation of language can lead to the creation of beauty.

In the same conversation with his classmates, Stephen posits that “to speak of these things and try to understand their nature and, having understood it, to try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, to press out again...from sound and shape and color which are the prison gates of or soul, an image of the beauty we have come to understand—that is art” (178). Art, in this conception, requires an understanding of the relationship between the thing and its expression. Concepts are only beautiful in so far as they are

expressed in an intelligible and cohesive manner. His theory of understanding beauty has its basis in finding a thing's "whatness," essentially separating it from its surroundings by identifying its causes and finding a way to communicate its special nature. Again, this parallels Saussure's method of finding meaning through difference.

Having gotten the theory under his belt, Stephen is able to apply it to his creation. He awakes one morning inspired to write poetry. Here again we see the marriage between character and narrator: "Thought, speech, and writing all merge in Stephen's climactic act of completing his poem, in which he achieves an extreme relationship like physical intimacy with the character in his own text, with the figure he makes of his poem, a figure that incarnates the androgynous coupling of the artist with interior paramour" (Riquelme 78). There seems to be no possible narrator than Stephen himself for the exclamation: "O! in the virgin womb of the imagination the word was made flesh" (187). The occasion for the poem is Stephen's frustration at his inaction upon seeing the new feminine object of his longings standing outside the University library with her friends. He has progressed from the idealized woman in Dumas' creation to a love he can express in his own poetry. He writes:

Are you not weary of ardent ways,  
Lure of the fallen seraphim?  
Tell no more of enchanted days.

Your eyes have set man's heart ablaze  
And you have had your will of him.  
Are you not weary of ardent ways?....

And still you hold our longing gaze  
With languorous look and lavish limb!  
Are you not weary of ardent ways?  
Tell no more of enchanted days (193).

This third installment of Stephen's poetry illustrates once again how far he has progressed. Much more than the series of names in the last "poem," in the poem, Stephen has united the object of his desires with the effects of her beauty on men's hearts. The beauty that separates the woman from others is not inherent, but based on the reactions of her onlookers.

With the completion of the poem, Stephen seems to have indeed gained a voice independent of any formal structure outside himself. However, the amalgamation of all of the systems of his past is not a complete transformation. Joyce's novel is about the creation of a writer. In order to make

the development complete within the book itself, Stephen must begin to tell his own story. He tells his fellow student Cranley, "I will tell you what I would do and what I would not do. I will no longer serve that in which I no longer believe whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life as art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can" (213). That the novel concludes with what can only be taken as excerpts from Stephen's journal illustrates that the only thing left for him to do is to express the course of his life in world of his own. Riquelme posits, "the style of the journal replaces the villanelle, and the aesthetic theory, and the other examples theory, and the other examples of Stephen's expression—written, spoken, and internal—that are either directly presented or alluded to earlier" (60). Thus, the last section becomes the inevitable expression of the theories he has developed at University. As a writer, Stephen cannot but extend his theory to practice. In Saussurian terms, he has progressed from "*la langue*," the possibility of a language, the innate predisposition for the creation of language to "*la parole*," (Culler 57) the expression of the propensity in an actual linguistic form. Stephen's "*langue*" is the application of his theory of artistic creation.

Essentially, he takes over the narration of his life from the narrator who has seen him through up to this point. The transformation began with the reader being privy to the process of creation of the poem. Now, the reader sees not the road to the linguistic creation, but the result of the creation itself. The line between narrator and character has blurred and eventually disappeared. Michael Levenson argues that "questions of characterization join with questions of genre, and the relationship between individual agency and impersonal form becomes vivid. In elaborate, though submerged patters, the diary reinterprets the narrative that it will soon conclude" (Levenson 1017). In this conception, Stephen's growth into himself, his coming of age through his discovery of writing, mirrors the shift in literary, and by extension, linguistic style, of the book itself.

Levenson furthers his analysis, however, with the argument that "[Stephen's] defiant act of individuality is only the latest instance, the millionth instance, of a persistently repeated gesture" (Levenson 1020). The foray into journalistic form, in Levenson's theory, is only the latest of Stephen's self-induced insertions into outside systems. Levenson focuses heavily on the form of the journal itself, and suggests that Stephen is has merely found, again, a sense of belonging in a structure he feels comfortable in. However, Levenson does not seem to take into account that the development has been gradual process toward the self. The poem in the previous section was only the first visible manifestation of his ever-growing liberation from other systems. He has matured from the never questioning the Clongowes system to using that of the

University to construct theories that, while they rely heavily on context, are products of his own construction. Stephen has progressed too far to regress again. While the diary form is a long-established tradition that Stephen in no way originated, his is far from an ordinary journal.

Over the course of the 21 entries, Stephen traces not only his reflections on the day's events (although never a simple recitation of events,) he reconstructs the course of his entire life as chronicled in the novel. The referents in the entries are the events of his life. He has become his own system, realized in journal form. He relates his journey through the series of superstructures. An early entry refers to a "long talk with Cranly on the subject of my revolt...attacked me on the source of one's love for one's mother" (214). This is analogous to the torment he received at the hands of a boy at Clongowes when asked if he kissed his mother goodnight. Earlier, the incident set him questioning the implications of the word "kiss." Now, he mentions it in passing, having discovered the parameters of his relationship with his mother.

Indeed, he records later that during a conversation with his mother, "to escape [the conversation, he] held up relations between Jesus and Papa against those between Mary and her son. Said religion was not a lying-in hospital. Mother indulgent. Said I have a queer mind and have read too much. Not true. Have read too little and understand less" (215). This statement recalls his early life at home, and that of his early days at Clongowes. Stephen sees his father and religion as similar in that they both constructed systems of belief that he was expected to but into. His contention that he had not read enough recalls his decision to attend University rather than seminary school, realizing that he desired more knowledge than the priesthood would afford him. The same entry includes "Then I went to college" (215). This easily becomes far more than a literal report of a trip to campus, it is the result of his conversation with his mother, and indeed of his search for the knowledge that she supposes he has.

As he begins to catch up with himself, chronicling his life up to the point at which he is writing, he comes to the same realizations in language as he did in reality. The journaled exclamation "Wild spring, Scuddling clouds, O life" (217)! strongly recalls his experience of the joining of beauty and language on the beach. Here, however, the amalgamation is three-fold. Language, a sign he has already discovered with "beauty" as its signifier, now join "writing." As in the Hell speech at Belvedere, Barthes' theory of myth applies strongly here. "Journal" takes on mythological status, with "writing" as the sign and "language" as merely the signifier. What remains is the abovementioned unification of narrator and character, which appears in the journal as "crossing Stephen's, that is my, Green" (215). He has realized himself as subject, as he did in Lacan's mirror stage, but here he has recognized himself as

writing self. Thus, Stephen has completed his linguistic development; writing has become an integral part of his identity.

As traceable ideologically through his participation in the structures of school, church and family, and materially through the movement from repetitive poetry to cogent journal entries with only themselves as referents, Stephen has come into his own linguistically. That he figures in as a prominent character in Joyce's later work, including as a full-fledged artist in Ulysses, argues that the development is far from complete. There is still a raw feeling to his journalistic endeavors, a sense of an individual encountering the world for the first time. Essentially, in the journey from "baby tuckoo" to the self-as-writer, the book has been a series of first encounters with meaning, with the last being the most self-reliant, and arguably the most complete. Words and author have merged as sign and signifier, and as Stephen with the "artificer" he longed to be.

### Works Cited:

- Barthes, Roland. "Mythologies," Literary Theory: an Anthology. Second edition. Ed. Rivken, Julie and Michael Ryan. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. 81-89.
- Culler, Johnathan. "The Linguistic Foundation," Second edition. Ed. Rivken, Julie and Michael Ryan. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. pp 56-58.
- Jay, Paul L. "Being in the Text; Autobiography and the Problem of Subject," *MLN* Vol. 97, No. 5, *Comparative Literature*. (Dec, 1982), pp.1045-1063.
- Joyce, James. Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1992
- Kenner, Hugh. "The *Portrait* in Perspective," Joyce. Ed. Chace, William M. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974. pp 29-49.
- Levenson, Michael. "Stephen's Diary in Joyce's *Portrait*—the Shape of Life," *ELH*, Vol. 52. No. 4. (Winter, 1985). Pp. 1017-1035.
- Piaget, Jean. The Language and Thought of the Child. New York, Harcourt Brace, 1932

- Riquelme, John Paul. Teller and Tale in Joyce's Fiction. Baltimore, the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.
- De Saussure, Ferdinand. "Course in General Linguistics," Second edition. Ed. Rivken, Julie and Michael Ryan. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. pp 59-71.
- Singer, Thomas C. "Riddles, Silence, and Wonder: Joyce and Wittgenstein Encountering the Limits of Language," *ELH* Vol. 57, No. 2. (Summer, 1990), pp. 459-484.
- White, David A. The Grand Continuum: Reflections on Joyce and Metaphysics. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983.

## The Musical Language

### Third Place: Scholarly Writing Award

*David Laine*

I just wanted to say, I started playing bass when I was about two years old. And a lot of people think that that's really strange, but, looking back on it now, I really don't think it's that strange, cuz music to me (cough) music's a language. And I think most of us can agree to that. And if it is a language, if we think about not learning the English language until we were two, most people would think we were kinda slow. So, when I look at learning the English language, usually we pick that up, you know, before we're one. We may not be able to speak it clearly yet, but we understand it. And so to me, if we can learn the English language, which is a very difficult language, then, when I think about it, we can learn the musical language. The musical language has half as many letters in the musical alphabet, so it should be that much easier. The thing we have to do, and in my opinion what we need to do, is just approach music the same way we approach a language, and take all the walls and the difficulties out of it, and just have fun with it, you know, like we do with language. We don't take our language so seriously, we just have fun with it. And if we approach music the same way, and that's all I do, that's the answer to everything I do, is I just make it as fun as possible. (Victor Wooten: Live at Bass Day 1998)

Victor Wooten is, in my opinion, a bass god. One of the best four-string electric players to live, I have often stood amazed at his fluid technique and improvisational grace, whether he's soloing or backing Béla Fleck and the Flecktones. After buying a book with some of his transcribed works, I found myself utterly dismayed at how impossible many of the songs looked. Watching videos showcasing his considerable talent, my self-esteem continued sinking lower and lower. Then I happened upon a DVD of his performance at Bass Day '98, and his words made me realize that music was not nearly so impossible as I had thought. I had approached music the wrong way, as a strange and abstract entity unto itself, entertaining to listen to but terribly difficult to comprehend. Mulling over this, it occurred to me that if music can be treated as a language, then it logically follows that it must be thought of as such to truly understand it.

The study of musical language and meaning has long been a focus of musicologists. The opinions proposed by authorities in the field are as varied as the experts themselves; while researchers such as Eduard Hanslick and Peter Kivy would argue music is simply meaningless sounds (Kivy going so far as to call it "pure sonic design"), this view is by no means universal (Walton 57). Perhaps such disagreement stems from the very nature of music; what is it, after all, but abstract aural stimulation? Unlike other fine arts, such as

painting, sculpture or dance, there is nothing in music more concrete to see or touch than the score, which is itself just a series of symbols arranging hypothetical noise. Leo Treitler observes that because of this, “Music, uniquely among the arts, is considered ineffable” (26). However, if music is so inexpressible, then why is it that it can contain enough beauty to bring us to tears, and how can it hold the power to lift our spirits so majestically? There must be something more communicated by music than simple pitch organization, something underneath the surface that anyone can learn to understand. However, it is worth remembering that calling music a language like any other is too simple of a comparison. Whereas language allows us to discuss things in the real world, music itself will always hold a certain conceptual nature (Sloboda 12). While a direct comparison would make things easier, it would not take into account the subtleties inherent in music and in language. With this in mind, we may begin to look at music in this new light.

Various links have been established between the grammatical underpinnings of language and music. Rita Aiello asserts that there is a phonetic, syntactic and semantic level inherent in each of them (40). Such terms, while rooted in language, can be used to compare the two, though it must be remembered that they almost become metaphorical when applied to music; indeed, “If there is a nonmetaphorical descriptive language for music, it would presumably refer strictly to the domain of the musical, set apart from the domain of the extramusical, as the domain of essentially uninterpreted tones and tone complexes or patterns” (Treitler 41, 42-43). On this cautious note, we find that musical pitch can easily be likened to the linguistic phoneme (Sloboda 24). This is because, while phonemes make up the basic sounds of a language, the note is the primary unit of a melody or harmony. Just like children first learn to distinguish words and then to talk, they also learn to hear and sing music first (one of my earliest songs was *Baby Beluga*). Should the child continue in his/her musical education, as they continue to build their linguistic knowledge through their ABCs, the learning process begins with simple notes. These are the alphabet of the musical language. By stacking the letters of the musical alphabet into chords, they make up the words of this special language.

Interestingly, accounts by some leading researchers appear to skip over the morphological aspect of music. Despite this gap, it seems reasonable to say that the chord is the basic equivalent of a word; they are “the basic vocabulary of tonal harmony” (Kostka 44). Words are made of individual phonemes arranged in a certain order, just like chords are constructed of notes arranged at specific intervals (generally at various intervals called different types of thirds). As our musical vocabulary, these chords hold certain meanings, whether we understand the fundamentals behind these feelings or not. As we

are humorously told by Nigel Tufnel, lead guitarist of Spinal Tap, the key of D minor, tonicized around the D minor triad, is “the saddest of all keys” (Reiner). This is delivered in a very tongue-in-cheek fashion, but it demonstrates the underlying meanings we attach to how chords sound. These meanings, just like words’, can be ambiguous and easily modified. We do this through changing the way chords are played. In an example we’ll come back to later, the “Hobbits” movement of the Lord of the Rings Symphony sounds in one instance light and happy, and in another relaxed and pastoral, and in yet another majestic and triumphant, simply by changing the music’s tempo and tone color (De Meij). The piece retains the same basic melodic and harmonic language, but slight variations in their delivery highlight the different things the music can say. Similarly, the Phrygian Minor Mode, when played over a major chord, can lend a luscious Spanish sound (Mel Bay). As we can see, while there are not very many words technically included in the musical language, they can be said in different ways to mean many different things.

Music has a syntactic structure very much like that of language. Sentences from any language can be treed, working up from the level of word to phrase to sentence. J. Sundberg and B. Lindblom show a method of treeing melodies that works along a very similar line (Sloboda 39). These trees combine individual melodic notes into longer musical phrases, eventually combining into yet longer periods. Fig. 1.1 is a facsimile of the formula of Sundberg and Lindblom’s treeing formula (for all examples, please refer to the end of the essay) (Sloboda 39, reproduction). The numbers on the bottom row refer to how viable a note is for chordal change, with a five meaning the chord cannot change and a one meaning that it practically must. Above these numbers are six hierarchical levels, ranging from the smallest unit (the beat) to the largest (the period). Each unit on a level comprises two lesser units, one foot equaling two beats, one bar equaling two feet, etc. This equation is even capable of generating simple melodies; two of Sundberg and Lindblom’s creations are copied in Fig. 1.2 (Sloboda 40, reproduction). The treeing strategy of Fig. 1.1 can be overlaid over either one of these to show where the specific phrases and periods lie. Compare the formula of Fig. 1.1 to the sentence tree of Fig. 1.3; we see that the two come out looking very similar. Each method combines words (notes in the context of their chordal structure) into longer phrases, which in turn combine into complete sentences (periods).

Although Sundberg and Lindblom do not include it in their structure, sentences can then be put together with conjunctions to form longer sentences, similar to musical double periods (Kostka 170). Conjunctions can take on various forms: “and” reaffirms the first sentence, while adding information, while “but” offers contrary information. Similarly, double periods are either called parallel, if the second period reestablishes the main theme of the first (and possibly adding to it), or contrasting, if it offers new, often contradictory

or responsory information (Kostka 171). The mark that distinguishes a double period from two separate periods is that a weak cadence ends the first period, effectively conjoining the two. A cadence is the punctuation that signals the end of a period. Typically, a double period first utilizes either a half cadence or an imperfect authentic cadence, leading to a much stronger perfect authentic cadence at the end of the second period (Kostka 170). To illustrate, a sentence such as “We went out and...” sounds incomplete; it obviously means to go somewhere, but it trails off. Musically, this is best called a half cadence; it ends on an unresolved note. “We went out,” while a more complete sentence than the previous, ends quite lamely. There is likely more that could be said, but the sentence is valid, and can continue on to a new thought. This is better likened to an imperfect authentic cadence; it ends on the tonic, but it doesn’t have a definitive ring to it. However, “We went out and got ice cream” gives us a thorough, complete thought. Its two sections work together for a comprehensive whole lacking in the previous examples. In a musical context, this most resembles a weak cadence leading to a perfect authentic cadence to wrap up the thought. Just like we find that there are various ways to link sentences together, weak cadences can be used to construct double periods. Of course, these are rough comparisons that do not explore the intricacies of the two systems; however, by looking at these independently created syntactical structures, it is apparent that there is a fundamental connection in how the two are organized.

Perhaps one of the greatest similarities between music and language lies in the connections made to Noam Chomsky’s linguistic structure. Chomsky lays claim that each natural language has the same basic structure, and that within it is a surface and deep structure; the deep structure makes up the inherent meaning, while the surface is simply the combination of words that happens to be chosen to communicate it (Sloboda 12, 13). I have encountered two different ideas about music’s structure. Each of these theories has a different focus; one tends to look at the music’s tonal structure, while the other looks at its thematic content. Musicologist Heinrich Schenker proposes the first, and his words are echoed throughout much of John Sloboda’s work. Schenker theorizes that the deep structure of a piece is the melodic and harmonic simplification of the work, while on the surface, the melody and harmony may include many alterations (Sloboda 13). Schenker calls his surface structure an *Ursatz*.

Three musical examples are provided here to illustrate how an *Ursatz* can be altered while maintaining the same deep structure. These three examples in the key of C minor all outline the same basic chord progression. It begins on the tonic chord, moves to the subdominant, then on to the dominant, and finally resolves back to the tonic. Fig. 2.1 shows the simplest

form of the sample *Ursatz*, directly embodying the deep harmonic structure, with C-A $\flat$ -B-C in the melody over a i-iv-V-i chord progression. (The roman numerals refer to major and minor chords in the key, depending on if the numerals appear in upper or lower case, respectively. Also note that only bass and melody notes are considered in *Ursatz*.) Fig 2.2 shows small changes to the melodic line, adding slightly without changing the basic meaning. Fig. 2.3 shows how longer passages can be added onto a melodic line without disrupting the deep structure. Measure two extends the first i chord with its first inversion, and measure four similarly draws out the iv chord. A cadential 6-4 chord is also added into measure five before the V chord. (Essentially, this is a tonic i chord in second inversion that leads to the dominant V. A cadential 6-4 followed by V functions the same as a regular dominant V chord, resolving to the tonic chord, but lends a different sound.) In addition to the elongation of the passage, more melodic depth has been added. These changes, while adding length, really do not change the basic i-iv-V-i progression. However, the cadential 6-4 especially could be seen as being a bit too much of an alteration, owing to the distinct sound. This process can be compared to a sentence such as “David hooked up with Meghan.” Small alterations add vividness, such as “David hooked up with Sexy Meghan,” or longer passages may further paint the picture: “David hooked up with that goddess sublime, Sexy Meghan, whose wondrous beauty left him in awe.” (Incidentally, David has not, in fact, hooked up with Sexy Meghan.) In each case, the basic deep structure is simply given greater elaboration. These sentences all put forth that David and Meghan went out. The first does so in a bland, unexciting way, though it does embody the basic meaning of the sentence. Sentence two fills in Meghan’s nickname, from which we can infer a little bit about her. The final example offers the same information, while doing so with the most embellishment. Just as Fig. 2.1 shows the simplification of Fig. 2.2 and 2.3, “David hooked up with Meghan” offers the most basic form of the other two sentences.

A second theory on musical structure is proposed by Aiello, hers being less rigidly systematic than Schenker’s. She looks at the musical theme and emotional weight, and proposes this to be the deep structure; the surface is the body of rhythmic, melodic and harmonic variations that are used to bring out these ideas (51). This theory seems to follow Chomsky’s much more closely. Chomsky’s theory sets the inherent meaning as language’s deep structure, as Aiello sets the underlying emotional themes conveyed through music. The specific words used are nothing more than a means to an end in communicating the message. While Schenker’s analysis can match Chomsky’s closely insofar as word/note placement goes, it greatly under-emphasizes the emotional weight we attach to music, and almost entirely misses Chomsky’s

point that language means something more than simple words. Schenker, in this regard, identifies much more closely with Kivy, seeing music as “pure sonic design.” Words are used to convey ideas, and Aiello’s musical theory puts forth that music acts the same way. We can see that her deep structure would probably fit Fig. 2.1-3 more closely than Schenker’s. The minor mode imparts a sadness to the piece that is evident in all three examples, while the V chord (utilizing the raised leading tone B natural, which is foreign to the key) gives a feeling “like a ray of light in a dark room” (Muller). These thematic elements are visible even in Fig. 2.3, overcoming the use of the cadential 6-4 chord in measure five: while it adds perhaps too much melodic variation to truly follow Schenker’s firmly tonal *Ursatz*, its emotional content remains essentially untouched. If anything, the delayed onset of raised leading tone in the dominant V chord heightens the drama and accentuates the release with the return of the minor tonic.

The implications of a linguistic comparison to music would do little without actually applying this concept to several musical pieces. The idea that music holds emotional value is by no means new to us. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle puts forth a musical doctrine of imitation, in which he postulates that music “imitates the passions or states of the soul, such as gentleness, anger, courage, temperance, and their opposites. Music that imitates a certain passion arouses that same passion in the listener” (Grout 6). Basically, he sees that by embodying the essence of an emotion, music reminds us of that passion, and draws it out in us in the process. Aiello, voicing the contrast between the meanings expressed by language and music, says that language is used to convey ideas, but “one of the main goals of music is to heighten emotions and express them aesthetically” (42). Let us, then, examine a few musical works for what they express emotionally. The first example is the “Hobbits” movement from The Lord of the Rings Symphony by Johan de Meij. Once the movement passes the main theme from the Gandalf movement, it kicks into a lighthearted, happy folk song marked by a major melody with a staccato feel, while the bass-line plods along in a carefree manner. The melody gets progressively happier as more instrumental tone colors, such as brass, join in melodically and make the sound bigger and brighter. Later on, the song transitions into a pastoral sound, recapitulating the same melody, but giving it to the strings and using a slower, more relaxed, flowing feel. The bass-line also stops its incessant banter in the background, liltily accentuating measures instead of each beat. Towards the end, the violins soar majestically as the brass triumphantly joins in, and the drums play a slow march beat. Finally, we have a return of Gandalf’s theme, ending out the symphony. All of these varied emotions are brought out with one melody played in different ways.

Another song that we can examine for its emotional impact is “Changing Your Demeanour,” by the Chieftains. A friend introduced this song to me years ago: “This is simply the happiest song ever. No matter how bad of a mood I’m in, I can just put it on, and everything feels better. In fact, you could even say that this song really does change your demeanour” (Precht). The song’s bouncing Celtic folk feel immediately establishes its excessively happy quality. The melody generally rises into the upper register, leading to a nonsensical chorus that revolves around notes up in the singer’s higher range. Towards the end, this whimsical piece of music picks up the tempo and continues to bounce along as it fades out. The light, brisk, staccato pace and rising melody combine to make it a wonderfully cheerful song. It would be hard to find an aspect that does not convey a playful, simple-minded happiness. The sense that we get, listening to this lovely Celtic ditty, is that it conveys a mirthful sensation and can possibly even bring our own emotions into alignment with it.

Music can also tell stories and describe characters. In some cases, the express purpose of music is to tell a story: “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice,” by Dukas, is a symphonic poem about an apprentice (to a sorcerer, to be precise) who messes up his master’s work. Mussorgsky’s “Night on Bald Mountain” paints a picture of All Hallows’ Eve, the night when Satan and the forces of darkness rise and walk the earth. To use an example not already made popular by a Disney film, though, we return once again to the De Meij Symphony, this time to its “Gollum (Sméagol)” movement. Sméagol is represented by a solo soprano saxophone that slyly slinks about. He whines and complains, and often ends phrases in a sputtering rage. At times, we can hear a second voice mirror Sméagol’s, introducing the duality of his shattered mind. Gollum appears as a solo flute, doubling the saxophone but rising above it to overshadow Sméagol while seductively driving him along. Gollum’s darker side can be heard in a carnival-like orchestral accompaniment, hanging insistently and malevolently in the background, sounding at times half-crazed and dangerous. The movement perfectly captures the essence of this pathetic, tortured creature, both his ruthless cunning and his sniveling wretchedness.

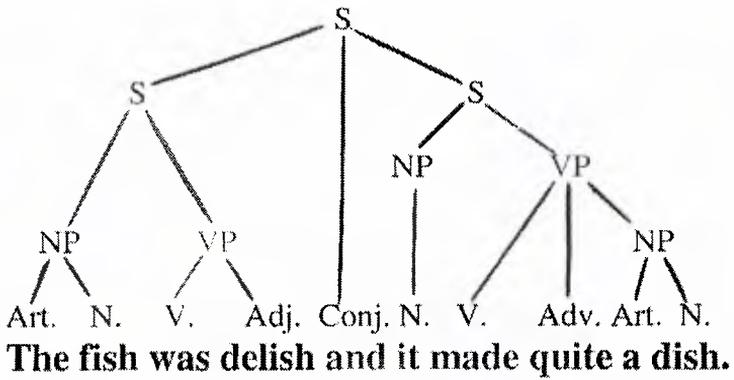
While sometimes the music has a direct representative meaning, at other times there is no specific story that the composer tells. Instead, we may find a story within the music’s emotional charge, sometimes even without trying: “If we look carefully, especially if we are willing to look under the surface, we stand to find more than a little imagining in our experience of music, even of fugues and sonatas, and many of our imaginings would seem to be called for by the music” (Walton 60). One such case came sitting at a New Music Concert in the Shannon Center. Sean Lee, a violinist, offered a performance of a piece by Luciano Berio, “Sequenza VIII.” The piece begins with an incessant drone, attacked with metronome-like regularity. Soon,

dissonant notes are introduced on top of this drone. Listening to this slowly awakens visions within my mind; the dissonance and unceasing, regular beating begin to cause the slightest sense of uneasiness. Thoughts of some evil, unnamable, chaotic force come unbidden to the mind, figures normally at the back of our perceptions, though ever ready to come to the fore. As these thoughts slowly seep through my mind, the violinist rushes into a wailing crescendo of notes, suddenly racing wildly and unbelievably. This cacophony soon flowers in my mind a sense of paranoia, and as the insanity crescendos, I see the terrors of pulp horror writer, H. P. Lovecraft. Vast, evil characters of his such as Great Cthulhu rise up from the depths of my imagination, springing from aeons of sleep to devour humanity in an orgy of destruction. The Elder Gods follow to sow discord among Earth's decimated population. As my mind races through these terrible images, the original theme returns, like the unworldly calm within the eye of some great storm. The rest of the piece continues in this unsettling cycle, ending finally with a discordant peace, resolving nothing, anticipating the eventual return to chaos. Walton could not have described this feeling better: "I do not think that metaphorical descriptions always indicate imaginative experiences (even subliminal ones) on the part of listener, but in many instances they do. We imagine agitation or nervousness, conflict and resolution. Sometimes we imagine (something's) rising or descending" (64). The experience brought out by this music is in no way incidental. While Berio may never have read a single thing by Lovecraft, this work embodies the same spirit of chaos and corruption that permeates Lovecraftian literature. Berio's *Sequenza* recounts the same tale as Lovecraft's mythos in a vague, tingling chill felt deep down in the spine, if not exactly in words.

Music and language bear close ties of kinship, for both are ways that we can communicate with each other. The difference is that music primarily conveys feelings and emotions, as opposed to the concrete ideas that we transmit through words. Both hold multiple levels of syntactical structure, culminating in a deep structural meaning that is conveyed through a variable surface structure. While there is controversy about exactly how this structure is handled, the best explanation is that the deep structure is the message that is being offered; the surface structure is nothing more than the way it is told. At any rate, we can still examine musical pieces and find in them emotional impact, and sometimes, entire characters and stories can be communicated. Music, when we really look at it, isn't really so difficult to understand. All we need to do is keep an open mind and learn to speak the language so we can dare to have some fun with it.



Fig. 1.3



Key	Adj. = Adjective	Conj. = Conjunction	S = Sentence
	Adv = Adverb	N. = Noun	V = Verb
	Art. = Article	NP = Noun Phrase	VP = Verb Phras

Fig. 2.1

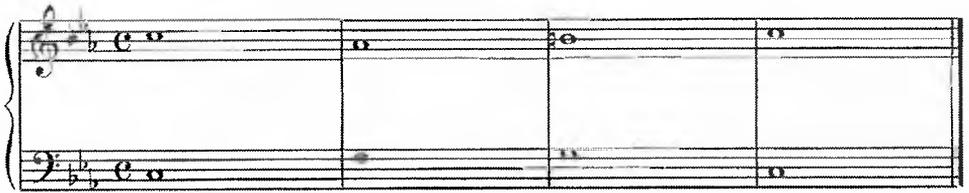


Fig. 2.2

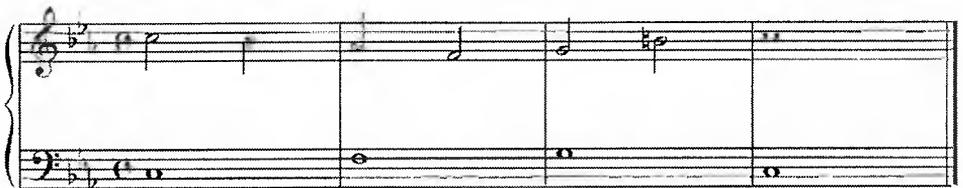


Fig. 2.3



### Bibliography:

- Aiello, Rita. "Music and Language: Parallels and Contrasts." Musical Perceptions. Ed. Aiello, R., with Sloboda, J. New York: Oxford Press, 1994.
- Grout, Donald and Palisca, Claude. A History of Western Music. 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 2001.
- Kostka, Stefan and Payne, Dorothy. Tonal Harmony. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. San Francisco: McGraw-Hill Co., Inc., 2000.
- Mel Bay Publications (n. author). Bass Guitar Scale Chart. Pacific, MO: Mel Bay Publications, 2004.
- Muller, Emily. Personal Interview. April 4, 2005.
- Prechtl, Anthony. Personal Interview. Summer 2002.
- Sloboda, John. The Musical Mind. New York: Oxford Press, 1985.
- This is Spinal Tap. Dir. Rob Reiner. With Christopher Guest, Michael McKean and Harry Shearer. MGM, 1984.

Treitler, Leo. "Language and the Interpretation of Music." Music & Meaning. Ed. Robinson, J. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.

Victor Wooten: Live at Bass Day 1998. Ed. Phil Fallo. With Victor Wooten, Kelly Grabber, Oteil Burbridge. Hudson Music DVD, 1999.

Walton, Kendall. "Listening with Imagination: Is Music Representational?" Music & Meaning. Ed. Robinson, J. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.

### **Musical Works Analyzed:**

Berio, Luciano. Sequenza VIII. Sean Lee, violin. Shannon Center, Whittier, CA: October 1, 2004.

Conneff, Kevin. Changing Your Demeanour. The Chieftains, with Kieran Hanrahan and Brendan Begley. RCA Victor, BMG Music, 1995.

De Meij, Johan. Symphony No. 1, The Lord of the Rings Symphony. Cond. David Warble. London Symphony Orch. Madacy 2 Label Group, 2001.

# The Ascent of Piety

Joshua Batts

To live piously is to live as one “should,” but what exactly constitutes this virtue has evolved and been challenged over time. Piety is generally seen as the set of actions or characteristics required for a positive relationship with the spiritual realm (Plato’s argument dually noted), and at the beginning of Classical society, people showed their devotion to the gods through their actions and dealings with others. However, as these interactions became more regulated by the state and its laws, piety (gradually) began to drift towards an increasingly direct, individual connection with the spiritual realm, itself becoming more unified. By examining various philosophical, religious, and literary texts authored during Greek and Roman Civilization, we can see the this shift upward and inward, as the soul and its world became more central to leading a pious life.

Homer’s *Odyssey* demonstrates its antiquity through the very direct role that gods, monsters, heroes, and mythological machina in general play in either making life more or less difficult for Odysseus. Athena constantly does what she can to help Odysseus in his journey home, whether it be vouching for him in the halls of Olympus, dispensing timely advice, or altering his appearance according to the needs of the situation. Conversely, Poseidon stirs up a storm every chance he gets in the hopes of stalling Odysseus indefinitely. In the midst of his voyage across the Mediterranean, Odysseus encounters various monsters and mythological temptations, from the call of the Sirens to the allure of both Calypso and Circe. He himself is a mortal man born of mortal parents, but the world he inhabits is one best understood in the imagination, in stories told over a campfire or accompanying a feast.

It is thus interesting to note that although the world of Homer is fantastic and otherworldly, piety (with its necessary connection to the gods) is shown most often in the form of hospitality, and act decidedly of this world. The pious characters are those who welcome Odysseus (or Telemakhos) with open arms, sometimes without even knowing the identity of their guest. Odysseus washes up on shore grimy, bloody, and odious, but is escorted by Nausikaa straight to the royal hall of the Phaiakians. Telemakhos is treated similarly by Nestor and Menelaus, who both welcome him into their halls and accommodate him as best they can. Even the loyal swineherd, victim to the suitors’ gluttony and foul treatment, feeds and clothes a disguised Odysseus, though he has barely enough to support himself. As Nausikaa states upon encountering Odysseus, “strangers and beggars/come from Zeus: a small gift,

then, is friendly.”<sup>1</sup> The pious man is thus the one who leaves their hall open for all who the gods send to their doorstep.

Homer was writing about (and arguably during) a time when the formalized laws present later in Greek city-states did not exist. Order originated with the individual, not with the state. Relationships, oaths, and pacts were forged over the banquet hall and required the trust of both parties involved. Those who wish to welcome the gods’ good graces into their lives welcome guests into their homes, places that offer a respite from the constant disorder and disarray of the world outside. In the *Odyssey* what often binds people to each other and the gods are their shared traditions and rituals, which involve telling stories, sharing meals, giving gifts, and extending a hand in friendship and camaraderie. A pious man is in communion with both the gods and other people, and hospitality is essential to maintaining that communion.

Conversely, those who break this communion through deception or cruelty are impious and represent the greatest threat to Odysseus. The Cyclops and his divergent interpretation of what it means to share a meal with guests is an obvious example. Circe, before being won over by Odysseus, presents the facade of hospitality to Odysseus’ men before turning them all into pigs at the dinner table.<sup>2</sup> The most powerful negative example of the centrality of hospitality to the notion of piety are the suitors awaiting Odysseus upon his arrival to Ithaca. They have taken up residence in a home that is not their own, eaten food that was not offered to them, corrupted some of the servant girls, and have the ultimate intention of robbing a husband of his wife. Furthermore, they treat the disguised Odysseus, to them a stranger at the doorstep, not as a guest, but as a form of cheap entertainment. The suitors represent the ultimate breach of privacy, the invasion of chaos into a place that is supposed to represent order. Polyphemus loses an eye, and Circe loses a lover, but the nature and seriousness of the suitors’ travesty results in the loss of all their lives. Ultimately, although the *Odyssey* is the tale of a man’s voyage home, it also serves as a reminder that it is every person’s duty to come to the aid of a stranger and help them reach the end of whatever odyssey they may be embarking upon.

Sophocles’ *Antigone* was written during Athens’ “Golden Age” in the fifth century B.C.E., where law and order had developed and evolved from provincial lords to a democratic city-state that was ruled by the *polis*. As such, hospitality and the trust it represented no longer took as much precedence, for there was now a state structure to guide lives and form rules equally applicable to all. The piety present in *Antigone* is conflicted, and pits state obligation against family ties, or even more broadly, the laws of men against the laws of the gods. The tragedy’s two antagonists, *Antigone* and *Creon*, are on opposite sides of this divide, with *Antigone*, her brother dead but unburied, siding with

family, and Creon, trying to solidify his rule after a period of conflict, siding with the state.

Both believe themselves to be pious, as both see themselves as following the will of the gods. Creon believes himself to be pious by bringing order to Thebes in the form of laws that are fair and binding to all of its citizens. Divisions in his own family have brought the disruption of life at Thebes, with war breaking out between his two nephews over the right to rule. There is no more chaotic human effort than war, and the fact that it was brought about by divisions within the family, traditionally a haven of unity and security, make the crimes of the aggressor all the worse. Creon is acting with the hopes of restoring that unity, with regards to both his family and his subjects. The state has been threatened, and the state is that organ which binds the entire community together. He sees his actions as both just and pious, for he is giving full burial to Eteocles, who died protecting the state, and making an example of Polyneices, who has threatened it.

Unlike her uncle, Antigone does not see the state's well-being as the primary will of the gods. Her piety appeals to a "higher" realm where honoring, protecting, and respecting the family assumes primacy. The merits of both of her brothers are questionable at best, but as their sister it is her role to make sure their bodies get the treatment and burial accorded to all of the dead. By leaving Polyneices to rot on the battlefield, Antigone would damn her brother to eternal unrest and call the wrath of the gods upon herself as well. In this case, failing to honor her brother would also be failing the gods, and the punishments the gods are capable of inflicting are far worse than any human construction.

Antigone has fastened her piety to the honor of her family, which is viable in both this world and the afterlife, while Creon's conception of piety to the gods resides solely in this realm, through the power and authority of the state. Though he sees himself as an agent of the gods' will, his decree is in an unintentional attempt to usurp their original authority over the people and their natural ties to each other. Fate sides with Antigone, and cruelly forces Creon to learn the flaws of his attempt at order at the cost of the lives of Antigone, his son Haemon, and his wife Euridyce. Antigone's life has been curtailed by Creon's (and by extension, the state's) action, but death is the eventual fate of every human being. However, her honor, integrity, and devotion to her family is timeless, and Antigone's actions insure that she remains in favor with the gods, who bring order to a much greater realm than Creon does. As Antigone herself states, "I shall be/ a criminal-but a religious one./ The time in which I must please those that are dead/is longer than I must please those of this world." <sup>3</sup>

The question of piety was soon discussed by another Classical figure, Plato, who played a pivotal role in shifting attention from this world to the next. Commonly held assumptions about the character and nature of piety and the gods who demand it were thrashed in Plato's *Euphythro*, which demonstrated that the gods themselves, with all of their bickering and disagreements, were incapable of providing men an example of what it meant to be pious. In fact, it can be rather easily inferred that the gods themselves are not even worthy of worship and are no longer viable if a man is searching for Truth and Wisdom. Plato instead directed our attention above hospitality, family, and all the other aspects of this world, even the gods, to true reality embodied in the Forms. He maintained that this world just takes part in the greater reality existing in the realm of Ideas, and that the physical world itself does not hold the key to any kind of enlightenment. For Plato, a pious man is one who seeks an understanding of the Good, that which is beyond the imperfect reality of this world and illuminates the other Forms. As for Creon, the ideal is unity, but for Plato this reunification with the Forms by far transcends the world that people inhabit while their souls are embodied. The world of the senses is the world of belief, not Truth, and is thus very limited in what it can teach us. Piety is the reaching for something more, something that can be grasped only through the soul, which after physical death is free to more directly contemplate, and be in concert with, the Good. Plato's shift in focus from this world to a world of true reality would have major reverberations throughout Classical society.

One of the intellectual heirs to Plato's Theory of Forms was Stoicism, which maintained that piety required apathy to externals and acquiescence to what the future held in store. Thus Stoics also asserted that the physical world occupied a role of secondary importance, though for different reasons than their predecessor. Plato maintained that the body was little more than a prison for the soul in its separation from the Forms. Stoics maintained that the world around us, the external, was outside of our control, and thus outside of our concern. For Stoics, the world is governed by rationality, causes and effect, even if we ourselves are not always capable of perceiving what rationale is moving the world forward. Worrying over what is outside of our control and thus beyond the scope of our ability to influence events is a waste of both time and effort. The world will unfold as it will, and our ability to fundamentally alter the path of events is extremely limited. What we can influence is our own attitude to the changes and circumstances in the world around us. As Epictetus asserts, "whatever be the outcome, it is within my power to derive benefit from it," and those most happy are the people who realize their own disenfranchisement in regards to the overarching plan guiding the world, while

simultaneously being aware of the complete control they possess in shaping their attitude to the world and the actions of others in it.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, a pious Stoic is not trying to ensure that his actions are in concert with a group of specific deities in the way that traditional Greeks and Romans occupied themselves with keeping Zeus or Jupiter happy. Instead, he is trying to make sure that he is not too entangled with the external world, and is accepting of the actions of others and their resulting consequences (cause and effect). He does not try to undo the chain of events that link past, present, and future, for such efforts would be wasted and result in only needless pain and detriment. His higher power is a rational fate, and he makes known his piety by submitting himself to that rationale as best he can, following in its footsteps. When he realizes that he has gone astray, and is pointlessly resisting what must come to pass, he once again alters his will and his attitude to better walk the path being laid out before him. Come what may, he weathers the storm as best he can, and instead of cursing fortune when it is not friendly, he collects himself, consolidates his attitude, and moves forward with the understanding that it all must be as it is.

Stoicism was initially developed by Greeks, but flourished during most of the Roman Empire, which must have appeared to many to be a fated kingdom. This idea was cemented in Virgil's *Aeneid*, which told the story of Rome arising from ashes of Troy through the trials of Aeneas, and acted as a national mythology for the Roman public. Whereas previous heroes were characterized by their strength, speed, or guile, Aeneas' great virtue is his piety, which is seen as his willingness to listen to the commands of the gods, and ultimately the will of Fate. This is an important distinction, because though it is implied that he tries to be fair and just in his dealing with men, it is his direct interaction with the gods that make him pious. Through various meetings with his mother and other supernatural deities and figures, Aeneas comes to know the plan of Rome's founding and future glory, and consistently works to bring it to fruition.

Like a good Stoic, Aeneas accepts his fate and gives up on certain externals that prove to be in the way. Both the most obvious and poignant example of this is his interlude and resulting tragedy with Dido in Carthage. Dido represents the basic desires and opportunities that many men concern themselves with. In some sense Carthage resembles Odysseus returning to Ithaca, for it presents the chance at home, hearth, family, and even authority over land and people. Most would count these blessings as more than enough to provide for a man's wants and give him a sense of security and belonging. However, Aeneas has been fated for bigger and better things, and for the sake of Rome he is called away from the comforts of domesticity to the grief of further war and bloodshed. Though he grieves over his separation from Dido,

there is never any question that he must move on as the gods have commanded and fate has determined. There is a resiliency present here, for Aeneas always strives to align his will that of Fate; and although he loses much of who he was because of who he must become (his first wife, Dido, Anchises), he continues on when told to do so without questioning the motives and plans of those moving Fate forward.

However, Aeneas differs from the Stoics in that he is aware of the rationality behind the world and his allotted destiny in it in a way that no person living in Rome actually could be. In his visit to the underworld, Anchises tells him of all that is to happen, from the ascent of Romulus to the glory of Caesar Augustus. Just prior to this reunion, the Sibyl had told him of the ensuing war and strife that will have to be overcome before Rome can be founded. Aeneas' shield is a narration of the fate of Rome and its coming glory, and the significance of Aeneas being defended by Fate itself cannot be overlooked. In addition to this, he is told constantly throughout the story by his mother Venus and other apparitions (such as Hector) what is to happen and what must be done.

Aeneas' knowledge of his own destiny allows him to move past the issue confronting Stoics with regards to how active one can or should be. If the world moves forward regardless of our action, to what degree should we remain passive, and to what extent should we make choices, take action, and exert our free will? Taking passivity too far results in complete non-action, which is neither a feasible nor practical way to live. Conversely, trying to assume too active a role in the world may result in an unnecessary struggle against forces that are outside of our control. Aeneas largely bypasses this because he knows exactly what it is he is working toward. The goal is Rome, and his actions should all help to ensure that his people settle and Rome is founded, so that it may follow its own unavoidable course through history. There are times when Aeneas deviates from this path, but he usually does so unknowingly, and with some gentle prodding from the gods, he adjusts his compass and sails on without having to worry about the legitimacy of his actions.

Turnus is also a pious man, but more closely resembles the Stoics of Virgil's Rome because he does not have the intimate knowledge of Fate's will that his Trojan counterpart is blessed with. Though Turnus is at first resistant to the idea of stirring up war over the arrival of Aeneas, the interference of the fury Allecto drives him to stand against Aeneas, and thus against Fate. Throughout, Turnus remains a good, though flawed, man. He is fighting for his home, his honor, and for his would-be wife against what he sees as a foreign aggressor, much like the Trojans themselves a few years prior. He believes himself to have the backing of the gods, but unfortunately is not privy to the interventions that guide Aeneas' path and act as the latter's security. After unknowingly resisting Fate and causing the bloodshed of Latin, Rutulian, and

Trojan soldiers alike, the pivotal moment comes when he realizes his purpose is not shared by Olympus. In some sense then, he is more pious than Aeneas, for he has to alter his course himself, and walks toward a Fate that ends in both defeat and death.

Echoing the *Euthyphro*, the gods themselves show that they are quite capable of impiety, and just as incapable of fundamentally altering Fate as any man. Although all of Olympus is privy to what Fate has decreed (at least in this instance), Jupiter is the only Stoic, while the rest of the gods try only to serve their own interest. Juno is the obvious example, spending the entire *Aenied* toying with the hearts and minds of men and women in the hopes of bringing about an end that she herself knows is out of the realm of possibility. By the end of the story, thousands have had to suffer needlessly and she is neither punished for her actions or feels the slightest bit repentant. Venus' interventions are for the benefit of herself and her descendants, and one gets the feeling that if the tables were turned and she was on the opposite side of Fate that she would be as pious as Juno. Eventually, Jupiter stops trying to rein them in and allows them to struggle as much as they prefer, knowing that although their actions bring about unnecessary suffering, they cannot change the course of events that will lead to Rome. The eventual outcome is never in question, but like men, it seems that the gods themselves often have to go about things the hard way, and it is through the stubborn actions of Juno and other deities that "it was so hard to found the race of Rome."<sup>5</sup>

Within the pages of the *Aenied* we see the rejection of the more worldly piety evident in both the *Odyssey* and *Antigone*. Dido opens both her city and her heart to Aeneas, displaying a hospitality that would rival any put forth by the kings and queens of the *Odyssey*. Her reward is a broken heart, a bleak future, and eventual suicide. She is a good woman, but her refusal to stoically accept what Fate has made inevitable prevents her from being pious, and this is reflected in her sad condition in the underworld. Latinus also extends his arm in friendship to Aeneas (twice over in fact), but is only met with a pointless war conjured up by his subjects and Turnus over the hand of his daughter Lavinia. Unlike Dido, Latinus is pious, but it is his attention to the gods and his respect for what Fate has laid before that makes him so. His trounced hospitality is just an outward showing of his internal acceptance of what has been announced by above.

Finally, the strong nationalist tone of the *Aenied* is in conflict with the piety of *Antigone*, which places familial duty above subservience to the state. Antigone forfeits her life by putting her brother before the decrees of Creon, while Aeneas loses his first wife and must give up on Dido in order to fulfill his destiny as the founder of Rome. Rome must come, and though its price is heavy, it is exactly this high cost that makes Rome so important and worth

protecting and celebrating. Rome was forged by a divine decree, and personal wants and desires cannot be allowed to get in the way. The piety of Aeneas is thus “higher” than that of Odysseus and Antigone, for he has a more direct connection with the world above, and less of a dependency on the world around him.

This connection between man and some higher power is further solidified by Christianity, which teaches that the key to salvation is an interpersonal relationship with God, the progenitor of all reality, and the source of all Truth and Wisdom. The gods of the *Aenied*, who in many respects acted as middlemen between Fate and mankind, are removed, and man is granted the ability to enter into a somewhat Platonic reunification with God, the One, and the Good. Unlike with Stoicism, the plan is known to all who wish to hear it. Man was meant to live in constant communion with God, but his sinful nature caused a separation from God’s will. Jesus, God in the flesh, came down to earth to save all of mankind by dying for their sins, the ultimate sacrifice and the ultimate expression of God’s love for mankind. In order to avoid the torments of Hell, men need to acknowledge their own sin, recognize Christ’s sacrifice, repent, and devote their lives to pleasing God and bringing other men to the Lord.

Piety is thus the expulsion of sin (as best as one can) and aligning both one’s thought and action with God’s will. Externals are even more debased in Christianity than in the Platonic and Stoic models that precede it. St. Augustine mentions how useless the world of the senses is, “that any pleasure whatsoever of the bodily senses..seemed to us not worthy of comparison with the pleasure of that eternal Light.”<sup>6</sup> The blessings and pleasure of this world are passing at best, and more often than not are corrupt in nature and vices to anyone wishing to follow God. Piety is not concerned with this world at all and appeals entirely to a realm only reached by the souls of the devout. Glory, possessions, lust, and all the trappings of this world mean little in the face of an everlasting life of bliss spent with the Creator, a stark contrast to the Homeric conception of the afterlife being a shadow of the physical world. In Christianity, the opposite is true, and thus piety must center on man’s relationship with the spiritual world instead of his connection with the physical. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus even cautions against being like the Pharisees, who demonstrate the outward signs of piety in overabundance and are not truly centered on God.<sup>7</sup>

Like the Stoics, Christian thinkers posit a plan guiding the events of the world, and as in the *Aenied*, this plan is known. Christianity takes this idea one step further by asserting that it is within everyone’s power to know God’s design for the world and become an active part of it. The uncertainty of Stoicism is somewhat muted, for by following God it becomes possible to know

whether or not we are walking with the cart or pulling against it. Free will is essential, because we must actively choose to follow the cart in order to finish the journey. Struggle against it for too long, and we are cast aside with no hope of catching up. Following the cart requires abstaining from earthly pleasures, sins, and habits that prevent our will from acting in harmony with the will of God. Salvation is not offered by this world, but the next, and like Peter and Andrew we must be willing to give up what this world offers and become “fishers of men” following in Christ’s footsteps and His calling.<sup>8</sup>

Unity of will is essential, for as Augustine found out, a divided mind finds pleasure neither in this world or the next. God himself is the ultimate manifestation of Unity, and our desire should be a reunification or “remembering” with our maker and spiritual father. Complete devotion to Christ must start with a commitment internally to consciously follow the will of God. Actions speak to men, but thoughts speak to God. Upon receiving God into one’s life, we are expected to make known to others in this world the love that God has for all; but these external actions must be a reflection of internal desires for one to be saved. Adultery is a sin, but so is the lustful glance that precedes the act. In this way thought is just as dangerous as action, and the pious man will draw on the Lord’s strength to keep his internal light, his soul, pure and righteous in the eyes of the Father. All of this is wholly removed from the physical world we inhabit; and hospitality, devotion to family, and the founding of empires are all useless if they do not first stem from an internal, loving relationship with the Lord, who exists above such things.

Classical thinkers and authors continued to stretch higher and farther for an explanation of the world and its purpose. Eventually, they realized that the mind can elevate far higher than the body, and their changing conception of piety reflected this. As men became more effective at ordering the physical world, they pushed the conception of the gods farther into the spiritual world, a world that could only be reached through internal contemplation. Devotion to the gods gradually became devotion to the One (whether that be Fate, God, or the Good), and the bridge to the One could only be crossed by the soul. Thus, faith and piety came under the jurisdiction of the mind, and its desire for connection to the Mind governing the universe. Earthly morality remained an important value, but for most of the West the ideal of piety became an internalized love of God.

# The Father, The Son, and The Holy Sophia?: The Bridge Between Hebrew Thought in the Old and New Testaments

*David Laine*

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

(Genesis 1:1-3, NRSV)

Yet when I am among mature Christians, I do speak with words of wisdom, but not the kind of wisdom that belongs to this world... No, the wisdom we speak of is the secret wisdom of God, which was hidden in former times, though he made it for our benefit before the world began. ... But we know these things because God has revealed them to us by his Spirit, and his Spirit searches out everything and shows us even God's deep secrets.

(1 Corinthians 2:6-7, 10, NLT)

Comparing the idea of God in the Old and New Testament, many people come to a distinct barrier in accepting the God of Abraham as the Christian Trinity. The concept of God in three persons is often seen as incomprehensible (doesn't that mean we're polytheists?), and as contrary to Hebrew thought (for, is he not one God, and jealous of our worshiping other gods?). Missing from this analysis, though, are several books that are themselves left out of the Biblical canon of many Christian denominations: the deuterocanonical writings of *The Wisdom of Solomon* and *Jesus ben Sirach*. These books can be seen as the pivotal point that could conceivably help many Jews to see God as three persons. In these books, Wisdom is personified as a woman, in Greek named Sophia, and linked directly with God and, ultimately, salvation. With the coming of the Christ, the strengthened roles of God's Spirit and Word would come into true acceptance by many as separate persons of God, as the seeds planted in the earliest Biblical writings are revealed in new lights by new teachers. Presented within the first three verses of the first book of the Hebrew Bible are the germs of the three persons of the Trinity. Each verse tells of a person: verse one, the Father; verse two, the Spirit; verse three, the Word. What we find in these two Wisdom books is the evolution of Hebrew thought that would lead to the full realization of the Trinity, as seen by Jewish and Gentile followers of Christ.

One person of God is obvious reading Genesis 1:1. There is little room to mistake that the verse speaks of Him when phrased, "God created the

heavens and the earth.” It does not come until later, though, that the wind and voice of God are seen as coequal persons of Him. Let us begin by looking at God’s Word, since this is perhaps the easiest to understand. In verse three, we are told that “God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.” Old Hebrew belief places this merely as the voice of God; by God’s proclamation that there shall be light, light appears. No extra persons are necessarily required here, and without later developments, the Word is not seen as a person of God. Later Hebrew texts speak of His voice and assign it power and glory, almost personifying it, without truly giving it its own person:

The voice of the LORD echoes above the sea.

The God of glory thunders.

The LORD thunders over the mighty sea.

The voice of the LORD is powerful;

the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

(Psalm 29:3-4, *NLT*)

By telling us that His voice echoes above the sea, the author calls to mind Genesis 1, as God sends his winds over the seas and his voice thunders, “Let there be light!” While this does not distinctly personify God’s voice, it does give it human characteristics; it is majestic and powerful, and the psalm continues by telling how it shatters cedars, makes mountains tremble, strikes with lightning bolts and the deserts with quakes, and twists oaks (Psalm 29:5-9). Ending this ode to God’s voice, we are told that “In his Temple everyone shouts, ‘Glory!’” (Psalm 29:9)! It seems that God’s voice is gaining its own strength in the Hebrew eye, but it is still seems understood more as an extension of the singular person of God. New Testament theologians give us a slightly more distinctive explanation of the Word. Perhaps its clearest (and also most baffling) description linking Christ as the third person is from the Gospel of John. He tells the story of the creation with one of the most enigmatic visions of God to be found in the Bible:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome.

(John 1:1-5, *NRSV*)

We soon find out that the Word he speaks of is Jesus Christ, the voice and Son of God. Since these early Christian writers are Jews as well, it must be wondered how Jewish thought could change so radically. Early writings depict

God as a higher power who few ever meet face to face in this life; in the Gospels, he becomes a man, born in a stable and killed on a cross. This shift in thought would begin to unfold in Jewish writings soon before Christ's birth, and would culminate in the founding of a new faith.

The Hebrew writings of Jesus ben Sirach and the Solomon poet offer us an early view of a singular God in multiple persons. The author of Solomon is unknown (and so "Solomon" must suffice for simplicity's sake, although the writer is definitely not the historical king), but Jesus ben Sirach is a known Jewish thinker of the Hellenistic era. These two personify Wisdom, giving her divine characteristics. Solomon says of her,

For she is a breath of the power of God,  
and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty;  
therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her.  
For she is a reflection of eternal light,  
a spotless mirror of the working of God,  
and an image of his goodness.

(Solomon: 7:25-26, *NRSV*)

Let us begin with the first line: "For she is a breath of the power of God." This would likely recall to the Jewish audience the Genesis account of creation, for in both the Hebrew and the Greek, the word for "spirit" and "wind" are the same. In Hebrew, this word is "ruach," meaning "air in motion," being applied to such meanings as breath, life, and spirit (Robertson). In Greek, this word is "pneuma," and can be translated as spirit or wind - breath (Beers 1624; O'Day 134). Regarding Genesis 1:2, we now see that the Hebrew holds two possible meanings - either it is a wind of God sweeping over the seas, or it is the Spirit of God (O'Day OT 2, see footnote). In fact, there really is little distinction between these to the original Hebrew; the question only arises when our language imperfectly translates the word. What is important is that now, Solomon sets up this Spirit as another person, but still ties her to God as His "breath or power," so the two are separate but one. Even if the Hebrew audience would not immediately make this association, the writer later tells us, "With you is wisdom, she who knows your works/ and was present when you made the world" (Solomon 9:9, *NRSV*). Wisdom, called the breath or spirit of God, is present at the creation of the world, just as the Spirit of God hovers over the primordial seas.

The remainder of Solomon 7:25-26 tells us of the nature of Wisdom. She is called an emanation, a reflection, a spotless mirror and an image of Himself and His goodness and glory. She is an established force, linked intimately to the Godhead, and her purpose is to reflect God's good to us. She is the visible sign of an invisible God, reflecting his glory and light, the image

of his goodness that we may see. We cannot see the wind, but we feel it and see things blowing; similarly, while God's Spirit is not physically visible, we can see the effects of His goodness. Later, Christ would teach about the Holy Spirit:

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not be presenting his own ideas; he will be telling you what he has heard. ... He will bring me glory by revealing to you whatever he receives from me. All that the Father has is mine; this is what I mean when I say that the Spirit will reveal to you whatever he receives from me.  
(John 16:13-15, *NLT*)

All associations of truth and wisdom aside, this description seems to confirm Solomon's words; the spirit conveys to us teachings from God. He guides us into harmony with God by reflecting truths given to Him it by the Godhead. These descriptions coincide so neatly that it is easy to tell how many Jews would take the extra step and believe in Christ. (Don't be confused about Christ's masculine gendering of the Spirit as opposed to the apocryphal feminine gendering; both are merely ways of conveying a genderless God, meant to avoid the impersonal "it." God's Spirit did not, in fact, get a sex change operation sometime in the centuries between these writings.)

Another point which both Solomon and Jesus ben Sirach attest to is that through Wisdom, we find immortality. This liberates Hebrew thought from the road to Sheol, the underworld, at death. Now there is promise of everlasting life. Solomon tells us that

When I considered these things inwardly,  
and pondered in my heart  
that in kinship with wisdom there is immortality.  
(Solomon 8:17, *NRSV*)

As Wisdom reflects upon him the glory of God, he finds "kinship" with her. This is an absolutely new concept, to be in direct relation with a part of God Himself, and one that would later be adopted by the followers of Christ. Paul would tell the early believers that, because of Christ's redemption, "Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, everything he has belongs to you" (Galatians 4:7, *NLT*). Through this kinship, it is said that we may rightfully inherit all that God has to offer. This includes immortality. Jesus ben Sirach says of our inheritance,

Those who fear the Lord will have a happy end;  
on the day of their death they will be blessed.  
To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;  
she is created with the faithful in the womb.  
She made among human beings an eternal foundation,  
and among their descendants she will abide faithfully.  
(Sirach 1:13-15, *NRSV*)

This life-giving power is to be a blessing as it brings the faithful dead into their eternal foundation, which is with God. God is becoming increasingly viewed as personal as He reaches out to give new life to mankind. This view is by no means new to these writers; it comes directly from Genesis: “And the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7, *NRSV*). God breathes the breath (Spirit) of life into Adam’s body. From the very beginning, it is God’s Spirit that is associated with our own life force. Solomon even spells out what would eventually be seen as the three persons of the Trinity as he recalls our creation:

O God of my ancestors and Lord of mercy,  
who have made all things by your word,  
and by your wisdom have formed humankind...  
(Solomon 9:1-2, *NRSV*)

Wisdom, the breath or Spirit of God, is said to have formed humankind, and all things are made by God’s word. It is little wonder, with thoughts like this, that some Jews would soon come to recognize these as the three persons of God. What is new here is that there is hope of new life being birthed within mankind. Jesus describes this spiritual rebirth:

The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven. So don’t be surprised at my statement that you must be born again. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.  
(John 3:5-8, *NLT*)

In the beginning, it is seen that life from God’s Spirit had been infused into us, literally breathing it into Adam’s nostrils. Here, Jesus teaches that the Holy Spirit will give us new life, a spiritual rebirth that allows us to enter the eternal Kingdom of God. This thought is present in the Wisdom of Solomon and

Jesus ben Sirach, but with the teachings of Jesus ben Yahweh, it is revealed in strikingly new ways.

There is one catch to the Spirit's outpouring of life, though, which is that it must be given by God. It cannot be gotten hold of by any other means, but only comes from God. The writer of Solomon absolutely pleads for it:

But I perceived that I would not possess wisdom unless God gave her to me—

and it was a mark of insight to know whose gift she was—

so I appealed to the Lord and implored him,

and with my whole heart I said:

“O God of my ancestors and Lord of mercy,

who have made all things by your word,

and by your wisdom have formed humankind ...

give me the wisdom that sits by your throne,

and do not reject me from among your servants.

(Wisdom 8:21-9:4, NRSV)

While we cannot get Wisdom, the Spirit of God, by any means of our own, we may ask the LORD for it. It is by no act of our own that we can grasp eternal life, but it must be a free gift of God entirely dependent upon his grace. It would appear, to hear Jesus tell it, that God is not very reluctant to give this out, for he says, “Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete” (John 16:23-24, NRSV). All that we need to do is ask for something, and we will receive it. There is no if, so long as we ask in Jesus' name. (And although Jesus' words come long after Solomon's plea, it is unlikely that God would turn a deaf ear on him because he did not ask in his name, though technically he does recall the Word here.)

From Christ's teachings, then, we learn that all we need to do is ask for the Holy Spirit of Wisdom and Life, and she/he shall be given to us.

Undoubtedly, Jesus ben Sirach feels an assurance of this as he writes,

There is but one who is wise, greatly to be feared,  
seated upon his throne—the Lord.

It is he who created her;

he saw her and took her measure;

he poured her out upon all his works,

upon all the living according to his gift;

he lavished her upon those who love him.

(Sirach 1:8-10, NRSV)

He feels so certain of God's saving grace that he writes in the past tense; it's not that these things will come to pass, but that they already have. By faith, he knows that God has already assured victory and eternal salvation as a free gift to those who love Him. Within a relatively short time of this writing, Jesus of Nazareth would be born, and the Jewish community would be divided. Many Hebrews would trust in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God. This would lead John, a believing Jew, to write, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, *NLT*). Jesus promises this eternal life through the Holy Spirit, telling the disciples on the eve of his death, "it is actually best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Counselor [the Holy Spirit] won't come. If I do go away, he will come because I will send him to you" (John 16:7-8, *NLT*). At last, when Jesus' words would be fulfilled, his followers would see an answer to the prayer of Solomon:

Send her forth from the holy heavens,  
and from the throne of your glory send her,  
that she may labor at my side,  
and that I may learn what is pleasing to you.  
(Solomon 9:9-10, *NRSV*)

Indeed, Luke records that seven weeks after Jesus' resurrection, at a Christian meeting on the day of Pentecost, "suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit..." (Act 2:2-4, *NRSV*). It could easily be said that what the Solomon and Jesus ben Sirach speak of with calm assurance comes here in wind and flames, consuming the believers in God's Holy Spirit. It is this Spirit's gentle guiding that brings people into wisdom, which Paul writes of to the Corinthians bringing Godly wisdom to mature Christians (see head quote). Amazing that such a life-giving, personal view of God can be found in a seeming puff of air rustling the primordial waters some thousands of years ago.

### Bibliography:

Beers, R., et al, eds. The Life Application Study Bible (NLT). Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996.

O'Day, Gail R., and Petersen, David, eds. The Access Bible (NRSV). New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Robertson, Gordon. "The Holy Spirit: Breath of God." Online. Viewed April 24, 2005. [http://www.cbn.com/700club/features/gordon-hs\\_teaching.asp](http://www.cbn.com/700club/features/gordon-hs_teaching.asp). Updated 2005.

**Dante:**  
**A critical analysis of selected passages from**  
**The Divine Comedy**  
Chris McKeon

**The Beauty of Love**

“[S]he seems to be a creature come from Heaven  
to earth, to manifest a miracle.”  
(Dante’s *Vita Nuova* P. 57 ll. 7-8)

These lines are the closing lines of the first stanza of a sonnet included in the twenty-sixth chapter of Dante’s *Vita Nuova*. In this chapter, Dante relates to the reader that Beatrice, “[the] most gracious lady of whom [he has] spoken”, has gained “widespread favor”, to the point that “people [run] to see her” (P.56). Deciding to write on “the theme of her praise” (P.57), Dante composes the sonnet, which describes Beatrice’s virtuous qualities and her effect on her surroundings, which are like the effects created by a divine being.

In this passage, Dante reaches a deeper level of understanding and appreciation of love. The opening line of the quotation~ “she seems to be a creature come from Heaven” ~describes Beatrice herself. The verb “seems” casts an ambiguous or undefined quality to the lady, and when coupled with the descriptive word “creature” Dante attaches a mysterious nature to his subject. The phrase “come from Heaven” (l.7) conveys an image of descending from above, which casts Beatrice as a traveler or messenger, which image also parallels other divinely sent beings, such as Jesus Christ. Such messengers from Heaven are purposeful and Beatrice’s journey “to earth” has a specific design: “to manifest a miracle.” (l.8) Dante now finally sees a deeper definition to Beatrice’s life and her relationship with Heaven and earth, once again echoing the mission of Jesus Christ and his manifestation of God’s love for the world. In short, Dante’s passage suggests that the presence of Beatrice on the earth demonstrates God’s will and love. Dante makes this point explicit in his canzone written after Beatrice’s death: “the tender soul, perfectly full of grace, now lives with glory in her rightful place” (P. 65 ll. 30-31).

As a pilgrim participating in the journey of love, Dante uses this passage to demonstrate his growing appreciation for his final destination. The attitudes and perspectives presented above are a far distance from the smitten youth who beheld a vision of his lady in the arms of Love, “wrapped in a crimson cloth...forced to eat of [his] burning [heart]” (P. 5) Throughout the *Vita Nuova*, Dante has already described his development from this focus on

the physical sufferings of love to the personal appreciation of the beloved. In this chapter, however, Dante takes a step further into his journey, to comprehend the “pure and sweet” (P. 57) purpose of love and the ties it creates between the seen and unseen worlds.

Dante’s purpose as a poet also matures in the production of this passage. Whereas before Dante’s intended audiences had been “many of the famous poets of the time” (P.6) or “Ladies who have intelligence of love” (P.32), in this sonnet he writes for “not only those who could see [Beatrice] with their own eyes, but others, as well” (P.57). For the first time, Dante’s praises are not meant for his time, but for posterity as well. This poetic extension into the unknown further reflects Dante’s growing skill and purposes.

Dante is not the only Italian author whose poetry casts the female in a heavenly light. Guido Cavalcanti, his close friend and colleague, also conceives these images in the third stanza “Fresca Rosa Novella”: “Heavenly features/In you, my lady, rest...Your beauty’s not transcribed, For can’t it be described: Beyond nature?” (“Dante: A Selection of Supplementary Readings P. 39 ll. 21-22, 31-34) Cavalcanti, like Dante, detects a heavenly origin in his lady’s beauty; and his statement “Your beauty’s not transcribed” (l.32), echoes Dante’s own “[inability] to describe” (P.57) Beatrice’s qualities. In praising their beloved, both poets attribute their lady’s presence to a heavenly origin, which suggests an intriguing concept: when men truly appreciate women, they gain a greater perception of God.

From a personal viewpoint, I find the idea of praising another to more fully appreciate God a very accurate expression of love. In Christianity, the two greatest commandments are to love God and also to love one’s neighbor. I feel that when a man begins to appreciate the value and natural beauty of a woman, he equally begins to learn more of the attributes of God. This is an appreciation that I want to experience in my life. The description of Beatrice and her relationships with the world around her is a beautiful demonstration of a good woman, and in my own experience with friends and family I know that there are good women in the world. Reading Dante’s *Vita Nuova* provides me with a personal motivation to search for such qualities in the woman whom I hope to marry~ not just that I might have pleasant companion to live my life with ~ but that I, through her example and company, might more fully come to know God.

### The Nature of Love

“Love, which in gentlest hearts will soonest bloom  
Seized my lover with passion for that sweet body  
From which I was torn unshriven to my doom.”

(Dante’s *Inferno* V, ll. 97-99)

These lines appear at the end of the fifth canto of Dante's *Inferno*. In this canto Dante continues his pilgrimage into Hell, and having already passed the Opportunists and Virtuous Pagans, arrives at its second circle. Here he first experiences "Hell's full lamentation, sound beyond sound" (l. 26) in "a place ... wracked by a war of winds ... sweep[ing] the souls ... of ... the carnal and lusty/who betrayed reason to their appetite" (l. 28, 30, 36-37). As Virgil identifies these casualties of passion, Dante wishes to converse with two souls "swept together...and still so sad" (ll.74-75). Francesca and her earthly lover Paolo descend to converse with the poet.

It is Francesca who explains their eternal situation and there are contradictions throughout her narrative, which contradictions are highlighted in the quotation: the first of three tercets often called "The Three Lies of Love". In the first line she states that Love "in gentlest hearts will soonest bloom" (l.97). In this description of love, the adjective "gentlest" applies a quality of meekness to the bonds shared between the lovers and the noun "hearts" suggests an inward focus and spiritual tone to their relationship. The phrase "soonest bloom" further conveys a sense of natural order and delicacy. Up to this point, Francesca casts herself and Paolo as innocents, motivated by the noblest sentiments. However, the second line of the tercet ~ "seized my lover with passion for that sweet body" (l.98) ~ clashes with the initially innocent description of Love. The verb phrase "seized my lover" connotes a frenzied, impatient action on the part of Paolo, and the noun "passion" heightens this tension by casting a sensual aspect to the lovers' emotions. The noun phrase "sweet body" reverses the focus of love of the tercet's previous line from an inward spiritual value to an outward physical desire. In the final line of the tercet Francesca clarifies that the "sweet body" was her own "[f]rom which [she] was torn unshriven to [her] doom" (l.99).

Francesca's description of the love between her and Paolo is unclear; as if she is unable or unwilling to directly identify the true nature of their love, whether it is born of the soul or of the body. However, ironically, she admits that Virgil, "[Dante's] Guide and Teacher knows the truth of this" (l.120). Virgil describes the souls in the second circle as those who "betrayed reason to their appetite" (l.39). The second line of the tercet, where Francesca describes the physical aspects of love, corroborates this statement. Francesca also admits that "Love, which permits no loved one not to love/ took [her] so strongly with delight in [Paolo]" (ll.97-98). Although Francesca defends herself with the claim that Love cannot be avoided, she also confesses that she accepted this love freely and "with delight". Francesca further indicates that at "the beginning of [their] love ... [o]n a day for dalliance [they] read the rhyme of Lancelot" (ll.122, 124-126). This tale of adultery "overthrew [their] caution and [their] hearts"

(ll.129-130), which indicates that in the prime motivation behind the love shared between Francesca and Paolo was that of the body.

This canto is also a significant step in the pilgrimage of Dante. His initial encounter with the truly tortured souls of Hell racks him with “pity and confusion” (l.72); and after Dante hears Francesca’s story “[his] senses reel and faint away with anguish” (l.137-138). The emotions of “pity”, “confusion”, and “anguish” clearly demonstrate that Dante does not comprehend the reasons why Francesca and Paolo are suffering in Hell; therefore demonstrating how little Dante, at this stage, knows about love and its misuse. However, as a poet, Dante possesses a different opinion in describing the second circle’s residents as “those who sinned in the flesh” (ll.38). This imagery not only demonstrates Dante’s intricate skill as a poet but also his improved ability to distinguish between earthly and divine love.

Francesca’s opinions on love echo in the words of the Countess of Dia: the only known female Troubadour and like Francesca, she “suffered great distress” (SR P.30 l.1) in matters of love. In the poem, “Estat ai en greu cossirier”, the Countess announces her loving a knight “to excess” (l.4) for which “sin [she] can only burn” (ll.7). Like Francesca, the Countess makes herself an object of desire; believing that “[the knight]’d be ravished by [her] charm” (l.11). The Countess of Dia also fits the description of the souls of the second circle, “who betrayed reason to their appetite” (V, l.39), when she, in an unnamed poem, assures her lover “that [she] [n]ever would betray him, except she found [her]self betrayed” (SR 31, ll.31-32).

Although difficult rules govern the game of adulterous love they are in accordance with the “Rules of Love”: a chapter in Andreas Capellanus’ *The Art of Courtly Love*, which clearly states in the first guideline- “Marriage is no real excuse for not loving” (SR 21, l.1). By the standards of Courtly Love the actions of Countess of Dia, Francesca and Paolo are justified. However Dante, whose works reflect the influence of this system, still places Francesca and her lover in Hell amongst “[the] evil souls through time foregone” (V, l.42). This break from traditional love poetry hints at the deeper spiritual and religious in the poet’s *Commedia*.

I believe that adultery is the failure to express love within a marriage. I have always felt that love is a very beautiful way through which we, as humans, communicate. I also feel that marriage is a special expression of love; and expression which we should cherish and nurture before abandoning it. I have known several people whose relationships have been affected by adultery and I know that its consequences are anything but sweet, blissful or happy. Having read Dante’s *Inferno* I hope, even more than before, to value the feelings of my future spouse and the commitment to be faithful I will someday make to her.

## The Power of Love

I shrank as a wayward child in his distress  
shrinks from his mother's sternness, for the taste  
of love grown wrathful is a bitterness.  
(Dante's *Purgatorio* XXX, ll. 79-81)

These are lines from the thirtieth canto of Dante's *Purgatorio*. Dante has just entered the Earthly Paradise and stands at the edge of the river Lethe, preparing to complete his purification from sin. Suddenly, at the moment that "a lady [comes] in view" (l.31), Dante discovers the departure of Virgil and "tears ... [stain his] cheeks" (ll.53-54). However the lady, who is Beatrice herself, rebukes Dante's sorrow, stating that "another wound / shall make [him] weep far hotter tears than those!" (ll.56-57). Beatrice then begins to reprove Dante for his own sake.

As she begins her unexpected evaluation, Beatrice explains that "[she] must speak with greater care that ... [Dante] may understand and feel a grief to match his guilt" (ll. 106-108). Accordingly, as the first line of the quotation details, Dante "[shrinks] as a wayward child in his distress" (l.79). The verb "[shrinks]" denotes profound humiliation while the adjective phrase "wayward child," as part of an almost self-mocking simile, casts Dante in the role of a guilty party. The noun "distress" also corroborates this sense of culpability, which suggests that Dante himself acknowledges his guilt. Dante carries his guilty simile into the tercet's second line, in which the misguided youth "shrinks from his mother's sternness" (l.80). The noun "mother" attaches a maternal quality to Beatrice and also reinforces her role as Dante's guide throughout the *Commedia*. However, the "sternness" of Beatrice makes her motives as Dante's guide uncertain. In the remainder of the tercet Dante poignantly summarizes "[that] the taste / of love grown wrathful is a bitterness" (ll.80-81). While the descriptive phrase "the taste of love" anticipates a sweet sensation, its companion phrase "grown wrathful is a bitterness" evokes an image of malnutrition and waste.

In clarifying her treatment of Dante, Beatrice acknowledges that "[Dante], potentially, was so endowed ... that marvelous increase should have come forth from every good he sowed" (ll.115-117). Nevertheless, she laments that "richest soil will soonest grow wild / with bad seed and neglect" (ll.118-119). Beatrice's disapproval of Dante's stunted growth stems from the fact that after Beatrice "rose from flesh to spirit, to greater beauty and ... virtue" (ll.128-129), Dante "left [her] and let other shape his will" (ll.126). Although this statement seems to suggest jealousy on her part, Beatrice also reveals that, through her example, Dante had begun to comprehend "That Good beyond which nothing / exists on earth to which man may aspire" (XXXI, ll.23-24), but

after her death “he ... turned his steps aside from the True Way” (XXX, ll.129-130). Thus, Dante’s guilt lies in his failure to follow God through Beatrice’s example.

This event is one of the most important in the pilgrimage of Dante. Since the beginning of the *Commedia*, Dante has witnessed the eternal punishment of the condemned souls in the *Inferno* and the purification of the souls in the *Purgatorio*, in preparation for their entrance into the presence of divinity. In these cantos, Dante discovers that the true purpose of his pilgrimage is because “[m]idway through [his] life’s journey, [he] went astray / from the straight road” (I, ll.1-2). This pilgrimage has been Dante’s own spiritual salvation. Upon confessing that “[t]he things of the world’s day ... turned [his] steps as soon as [Beatrice] had ceased to light [his] way” (XXXI, ll. 34-36), Dante is finally prepared to bathe in the waters of Lethe, and receive purification from sin. In these cantos Dante expertly demonstrates his poetic skill through the use of dramatic irony in describing his encounter with Beatrice. The reader’s expectations of Beatrice, whom Virgil initially describes as “a Lady so blessed and so beautiful ... [h]er voice ... an angel’s voice, a music of its own” (II, 52-53, 56-57), are a stark contrast with the woman who is like “an admiral [taking] his place at stern or bow” (XXX, l.58). The irony of Beatrice’s true personality, which has an almost masculine quality, reveals the depth of the Dante’s ability to create complex and memorable poetry.

Dante’s other literary works provide evidence to corroborate Beatrice’s disappointment. In the final chapter of the *Vita Nuova*, the poet determines “to say no more about [Beatrice] until ... capable of writing ... in a nobler way”, pledging, ironically, that he is “striving as hard as [he] can, and this she truly knows” (P.86). However, as Dante’s biographical information indicates, in the period following Beatrice’s death he “[entered] Florentine political life,” and during the political turmoil of the early 14<sup>th</sup> century he served as “an ambassador to persuade [others] to join the Guelph party” (SR P.4), thus turning his attentions to the ways of men.

Dante-the-poet also references his politically focused period, aptly called “the years of waywardness” (SR P.4), in Canto XIII of the *Purgatorio* in which Sapia, in response to the pilgrim’s search for “any Latin soul” (l.91), reveals that “[they] are all citizens of one sublime and final city, brother” (ll.94-95). The distinction between the nationally divided man and the spiritually united souls reflects the separation between the worldly “City of Man” and the heavenly “City of God” (SR P.7), and Dante’s poetic preference of the latter city further indicates the purpose of the *Commedia* truly is divine.

From personal experience, I know that love is, at times, harsh. My parents have often disciplined me for my actions or misconduct. However, I recognize that it is because of their love and concern for me that they correct or

counsel me in my failures. Through the love of reproach, I have grown and improved as a person. After reading Dante's *Purgatorio*, I value the example of Beatrice, who chastised Dante because she loved him. I hope that my wife may also possess that refining love in our future relationship.

### The Perfection of Love

You have led me from my bondage and set me free  
by all those roads, by all those loving means  
that lay within your power and charity.  
(Dante's *Paradiso* XXXI, ll.85-87)

Dante speaks these touching lines early in the thirty-first canto of the *Paradiso*. Through the guidance of Beatrice, Dante arrives in the ninth sphere of heaven, the Empyrean, and finally discovers the Church Triumphant within the Mystic Rose. The pilgrim, anxious to know more of "the form and general plan of Paradise" (l.54), seeks further illumination from Beatrice. However, turning towards his companion, Dante "[finds] instead / an elder in the robes of those in glory" (ll.59-60). The elder, who is St. Bernard, has taken Beatrice's place as Dante's guide and directs the mortal's sight to where she now sits "in the third circle down from the highest rank / upon the throne her merit has assigned her" (ll.68-69). In his final vision of Beatrice, Dante expresses his gratitude for her love towards him.

In the opening line of the tercet—"You have led me from my bondage and set me free" (l.85)—Dante credits Beatrice for his spiritual enlightenment. The use of the personal pronoun "You" attributes the pilgrim's journey to a specific source, while also demonstrating Dante's humility at the conclusion of his pilgrimage. The potent verb phrase "led me from bondage" references an active removal of Dante's worldly concerns, with the adjacent phrase "set me free" emphasizing a liberation, or freedom towards progression and understanding. Dante recalls the means through which Beatrice demonstrated her love for him in the second line, "by all these roads, by all those loving means" (l.86). The repetition of the preposition "by" suggests multiple methods of how Beatrice has manifested her love. The first method mentioned, "by all those roads," alludes to Dante's actual journey throughout the *Commedia*, and the pathways taken within the *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*. The second method mentioned, "by all those loving means," suggests the variety of physical and spiritual conditions, penances, and redemptions which Dante has witnessed. However, the adjective, "loving," casts all of the pilgrim's experiences as expressions of love.

Dante corroborates Beatrice's motivations of love in the final of tercet, again crediting Beatrice for doing everything "that lay within [her] power and

charity" (l.87). The repeated use of the personal pronoun, in reference to Beatrice, continually stresses the importance of her role in the *Commedia*. The phrase "within your power," indicates that Beatrice's guidance, from enlisting the assistance of Virgil, to her own reproach of Dante, and to being the pilgrim's personal light in the heavens, was a voluntary act of love. Nevertheless, the final word of the tercet, "charity," reveals that Beatrice's love for Dante is not an earthly love, *Eros*, but heavenly, or godly love, *caritas* (SR, p.7).

As Dante concludes his final vision and tribute to Beatrice, "she—far up a mountain, as it [appears] to [him]—[looks] down and [smiles] ... [t]hen turns back to the Eternal Fountain" (ll.91-93). At this moment, the pilgrimage of Dante reaches its climax. Throughout the *Commedia*, Dante has witnessed the justice of God amongst the "souls who have lost the good of intellect" (Dante's *Inferno* III, l.18), the wisdom of God from the souls becoming "citizens of one sublime and final city" (Dante's *Purgatorio* XIII, ll.94-95), and the love of God radiating from the souls whose "every eye / and every love [are] fixed upon one goal" (Dante's *Paradiso* XXXI, ll.26-27). During this intense journey, Dante has been aided by the guidance of Virgil, the representation of Human Reason, and later Beatrice, the representation of Divine Wisdom. However, with the departure of Beatrice, and the pilgrim worthy to be in the presence of the chosen, Dante now stands ready to gaze upon "the Sum of Grace" (XXXIII, l.33), or God himself.

The cantos of the *Paradiso* also clearly represent the sublime brilliance of Dante's poetry. Although the poet concedes that "[his] words miss [his] conception, which is ... so far from what [he] saw ... to call it feeble would be rank deception"(ll.121-123), through his poetic verse Dante demonstrates the capability to capture the inspiring scope and presence of "all things in a single volume bound by Love"(ll.86). Of equal poetic importance is how Dante, through his verse, delicately shows how much his love for Beatrice has grown.

Dante's display of love for Beatrice at the end of the *Paradiso* certainly has deepened by far since their first meeting, as described in the *Vita Nuova*. The first sight of the young girl, "dressed in the most patrician of colors, a subdued and decorous crimson ... in a style suitable for her years" (p.3), and their subsequent encounter nine years after, prompted the youthful Dante's vision of his lady, "in [Love's] arms ... sleeping ... naked but lightly wrapped in a crimson cloth" (p.5). This initial earthy image of the female, a romantic object of a boyish fantasy, starkly contrasts Beatrice's final form as the blessed lady "who in glory contemplates the countenance of the One *qui est per omnia secula benedictus*." In appreciation of his experiences with Beatrice, Dante aspired "to write of her that which has never been written of any other woman" (p.86), and taking the Divine Comedy in this context, Dante succeeded.

I, like Dante, have hopes to write in appreciation of my wife. However, I am only twenty-two years old and I have little experience of the world. I have never had a girlfriend, nor do I feel prepared to appreciate one, nor a wife for that matter. However, having read Dante's *Paradiso* and the entire *Commedia*, I can value the fact that one of the greatest writers of history also began as a young man, and out of the love and admiration of a woman he did something remarkable. This in itself is an excellent motivation to seek out the woman for whom I want to do good things. First all I need is a solid table.

## A Trinity of Images in the *Commedia*

Christine Hill

Within the depthless deep and clear existence  
Of that abyss of light three circles shone—  
Three in color, one in circumference:  
The second from the first, rainbow from rainbow;  
The third, an exhalation of pure fire  
Equally breathed forth by the other two.  
(*Paradiso*, Canto XXXIII, l. 115-120)

One does not need to believe in God to believe in love, but to Dante Alighieri, the two are inseparable: God is love and loving is the central characteristic of God. This is why there are so many images that meld the two together in Dante's epic the *Commedia*—specifically those of *fire*, *water* and *light*. At first reading, fire seems to be a symbol of God's consuming love, as both angels and souls are ablaze with love. Light is seen as reflections of God's love, as each soul shines to his or her brightest capacity. And water seems like the ultimate symbol of God's love, as it is used to wash away the impurities of sin and misdirected desire. Yet, upon closer inspection, these images do not just represent God's love, but God's complex nature as He is made up of a trinity. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit can be represented by the fire, light and water as Dante sees in his vision of the trinity in the last canto of the *Paradiso*. In this vision, light is refracted off of water to form two circular rainbows, while a third circle of fire is the breath of the former two. This trinity of images is not only a beautiful use of symbols, but also displays the seemingly contradictory and incomprehensible nature of God.

Dante is able to see this vision of God only after he has passed through the pits of hell and is purified in the cornices of purgatory, to ascend into the spheres of heaven. Yet Dante does not accomplish this journey on his own: Virgil, the embodiment of human reason, guides him through hell and purgatory; and Beatrice, the embodiment of the beatitudes, guides him up to heaven. Prior to entering Heaven, Dante has experienced water, fire and light in an entirely different way than when he sees them in the Trinity. In Hell the trio is only noticed in its absence and its elements are used as a source of torment, while in Purgatory they are used as cleansing agents. But Dante's entrance into heaven marks a different use of water, fire, and light, as they show the inconceivable nature of God.

In the *Inferno*, Dante experiences the absence of God through the blinding darkness of hell. There is no light at all, except in what the virtuous pagans manage to emit through human reason (Canto IV). Fire is seen in both its absence and its use to directly torment souls, as those who counseled people to do wrong are engulfed in tongues of flame, and those in the ninth circle of hell are frozen and starved for the heat of a fire (Canto XXVI, XXXII). Though water is the basic property of ice, because it is a solid it isn't the same substance, and so is not representative of water. But water is seen in other areas of hell. Three rivers flow through hell, separating Hell from Purgatory; and those in hell need to cry due to their intense suffering (Canto XXXIII). Thus all three elements are in hell, but with different uses, as they amplify the suffering of souls.

In *Purgatorio*, the three elements are cleansing agents for Dante and other souls who are getting ready for heaven. In Purgatory, the world is lit with light that gives power to those who are climbing upwards. It is a source of energy to keep climbing and keep refining the soul; for without the sun's light, no one has the power to move (Canto VII). Fire refines Dante, as he must walk through a wall of fire to enter the earthly paradise, or the Garden of Eden, on his way to heaven. Water is used when Virgil cleanses Dante of the soot and dirt that he acquired in his travels through hell, as they enter Purgatory; and Dante is washed again at the end of his journey through Purgatory, as he bathes in the Eunoë and Lethe (Canto I, XXXIII). Thus the three elements are used to cleanse in Purgatory, as they are used to torment in hell.

It is in Paradise, though, that the three elements are no longer used as tools, but rather as representations of God. As Dante looks at God himself, he sees that "three circles shone—three in color, one in circumference," giving the impression that this is a trinity of beings: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Canto XXXIII, l. 116-117). Each of these circles must represent a part of the trinity, and can be interpreted in a variety of different ways. First, there is an "abyss of light," showing that light is the fundamental presence of heaven, as it is everywhere and shines on everything (Canto XXXIII, l. 116). This could lead to the implication that the light is the presence of God, as the darkness in hell shows the absence of God. Light is everywhere in heaven and shines down on everyone, displaying God's omnipresence, is a fundamental principal of God. Whether it is God the father or God the Son is up for debate, though God the Son makes the most sense, since Genesis tells of God begetting a first light through saying "let there be light," which we know is not the sun because God creates the sun later. The book of John also speaks of Jesus Christ as the word of God, showing that the

initial light begotten through word was the Son, before taking the form of a man.

There are also two rainbows that could represent Jesus Christ; as the Son of God had two forms, so there are two rainbows. Rainbows are made when water refracts light, so that the combination of the two elements would create two symbols of God's promise. In Genesis, rainbows were created to be signs of God's promise to Noah, as God said that never again would He destroy the world as He did after the great flood. Therefore, if the two rainbows collectively represent Jesus, then He would be a promise from God to the world, which He certainly fulfilled by dying on the cross. Yet the rainbows could also be seen as made from Jesus, the light of the world, and water, the Holy Spirit that is the living water. The combination of these two would create rainbows; and the very fact that the two could combine, or move would show that they are the actors of God, the moveable mover.

Following the lines of that analysis, God would be the "exhalation of pure fire/equally breathed forth by the other two" (Canto XXXIII, l. 119-120). This makes sense as God is the consuming fire, and the other two members of the trinity speak His will. This also gives God a voice, as He exhales, but does not give Him a body through which He moves, because God the Father does not move, as He is the embodiment of Aristotle's unmoved creator (Canto XXIV, l. 130-132). This interpretation is up for debate, for if God is the exhalation of pure fire, then He would be begotten of the Son and the Spirit, which isn't biblically accurate. Since God the Father being the fire leads to some contradiction, the image could, instead, represent Jesus Christ, as He is the spoken word of God, or it could be the Holy Spirit that moves Paul to speak that should he refrain to write the Bible, his veins would burn. There are a variety of ways to interpret which of the trinity is represented by the three elements, most of which work in a variety of ways.

It is precisely because the symbolism works in so many different ways that this is an accurate representation of the Holy Trinity. God is inconceivable and unintelligible; our human minds cannot grasp the essence of God, just as we cannot grasp the exact meaning of this metaphor. The ability of each member of the Trinity to represent a different symbol also allows for a fluidity of movement; for Dante says, "as I grew worthier to see,/the more I looked, the more unchanging semblance/appeared to change with every change in me" (Canto XXXIII, l. 112-114). The interchangeability of the meanings gives credit to Dante's surprise at seeing the constant being of God change. It is not that God is any different, but rather that Dante is, and as Dante continues to grow "worthier," his vision becomes more accurate.

This growth is especially poignant, as heaven is a place of constant growth and re-vision. Dante is continually growing brighter, just as all the other souls in heaven are growing brighter, because they are constantly

increasing their ability to see and reflect God. His virtues, His foresight, and His love are all aspects of Himself that souls in heaven develop, as they grow closer to Him. And as great as that may seem, it means that those of us who are still on earth, must remain uncertain as to the exact nature of God until we reach heaven. We must certainly begin to acquire God's characteristics, as the world can also be a purgatory, a place of refinement, but motivation for such growth must be from faith, rather than from complete comprehension. This is at once a source of sadness and hope: we must live our lives in partial truth and ignorance, but we also get to live our lives in the belief that we will one day see and understand the true essence of God.

# The First Feminists: Women in the English Epic

Cathy Johnson

Up until about the nineteenth Century the epic poem was one of the dominant literary genres. From the *Beowulf* poet to John Dryden and Alexander Pope, it was in this form that some of the greatest writers articulated their literary imaginations in the common effort to drive the progress of the English language and the valuable role it plays in Western civilization. Each epic simultaneously built upon and referenced what had come before, as well as introduced a new element that would advance the genre and literature as a whole. *Beowulf* resurrected notions of heroism invented by the Greeks while laying the foundation for epics written in English; Geoffrey Chaucer recycled some of the epic characteristics in his satire to intelligently critique his society's social hierarchy in comparison to that of God's. As time passed this same cycle of acknowledging the past while progressing continued but a new element began to appear and evolve: the role of women in the epic poem. In *The Faerie Queene* Edmund Spenser again recalls the classics, but also uses allegory not only to reveal the political and religious tensions of his time, but to honor the first female monarch of England, Queen Elizabeth I; in *The Rape of the Lock* Alexander Pope litters his poetry with classical allusions but surpasses Spenser by writing the first epic where a woman is undoubtedly the central hero. However, most important is Milton's *Paradise Lost*, arguably the greatest epic poem ever written, in which he invokes the most beautiful classical allusions and manages to reinvent the character of Eve and bestow upon her the respect, dignity, and heroism she has always deserved and never received.

Traditionally an epic poem consists of the following elements: a "vast canvas" and "significant action," epic deeds, supernatural machinery, elevated style, an epic voice, one unified action, an invocation to the Muse, and above all an epic hero. In Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, there are two heroines who do not always receive the attention due to them. If the title of the poem does not reveal the first lady she is introduced to us in the third stanza as she who has given Red Crosse Knight his mission: "Upon a great adventure he was bond,/ That greatest Gloriana to him gave,/ That greatest Glorious Quenne of Faerie Lond,/ To winne him worship, and her grace to have,/ Which of all earthly things he most did crave" (ll. 19-23). Just as Red Crosse Knight, who is usually deemed this poem's hero, is completely in the service of and only aims to please Gloriana, so it is with Spenser and Queen Elizabeth I, whom this character represents.

Our next heroine enters the scene in stanza four: "A lovely Ladie rode him faire besides/...So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,/ She was in life and every vertuous lore, and by descent from Royall lynage came/ Of ancient

Kings and Queenes” (ll.28, 37-40). Despite Una’s virtue (her character is meant to symbolize truth) she is framed by the evil Archimago and falsely accused of infidelity. Red Crosse Knight, who is easily fooled by the contrived vision and forgets Una’s wise prophecy of a possible danger lurking in the future, abandons her and she is left with the task of finding him again, proving her worth and restoring her honesty. In contrast to previous female literary figures, Una is not merely a love object; instead of being a passive character she plays an extremely active role, and even saves her beloved’s life by rescuing him from Despaire. After they are reunited, Red Crosse Knight is convinced by Despaire to commit suicide; and just as he is about to turn his dagger on himself, Una stops him with her powerful words and restores him to life: “Come, come away, fraile, feeble, fleshly wight,/ Ne let vaine words bewitch thy manly hart,/ Ne divelish thoughts dismay thy constant spright./ In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part?” (ll. 469- 272). It is her powerful words of faith and courage that save Red Crosse Knight and return him to his task at hand.

Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* is not only dense with classical allusions and references to previous English poets, but Christian imagery and iconography as well. His allegory consists of multiple levels that pay homage to those who wrote before him, as well as advancing the genre by embedding in it political and religious issues, publicly praising his beloved female monarch, and honoring a woman who is arguably the best monarch England ever crowned.

John Milton took one of the greatest stories ever told, reinvented it in English heroic verse without rhyme, with none other than God as his Muse, and created his masterpiece, *Paradise Lost*. Remarkably enough Milton takes the brief synopsis the Bible offers regarding these events and builds a complex, dense story that challenges the previous understanding of these stories, especially when it comes to Eve’s character and role in the fall of mankind. From the moment she is introduced to the reader she breaks the former accepted mold cut out for her. When Adam asks God for a companion he says: “Among unequals what society/ Can sort, what harmony or true delight?/ Which must be mutual, in proportion due/ Giv’n and received” (ll. 383-386). His happiness depends on having a companion who is his equal, not subordinate as some interpretations frame Eve. After God grants Adam’s wish he describes their relationship as “one flesh, one heart, one soul” (ll. 499). Later in Book VIII Adam again describes “Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,/ And in herself complete, so well to know,/ Her own, that what she wills to do or say,/ Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best” (ll. 547-550). She does not need Adam and is in no way dependent upon him, but is empowered by the free will and individuality she was granted and blessed with by God, her creator. But as she is human, she is also susceptible to temptation.

As tragic as the Fall of mankind is, it is of course essential to the beginning of human history, and the pivotal event of the Bible as well as *Paradise Lost*. Although Eve is the first to give into Satan's temptation of the forbidden fruit and encourages Adam to do the same, she is not solely responsible for their expulsion from Paradise as she is often blamed. Because God granted both of them free choice, they have only themselves to blame, including Adam who does not initially recognize this. In Book X he compares his wife to the devil when he says to her: "Out of my sight, thou serpent, that name best/ Befits thee with him leagued, thyself as false/ And hateful" (ll. 867-869). Adam regrets he ever asked God for her companionship, implying that had she not been created this never would have happened and holding her solely responsible: "O why did God,/ Creator wise, that peopled heav'n/ With spirits masculine, create at last/ This novelty on earth, this fair defect/ Of nature, and not fill the world at once/ With men as angels without feminine,/ Or find some other way to generate/ Mankind?" (ll. 888-895). Adam denies his free choice and blames not only Eve as an individual, but her entire sex as well.

To this Eve graciously and selflessly responds: "both have sinned, but thou/ Against God only, I against God and thee,/ And to the place of judgment will return,/ There with my cries importune Heaven, that all/ The sentence from thy head removed may light/ On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,/ Me me only just object of his ire" (ll. 930-936). Not only does Eve confront her own sins but she is willing to take responsibility for Adam's as well and suffer the punishment for both of them. One might go so far as to compare her words of self-sacrifice here with those of another even more important figure in the Bible who sacrificed himself for the sins of others. If we are to aspire to be Christ-like, then it seems that is exactly what Eve is doing here. Because of The Fall, to be human means to be henceforth inherently flawed. So though it may not be possible for us to obtain perfection, it is possible for us to strive in that direction as Christ did.

Eve's words are so powerful here that she changes Adam's heart and he regrets his previous attitude towards her: "soon his heart relented/ Towards her, his life so late and sole delight" (ll. 940-1). It is easy to be stubborn and defensive and vengeful, but to accept one's own wrong-doings and seek forgiveness and reconciliation is difficult and courageous in itself. It is Eve who takes this first brave step, and understands that free will does not simply mean the freedom to pursue the pleasures in life, but also means accepting responsibility for one's own actions and making the right choices that will determine his or her fate.

*Paradise Lost* is also underscored with heavy political themes that, as with Spenser, were relevant to his time and to the tensions running throughout

England. Milton's portrayal of Eve was very different than any understanding of her that was previously accepted, yet this poem was vastly popular. Perhaps this can be explained by Milton's thorough and exceptional skill at crafting this poem, and like all great poets before him, alluding to the works of Homer and Virgil among others. By presenting the public with a traditional form using many traditional techniques, he could afford himself more freedom in pushing other boundaries, such as presenting Eve as a heroine, not only a character to be blamed for Adam's fall into temptation.

The next great poem to challenge the woman's position in an epic is Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* in which Belinda, our central character and heroine, prides herself in the maintenance of her appearance, especially her curls of hair, as a tool to protect her chastity and her independence. This piece is considered a "mock epic" because it uses the elements of epic, but in regards to a subject matter than on the surface seems silly and absurd. For example, the main heroic battle is fought over a lock of hair, something that in it of itself does not seem worthy or capable of holding epic meaning or value. However, a closer analysis of the text will reveal a very insightful and carefully crafted poem that addresses gender issues still relevant today.

Belinda's make-up and cosmetic tools act as her armor and protection in a society eager to put a wedding ring on her finger and force her to finally give up her virginity, which was then considered the essence of a woman. By maintaining a facade of impeccable beauty she gains more power regarding who she eventually marries than an ugly woman who would instantly be married off at the first chance, in fear that it might be the last. Thus she maintains control of her essence, and in a sense her independence as well. But while there is some power in maintaining the ideal standards of beauty, Pope also mocks this vanity: "Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;/ Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul" (ll. 33-35). When Belinda's lock is raped in the brutal cutting of it from the rest of her hair, her "screams of horror rend the affrighted skies./ Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast,/ When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last" (ll. 156-7). But had Belinda not placed so much value in her hair, it would not have been a rape, because she would not have lost anything of value. The same force that helps her maintain some resemblance of independence is also that which oppresses her.

Pope uses classical elements, such as Belinda's dream in the beginning, which serves as an oracle, multiple references to fate; as well as countless literary allusions like when he compares her actions to that of another great epic hero: "The Goddess with a discontented air/ Seems to reject him though she grants his prayer./ A wondrous bag with both her hands she binds,/ Like that where once Ulysses held the winds" (ll. 79-82). Like Spenser and Milton,

Pope takes on a tradition that has been handed down through the centuries, and uses it to build upon past literature and raise some considerably progressive ideas regarding women's roles, beauty and power.

Spenser, Milton, and Pope (as well as John Dryden in *MacFlecknoe* although that is unfortunately not entirely relevant here) inherited a literary tradition of using classical allusions but also advanced the genre of the epic poem by pushing it forward in other directions, such as radically changing the role of women. Each of these poets offers the reader something new and allows women a little more ground in each case. These men could indeed be considered early feminists because the issues they erect regarding women are issues that still persist today: the role of women in government or the lack of females running for President; Eve's role in *The Fall* is still argued and some do still deny man's freewill so they can blame her; beauty, power and chastity are still forces that women struggle with and have yet to reconcile. These men took the risk of embarking on new progressive ideas while also remembering and building upon the traditions of the past. That is what literature should do and that is why it plays such an important role in society. It should be valued as such.

## Tolkien's Leaf

David Laine

Do not laugh! But once upon a time (my crest has long since fallen) I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic to the level of romantic fairy-story – the larger founded on the lesser in contact with the earth, the lesser drawing splendour from the vast backcloths – which I could dedicate simply: to England; to my country. ... I would draw some of the great tales in fullness, and leave many only placed in the scheme, and sketched. The cycles should be linked to a majestic whole, and yet leave scope for other minds and hands, wielding paint and music and drama. Absurd.

– J. R. R. Tolkien  
(Carpenter 97-98)

J. R. R. Tolkien shared a dream with the world. This dream has excited wonder in millions with its lush beauty; it is full of magic and splendor, a creation of such power and majesty that it may never be rivaled. With it, Tolkien shook the foundations of the fantasy world and altered the course of literary history. Virtually all post-Tolkien fantasy at the very least lends a nod to Middle-earth, if not in fact outright mimicking it. *Forgotten Realms'* Faerûn and *Everquest's* Norrath could practically be called forgeries of Middle-earth, they borrow from it so freely. *Forgotten Realms*, beginning as a simple pen-and-pencil role-playing game, has moved authors to create short stories, novels, and even epic sagas set throughout the lands of Faerûn; *Everquest*, with its higher-tech debut, is beginning to make the same transition. But why is it that these mere copies are generating such interest in new material to expand their respective worlds, while their forbear remains almost entirely untouched? What is it about Middle-earth that has set it apart as a work of art to be read about, loved, discussed, revered – but never added onto? When Tolkien's dream was brought to light, why did we not endeavor to discover Middle-earth's secrets ourselves, to share in his wonderment, instead creating our own mere imitations?

An immediate excuse for why Middle-earth's exploration remains in hiatus could be that Tolkien's grand mythology is simply too large, too complex. Probably most people come away from attempting to read *The Silmarillion* the first time wondering what it's all about. It begins with a strange section called the *Ainulindalë*, immediately plunging the reader into chronicles of some ten or fifteen oddly named gods, followed up by ten pages describing these absolutely foreign deities in the *Valaquenta*. Jane Nitzsche expresses a concern that likely echoes what many people think of this: "Even now in its published form *The Silmarillion* is difficult to read and even more difficult to

enjoy. Despite its epic theme the collection still lacks continuity, if not unity, and is hard to follow” (129). While *The Silmarillion* can be a wonderful experience to those who find themselves charmed by its magic, it can be tedious and banal reading to those who don't. I know that this was my first impression; I gave up before ever even reaching *The Silmarillion's* main section, entitled the Quenta Silmarillion, in my failed first attempt. I would not actually realize the irony of this situation until years later.

In all honesty, Tolkien's mythology is a lot to take in, and the way it is laid out in *The Silmarillion* does little to ease the shock. Reading Greek or Norse mythology is relatively accessible because our culture is so steeped in these; we know, for instance, that Hercules is the demigod once portrayed by Kevin Sorbo and later star of a self-titled Disney film, and that his old man is the bearded guy who throws lightning bolts at centaurs, satyrs and little winged horses in *Fantasia*, before yawning and reclining in a bed of storm clouds. While these mythologies have been to some extent a part of our cultural learning from childhood, it is an entirely different matter when the first twenty-four pages of a novel introduce a host of new gods and their servants - followed by another twenty-two pages spent reading about their jobs, relationships and petty squabbles (while constantly referring back to the glossary to remember who's who) before finally meeting anyone who's not a god or demigod. Nietzsche once again lunges to the attack, citing the glossary of nearly 900 names (for a mere 300-page work), then charging that “Tolkien's interest in philology nearly adumbrates the work as a fictional narrative. Like Morgoth and Fëanor in *The Silmarillion*, Tolkien seems to love what he has created as an end in itself, and the ensuing catalogue of names confuses, if not stifles, the reader” (129-130). This is quite a grievous charge to lay on the man, essentially claiming that any appeal to be found in his life's work is lost in its vastness. If this is truly the case, and the entire charm of Middle-earth lies in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* (if they are not, in fact, similarly cursed), then it would be understandable that nothing new has come of it. These stories are self-contained and can stand quite on their own without the background Tolkien provides in *The Silmarillion*, and in a way it would be presumptuous to add to such independent works. Tolkien has given us two wonderful stories, but we don't necessarily need to hear anything more about Middle-earth, and can go about creating our own stories and shaping their respective worlds.

The fact of the matter remains that Tolkien gives us more than just two stories: much more. He chronicles three ages of Middle-earth's history, and all that *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* encompass is the final years of its third age, as well as the first few of its fourth. *The Silmarillion* could perhaps best be called a synopsis of everything that came before, and it is important to

remember that not everybody bears such a bleak view of this work as Nietzsche. A much more balanced opinion is offered by Peter Kreeft, who acknowledges two ways of looking at it:

One does not read *The Silmarillion*; one either abandons it in bored disgust, or else one lives in it. If the latter, it overwhelms, like enormous waves. It is more than thoughts and feelings, a flip of the subjective consciousness; it is massively *real*. When you close its covers and turn to your refrigerator, you do not experience a passage from a less real world to a more real world, but vice versa. (164)

Kreeft claims that Tolkien has created a world with such reality and depth that, in a way, it surpasses our own. As for those who can't stand wading through the Elvish names and Tolkien's philology, this is completely understandable. It certainly isn't for everybody. However, there are still many who are drawn completely into the world of Middle-earth, reaching depths only hinted at in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, but revealed more fully in Tolkien's life's work, *The Silmarillion*.

This brings up an interesting question: would people who can't stand *The Silmarillion* still think so poorly of its tales if they were fleshed out to the same degree as Tolkien's other works? Indeed, this gets right to the heart of the matter. Why don't we explore Middle-earth further, or give grander treatment to tales told in brief in *The Silmarillion*? Tolkien's publisher, Stanley Unwin, realizes this potential as he mirrors Tolkien's own dream in a letter to him:

*The Silmarillion* contains plenty of wonderful material; in fact it is a mine to be explored in writing further books like *The Hobbit* rather than a book in itself. I think this was partly your own view, was it not? What we badly need is another book with which to follow up our success with *The Hobbit* and alas! Neither of these manuscripts (the poem and *The Silmarillion* itself) quite fits the bill. I still hope that you will be inspired to write another book about the Hobbit. (Carpenter 188)

*The Silmarillion* supplies us with all of the background necessary to explore Middle-earth in further adventures, and it is, once again, more of an abridgement than anything. The publisher describes it as "a mine to be explored in writing further books," and Tolkien's attitude seems to agree on the issue when he himself says he is leaving scope for other minds and hands to work on the world (see head quote). After all, in *The Lord of the Rings*, he writes roughly a thousand pages dedicated for the most part to the events of a year; it

is conceivable that its prequel, spanning several thousand years, could generate considerably more. Stories don't even need to come from *The Silmarillion* itself; the history of Middle-earth and its lands have been laid out to equip authors to explore on their own. This can be done in various ways. For example, when interesting characters are introduced in other fantasy worlds, such as the dark elf Drizzt Do'Urden of the *Forgotten Realms*, fan reaction or the writer's personal excitement often brings these characters back as the heroes (or anti-heroes) of their own tales. In such ways the fantasy world grows deeper roots. With so many possible ways to expand upon Tolkien's discoveries and find more of what Middle-earth's has to tell, we're left to wonder why its growth virtually ceased with Tolkien's death.

The simplest explanation that I can see is that Tolkien has been raised on a pedestal. It is not an easy thing to try and earn a place alongside a true master. He is seen as "one of the finest writers of escapist fantasy in any language and of any time," and "unlike the real world of infinite possibility in which we live, [his world] offers the attractions of completeness: he has anticipated every question and found an answer before you asked" (McLeish 135). He is the father of modern fantasy: revered, perhaps even worshiped, but never added onto. It would be arrogant to try to climb onto the pedestal beside him and expand on what he has accomplished, for it is perfection. It offers us a sense of completeness, so instead, we try to emulate him with new worlds that liberally borrow (or, more accurately, steal) from his. But why should we look upon Middle-earth as a sort of Blessed Realm, so holy it cannot be approached by mere mortals? In other worlds created in the image of Middle-earth, designers lay out histories, geographies, racial lines, etc., for the express purpose of inviting others to join in the fun of participating in a dynamic and expanding world. Is this not what Tolkien himself intends with the grandiose histories and genealogies included in *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*? He is no Son of Fëanor, hoarding his creation for his pleasure alone, but is offering it to the world. Besides, how complete is Middle-earth, really? Tolkien could never bring himself to stop working on it, revising it, rethinking and updating it, which is why *The Silmarillion* was only completed and published posthumously by his son Christopher. To Tolkien, it can never be finished; it will always need a little touch up or expansion.

The fact that Tolkien invites us to join him on the pedestal we've built for him does not necessarily mean that people are willing to try their hand climbing up. He is, after all, quite high up, and any serious mistake could just bring the whole thing toppling down. (To anyone who doesn't believe me, just observe the downward progression that can typically be charted in horror/slasher movie series, such as by comparing *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>*, a horror classic, to the atrociously ill-conceived and formulaic *Jason X*.) But who says

that new writings must embody the epic grandeur of *The Lord of the Rings* that people tend to associate with Tolkien? The man himself showed us many of the voices of Middle-earth: *The Hobbit* is essentially a whimsical, light-hearted fairy tale; *The Lord of the Rings* is epic fantasy; *The Silmarillion* holds the exalted feel of myth and legend. Even within any one of these can be found various tones. Similarly, perusing a few of the short stories from *Forgotten Realms' Best of the Realms* compilation we find stories of darkness and hope, humor and heroism. There is no reason that anything new needs to be another *The Lord of the Rings*. There is another way that the pillar could come crashing down, though: factual errors. *Forgotten Realms* literature passes through Wizards of the Coast to be published; similarly, if Middle-earth is to be revisited by new authors, it would absolutely require extra special care, especially since Tolkien's writings show him to be obsessively meticulous in his work. Careless attention to detail would rob Middle-earth of the reality he infuses it with, cheapening the entire experience. Cartography would need augmenting, as chronologies and genealogies would want cross-referencing. Histories and cultures would require careful sculpting, and languages would require enlarging from dedicated professional philologists. All told, such a task would be huge in the undertaking, but would that not be better than expending similar energy casting mere shadows of Middle-earth?

Personally, I find the lack of new Middle-earth literature both shocking and depressing. I would love to find works dedicated to the rich stories of Tuor and the Fall of Gondolin, the Tragedy of Túren, or to Elwë Thingol, Melian, and the land of Doriath. Even better would be to find one dedicated to Beren and Lúthien Tinúviel, the elf-maiden who gave her love and immortal life to a mortal man. Perhaps more exciting would be to learn new things about characters and events Tolkien alludes to or merely introduces, such as Angmar's rise and fall, the waking of the Ents (or the reunion of the Ents and Ent-wives?), Sméagol's tortured background, or the misadventures of those two loveable rascals, Shagrat and Gorbag. After all, a tale doesn't need to revolve around the good guys; they can be dark and evil and just as fun. Another interesting concept would be to put Middle-earth's heroic deeds into epic poetry, following Tolkien's own intention for the Lays of Leithian and Eärendil (and his original casting for them). It's a shame that so little has been written by others within such a masterfully drawn world. I know of only one series set in Middle-earth not written by Tolkien, called *Middle-Earth Quest*. It is a set of *Choose-Your-Own-Adventure*-style youth books, and I once owned *Treason at Helm's Deep*. Is this truly what Tolkien has in mind, spending his entire life chronicling the history of a world so that it can basically never be used except as a point of topical interest to the most devoted fans? Is this his wish, that Middle-earth's growth should die with him?

J. R. R. Tolkien's body of works is cast with such magnitude and scope that it will likely never be surpassed, and for this we owe him our utmost respect. There is no better honor that the literary community can now bestow upon him than to humbly present him with our contributions, as Aulë offers up his creations to his father, Ilúvatar, "so that they too might perceive the beauty of Eä, which thou hast caused to be. For it seemed to me that there is great room in Arda for many things that might rejoice in it, yet it is for the most part empty still, and dumb. ... As a child to his father, I offer to thee these things, the work of the hands which thou hast made" (*Silmarillion* 37-38). Feeble as our efforts may be, this would ensure that Middle-earth, Tolkien's legacy, will continue to live on freshly in our imaginations.

Tolkien offers us another little story called "Leaf by Niggle," written to deal with his fear that he would not live to complete his work on *The Silmarillion*. The story follows Niggle, an artist who loves to paint perfect leaves but can never get around to drawing a full tree. Niggle never finishes his masterpiece on his own. He takes his final journey despite "some corners where he would not have time now to do more than hint at what he wanted" (*Leaf by Niggle* 103). It is not until later when others help that his world finally begins to more fully resemble his vision. Tolkien's world also began as a leaf. He fooled around, making his nonsense fairy languages, and soon this leaf turned into a tree when he met Eärendil and wrote about his adventures; "... and the tree grew, sending out innumerable branches, and thrusting out the most fantastic roots. Strange birds came and settled on the twigs and had to be attended to. Then all round the Tree, and behind it, through the gaps in the leaves and boughs, a country began to open out; and there were glimpses of a forest marching over the land, and of mountains tipped with snow." (*Leaf by Niggle* 101)

Tolkien leaves us with a picture of Middle-earth, forever broadening, though never complete, and only hinting at much of what there is to be said. Thankfully, he provides tools for other minds and hands to work with, so that they too might discover the tales of Middle-earth that remain untold thus far.

Absurd.

## Bibliography:

- Carpenter, Humphrey. *J. R. R. Tolkien: A Biography*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.
- Kreeft, Peter. "The Wonder of *The Silmarillion*." *Shadows of Imagination: The Fantasies of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979: 161-178
- McLeish, Kenneth. "The Rippingest Yarn of All." *J. R. R. Tolkien: This Far Land*. Ed. Robert Giddings. Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1983: 125-136
- Nitzsche, Jane. *Tolkien's Art: A 'Mythology for England'*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Silmarillion*. New York: Ballantine, 1999.
- ~. *Leaf by Niggle*. *The Tolkien Reader*. New York: Ballantine, 1966: 100-120

## Other Works of Interest Mentioned:

- Athans, Philip, et al., eds. *The Best of the Realms Vol. 1*. Renton, Washington: Wizards of the Coast, 2003.
- Barrett, K., Peters, S., Tolkienquest. *Middle-Earth Quest: Treason at Helm's Deep*. Berkley: Berkley Pub. Group: 1988.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. New York: Ballantine, 1982.
- ~. *The Hobbit*. New York: Ballantine, 1997.
- ~. *The Return of the King*. New York: Ballantine, 1983.
- ~. *The Two Towers*. New York: Ballantine, 1982.

# The Great Enemy: Hemingway's portrayal of Gertrude Stein

Adam Ekblom

In 1921, guided with nothing more than a letter of introduction by Sherwood Anderson, a young Ernest Hemingway ventured into Paris in search of something new. In his search, he found some of the most influential voices of the moment. However, all of them seem tied to the ideas and influential connections of the Madame who lived at 27 rue de Fleurus. Gertrude Stein was seen as Paris' authoritative voice on modern art, writing, and psychology. Her domineering presence made her, in the eyes of the young artists, as either a necessary ally or a dangerous adversary. Throughout the course of his life, Hemingway saw both the motherly Stein who encouraged his writings and the vengeful Stein who latter saw him as a naïve simpleton. Hemingway countered such arguments with his own, unkind, sketches. Despite such animosity, Stein's influence on Hemingway is evident in both his prose style as well as the social connections he gained. However, is Hemingway's portrayal of Stein as an egocentric prophetess accurate? What lies at the center at Hemingway and Stein's disjointed relationship is the creation of ideas that defined a generation. It is through understanding that relationship that we can better understand the world it created. Although its accuracy is questionable, Hemingway's A Moveable Feast presents his relationship to Stein in three changing stages from friendship to adversary. It is through examining these three character studies and other writings can we better understand Hemingway's interpretation of this volatile relationship.

In Hemingway's A Moveable Feast, we first see Gertrude Stein as an authoritative figure who is intrigued by the young soldier's potential, but is quick to point out his amateur writing capabilities. Hemingway writes:

She [Gertrude Stein] wanted to be published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, she told me, and she would be. She told me I was not a good enough writer to be published there or in *The Saturday Evening Post* but I might be in some sort of new writer in my own way but the first thing to remember was not to write stories that were *inaccrochable*. I did not argue about this nor try to explain again what I was trying to do about conversation. That was my own business and it was much more interesting to listen.

This short passage demonstrates some of Hemingway's major views of Stein. Firstly, it demonstrates Stein's confidence in her success as a writer, something he later question. Secondly, the rigid structure of master to pupil is evident.

The young artist gladly welcomes Stein's advice and begins to incorporate her writing style and thematic ideas into his own. Such compliance brought Hemingway's own artistic merit into questions, as seen in Lewis' essay "The Dumb Ox." Lewis states, "This brilliant Jewish lady had made a *clown* of him by teaching Hemingway her babytalk . . . And it is very difficult to know where Hemingway proper begins and Stein leaves off as an artist." Lewis' assessment is both unkind, and in many aspects inaccurate. This view is evident in Hemingway's inner response to Gertrude Stein's criticism of the crude language in "Up in Michigan." Hemingway, though interested in Stein's opinion, is already determined to maintain the realistic dialogue of his characters as his "own business" and not in the realm of Stein's approval. Most importantly, we see Hemingway using Stein as a catalyst to become a recognizable name. Evidence of this is seen in Hemingway's review of Stein's *Geography and Plays*.

In his review, there is little if any mention to Stein. The review is, instead, Hemingway's first chance to present himself to the Paris scene. Reynolds' writes, "If it says little about Stein, it tells us a great deal about the education of Ernest Hemingway." Throughout the review Hemingway demonstrates his independence by rejecting such writers works such as Mencken, Lawrence, and Lewis. The only mention of Stein states that she is a necessary source for potential "writers," presenting his own interest in Stein.

The second encounter with Stein in A Moveable Feast presents Hemingway's view of her writing capabilities as well as the cause of her critical acclaim. Although he was partially responsible for Ford Madox Ford's publication of Stein's *The Making of Americans*, he was also dissatisfied by the results. Hemingway states that *The Making of Americans* "began magnificently, went on very swell for a long way with great stretches of great brilliance and then went on endlessly in repetitions that a more conscientious and less lazy writer would have put in the waste basket." This statement seems to present a contradiction. Despite his interest in having the work published, he sees it as an incomplete work. Perhaps it is a continuation from his book review. Stein's importance in the literary world, to Hemingway, is to be an inspiration and example for all future writers. Therefore, any publication can further demonstrate Stein's experimental style. However, Hemingway's desire in making the work accessible places the work in a public domain in which it can be dissected, praised, and ridiculed. Such a process is necessary for any writer, including Hemingway, to see which elements work in a story and which do not. In his statement, it is clear that, although the story itself is quite strong, Stein's use of experimental repetition only confuses and lessens the work.

With the publication of *The Making of Americans* we see Hemingway's view of Stein's relationship with her critics. Hemingway writes:

In the three or four years that we were good friends I cannot remember Gertrude Stein ever speaking well of any writer who had not written favorably about her work or done something to advance her career except for Ronald Firbank and, latter, Scott Fitzgerald.

Such a statement presents some inner failings of Gertrude Stein. It suggests that, although she presents a strong personality, she can be easily offended by criticism. It also brings into question the relationship between Stein and other writers. Were those writers supportive of Stein's publications because of a general enjoyment, or because they hoped to strengthen their own career through their involvement with Stein. Hemingway is clearly aware of Stein's fragile nature as his comments regarding *The Making of Americans* were never mentioned to Stein.

During this same passage, we see, once more, the master-pupil relationship between Stein and Hemingway. In this case, the educational lesson Stein hopes to convey is the differences between male and female homosexuality. Throughout Stein's instruction, we see how her own practices reflect her opinions. A known male homosexual is seen as a "corrupter [whose] truly vicious<sup>i</sup>." However, Stein's view of lesbianism is completely different. Hemingway describes her argument as, " 'In women it is the opposite. They do nothing that they are disgusted by and nothing that is repulsive and afterwards they are happy and they can lead happy lives together<sup>ii</sup>.'" This statement can be seen as Hemingway's attack on Stein's relationship with her companion Alice B. Toklas. No matter what Hemingway hoped to imply in the comment the passage demonstrates Stein's authoritative knowledge on all subjects. Despite claiming this "knowledge," it is clear that her source of explanation is based solely on what she likes and what she does not like.

Such knowledge carries over to Stein's interest in writers. Those who wrote kindly of her or helped in her career are beloved. Such as her short stories for Sherwood Anderson; "Sweet Sherwood," and "A Valentine for Sherwood Anderson." Despite being a great supporter, Stein says little about Anderson as a writer, instead she speaks of him as a "man and of his great, beautiful, warm Italian eyes and his kindness and his charm." Her defense of Anderson is demonstrated by her outrage at Hemingway's publication of a parody piece, *The Torrent of Spring*. Other writers are also viewed by Stein's biased opinions, such as Ezra Pound, which made Stein angry by breaking one of her delicate chairs<sup>iii</sup>. Other opinions demonstrated the same idea. Carlos Baker writes:

The second sketch [of Gertrude Stein] told of his habit of dropping in to talk literature at her apartment. Again her opinions were firm but biased. Aldous Huxley's books were "inflated trash," D.H. Lawrence

wrote like a “sick man,” and, as for Joyce, if a visitor brought up his name as much as twice, he would no longer be welcome in the rue de Fleurus. . . . Hemingway not only received but retained the impression that she was both dictatorial and professionally jealous.

Thus, Hemingway sees Stein’s contempt of those who think ill of her. Hemingway soon joined her list of enemies, as seen in her sketch of him in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*.

Gertrude Stein’s final appearance in *A Moveable Feast* presents her famous saying of declaring the expatriate writers as a “Lost Generation.” Despite the quote being prevalent in the definition of the expatriate writers of the Paris moment, Hemingway deconstructs Stein’s importance in both *A Moveable Feast* as well as the quotations that begin *The Sun Also Rises*. In Hemingway’s biographical remembrance, a garage manager presents the famous quote. Stein’s involvement is simply to twist the comment into an instructional tool regarding the young writers in Paris. Hemingway writes:

“That’s what you are. That’s what you all are,” Miss Stein said. “All of you young people who served in the war. You are a lost generation.”

“Really?” I said.

“You are,” she insisted. “You have no respect for anything. You drink yourselves to death . . .”

Hemingway dismisses Stein’s interpretation, as she had never experienced the war. And, in his walk home, Hemingway thinks more and more about the boy in the garage and whether he was ever been “hailed in one of those vehicles when they were converted to ambulances.” Thus making the story of the “Lost Generation” one of male experience during the war, Hemingway shuts out Stein and her opinions.

Hemingway continued to discredit Stein and the notion of the “Lost Generation” by pairing her famous quote against Ecclesiastes stating that “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever.” Instead of being a lost generation, Hemingway saw himself as being a part of all generations in its constant life and death, but the natural world is where truth is immortal.

The relationship between Ernest Hemingway and Gertrude Stein was both fruitful and destructive. Of course basing the analysis of this relationship on Hemingway’s recounts in *A Moveable Feast* certainly suggest a bias against Stein, it may be an accurate portrayal. While many historians and scholars have tried to understand the true nature of their relationship, I believe the search for that truth is lost because the only historic record we have is two autobiographies with their own biases and partial truths. Perhaps what is

important is not what truly happened, but what was remembered. To Hemingway, Stein was more important as a social connection than her experimental writing. Although several stylistic elements can be seen as being expanded from Stein's own ideas, the grand ideas of Hemingway and his characters are his and his alone. Hemingway's anger at Stein's label of the "Lost Generation" was perhaps the tipping point in his relationship with her. With this comment Hemingway realized that she did not know him, and did not know or care to know the purpose of his friends. In a sense, Gertrude Stein was no longer useful for Hemingway's growth. In the end, Hemingway saw Gertrude Stein as nice, but she sure "does talk a lot of rot sometimes."

### Bibliography:

- Baker, Carlos. Hemingway: The Writer as Artist. Fourth ed. Princeton UP: Princeton, 1972.
- Bernner, Gerry. *Are We Going to Hemingway's Feast?* American Literature. Vol. 54, No. 4 Duke UP, December 1982 pgs. 528-544.
- Ernest Hemingway. A Moveable Feast. Touchstone: New York City, 1992.
- Hemingway, Ernest. The Sun Also Rises. Scribner: New York, 1954.
- Hoffman, Michael J. *Introduction*. Critical Essays on Gertrude Stein. Hoffman, Michael J. ed. G.K. Hall & Co.: Boston, 1986. pgs. 1-5.
- Reynolds, Michael S. *Hemingway's Stein: Another Misplaced Review*. American Literature. Vol. 55, No. 3.

# It's a Jungle out There: An Argumentative Look at Social and Economic Realism in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*

Josh Lowensohn

*The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair is one of the great socio-economic semi-fictional novels of the 20th Century. Sinclair blends real world events of labor struggles, and hardships with a heart (and gut)-wrenching story of life in the hideous world of Chicago's "Packingtown." How realistic was Sinclair's portrayal of the working life of Packingtown at the turn of the century in the 1900s? The answer is extremely realistic. In this essay, I will be examining the realism of economic life in Packingtown in both *The Jungle* and America in the early 1900s.

To aid in my argument that Sinclair portrayed working life in Packingtown realistically, I have broken down *The Jungle* by subject. I will be focusing specifically on the food packing industry, Packingtown, railroads, immigration, employment, wages, labor movements, and Socialism. While the issue of labor movements and unions warrants its own paper, I will be focusing mainly on the corruption that Sinclair portrays in that sector, which I believe gets the heaviest attention in the novel.

*The Jungle* was first published in 1906 and the realism of the packinghouses that it's so famous for is due in part to the first-hand experience of Sinclair. Sinclair, who was being subsidized by the publication *Appeal To Reason*, flexed his journalistic muscles by going in-depth into the hideous world of Chicago's Packingtown. This experience comes out specifically in some of the more gruesome accounts within *The Jungle* that contained information or practices that a "factory tour" to the general public could not provide:

There would be meat that had tumbled out on the floor, in the dirt and sawdust, where the workers had tramped and spit uncounted billions of consumption germs. There would be meat stored in great piles in rooms; and the water from leaky roofs would drip over it, and thousands of rats would race about on it. It was too dark in these storage places to see well, but a man could run his hand over these piles of meat and sweep off handfuls of the dried dung of rats. These rats were nuisances, and the packers would put poisoned bread out for them; they would die, and then rats, bread, and meat would go into the hoppers together. This is no fairy story and no joke; the meat would be shoveled into carts, and the man who did the shoveling would not trouble to lift out a rat even when he saw one—there were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit.

This passage in particular shows some of the inside aspects of working packinghouses besides the killing and butchering, which is what most people thought to be the end of it.

Surprisingly, the effect of *The Jungle* on the American public was not that of a need to reform labor or the economic plight of factory workers, but rather that the food industry was cutting too many corners at the cost of public safety. Sinclair himself sought to try to provide an answer to the labor problems with his Socialist party idealism that took over the latter third or so of the novel. Sinclair even noted difference between his intent and the public reaction that followed: "I aimed at the public's heart, but hit it in the stomach."

The public outcry for food reform mere months after the release of *The Jungle* led to the quick establishment of the Food and Drug Act of 1906. The new Act was due in large part to President Theodore Roosevelt's interest in some of the things described in Sinclair's book:

The president also recognized how public reaction to Packingtown's problems carried over into a concern about all processed food.

Whereas in January, Roosevelt had not included the food bill in a list of the four or five measures he was "anxious" to have passed, he now added a hand-written postscript to a letter to Speaker Cannon: "I earnestly favor" passage of a pure-food law.

The legislation for the Food and Drug Act of 1906 set up not only parameters for how pure food must be, but also how much makers of the food had to tell customers. In order to have any kind of control on this new legislation, there had to be an organization to oversee investigation and punishment. The control came in the form of the Bureau of Chemistry, until the official re-organization of government offices into the Food and Drug Administration in 1931. However, none of this was to happen before the story of the Packingtown was told in *The Jungle*.

At the turn of the century, the beef packing industry was controlled by a group of four main companies, lovingly called "the big four." These four main companies were Armour, Swift, Morris, and Hammond, and collectively had a \$200 million dollar share in the market. The financial stretch of these companies is unimaginable, turning nearly every part of the cattle into something profitable:

Here was where they made Brown's Imperial Hams and Bacon, Brown's Dressed Beef, Brown's Excelsior Sausages! Here was the headquarters of Durham's Pure Leaf Lard, of Durham's Breakfast Bacon, Durham's Canned Beef, Potted Ham, Deviled Chicken, Peerless Fertilizer!

In *The Jungle*, the names of the companies were changed, but the magnitude of their size and location in Chicago were not.

The location of these packinghouses plays a huge part in the interesting socio-economic sphere that is "Packingtown." From a modern-day perspective, the new forms of Packingtowns are business parks where companies are consolidated to benefit themselves and each other. Such was the case with this densely packed area of Chicago:

Companies already established in the Packers' Addition added new plants, dressed beef houses with the requisite railroad tracks, warehouses, glue and fertilizers works, canning factories, and their own maintenance facilities...Land prices per front foot climbed from \$80 in the early 1870's to \$333 in 1890, when it was virtually impossible to find vacant land.

The integration of railroad tracks and the other businesses close by allowed the meat packers to diversify what they could do with the cattle, as well as cut down on transportation costs.

The railroads were an integral part of the success of Packingtown since they not only provided the cattle a way into the packinghouses, but also a way out to the consumers. The railroads continued to provide cattle, and the numbers of cattle increased along with the size of the railroad:

[The Railroads] delivered just under 9 million animals in 1880, 12 million a decade later, and just over 13.5 million the year before the Columbian Exposition...Meantime, the new lines tapping "cow country" and feeder lines throughout the plains made possible the increase in livestock deliveries.

The use of the railroads allowed the businesses in the area to import and export an incredible amount of goods to and from the rest of the country—and like all businesses in Packingtown, the railroad company in *The Jungle* sought to get its stake of the market with a secret underground railroad:

A great corporation had proceeded to tunnel all Chicago with a system of railway freight subways...when these freight tunnels were completed, connecting all the big factories and stores with the railroad depots, they would have the teamsters' union by the throat.

I will discuss unions and labor issues later on, but the underground railroad would allow the packing companies to transport goods without the interference of the teamsters, whose most powerful tactic was tying up the street traffic, which hindered the full functionality of the packinghouses and

associated businesses. However, before the discussion of unions must come workers, because without the workers, there would be no unions in the first place.

Who would they find to do all this horrendous work? The answer was immigrants, the make-up of which was mostly from Europe. While Jurgis' family is Lithuanian, this was one of the smallest percentages of people not only immigrating to America in 1900, but also those recorded males working in Packingtown at a mere 0.5% of the ethnic make-up. The majority of immigrants during this time were from Germany, Ireland, and Canada, which contributed to 55.5% of immigrants who were working in Packingtown.

The cause of this immigration to America can be traced back to economics with the Brinley Thomas model. Thomas believed that America was in an upswing, and Europe was in a downswing; meaning that America had a pull with its growing economy and real wages, while Europe had a push with its slumping economy and housing conditions. In *The Jungle*, Jurgis and his family seem drawn to America based on its possibilities of economic prosperity:

Jurgis, too, had heard of America. That was a country where, they said, a man might earn three rubles a day; and Jurgis figured what three rubles a day would mean, with prices as they were where he lived, and decided forthwith that he would go to America and marry, and be a rich man in the bargain. In that country, rich or poor, a man was free, it was said; he did not have to go into the army, he did not have to pay out his money to rascally officials—he might do as he pleased, and count himself as good as any other man. So America was a place of which lovers and young people dreamed. If one could only manage to get the price of a passage, he could count his troubles at an end.

Jurgis seems attracted most of all to the amount of money he'd be earning in comparison to his own. The problem with that however is that Jurgis was comparing the amount he could earn in America with prices of goods and services in Lithuania, as opposed to prices in America, which is where the family gets into trouble later in the story.

Employment itself is what the story of *The Jungle* centers on, more so than rotten meat in fact. The historical records of Packingtown say that the “employment stood at 25,000; some 17,500 were beef and pork workers, while the remainder were in canning, lard, margarine, glue, soap, fertilizers, and closely allied industries.” Sinclair provided similar numbers in *The Jungle* when the soon-to-be-employees are taking a tour of the packinghouse for the first time:

It was, so Jokubas informed them, the greatest aggregation of labor and capital ever gathered in one place. It employed thirty thousand men; it

supported directly two hundred and fifty thousand people in its neighborhood, and indirectly it supported half a million. It sent its products to every country in the civilized world, and it furnished the food for no less than thirty million people!

This segment of the book follows closely with what early-1900s journalist Harvey Goodall had to say about the business in Packingtown in that it “supported in the vicinity of one hundred thousand persons. No pigmy this.”

In order to employ most people, you must offer them wages and this is where some of the economic intricacies of *The Jungle* come out. The wages in *The Jungle* represent real wages in Packingtown during the late 1800s and early 1900s very closely. In Jurgis’ first job at the packinghouse as a sweeper in the killing beds, he describes his wages:

His whole soul was dancing with joy—he was at work at last! He was at work and earning money! All day long he was figuring to himself. He was paid the fabulous sum of seventeen and a half cents an hour; and as it proved a rush day and he worked until nearly seven o'clock in the evening, he went home to the family with the tidings that he had earned more than a dollar and a half in a single day!

This figure of a dollar and a half is right in the middle of the average for laborers between the summer and winter seasons as \$1.25 and \$1.75 respectively. In comparison to the other jobs in the packinghouses, the breakdown of wages looked like this:

Wages of workers in Packingtown c1890

Worker type	Summer wages (daily)	Winter wages (daily)
Skilled butchers	\$4.50	\$4.50
Less highly skilled knifemen (gutters, choppers, and trimmers)	\$3.75	\$2.25
Laborers	\$1.75	\$1.25

Surprisingly, these low wages were higher than the wages of most of America at that time. The U.S. census puts the average annual wages of “Lower-Skilled” labor hovering around \$.20/hr between 1890-1900. In comparison to the information from the U.S. Census Bureau, author of *Chicago’s Pride* Louise Carroll Wade provides specific information about incomes and jobs in Chicago:

The range of packinghouse wages in 1890 \$1.50 to \$4.50, compared favorably with the Rock Island Car-Shops (\$1.25 to \$3) and McCormick Reaper Works (\$1.50 to \$2.50). The average annual income of Chicago factory workers in 1890 was \$589; the average for

17,500 people in slaughtering and meatpacking was \$615. The national average annual income of factory workers was only \$427 in 1890.

So it would appear that working in the packinghouses was the most profitable legal venture in Chicago if you were able to do the work.

The struggle people had to actually do the work required of them in packinghouses and canneries is part of the message Sinclair tries to get across in *The Jungle*. While these were the days before the scientific management of work prescribed by industrial engineer Frederick W. Taylor, jobs in Packingtown were being run in a similar fashion according to Sinclair:

But let no one suppose that this superfluity of employees meant easier work for any one! On the contrary, the speeding-up seemed to be growing more savage all the time; they were continually inventing new devices to crowd the work on—it was for all the world like the thumbscrew of the medieval torture chamber. They would get new pacemakers and pay them more; they would drive the men on with new machinery—it was said that in the hog-killing rooms the speed at which the hogs moved was determined by clockwork, and that it was increased a little every day. In piecework they would reduce the time, requiring the same work in a shorter time, and paying the same wages; and then, after the workers had accustomed themselves to this new speed, they would reduce the rate of payment to correspond with the reduction in time!

Taylor's method was to scientifically maximize the efficiency of every job according to time, which would "reduce labor costs by making workers produce more quickly for piecework pay." The problem with this idea is that these workers (for the most part) were still getting paid by the hour instead of by output.

While the methods of "speeding-up" work parallels Taylor's method, *The Jungle* does an amazing job at showing how this can be more hazardous to the workers than profitable both mentally and physically. There is a specific passage where Elzbieta is recollecting her line of work and its monotony:

The woman did not go on; she stayed right there—hour after hour, day after day, year after year, twisting sausage links and racing with death. It was piecework, and she was apt to have a family to keep alive; and stern and ruthless economic laws had arranged it that she could only do this by working just as she did, with all her soul upon her work, and with never an instant for a glance at the well-dressed ladies and gentlemen who came to stare at her, as at some wild beast in a menagerie.

Monotony is represented in practically all the jobs in *The Jungle*: from Marija's job putting labels at the canning factory, to Jurgis' several jobs ranging from sweeping innards from the killing beds, to shoveling fertilizer and stamping metal pieces. Even when Jurgis goes out into the country while tramping, there is still monotony: "Jurgis joined a gang and worked from dawn till dark, eighteen hours a day, for two weeks without a break."

Sinclair also shows how working in Packingtown was physically dangerous for everybody who got involved. While Jurgis gets hurt several times from job-related incidents, both his wife Ona and father Dede have their lives taken because of their hazardous nature of their jobs. Just like in nature though, the surviving in Packingtown was survival of the fittest:

They had got the best of him—they had worn him out, with their speeding-up and their carelessness, and now they had thrown him away!...Some had been frankly told that they were too old, that a sprier man was needed; others had given occasion, by some act of carelessness or incompetence; with most, however, the occasion had been the same as with Jurgis. They had been overworked and underfed so long, and finally some disease had laid them on their backs; or they had cut themselves, and had blood poisoning, or met with some other accident. When a man came back after that, he would get his place back only by the courtesy of the boss.

This quotation also re-affirms the previous point regarding "speeding-up" as in its infancy. Also, the use of "their" in the first sentence seems to put all the responsibility of the tragedy on the part of the packers, and not the laborers, which is what Sinclair is writing the novel about.

Monotony, along with a loss of hope is what led many to become alcoholics (like Jurgis) in Packingtown. "The irregular character of packinghouse work meant that many workers spent a good deal of time in saloons." Saloons were the main place to go, considering, for example, that the ratio of saloons to churches in Packingtown in 1908 (a few short years later of course) was nearly 10 to 1. Sinclair captures this impressive aggregation of pre-prohibition fervor:

Jurgis had either to eat his dinner amid the stench in which he had worked, or else to rush, as did all his companions, to any one of the hundreds of liquor stores which stretched out their arms to him. To the west of the yards ran Ashland Avenue, and here was an unbroken line of saloons—"Whiskey Row," they called it; to the north was Street, where there were half a dozen to the block, and at the angle of the two was "Whiskey Point," a space of fifteen or twenty acres, and containing one glue factory and about two hundred saloons.

While Jurgis later miraculously kicks the habit of alcoholism after becoming a Socialist, Sinclair does his best to showcase the saloon business in Packingtown.

The hazards of the workplace, along with the hours worked for pay outwardly led to the labor upheavals that characterized the early 1900s. As an industry, “meat packing was the most strike-prone of all U.S. industries in the years between 1881 and 1905.” In *The Jungle*, Sinclair’s first introduction of the unions attempts to show readers their cause and how misconceptions might have occurred between labor and the unions:

There was a delegate of the butcher-helpers' union who came to see Jurgis to enroll him; and when Jurgis found that this meant that he would have to part with some of his money, he froze up directly, and the delegate, who was an Irishman and only knew a few words of Lithuanian, lost his temper and began to threaten him. In the end Jurgis got into a fine rage, and made it sufficiently plain that it would take more than one Irishman to scare him into a union. Little by little he gathered that the main thing the men wanted was to put a stop to the habit of "speeding-up"; they were trying their best to force a lessening of the pace, for there were some, they said, who could not keep up with it, whom it was killing.

Jurgis rejects the chance to join a union primarily because it will cost him money, which would have obviously been a huge barrier for most workers. The other reason he rejects it is that he hasn’t experienced the damage working in Packingtown has in store for him and his family, which is also another reason he gets interested in the Socialist movement later in the story.

Sinclair also works in the anti-union actions of the packinghouses during the strikes when they hired replacement labor (or “scabs”) to fill the spots of striking workers.

The packinghouses seemingly went through an incredible amount of expense, just to keep the unions from winning:

And meantime, agents of the packers were gathering gangs of Negroes in the country districts of the far South, promising them five dollars a day and board, and being careful not to mention there was a strike; already carloads of them were on the way, with special rates from the railroads, and all traffic ordered out of the way. Many towns and cities were taking advantage of the chance to clear out their jails and workhouses—in Detroit the magistrates would release every man who agreed to leave town within twenty-four hours, and agents of the packers were in the courtrooms to ship them right. And meantime

trainloads of supplies were coming in for their accommodation, including beer and whisky, so that they might not be tempted to go outside.

Historically, it is recorded that these black “scabs” received about \$2.15 per day as opposed to the five dollars listed in the novel. Regardless of this differential however, the packinghouses were still attempting to crush the unions by outspending them and collaborating with other corrupt institutions like the railroads. Sinclair also portrays the corruption of the packers with the government when describing the packer’s means of getting around inspection of their working conditions:

And when the clamor of the public led to an investigation into these conditions, and the mayor of the city was forced to order the enforcement of the law, the packers got a judge to issue an injunction forbidding him to do it!

So what is the role of Socialism in all this mayhem, and why did Sinclair seem to bludgeon his readers with it for such a large part of the novel? The answer is that Sinclair believed that Socialist movement was the answer to solving these problems that had plagued society and labor for so long. Up until that point in history (1906), no movement had really fixed both government and the social sector, which is why Socialism may have seemed like the answer to Sinclair. In *The Jungle*, Sinclair laid out the means to take control of the government and in turn make changes to businesses like packers:

It was a slow and weary process, but it would go on—it was like the movement of a glacier, once it was started it could never be stopped. Every Socialist did his share, and lived upon the vision of the "good time coming,"—when the working class should go to the polls and seize the powers of government, and put an end to private property in the means of production. No matter how poor a man was, or how much he suffered, he could never be really unhappy while he knew of that future; even if he did not live to see it himself, his children would, and, to a Socialist, the victory of his class was his victory.

Instead of just lobbying politicians or striking, Socialism had the potential to let people create another party to find a way into government office and have more clout over private industry. So if anything, it would appear that Sinclair’s inclusion of Socialism was an attempt to answer the problems that are addressed throughout the first two-thirds of the novel.

In the end, Sinclair’s portrayal of life in Packingtown both economically and socially is a fantastic achievement in realist literature. *The*

*Jungle* gives an accurate view of both the juggernaut of an industry that meatpacking was, and the difficulty that immigrant workers faced in trying to profit from their existence in Packingtown. Like most realism, *The Jungle* tries extremely hard to depict real life, and despite the peculiar socialist twist in the end, achieves this effect chillingly. Jurgis is a believable character up until the end of the novel, and like a good realist character, he isn't larger than life.

The turn of the century was a tense time in America for both labor and capital, and Sinclair captures this tension in the micro chasm of Packingtown. In a place where few souls could venture, Sinclair did his best to accurately depict not only the horrors of labor in America, but also the horrors that went into our food. His work launched the beginnings of food reform and planted the seeds for finding answers to the problems between labor and capital later in the century.

Sinclair's combination of economic struggle and realism of jobs and wages provides an accurate depiction of life in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Although the socialist section in the last third skews the image of *The Jungle* being a great book, the first two-thirds or so is a testament to the struggle of trying to achieve the impossibility of the American dream and its toll on the human mind, body and spirit.

### Bibliography Sources Cited:

Pure Food: Securing the Federal Food and Drugs Act of 1906 James Havery Young. Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1989.

Food Regulation and Compliance Arthur D. Herrick. Revere Publishing Company, New York 1944.

Center for Food Safety & Applied Nutrition  
(<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~lrd/history1.html>)

Robert L. Gale. "Sinclair, Upton"; (<http://www.anb.org/articles/16/16-01510.html>);  
American National Biography Online Feb. 2000.

Chicago's Pride: The Stockyards, Packingtown, and Environs in the Nineteenth Century Louise Carroll Wade. University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago 1987.

The Jungle, Upton Sinclair. Signet Classic Printing, New York 1960.

American Economic History Sixth Edition. Jonathan Hughes and Louis P. Cain. Addison Wesley, New York 2003.

Weil, Susanne. "The Jungle" and "Romanticism vs. Realism." American Realism and Naturalism, Whittier College 2002-3.

Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970 Bicentennial Edition. U.S. Department of Commerce 1995.

Work and Community: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922 James R. Barrett. University of Illinois Press 1987.

### Sources Consulted:

Meatpackers and Beef Barons: Company Town In A Global Economy Carol Andreas. University Press of Colorado 1994.

Meatpackers- An Oral History of Black Packinghouse Workers & Their Struggle for Racial & Economic Equality Rick Halpern. Twayne Publishing, New York 1996.

Economic Concentration In The Meatpacking Industry; July 20, 1990 U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C. 1991. S Hrg. 101-1243.

Productivity In The Food Industry: Problems and Potential Gordon F. Bloom. The MIT Press, 1972.

The Food Manufacturing Industries: Structures, Strategies, Performance, and Policies John M. Connor. Lexington Books, 1985.

100,000,000 Guinea Pigs: Dangers in Everyday Foods, Drugs, and Cosmetics Arthur Kallet & F.J. Schlink. Grosset & Dunlap, 1933.

One man's meat is another man's poison: imagery of wholesomeness in the discourse of meatpacking from 1900-1910. Leslie A. Levin. Journal of American & Comparative Cultures v. 24 no 1/2. P. 1-14.

A muckraker's aftermath: the jungle of meat-packing regulation after a century William Mitchell Law Review v. 27 no4 (2001) p. 2413-33.

The Muckrakers: Crusaders for American Liberalism Louis Filler. Gateway, Chicago 1968.

American Chamber of Horrors Ruth deForest Lamb. Farrar and Rinehart, New York 1936.

The Food Industry Wars: Marketing Triumphs and Blunders Michman and Mazze. Quorum Books, 1998.

“The Call of the Wild and The Jungle: Jack London’s and Upton Sinclair’s Animal and Human Jungles” in The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism, edited by Donald Pizes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

The Random House Handbook: Sixth Edition, Frederick Crews. McGraw-Hill, Inc: New York 1992.

## Oh Hey, Power! Foucault, Discipline, and Hope

*Greg Prieto*

Nothing Gold Can Stay  
Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.  
-Robert Frost

Frost is concerned with temporality in the same way Foucault is concerned with the importance of the present; the haphazard, local, and the passing; and with movement (intellectual, discursive, normative, valued, etc.). They are both deeply interested in and comfortable with process—that fluidity by which our world, our perceptions, our relationships are constantly fluxing, revealing new combinations, disappointing and empowering, always morphing, and always occurring. This promise of fluctuation intrigues both, but particular to Foucault is how he believes these movements or processes are negotiated. For Foucault, the primary social force that moves bodies, populations, discourses, values, etc. is power. Power is quite literally everywhere, but not always visible: not invisible, but not always perceived. Because his writing is in part *exposé*; Foucault has undertaken to unveil the mundane, micro-level, quietly operating nature of power. For Foucault, power operates in the day-to-day, in the smallest actions, regulations, and choices; it operates on the body and within the body in very much the same way temporality characterizes and pervades nature (and perhaps life) for Frost. So important is this power that it even affects the subjective self by altering desire in ways that facilitate usefulness and productivity. These concerns will be addressed in a discussion of Foucault's concept of disciplinary power: power that regiments bodies, renders them useful, and molds will. I will explore this modality of power in detail, always returning to the following organizing questions: How does power operate, who does it affect, and what does it do?

Disciplinary power is power which is exercised upon a body, which induces physical regimentation and eventually yields the regulation of oneself by oneself: self-discipline. Foucault describes disciplinary power in the following way:

To begin with, there was the scale of the control: it was a question not of treating the body *en masse*, 'wholesale,' as if it were an indissociable unity, but of working it 'retail,' individually; of exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself—movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power of the active body. Then there was the object of the control: it was not or was no longer the signifying elements of behavior or the language of the body, but the economy, the efficiency of movements, their internal organization; constraint bears on the forces rather than on the signs; the only truly important ceremony is that of exercise. Lastly, there is the modality: it implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result, and it is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement.

(Rabinow 181)

Foucault understands power in this first instance as a force that does not attempt to regulate populations *qua* populations, but rather through the minutest regimentation of individual bodies. It is only when one takes these individuated objects of power as an aggregate that one might witness the ways disciplinary power affects populations. Foucauldian power is grounded in the notion of detail and mundanity; Foucault argues that power is most insidiously exercised at these low levels of recognition. Because these tiny moments of disciplining go relatively unnoticed, the disciplined rarely offer a challenge to these powered processes. It is only through aggregation that objects of power reveal themselves as fully disciplined, but because these "micro-politics" of power operate without scrutiny, the disciplined steadily fall prey (although it is important to note that all instances of disciplining power are not as negative as the term "prey" would suggest) to the power of gradual mundanity—often unnoticed but always resulting in a disciplined body, a regimented object of power.

Foucault goes on to argue in his second and third points that power must be and is present in the activity itself. Because power is grounded in the minute, each action, each movement, each choice must be governed by power at the moment an action, a movement, or a choice occurs. In this way, disciplinary power is deeply useful in increasing the efficiency of a body. Clerical workers, for instance, are a class of workers whose occupations have been increasingly deskilled over the last 100 years. This process of deskilling (that is, the breaking up of tasks into simplistic steps and then assigning those

steps to separate workers) demands the application of power over the minutest details of a given clerical activity in order to increase efficiency. Thus, managers will often strategically organize workspaces by placing water fountains and bathrooms in parts of a workspace that encourage the least possible amount of steps, and thus time, for one to leave the desk, relieve oneself, return to the desk, and resume work. Power here is present in the activity, in the motions a worker chooses, the time necessary to complete a task (even one as mundane as a visit to the restroom), as well as in the result: a more efficient worker. But notice, this efficiency would not be possible without the presence of power in a variety of very mundane activities; the aggregation of these carefully regimented activities results in a more efficient work process and worker.

But how is power present in these activities? Foucault's final point in the above quotation points to the importance of a representative of power (and indeed power may only be represented or wielded because no one body retains power, only the mechanism) or a supervisor in the enforcement of these demands for efficiency through carefully administered regimentations. In the case of the clerical worker, the role of the manager—or perhaps more precisely, the role of his or her “powered” gaze—places the clerk under constant pressure to abide by the rules and regimentations laid out by management. The supervisor enforces discipline by demanding the complete transparency or observability of the clerk; it (and indeed “it,” if we think about the way computer software can perform this same supervisory role) is a constant witness to subaltern movement. The presence of this supervisory gaze is essential to the presiding of power over each detail and activity, over every minutiae and process that make bodies useful for those wielders of power.

The presence of this supervisory gaze, however, is not always applied from an external source. Foucault argues that disciplinary power is perhaps most insidious when it begins to operate from within us. Take, again, the clerical worker; he or she, after some exposure to this disciplinary power eventually may no longer need a present gaze to motivate him or her to perform according to disciplinary standards. The sheer potential of supervision prompts the object of power, the clerical worker, to “internalize the gaze,” that is, regulate himself or herself, regardless of the presence or absence of a supervisor or some other representative of power. Ransom, using the Panopticon as an instance of self-discipline, elaborates:

This turns out to be the essential “mental” correspondence to the disciplinary infusions. Never sure when they are being watched by someone in the central tower—or even if there is anyone in the tower at all—prisoners come by degrees to watch

themselves, to make sure on their own that exercises and tasks are performed in the correct manner, that no word or gesture escapes that is other than part of the prescribed routine.

(Ransom 47)

This same process affects clerical workers as well; because they are never quite sure when a supervisory gaze is aimed at them, they eventually come to look after themselves, to regiment their own bodies in an effort to be productive and useful in the ways that power, even though externally absent, dictates. Disciplinary power, in this instance, not only prevents transgression, but removes the will to transgress. That is, discipline not only regiments the body, but alters a part of the subjective self that desires to transgress.

Ultimately this disciplining process creates “docile bodies;” bodies that have become more useful, while simultaneously rendered more compliant. Foucault elaborates,

Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an ‘aptitude,’ a ‘capacity,’ which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection.

(Rabinow 182)

To be subjected to disciplining power is not only to be rendered more useful, more efficient, and thus more productive, but also to be rendered more docile, more supple, and more compliant. The disciplining force both creates capacities within the object of its power that makes that object more useful, efficient, and productive, and, to a significant degree, hijacks or manipulates the power of the object (perhaps here, one might substitute the word subject as we conceive of a “thing” as having its own power, as being an instrument of power, not solely its object) in ways that render the object submissive to the disciplining force. To be more concrete, the supervisor not only trains the clerical worker, inculcating him or her with particular capacities that make the clerk more useful and productive for the company, but also, in this disciplinary process, the clerk is subjected to the supervisor’s power in ways that render the clerk more deeply compliant to power, and thus more docile.

This production of docility is perhaps the beginning of Foucault’s embarkations into the realm of subjectifying power. Although intricately connected to disciplinary power, a discussion of subjectifying power at this juncture would seem to transgress some disciplinary boundaries (i.e. page

length). Nevertheless, this concept of disciplinary power is important not only because it marks the beginnings of Foucault's engagement with power as mundane and oriented on and within the body, but also lays the foundation for his future theorizing on the way power negotiates the construction of subjectivities. Although we see hints in Foucault's early works and especially in his arguments about self-regulation, at this point in his career he has yet to theorize extensively about subjectifying power. This paper, then, should act as a snapshot in his theoretical undertakings. Disciplinary power points to a new "analytics of power:" a power that inheres in its mechanisms, that concerns itself with the mundane and the production of useful capacities, that operates unnoticed and thus unchallenged, but is now revealed and so, potentially empowering. Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power, while on its face may seem daunting in its pervasiveness, might actually be read as deeply hopeful. Resistance begins by posing challenges to the mundane and the everyday; small acts of resistance are no longer ineffective because of their precision and locality, but are deeply powerful precisely because they are local and comprehending of the mundane nature of power. Foucault does not render impotent my attempts at resistance, but emboldens and enlivens my activism. Awareness is the beginning, resistance is meaningful, and process is permanent. I am ready to work and I have Foucault to thank for these new tools.

---



