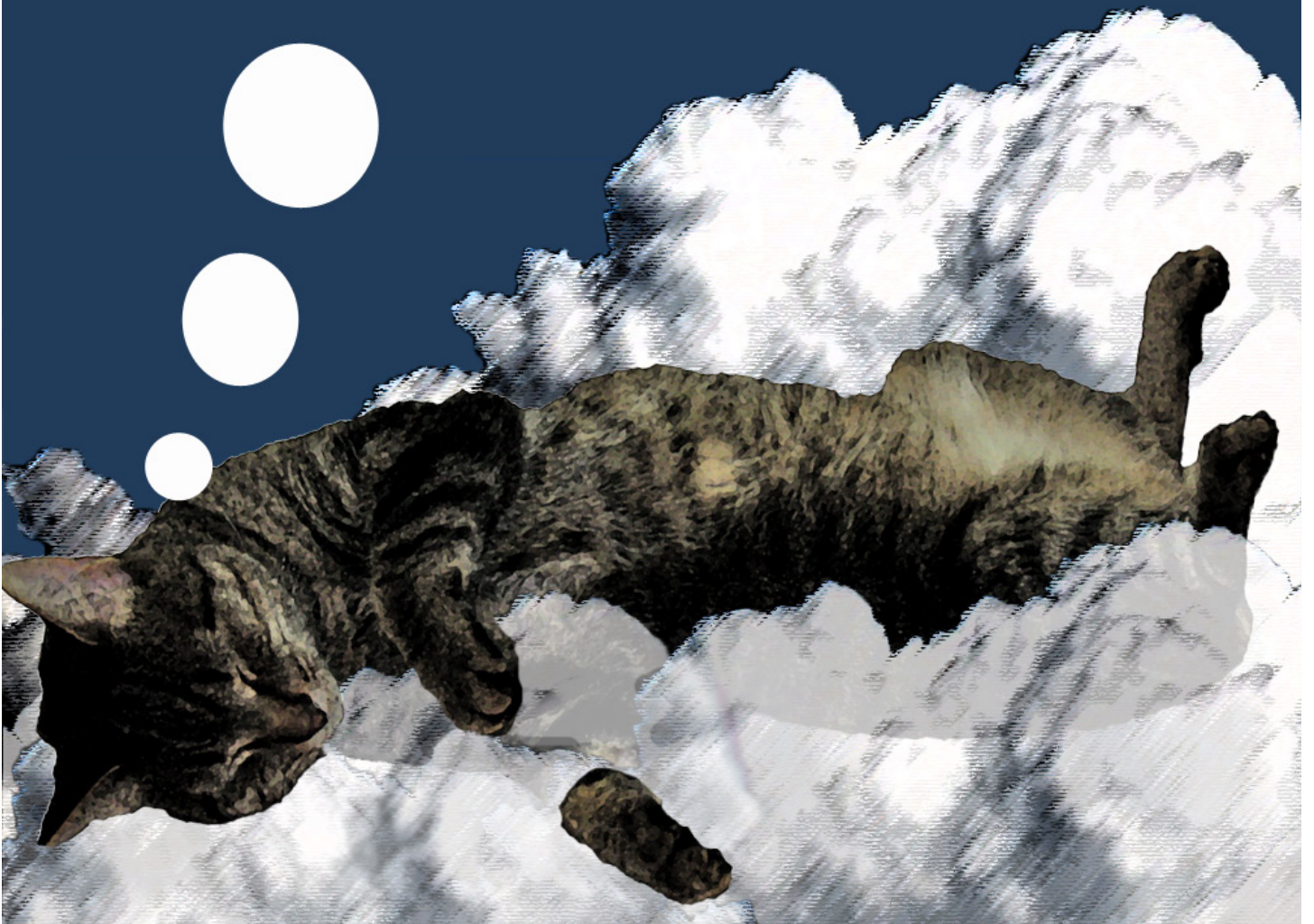


Fall 2012

Morpheus

Morpheus Literary Magazine





2012 *Morpheus* Staff

Editor-in-Chief *Laura Van Valkenburgh*

Contest Director *Lexie Pinkelman*

Layout & Design Director *Brittany Cook*

Marketing Director *Brittany Cook*

Cover Design *Lemming Productions*

Merry the Wonder Cat appears courtesy of Sandy's House-o-Cats.

No animals were injured in the creation of this publication.

Morpheus

Morpheus

Contest Winners





Table of Contents

Morpheus Literary Competition

Author Biographies.....	5
3rd Place Winners.....	10
2nd Place Winners.....	26
1st place Winners.....	43

Senior Writing Projects

Author Biographies.....	68
Brittany Cook.....	70
Lexie Pinkelman.....	109
Laura Van Valkenburgh.....	140

Author Biographies

Logan Burd

Logan Burd is a junior English major from Tiffin, Ohio just trying to take advantage of any writing opportunity Heidelberg will allow. For “Onan on Hearing of his Brother’s Smiting,” Logan would like to thank Dr. Bill Reyer for helping in the revision process and Onan for making such a fascinating biblical tale.

Erin Crenshaw

Erin Crenshaw is a senior at Heidelberg. She is an English literature major. She writes. She dances. She prances. She leaps. She weeps. She sighs. She someday dies. Enjoy the Morpheus!

April Davidson

April Davidson is a senior German major and English Writing minor from Cincinnati, Ohio. She is the president of both the German Club and Brown/France Hall Council. She is also a member of Berg Events Council. After April graduates, she will be entering into a Masters program for German Studies. She is hoping to attend the University of Cincinnati.

Melody Diaz

Melody Diaz grew up in Los Angeles, California. She transferred to Heidelberg University from the University of Southern California Davis. She is double majoring in English Literature and Biology. This is her first semester at Heidelberg.

Calista Hall

Calista Hall is from Green Springs Ohio. She is an English Writing major and an AYA Language Arts Education major. In her free time she enjoys playing with her daughter, Caroline, writing poetry and reading.

Emma Markley

Emma Markley is a senior this year majoring in English Literature and Spanish. She is from Buffalo, New York and plans on returning there to attend graduate school. She started writing poetry in Dr. Reyer's Creative Writing class her freshman year and has found it to be such a wonderful outlet ever since. She finds inspiration in her various antique collections and believes every object carries a story within it.

Shane Plassenthal

Shane Plassenthal was born in Dayton, Ohio, on Halloween. He grew up there, attending Stivers School for the Arts, where he studied Creative Writing. He has received a Gold Key from the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards of 2010, as well as an Honorable Mention from the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards of 2012. He was inspired to write "Chain Linked Fences" after a close friend of his developed a serious eating disorder, and hopes his story can serve as both a warning and realization to readers that eating disorders are far too often ignored by the general public as a serious problem.

Jessica Reed

Jessica Reed is a junior Psychology and History double-major at Heidelberg University. She is a proud member of the Euglossian Society and Heidelberg Greek community, serving in several capacities throughout her time in the Society. Jessica is dedicated to serving her fellow students, having been a member of the Residence Life staff, Orientation staff, and former President of Berg Allies. She spent time in Sevilla, Spain this semester in a Study Abroad program, where she took this photo.

Jackie Stanziano

Jackie Stanziano is a junior writing major from Spencer, Ohio. One day she hopes to pursue a career in publishing and maybe even write a novel. Actually, she would enjoy anything that doesn't involve dish washing in the back of Denny's. She enjoys writing, white teeth, and cats. She especially enjoys cats that can write and have white teeth. She doesn't know how to formally end this mini-autobiography because she is terrible at conclusions. The end.

Tyler Terwilliger

Tyler Terwilliger is a junior at Heidelberg. In high school, she was a part of the National Art Honor Society and is minoring in art. Art is one of her passions and relieves stress, especially when one enjoy it. She has not yet been recognized for any artwork that she has produced, so she is glad to say that she is thrilled to be a part of the Morpheus Literary Magazine of 2012.

Sebastian Williams

Sebastian Williams is 20 year old junior Heidelberg. He has lived in Tiffin his whole life and works at Wendy's. He will be studying in Germany next semester. Also, he enjoys long walks on the beach and gathering shells for his extensive shell collection. He like jamming out to music and sleeping. His plans for the future include paying off student loans over the course of many many years.

3rd Place Winners

Academic

Melody Diaz.....11

Poetry

Calista Hall.....16

Fiction

Sebastian Williams.....17

Journalism

Erin Crenshaw.....22

Visual Arts

April Davidson.....25

Disgust, Hunger and Religion in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

by Melody Diaz

"Disgust simply does not exist where hunger is: and as to superstition, beliefs, and what you may call principles, they are less than chaff in a breeze"(116).

The phrase above encapsulates the general meaning of Joseph's Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Coming from a time where Nietzsche's slogan "God is dead" introduced a concept that few were ready to face before, Conrad takes a bold step and hurls the reader into a world of disheartening revelations. He uses the journey into Africa and the complex search for the enigmatic Kurtz as a foil for the concept of Christianity. In short, Conrad suggests that religious notions, Christianity specifically, work merely as a veil to shroud the darker and more survivalist components of human nature, which are presented as type of carnal hunger.

Firstly, it is essential to

establish the religious parallel between the novel and Christian Dogma. Kurtz here is symbolic of Jesus Christ as a messiah figure. For example, whilst Marlow converses with the suspicious Brick Maker, the latter reveals that he envisions Kurtz as "a prodigy," "a special being" and an "emissary of pity" (94). He is portrayed as having "disciple[s]" (139), and he will also be betrayed by the forerunners of the *El Dorado Expedition*, who are often referred to as "faithless Pilgrims," much in the same light as Christ was betrayed by Judas Iscariot (91). Here, Conrad attempts to make Kurtz into an over-the-top being, an embodiment of good intentions and even perfection. The fact that he has been selected by the *International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs* as a sort of researcher and medium for change reveals an eerily reminiscent

parallel between him and the Christ figure. They are both portrayed as being exceptional beings. The Christ figure, according to Christian theology, came to earth to absolve the people of original sin and establish a new covenant. Throughout the time he is said to have spent on earth he preached and offered up teachings on how to live properly for entry into “heaven” after death. If Kurtz is akin to Jesus Christ, then it is safe to say that Europe and the *International Society* work as a symbol for heaven. Instead of religious customs, Kurtz as the messiah is supposed to be enforcing a “civilized” and European method of existence to the “savages” of Africa.

Kurtz as the Christ can also be gathered from the absence and presence of his voice. The information that Marlow receives from Kurtz is always secondhand, and at times not even that. Thus, Kurtz, at the beginning, is always displayed through Marlow’s perception and not through a solid and concrete means. This is much like how religion works, where

the believers mainly perceive a divine being through secondhand information, such as reading what many consider sacred texts. Also, Since Kurtz is understood to be like the Christ figure, it goes that he inherits the multiplicity of that deity. Where the Christian God is said to be three figures, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in one embodiment, Kurtz contains three attributes. He is like an all-powerful god when he uses the authority of his voice to command action. Marlow goes as far to say of Kurtz that “He was very little more than a voice” (125), while the Russian Trader claims that “You don’t talk with that man, you listen to him” (132). The concept of Kurtz as Jesus, the Son, has already been established in the preceding paragraph through his reported actions and the similarities between the figures. Kurtz as a Holy Spirit is evident when the other characters reminisce about him after death. For example, Marlow reveals that even though Kurtz has died his memory still lingers, “I shall see this eloquent phan-

tom as long as I live” (163). Here Kurtz is described as an ephemeral being. However, this being still has much sway and the power to move individuals, like Marlow, and his “intended” whom seems to be in eternal mourning. Thus, Kurtz is like the Christ figure who also was said to be a part of the trinity.

When Marlow finally receives tactile knowledge of Kurtz, however, he realizes what he has envisioned embodied in one man is a great farce. The narrator unflatteringly refers to the mysterious Kurtz as a short “specimen [that is] impressively bald” (125). Not only is Kurtz physically unimpressive and uninspiring, he is portrayed as being the opposite of what the narrator had come to expect: greedy, cruel and carnal. The “hunger” in the opening quote ties in very well to all of Kurtz’s malicious qualities, where hunger works as a metaphor for the base needs of humans. To illustrate, Marlow recalls that Kurtz would lament “my ivory. ... My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my” which

can be seen as a hunger for material wealth (126). Marlowe also recalls he had a vision of Kurtz “on a stretcher opening his mouth voraciously, as if to devour the all the earth with all its mankind” (158). Kurtz not only hungers for wealth, he also is a glutton for power. Once having arrived at Kurtz’s head quarters, for example, Marlow is astonished to discover what he imagined as decorative knobs on fence posts are actually the severed heads of “rebels” facing the entry of Kurtz’s abode. This not only reveals that Kurtz is cruel but that he desires all the power of authority for himself. This can be further established when Marlowe recounts that “Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts” and that there was “something wanting in him” (138). In truth, Kurtz is not the messiah that he has been made out to be; he is the embodiment of the very nature that he is supposed to repress in the “savages.” He gives in to his basest of needs, the need for power, wealth, and the satiation of

his lusts. In short, Kurtz's nature is no different from what Marlow originally perceived in the native Africans.

This is where Conrad breaks the parallel between Christianity and his narrative and implants his own revelation. To speak plainly, Conrad suggests that religion and Christianity work merely as a facade to hide the truth, that man, according to his nature, is greedy, selfish, and lustful. In short, all men have "savage" and animalistic tendencies that Conrad describes as a "hunger." The thin veil that is religion becomes "less than chaff in a breeze" when that hunger becomes realized. Conrad best illustrates this with the juxtaposition of Europe and Africa. In the beginning framing device, Marlow, while floating on the Thames, comments that, "this also... has been one of the dark places of the earth" (67). This comment, which sets Africa as a foil for England, also implicates the inhabitants once came from a state of savagery. For if it was once dark, then so it follows that the natives also contained "darkness."

In this scenario, Englanders were once savages in the eyes of their conquering civilizers, the Romans, who also introduced Christianity as a suppressant for "savage customs." The realization that religion is merely a means of suppressing, what Marlow sees, as man's natural and savage state slowly unfolds as he journeys deeper into the continent and as he continues to draw parallels. For instance, while cruising along the river, Marlow notes that the "far off drums" that he hears within the confines of the jungle are oddly reminiscent of the "sounds of bells in a Christian country" (87). Thus, the innate qualities of "savagery" are possessed by both parties. Conrad's end result is that the European and African are no different; they both have a hunger for wealth, baseness and cruelty within their hearts. Religion merely works as a mask that hides the more unpleasant side of existence. When hunger is realized and beliefs are tossed aside, there is no more need to feel the "disgust" – the "darkness" is just human nature.

Bibliography

Conrad, Joseph. Heart of Darkness. New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1950. Print.

Jeffrey Meyers, Joseph Conrad: a Biography, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991, p. 139.

Lost in Wonderland

by Calista Hall

You spent your time betting on him
being a nice guy.
That's what happens in fairy tales.

Then he played you like a deck of cards,
shuffling you around like a Blackjack dealer,
stacking the deck
and leaving you with nothing but the joker.

That's what happens when you gamble with love –
you get an Ace of Spades shot right through
your Queen of Hearts.

This time you have no rabbit to get you through.
This love isn't Alice in Wonderland,
the rabbit is still in his hat.
You're left with the realization –
nice girls finish last, too.

Crayfish in the Desert

by Sebastian Williams

“George, I really think this was a bad idea. I wish you would’ve talked to your father and me more before you had gone and done such a stupid thing. You’re just a kid, for God’s sake.” George sat on the edge of his bed with a magazine as he listened, half-heartedly.

“Mom, quit worrying. Really, I’ll be fine. I’m doing the right thing.” Immediately after he said this, his right eyebrow raised a little, and he really thought about what he said. “Anyway mom, I have to go, we’ll be leaving soon.” He hung up the phone.

George would be in Kyrgyzstan for a day before he was deployed to a small base outside of Bagram. He had never heard of many of the places he had been and the places where he would go. He was never taught the names of any of these places in high school. He noticed

that most of the other troops were this way too. He wondered sometimes if they were real places. George thought it would be nice, and cruel at the same time, if there never really was a war. Just a pit of money to keep people quiet.

It wasn’t that way though, and George soon noticed it. When he reached base, all he heard were explosions, reoccurring every 15 minutes. Sometimes it was near, sometimes far. But no matter, it never failed; about every 15 minutes someone tried to kill someone somewhere.

“Is it our fire or theirs?” George asked another soldier one time.

“Let’s just say ours kid. That’ll make us all feel a little more empowered.” It wasn’t what George wanted to hear.

One thing George did enjoy was that he rarely had to

see the enemy. The closest he got were the Muslim villages scattered around the area. Other soldiers told George to beware of the Muslims; they were trouble, “buncha inbred backwards people” they said. Sometimes George thought the soldiers seemed right. Other times they were dead wrong. It just depended on the day, the village, the people. George knew that generalizations are rarely accurate.

After about three months of explosions that got less terrifying day after day, George grew accustomed to the things he did and the people he saw, both soldiers and locals. It took them three months to meet the first Afghan he knew who spoke English, a young boy.

“Hello there.”

“Hallo, do you have any candy?”

“—uh, yea, here. You speak English?”

“Yes, they taught us in the schools. My parents do not like the language, but I like it very much. Are you from America?” The boy was very eager.

“Yes I am. Flint, Michigan, ever heard of it?”

“I know of Michigan, yes sir. Mitten-state.”

“Pardon?”

“The state is shaped like a mitten, my brother says. America is very strange in these things...” The boy ran off as soon as he said this, candy in hand.

“Yes, yes it is strange sometimes.” George had never said that aloud before.

Later George discovered the boy’s name was Khalid, and he turned out to be a very bright boy. He was not a Kurd, but George could not remember exactly what kind of Muslim the boy was. Most of Khalid’s knowledge came from his older brother who studied Western culture, something Khalid’s parents didn’t like apparently, as he was always mentioning their dislike of anything so. George realized his parents were probably the same way about anything Muslim or Eastern.

George would spend his time reading magazines and books his parents sent him. He would talk to Khalid any chance he got. School was

a prevalent topic, but they discussed movies and music and every other sort of thing. The other soldiers were very friendly to Khalid and any other children they saw, but they were always weary of attacks. There were rumors of rebel parents sending children loaded with explosives to talk to soldiers. None of these children were that way though; at least George didn't think they had the capacity to do such a thing. No one else seemed to doubt it though.

"George, are you doing well there?"

"Yeah mom. It's rough, and I barely get any sleep, but there are days when we can do whatever we want, and interact with locals."

"Watch out George, you don't know what anyone is capable of over there." She spied on about typical mother-worrying topics. "Wash yourself well. Did you get the chocolate? Do you know when you'll be coming back?" And on like this.

George interrupted, "Do you think we're needed here mom?"

"Of course, George. I

mean, I'd prefer someone else's child was over there, but despite all my worries you're making everyone very proud, George."

"They explain why we're here sometimes and it's just so hard to take. I hate that there never seems to be any second thought. I suppose I should've expected that though..." George was almost ashamed to say this.

*

Khalid came to the well, where George had been standing, supposedly on patrol.

"My father does not like me having conversation with soldiers or you George, I am sorry."

"That's ok Khalid, I understand."

They both paused in silence for a while. "Do you know of the banana fish George? My older brother once told me about a story from America, where a banana fish ate too many bananas and was stuck in a hole. He said it was very sad, but I did not see why. Do you have banana fish?"

"I've never heard of ba-

nana fish Khalid, but we do have crayfish, bet you could find some of those down this well here. They would like a place like this.”

“What are these?” Khalid stayed longer than he knew he should, as his father would suspect he was talking to the soldiers again. Khalid didn’t care though; he wanted to hear about the fish in America.

“Crayfish are like little lobsters that live in rivers. Know what lobsters are?” Khalid nodded to George. “Right, well these crayfish have little pincers, and they hurt like hell when they get you.” George paused for a bit. “They aren’t mean though, they only squeeze at you when you try and catch them. If you leave them alone, they’ll leave you alone.”

“Why do you not leave them alone? Then the crayfish will be happy, and you will not get hurt.” Khalid was proud of his answer.

“Sometimes it’s just not that simple Khalid. They taste good, and they make good bait.”

Khalid liked fish, but he

thought that crayfish wouldn’t be a very good dish. “I should return now, George. I wish my father and you soldiers could get along better.”

“Me too kid, me too.” George sighed. Khalid was glad George understood why he couldn’t see him anymore.

*

Weeks past and George had not seen any locals for a while, aside from rebels from a distance and behind cover. The fighting grew more intense, and George was forced to fire his gun a few times. At first he aimed away, purposefully not hitting anyone, but later he remembered his training, and also that he was told he would probably die if he didn’t fire back. He was switched from guard duty to sweeping through villages, to clear them of rebels.

Moving through the town on the first day of his new job, George had never been more nervous. He constantly breathed in the dry air in deep heaves, and he had to remind himself to exhale every once in a while. When he reached the center of town, he noticed several books, most likely

Qurans, stacked in a pile. He wondered if it were really necessary. He looked away as the other soldiers set them on fire.

As he averted his gaze, he noticed movement out of the corner of his eye. Prone to the ground, George moved gracefully behind cover and spied. As soon as he saw an Afghani rebel peeking out with an assault rifle ready to fire at his allies he put his gun in front of him. Without sound. Incredibly fast. Firing two shots straight to the chest, and one through the head. By the book and clean.

Something was wrong though, terribly wrong. He started to cry, and he wasn't quite sure why. George rarely showed emotion let alone cry. Then he realized the source of his tears was an agonizing pinch in his back. He felt for it as his vision began to blur, touched the hilt of a small decorative knife in his lower back. When he pulled his hand away, it was dripping wet. As his head fell to the ground, the last thing he remembered seeing was Khalid crying, saying something

to him. George couldn't quite make it out.

*

"I am sorry George, I am sorry!" Khalid was crying now, crouching over George. "I didn't want to..."

The noise drew the attention of a nearby soldier. Three shots were fired. A gurgling sound was heard. It was by the book and clean.

A Musical Look at Diversity in the 1960s

by Erin Crenshaw

It's a Sunday afternoon in Heidelberg's Gundlach Theatre and passersby can hear the faint sounds of rejoicing from inside. It is the cast of Heidelberg's latest theatrical effort "Hairspray"; a musical comedy that combines light hearted humor and hard hitting themes to make it a unique attraction to both the Tiffin and Heidelberg community alike.

Junior Dakota Thorn, who won the coveted role of the musical's unconventional heroine, Tracy Turnblad, belts out the lyrics to the show's uplifting opening number "Good Morning Baltimore". The show's supporting cast joins her in song, while emphatically waving their arms as they surround Tracy and attempt to gleefully express the delight of living in 1960's Baltimore.

The musical's hyper positive attitude, irrespective of its serious social commentary, is what sets it apart from previ-

ous endeavors presented by the Heidelberg theatre. Set during the era of integration, the story follows young Tracy, a girl with a large carriage and an even larger head of hair, as she tries to shake up the conservative perspectives of her family, friends, and neighbors.

She aspires to become a famous dancer on the notoriously popular Corny Collins Show. When her dream is made a reality, she does her best to show the Baltimore community that, not only can a girl of her size dance, but that associating with blacks wasn't in any way shameful.

"Diversity is such a big part of this play," said sophomore ensemble cast member Mike Landeros. "This subject matter is not something you see every day and that's why it is inspiring to an audience."

This opinion seemed to be unanimous amongst the musical's cast of actors. The

themes of acceptance, being yourself, and going against the grain were all widely discussed when members of the cast were asked what they thought set this work apart from other musicals.

Senior Jasmine Shaw, who plays Motormouth Maybelle, the charismatic, black hostess of “Negro Day”, the one day a month where black teens are permitted to dance on the ordinarily all-white Corny Collins Show, said that issues of race are still alive.

“Simply coming to college has showed me that,” she said. “My friends have parents that still have problems with things like mixed race relationships, which makes it clear that this musical still has a place in 2011.”

Ellis Thompson, a student actor from Findlay, supported her opinion. “This musical will bring out subconscious feelings in people and they will be able to reflect more so on racial issues.”

He plays Seaweed, the son of Motormouth Maybelle and love interest of Tracy’s white

best friend, Penny Pingleton.

The negative societal judgments about interracial relationships, mixed race community events, and changing times are frequently highlighted in the musical with songs like “(The Legend of) Miss Baltimore Crabs” and “Run and Tell That!”.

While pushing for tolerance is the play’s major theme, it doesn’t appear to be much of a struggle for the cast. Thompson explained the best part of this production was the freedom to be himself no matter what. “I can be me no matter what anyone else thinks,” said Thompson. “I don’t have to worry about boundaries here. No matter who you are or what you look like in this cast you can do your own thing.”

The racially diverse cast described feelings of mutual bonding and respect for one another that ironically resembled the relationships of the musical’s more tolerant characters. Freshman Holly Oberlin, ensemble member, said, “I really love getting to know

people I never would have met if I hadn't done this."

Shaw echoed Oberlin's thoughts when detailing how rewarding the experience of working with this cast has been. "I'm having so much fun," she said. "Meeting different types of people and working with all kinds of personalities. It's great to meet people that are interested in other things and participate in other school activities apart from the ones I am in."

The cast is also enjoying the challenge of the musical numbers and choreography. Seth Aaron Mitchell, who plays Tracy's suave, leading man, Link, stated that he liked the intensity of the show's dance moves. "It's great because it's paced well and physically demanding, but there are definitely days when you just want to relax," he said. "However, shows like this help you develop long lasting bonds with other actors, because you all go through so much together."

Sophomore Darci Allen, who plays the loveably, awk-

ward sidekick Penny, enjoyed the challenge of being stretched out of her comfort zone. "She's not who I am personally, but that's what pushes me. It's out of my boundaries to be awkward and uncomfortable, but when I get her character right in a scene I feel like I'm doing my job and that feels good."

Director Chris Tucci, assistant professor of theatre, will utilize his ultra-talented cast in a manner that resembles the fast-paced speed and heart of the musical's script. "Everything in this production is facilitated quickly because fast equals fun, fun equals happy, and happy equals laughter," explained Tucci.

Tucci is very happy with the collaboration. "This is a wonderful opportunity for the Tiffin community and Heidelberg community to come together."

Hairspray premieres at the Ritz theatre, October 15 at 7:30 pm. The musical runs October 21 and 22 at 7:30 pm and October 16 at 2 pm for a matinee showing.



“Pineapple”
April Davidson

3rd place, visual arts

2nd Place Winners

Academic

Brittany Cook.....27

Poetry

Laura Van Valkenburgh.....34

Fiction

Logan Burd.....36

Journalism

Jackie Stanziano.....39

Visual Arts

Jessica Reed.....42

**“I am a well dressed man in a larger house”:
The Search for the American Dream in an Era of
Materialism** *by Brittany Cook*

F. Scott Fitzgerald provides a spirit of the 1920s in the text of the novel as a time where morals were loose, society was cynical, and most Americans searched for happiness in greed. For Fitzgerald himself, “the dream was quite literally about the vanishing quality of greatness. It meant displaying in private life those daring unselfish qualities that had made America possible. This was a subject on Fitzgerald’s mind in the twenties” (Berman 55- 6). Although seemingly about the failed relationship between a man and a woman, *The Great Gatsby* ultimately comes down to the disintegration of the American dream during the Roaring Twenties, a time of wealth and gluttony. Because of the materialistic nature of the post-war generation, Gatsby’s lavish parties, Gatsby’s relationship with Daisy, and his demise

at the end of the book display this collapse of not only the character of Jay Gatsby, but also his representation of the American dream and its bankruptcy.

The dishonesty of the American dream arose from the parties that Gatsby would throw; money and pleasure became more important to young Americans now that the war was over, and more noble exploits were long forgotten. Nick attends his first party at the Gatsby mansion and becomes “on guard against its spectroscopic gaiety;’ he finds some things ‘graceless’, others ‘vacuous’. After two glasses of champagne ‘the scene had changed before my eyes into something significant, elemental, and profound.’ There is a touch of self-mockery in the knowing exaggeration (if that’s all it takes...)” (Tanner 200). Although he comes

to the party realizing that it was all out of opulence and overindulgence, after enough of the expensive drink he grows fonder of the idea. This is symbolic of the morphing of the American dream in the East; one may come with morals and beliefs, but as soon as one is introduced to the life of gluttony that many Americans had, they became drunk with desire for that lavish life.

In reference to the lavish life that Fitzgerald discussed, he stated “sometimes they came and went without having met Gatsby at all, came for the party with a simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission” (Fitzgerald 45). This was common among those with money, as it is explained in this statement. Most Americans are materialistic, and “Americans do not have many other alternatives. Material life offers one of the few recognized ways in which the American can express his idealism” (Berman 57-8).

Although the failed relationship between a man and a woman is the main theme of *The Great Gatsby*, it is also a factor in elaborating on the

idea of the death of the American dream. For Gatsby, all that he wanted was to be able to have his love, Daisy. But in order to win Daisy, he would have to be rich: “Gatsby cannot choose love or money; they are bound up with each other, so he must have both or neither” (Lathbury 59). This fight between the two not only makes him attractive as a character to the reader but also Daisy and Nick; this “struggle to overcome his impoverished circumstances and to fulfill himself gives him force” (59).

But having this money does not automatically give him claim to Daisy’s heart: “One characteristic of popular American fiction is the implicit separation of love and money. Possession of one does not lead to possession of the other” (Lewis 41). When Gatsby and Daisy finally meet again, he shows to her the expensive shirts that he has sent from Europe: “I’ve got a man in England who buys me clothes. He sends over a selection of things at the beginning of each season, spring and fall” (Fitzgerald 97). Daisy reacts to

them, saying “They’re such beautiful shirts,’ she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds, ‘It makes me sad because I’ve never seen such—such beautiful shirts before” (98). After Gatsby’s and Daisy’s emotional reunion, it is made obvious again by Daisy’s reaction to his shirts that love and money are intertwined.

In the first chapter, this reaction to the way of the world is shown in Daisy’s comment that “You see I think everything’s terrible anyhow” (Fitzgerald 21). She believes that no matter what, she has the freedom to act however she would like; the world gives her the choice to do whatever she pleases, but she is not content with having this ability to choose. “It is a world of broken relationships and false relationships, a world of money and success rather than of social responsibility, a world in which individuals are all to free to determine their moral destinies” (Berman 54).

Even though the people in this time had the means and motive to go for their dreams,

for Gatsby and Daisy, this was impossible. He had the girl, but he did not have the money to catch the girl. When he finally got the money and rose above his social class, the girl had moved on. This did not bother her much; this is the “core of Gatsby’s tragedy.” This life that he yearned for “fell so far short of the scope of his imagination. Daisy is a trivial, callous, cowardly woman who may dream a little herself but who will not let her dreams [...] disturb her comfort” (Johnson 99).

Fitzgerald ultimately implies that the American dream is being the person one wants to be and not wanting for anything in the materialistic sense, but throughout the shallow characters of *The Great Gatsby*, one discovers that “the allure of romantic culture is a hypnotic beckoning of light on the remote horizon or across the dark bay, but when you get too close in broad daylight and try to make it too real, Fitzgerald tells us, much of it turns out to be just tinsel, a cheap glitter” (Miller 123).

The end of the book provided the most proof towards the destruction of the “American dream” that Gatsby so sought; his death is compared to the death of the dream. When Nick finally leaves the East never to return, one of his final gestures rings true as a symbolic act towards Jay Gatsby:

On the last night,
with my trunk packed
and my car sold to
the grocer, I went over
and looked at that
huge incoherent failure
of a house once more.
On the white steps
an obscene word,
scrawled by some boy
with a piece of brick,
stood out clearly in the
moonlight, and I erased
it, drawing my shoe
raspingly along the
stone. Then I wandered
down to the beach
and sprawled out on the
sand.

(Fitzgerald 188-9)

Tanner believes that “Gatsby’s actual career... is itself an ‘obscenity.’ His career, money and identity are clearly

grounded in a series of more or less dirty, more or less criminal activities,” and whenever Gatsby tries to force Nick to recognize that his acts are criminal, “Nick always refuses: he prefers to ‘erase’ whatever might be the ‘dirty’ side of the story, either by omission, denial, over-writing, reinterpretation, or by transformation” (Tanner 179).

The end of Gatsby’s life, however, is a reminder that dreams die with the mortal soul. Although Fitzgerald never mentions the term “American dream,” a passage at the end of the book clearly outlines the theme:

And as I sat there
brooding on the old,
unknown world, I
thought of Gatsby’s
wonder when he first
picked out the green
light at the end of
Daisy’s dock. He had
come a long way to
this blue lawn, and
his dream must have
seemed so close that
he could hardly fail
to grasp it. He did
not know that it was
already behind him,

somewhere back
in that vast obscu-
rity beyond the city,
where the dark fields
of the republic rolled
on under the night.
(Fitzgerald 189)

This passage explains the romanticism that stems from the belief in the American dream: “at night, on the margin between the primal elements of earth and water, a transformation takes place” (Tredell 39). This transformation is likened to the transformation that achieving one’s dreams has on a person; in this case, the transformation that James Gatz made to become Jay Gatsby.

Finally, the novel closes with the statement, “So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past” (Fitzgerald 189), reminding the reader that “all our great dreams are grounded in impossibility: We progress toward that which we want, but the natural movement of life is retrograde—we die” (Lewis 56). In the end, our dreams do not mean much to the world; we are mortal, and when we

die, so do our dreams. These final statements relate Gatsby once more to the American dream; with his death, so does the dream die.

Despite Gatsby’s tragic end, we do not learn our lesson; Fitzgerald tries to give America a warning that we do not heed. But does the dream die? We become the boats beating against the current, constantly moving into the past. Because of the focus on the past, it seems that our delusion of the American dream, materialistic or true, will continue on regardless of what has happened to those who have pursued it. Although Nick made attempts to do so, the characters’ minds were “too busy to stop and learn” from the mistakes that they made. Their dreams have died, but Fitzgerald maintains the hope that future generations could learn from their mistakes.

“The Orient. And the Gatsby’s Slew of Choices” by Justin Vernon

Couldn’t leave well enough alone. You were right, I’m wrong.
Couldn’t leave the well alone. She called me on the phone.
It was just to let out a friendly cry. My middle aches, can you make
me fly?
So many thoughts in so little time, ‘cause their pain is their crime.

Sell my car to the moving man - I’m the sea and you’re Japan.
No great morning, no rising sun. No Gatsby in me I’m running
from.

Like a whisper in a lonely town; you brush it off, but it’s so loud.
That’s your ticker wishing, “Don’t give up.” This is more than can
fill you up.
More than this I would ask in turn, minds too busy to stop and
learn.
Slight of hand and a gentle push, the lines of promise turn to
crush.

Sell my car to the moving man - I’m the sea and you’re Japan.
No great morning, no rising sun. No Gatsby in me I’m running
from.

It’s funny how the kids arise in the pool of my disguise.
They are warped outside and in. What’s my muse? It’s their sin.
Walking backwards face-first into my past, as I refuse to be lied
against.
I am a well dressed man in a larger house; it’s so quiet.

Sell my car to the moving man - I’m the sea and you’re Japan.
No great morning, no rising sun. No Gatsby in me I’m running
from.

Bibliography

- Bewley, Marius. "Scott Fitzgerald's Criticism of America." *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Great Gatsby*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968.
- Bloom, Harold. *F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*. New Haven: Chelsea House, 1986.
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. New York: Scribner Paper back Fiction, 1995.
- Johnson, Claudia Durst. *Class Conflict in F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*. Detroit: Greenhaven, 2008.
- Lathbury, Roger. *Literary Masterpieces: The Great Gatsby. Vol. 1*. Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Group, 2000.
- Lewis, Roger. "Money, Love, and Aspiration in The Great Gatsby." *New Essays on The Great Gatsby*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985. 41-58.
- Miller, Michael Vincent. "An Adolescent Version of the American Dream." *Readings on F. Scott Fitzgerald*. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven, 1998. 122-28.
- Tanner, Tony. "The Story of the Moon That Never Rose': F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby." *The American Mystery*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2000. 166-200.
- Tredell, Nicolas. *Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*. London: Continuum, 2007.
- Vernon, Justin. "The Orient. And The Gatsby's Slew of Choices". *Unreleased Album*. 2011.

Scattering Citrus

by Laura Van Valkenburgh

Six months ago, I gave you a bracelet
I made from citrus-colored beads.
You wore it every day
until you lost it.

I had a matching one –
it curled around my wrist
among a tangle of bracelets.
It easily blended in
with the others,
but it still caught a glint
in the sun while the rest
faded into each other.

One day I stood in front
of the wastebasket
to throw away a rind –
my bracelet broke,
spilling mini glittering oranges,
lemons, limes, and tangerines
over the trash
and across the room.

Most of the pieces made it into the can,
but sometimes I still find a grapefruit
on the ground or a clementine
on the countertop. Some days I wonder
if I could collect the glass fruits
and replace them onto the string
they fell from. Then I remember
many of the beads are long gone.

Most of the bracelet
would be bare.

Onan on Hearing of his Brother's Smiting

by Logan Burd

"Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother," my father read aloud, verbatim, from the good book.

"In English, pops!"

"You have to have sex with Tamar."

"I have to do what!?"

"Have sex wi—"

"I heard you. Just because Er was wicked in the sight of the Lord," I said, looking to the sky, "I have to reproduce with that repulsive woman Tamar? Why must I be punished—burdened—with this deed? Am I my brother's keeper!? And where in God's name is Shelah to do this? He's still young, maybe he won't care what she looks like when they make love!"

"Hey now! Don't be so harsh, Onan; your brother very much liked that nasty woman. And Shelah is far too young...he wouldn't even know where to begin."

"Just splendid! This stupid law is the most dreadful thing around, and you can tell the elders I said that! Why can't I reproduce with someone else? I can find a nice fertile woman in town and I'll make a million beautiful sons with her. And we can send Tamar a nice basket of figs or a couple of servants. Anything that can save me from this awful bondage!"

Nothing did. The wedding would end up bearable, at least until Tamar's relatives see her dress and begin crying. Then we all see the lousy cake. I laugh, but Tamar doesn't find it funny.

Suddenly, an awful sound flooded my ears.

"Dearest, is that you?" Tamar called out as she neared the stable my father and I had taken refuge in. "I'd always hated pet names and had no desire to hear them now. I motioned for my

father to remain quiet, for fear that she would find us. Finally, she stuck her head around the corner and let out an awful shriek.

“Ahh! I see you!” she squealed.

“Tamar—can I just call you that by the way?—it would be cool if we could just keep this a mostly quiet affair, if you don’t mind.” I had always hated the sound of her voice.

“Sure, sweetie. So are you ready for the ‘hoochie-coochie?’” she asked childishly with a giggle, as if she didn’t do the hoochie-coochie every Saturday outside the temple. “Of course,” I lied, knowing that any sign of discomfort would cause her only to complain more about God knows what.

After father left us alone in the stable with well wishes, we slowly prepared for the deed. Since I needed time to mentally prepare myself, we started a bit behind schedule. I’ll spare the details, but near the finale I realized that any spawn that would become of this moment would never be credited to me, but to my evil,

wicked, dead brother. And so I did what any self-respecting man would do. I pulled out.

“What in God’s name was that for!?” Tamar shouted, irritated.

“Raising a child is rough these days; a man can’t afford to waste half his crops on a little baby! And in a dry spell, no less!”

Always the snitch, Tamar dressed and stormed outside to tell the Lord. Of course, being unclean, Tamar had to bathe thoroughly before the Lord would listen. The Lord was very displeased with me, but he allowed me to plead my case...after I, too, had cleansed myself.

I said to Him, “Lord, who is really to blame here? Is it I, the innocent brother of a wicked man? Or is it my father, who raised not one, but two children to be so defiant and wayward?”

And the Lord said, “Wow, I have never thought of it in this way. However, according to the Old Testament—Genesis, Article 38, Section 10—I am required to smite you as I have smote your brother. I will, nevertheless, think of an

Morpheus

equally horrible fate for your father to suffer for the blunders he hath committed.”

Unable to argue with the world’s supreme ruler, I accepted my doom and pondered how to punish my father. It didn’t take long at all to decide on the worst fate a man can endure.

“I have one idea,” I said softly. “Tamar.”

Dracula- The Man, the Myth

by Jackie Stanziano

Candles illuminate the dank castle as the sun begins to set in Transylvania. Artificial lighting is not a commodity that a nobleman has during the mid fifteenth century. A man sits at a table, eating his dinner in silence.

He wears a black cape and his eyes show no fear. He takes a piece of bread and dips it into a cup of blood sitting just within arm's reach. He looks up to see at least ten men impaled on stakes, all of them lifeless, rotting. The stench of death fills his nostrils.

He takes a sip of his bitter wine and is satisfied. According to carter-stephenson.co.uk, this is real life for Vlad the Impaler, the man that would later be inspiration for one of America's most noted Halloween icons.

Halloween is a holiday that celebrates the scary, the grotesque, the paranormal. A

traditionalized staple for this holiday is the involvement of vampires, a trend that has recently become quite popular due to the "Twilight" series, as well as television shows such as "True Blood" and "The Vampire Diaries".

Jenna Rhoades, a current Heidelberg sophomore, said "they are the incarnation of everything that humans aren't supposed to be: wrathful, lustful, and gluttonous, which of course fascinates people because of how taboo it all is. People live vicariously through these creatures because they are everything we're not supposed to be and that's what makes them fun."

This vampire fascination can be taken back to the beginning with possibly the most notorious vampire of all: Dracula. Many people don't know, however, that the character of Dracula was loosely based on the life a real Transylvanian

nobleman named Vlad Tepes. Unlike the current romantic portrayal of vampires, Vlad Tepes was shockingly horrifying.

According to medievality.com, Vlad Tepes was born in the winter of 1431 in Transylvania. He was the second child to Vlad Dracul and Princess Cneajna of Moldavia. His father was a military governor of Transylvania and belonged to the Order of the Dragon. This religious and quasi-military society had two main goals: protect Catholicism and crusade against the Turks. These goals would eventually influence Vlad's own decisions in life.

After entering his teenage years, Vlad took the surname Dracula, specifically translated as 'the son of Dracul.' According to theculturedtraveler.com, Vlad and his younger brother, Radu, were held as Turkish hostages for six years. During this time, his father was assassinated by the Turkish people.

Vlad was later removed from his captors and then re-

turned to rule Wallachia, his father's former land. Soon after, one of his older brothers, Mircea, was found and buried alive by Turkish enemies. Theculturedtraveler.com suggested that these instances shaped Vlad's bloodlust.

It is stated in theculturedtraveler.com that Vlad was "known throughout his land for his fierce insistence on honesty and order." In order to control his land and its people, Vlad began a strict rule of Wallachia.

The main act of punishment became impalement, a punishment that Dr. Courtney DeMayo, assistant professor of history, described as gross: "You force a spear through the rectum and torso of the victim, and the spear emerges somewhere near the neck. It is a painful way to die." Because of his new strict rule, Vlad Tepes became known as Vlad the Impaler, but his bloodlust did not stop there.

It is estimated that Vlad the Impaler murdered be-

tween 20,000 and 300,000 people, according to medievality.com. Although impalement was his preferred choice of death, he killed people various ways.

Medievality.com stated that Vlad the Impaler's main targets were the Turks and the so-called lowlifes of society: the beggars, the liars, the thieves. In one instance, Vlad organized a feast for all of the beggars in Wallachia. In the middle of it, he asked if they would like to live a life where they did not have any difficulties. After the beggars agreed with his proposition, Vlad ordered them to be burned alive. Nobody survived.

Vlad's confidence in his rule was so great that according to theculturedtraveler.com he would leave a gold cup sitting in the main square of Tirgoviste, the main city of Wallachia, that thirsty travelers were allowed to drink from. During Vlad's entire reign the cup remained in Tirgoviste. Nobody dared to cross him. That is, however, until the boyars, Hungarian noblemen,

gathered together and formulated a devious plot to eject him from power.

Medievality.com stated that the boyars captured and beheaded Vlad as part of a conspiracy. They supposedly sent his head to the Turkish sultan as a gift. This ended the reign of Vlad the Impaler.

Today, people most recognize Dracula as the popular character invented by Bram Stoker according to theculturedtraveler.com. This website also stated that Stoker, whose novel was completed and sold in 1897, was loosely based his inspiration for Dracula on the life of Vlad the Impaler. Because many of the stories surrounding Vlad have been subject to exaggeration, Stoker was able to enhance certain qualities that may or may not have been true.

Theculturedtraveler.com states that Stoker created a terrifying character that would creep into our imagination and haunt Halloween: a character that forever will be known as a demon that drank blood in the candlelight.



“Iron”
Jessica Reed

2nd place, visual arts

1st Place Winners

Academic

Brittany Cook.....44

Poetry

Emma Markley.....53

Fiction

Shane Plassenthal.....55

Journalism

Brittany Cook.....62

Visual Arts

Tyler Terwilliger.....65

“Everything Will Change”: The Influences of Seventeenth Century Poetry on Contemporary Lyrics

by Brittany Cook

“Everything will change,” states the end of the Postal Service song “Brand New Colony.” This was true of the times in which the sonnet, metaphysical poetry, and cavalier poetry were popularized; in the seventeenth century, new inventions, new sciences, and new ways of life were being discovered, and the old way of life was changing. According to all these styles of poetry, the Postal Service songs “Brand New Colony” and “Such Great Heights” are included in these styles.

The Postal Service’s song “Brand New Colony” accurately depicts a modern description of sonnet conventions and cavalier subject matter. With its use of paradox, the explanation of unrequited love, and the use of the loved one as inspiration, it is comparable to the sonnet, whereas it is most cavalier in its love and chivalric themes and

its epigram characteristics.

The most comparable feature of this song and the sonnet is the usage of paradox, or metaphor. Much like Shakespeare’s Sonnet 18, “Brand New Colony” uses an extreme number of metaphorical phrases. The lyricist of the song states that “I’ll be the grapes fermented, bottled, and served with the table set in my finest suit like a perfect gentleman.” In this case, he’s comparing himself to something he could never possibly be, much like Shakespeare and his comparison of his lady to a summer’s day. The writer of the song also goes on to explain that he could be a multitude of things for his lover: a fire escape for her to “contemplate [her] day,” the “water wings” to save her, and the phonograph on which she plays her music. These are not conventional metaphors, as Shakespeare’s have be-

come, but they are effective in the artistry of the song.

This song could also be expressed as a display of unrequited love. The lyricist, a male, follows the gender conventions of the sonnet; he is wooing and pining for the woman to whom he sings. The woman he is singing to, therefore, is playing hard to get. He tells her all the things he would like to be able to do for her, but it is not clear whether she accepts this display of love or not. He even expresses a yearning to “start a brand new colony where everything will change” with her, implying that he would love her enough to take her away and begin again. This idea of (possible) unrequited love is mentioned in many of Shakespeare’s sonnets – for example, Sonnet 27. He states that, even though he is weary, the thought of his love keeps his “drooping eyelids open wide” (7) and, since she does not love him, “for thee, and for myself, no quiet find” (14). Like Shakespeare’s narrator, the lyricist in “Brand New Colony” desired love from his loved one and was

under the impression that he might not receive it.

Another reason that this song compares with the sonnet is the idea that the lyricist wrote from the heart and used his lover as the inspiration. It is clear from the beginning of the song that he wants to provide for and love her, no matter what: “I’ll be the platform shoes and undo what heredity’s done to you; you won’t have to strain to look into my eyes.” Even with his unconventional methods of description and metaphor, he displays his way of loving and his uniqueness in a way that his lover could understand. All of Shakespeare’s sonnets, especially the ones mentioned above, are about love and explain love and how the subjects go about loving in the easiest and most comprehensible way.

The song, in the manner of cavalier poetry, follows the themes of love and chivalry and has characteristics of an epigram. It is obvious that the song includes the theme of love, much like the ideals behind Robert Herrick’s “Upon Jack and Jill. Epigram.”

Jack, in his poem, is trying to woo Jill, whereas Jill is not accepting his advances (this is also comparative with the gender roles of the sonnet). In the spirit of the epigram, as well, the only subject of the song is love, which is one of the main themes that cavalier poetry follows.

Another theme that the cavalier poetry conforms to is the idea of chivalry; more specifically, these verses imply the idea of honor in how men treat women. Although unconventional, the list of things that the male narrator would do for the woman imply that he would always honor things in her best interest (“I’ll be your winter coat buttoned and zipped straight to the throat with the collar up so you won’t catch a cold”). Like Jack in Herrick’s poem, he simply wants to give anything that he could possibly give to his lover, the unnamed woman in the song. Jack believes he can give his Jill something she can “freely eat” (2) since love is the “food of poets” (5). Both men are acting honorably and do well for their lovers.

The epigram, a short, witty

one subject poem, is indicative of The Postal Service song “Brand New Colony.” The subject of the song is straightforward; the lyricist or narrator explores what he would do for his lover, even going as far as saying they could run away and begin a whole new world, even referencing “bare feet” like Adam and Eve. Like Herrick’s poem the song explores the description of love that is “full of nectar and ambrosia” (4). In the song, much like the epigram, the lyrics explore the things one does for love and the positive things that stem from those actions, namely the “brand new colony” where they would live in peace and harmony. Although the song does not include a witty closing to its lyrics, it is still a fitting end to the meaning of the song, in which “everything will change” if they could be together.

The song “Such Great Heights” by the Postal Service offers a current portrayal of metaphysical conceits and sonnet conventions. It contains the sonnet conventions of ignoring others’ poetry, explaining how the loved one

is exquisitely beautiful, and showing how the lover uses his loved one as inspiration. The lyrics also exhibit meta-physical conceits, including themes of God and love, contradictions and comparisons, and descriptive imagery.

The song lyrics, like “Brand New Colony,” ignore the normal conventions of poetry and are written in an original way. The lyrics describe love in a very different way than normal: “I am thinking it’s a sign that the freckles in our eyes are mirror images, and when we kiss they’re perfectly aligned.” In Sir Philip Sidney’s “Astrophil and Stella,” he describes in Sonnet 1 his love as a painful process, but in the most peculiar way: “Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes” (12). Although these two moods are drastically different, they provide the same basic theory – that both poets provided a new and different way to describe how their love made them feel.

The “exquisite beauty” usually described in sonnets is also found in this Postal

Service song. The lyric, “I am thinking it’s a sign that the freckles in our eyes are mirror images and when we kiss they’re perfectly aligned” describes the idea that the lyricist’s loved one is ideal, and they are perfect for each other. Sidney describes his love in Sonnet 8 as having a “joyful face,/Whose fair skin, beamy eyes, like morning sun on snow” (8-9). Throughout the entirety of Sidney’s work, he tells of Stella’s face being beautiful; Sonnet 9 states “Queen Virtue’s court, which some call Stella’s face,/ prepar’d by Nature’s choicest furniture” (1-2). This, although much more eloquently said in Sidney’s work, is comparable to the description of the lyricist’s lover in “Such Great Heights.”

The lovers in both of the works of art use their loved one as inspiration; the lyricist and Sidney both use verse to explain how their lovers provided the reason for which they write. Sidney’s first sonnet of “Astrophil and Stella” explains how “I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe... ‘Fool,’

said my Muse to me, 'look in thy heart and write" (5-14). In this, he explains that he hopes he can gain pity and eventually "grace" through his writing to Stella. In contrast, though, the writer of the song implies that his loved one is his inspiration through the lines, "I tried my best to leave this all on your machine but the persistent beat it sounded thin upon listening and that, frankly, will not fly. You will hear the shrillest highs and lowest lows with the windows down when this is guiding you home." his attempt in sharing what he created was complicated for him to give to her, but he made sure she knew that his verse was for her in the end.

"Such Great Heights" has lyrics that correspond with the ideals of metaphysical conceits. The song, like the poetry of Donne and Herbert, has themes of God (and ultimately love) , uses descriptive imagery, and contains contradictions and comparisons.

The lyricist states in the first chorus of the song that "And I have to speculate that God himself did make us into

corresponding shapes like puzzle pieces from the clay"; in his mentioning of God, he implies creationism, and that both he and his lover were created for each other through God. John Donne's poetry also implies creationism, especially through his set of Holy Sonnets. Sonnet 15, in particular, states in its opening line "Wilt thou love God as he thee?" and at the end of the sonnet, it states "'twas much, that man was made like God before,/But, that God should be made like man, much more" (13-14). Not only does this include the love that God wanted mankind to love him, but this also means that God created mankind to love each other, much like the lyric from "Such Great Heights".

The descriptive imagery used in "Such Great Heights" is evident; in his description of His love, he comments on "the freckles in our eyes" and how "they're perfectly aligned." He even compares himself and his lover to "puzzle pieces" when talking about how they were made for each other. Although Donne's Holy Sonnet 1 is clearly depressing in na-

ture, it holds a large amount of description of the resurrection: “Spit in my face, you Jews, and pierce my side,/ buffet, and scoff, scourge and crucify me” (1-2). These, like the description of love in the song lyrics, are both examples of the descriptive nature of the metaphysical conceit from the seventeenth century to now.

The song, like the metaphysical poem, contains contradictions and comparisons within its text. More specifically, the song’s chorus has the lines: “They will see us waving from such great heights, ‘come down now,’ they’ll say. But everything looks perfect from far away, ‘come down now,’ but we’ll stay.” This, of course, is a contradiction; it is clearly impossible for a person to fly. This contradiction, though, heightens the comparison of love and happiness: for this couple, they are euphoric, which is sometimes described as being “over the moon” or “head over heels in love.” In the seventh stanza of John Donne’s “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning,”

he states “if they be two, they are two so/as stiff twin compasses are two;/thy soul, the fix’d foot, makes no show/ to move, but doth, if th’ other do” (25-28). This example explains how, even though lovers are physically separated, their souls will always be together. Like Donne’s metaphysical work, the song “Such Great Heights” follows the idea of love through comparisons and contradictions.

Both songs— “Brand New Colony” and “Such Great Heights”— display different details of the sonnet, metaphysical conceit, and the style of cavalier poetry. Whether “everything will change” or not, the seventeenth century style of poetry has put itself into the contemporary style and will continue to influence the lyrics of today.

Brand New Colony by The Postal Service
Give Up, 2003

I'll be the grapes fermented, bottled and served with the table set in my finest suit like a perfect gentleman. I'll be the fire escape that's bolted to the ancient brick where you will sit and contemplate your day.

I'll be the water wings that save you if you start drowning in an open tab when your judgment's on the brink. I'll be the phonograph that plays your favorite albums back as you're lying there drifting off to sleep.

I'll be the platform shoes and undo what heredity's done to you; you won't have to strain to look into my eyes. I'll be your winter coat buttoned and zipped straight to the throat with the collar up so you won't catch a cold.

I want to take you far from the cynics in this town and kiss you on the mouth. We'll cut our bodies free from the tethers of this scene; start a brand new colony where everything will change. We'll give ourselves new names (identities erased). The sun will heat the grounds under our bare feet in this brand new colony. Everything will change.

Such Great Heights by The Postal Service
Give Up, 2003

I am thinking it's a sign that the freckles in our eyes are mirror images and when we kiss they're perfectly aligned. And I have to speculate that God himself did make us into corresponding shapes like puzzle pieces from the clay.

And true, it may seem like a stretch, but it's thoughts like this that catch my troubled head
when you're away when I am missing you to death. When you are out there on the road for several weeks of shows and when you scan the radio, I hope this song will guide you home.

They will see us waving from such great heights, "come down now," they'll say.
But everything looks perfect from far away, "come down now," but we'll stay...

I tried my best to leave this all on your machine but the persistent beat it sounded thin upon listening and that, frankly, will not fly. You will hear the shrillest highs and lowest lows with the windows down when this is guiding you home.

William Shakespeare

SONNET 27

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;
But then begins a journey in my head,
To work my mind, when body's work's expired:
For then my thoughts, from far where I abide,
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see
Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
Makes black night beauteous and her old face new.
Lo! thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,
For thee and for myself no quiet find.

John Donne

XV.

Wilt thou love God as he thee ? then digest,
My soul, this wholesome meditation,
How God the Spirit, by angels waited on
In heaven, doth make His temple in thy breast.
The Father having begot a Son most blest,
And still begetting—for he ne'er begun—
Hath deign'd to choose thee by adoption,
Co-heir to His glory, and Sabbath' endless rest.
And as a robb'd man, which by search doth find
His stolen stuff sold, must lose or buy it again,
The Sun of glory came down, and was slain,
Us whom He had made, and Satan stole, to unbind.
'Twas much, that man was made like God before,
But, that God should be made like man, much more.

Cracked

by Emma Markley

In a mint green taffeta house dress,
a woman stands in the kitchen
at a spotless porcelain sink.

On the black and white honeycomb counter,
there are dingy grey egg cartons,
which are closed –
rows of tombstones.
Opening one, she admires the eggs,
smooth curves nestled,
each in its perfectly molded cup.

She examines an egg in her hand,
the cold shell lying there helpless,
unable to hold itself up.
Its complexion is jaundiced,
bathed in the buttery kitchen light.

Cracking the first shell on the counter,
she watches whites ooze,
globbs slowly dripping from the fracture.
Breaking off the top, they pour,
plopping in the sink and slide,
heading for the drain.

She cracks hundreds of eggs,
each yolk following the mucus trail
left by its brethren.
Crushed shells pile in the garbage
like crumpled pages by a writer's desk.

Clamoring through the cartons,
pruned fingers searching for stragglers,
she comes up empty.

Crossing the floor to the Frigidaire,
she looks for fresh eggs –
the icebox is barren.

Chain Linked Fences

by Shane Plassenthal

Looking back now, as an adult, I'm not sure that most children are children, but adults. It also seems now that most adults are not really adults at all, but children themselves.

Dad's Volvo took me there that summer to Aunt Linda's suburban castle on Byford Ct. in somewhere Ohio. On the way trees passed us by.

It was July.

I liked July.

But, I didn't like Aunt Linda's. Dad was leaving me there for the summer to rot while he met Natalie. Natalie came from "Land of the Sluts," and since Mom left and Dad was lonely, it didn't bother him she was twenty years younger or that he met her online. Dad was the kid on the playground with no friends.

When the car pulled into Aunt Linda's driveway, and he dropped me off like a UPS

package, I saw my cousin Brady. He was a slim boy with long locks of blond hair. He kicked his stupid soccer ball against the chain linked fence dividing Aunt Linda's house and her neighbors. RAT RAT RAT said the fence.

Janice, my other cousin, laid sprawled out on a lawn chair absorbing the sun.

Janice.

Stupid Janice.

She was so thin and beautiful, and I wasn't. I was chubby. With stupid brown hair. And stupid freckles. I didn't care, though. Well, yes I did. Like most things I was bad at, I just pretended to hate them, like one time in math class, I told Ms. Schwartz she could choke on her stupid lesson and that I hated her. Well, she gave me a detention and told me I had a bad attitude. Well, I didn't care for her big old stupid attitude, either, so I didn't go

to her stupid detention, and that was a big old dumb mistake because, then, she gave me another one. Stupid Ms. Schwartz. Stupid math.

I remember the first day I was there, Aunt Linda smiling and making an awful casserole for dinner that I pretended to like. She was a middle-aged woman who wore too much make-up and sold houses all day to people who couldn't afford them. I didn't like her either.

Well, anyway, we sat around her kitchen, all one big happy family, except for her husband, Uncle Jeff, who got cancer and died. She had a son too, Lance, who hung himself a couple of winters before all this.

Aunt Linda performed like a mother from this old movie I once saw on late night cable called *The Stepford Wives*, about a bunch of husbands turning their women into robots. She kept asking me, "How are you?" Or telling me, "You're getting so big! Your cousins are just so excited you're here!"

Well that was boloney.
Janice sat shoveling food

down her pipe, God knew she needed it as skinny as she was, and Brady left early to do his boring routine soccer game outside.

Well, who needed them?

Stupid big old dumb heads. I had brought books to read anyway. I loved reading. It was probably the only thing I did like. I didn't read much that summer though. Not after what happened.

I soon discovered the stupid sleeping situation as I tried to climb into Janice's bed. We had to share a room, and her room was pink, and I hated pink. It's a stupid color.

"What do you think you're doing?" she asked.

"Going to bed."

"No, you're not," she said. Then she pointed to the floor as if I were some puppy who had his first accident and snapped, "You're sleeping on the floor."

"No." I told her.

"Yes."

"No."

"Yes!"

"I said no, Janice."

"Listen to me," she barked, "this is my house, so my rules. What I say goes. No

one, including my Mom, wants you here anyway. It's not my fault your dad is having some mid-life crisis and left you here. Got it?"

I was so mad that I could only agree with her.

"Fine, have it your way," I said, trying to hide the defeat in my voice. Then I added, "you stupid skeleton."

"I'm pretty," Janice said. Her voice cracked.

I didn't say anything.

Instead, I lay down on that stupid hard floor in that stupid pink room.

Stupid skeleton Janice.

The days were long, the world was empty. RAT RAT RAT said the fence outside, and Janice locked herself in her room all day. Well, fine. I had my own little slice of heaven upstairs in the attic. One of Aunt Linda's rules was not to go up there, but she was gone all day at work, so who would know? It had been Lance's room and everything had been intact as if he had been there that very morning.

I don't know much about my cousin Lance, but I can tell you one thing, I feel like I know him better than anyone

else. His room provided me my own private adolescence. He had a big brown desk in the corner with a chair beneath the low ceiling rafters. The desk had hundreds of notebooks just waiting to be read. Lance had been a writer.

One day I stumbled across a poem. To this day, it is my favorite.

As I was going up the stairs,
met a man who wasn't there.

He wasn't there again today.

I wish, I wish he'd go away.

The poem stayed with me, and one day as I sat eating lunch in Aunt Linda's kitchen, I ran over it in my mind several times. Janice entered, ignoring my presence, but I couldn't keep my eyes off of her. She ate a whole bunch of food for being so slim and quickly rushed back upstairs. I noted the following days that Janice repeated this, and I wondered why.

I even asked her if she was Okay.

She looked at me and said, "I'm fine. Obviously you're not, because you obviously have nothing better to do than to watch me eat."

Well that was that, then.
Stupid skeleton Janice.

Some days I grew bored and would spend the time with Brady playing a game of soccer. RAT RAT RAT the fence would say. Yet, for the most part, Brady was a silent character.

"You know what Brady?" I told him one sunny afternoon.

"What?" he asked, kicking the ball into the fence. It was hot outside and the boy wore no shirt, exposing his scrawny torso. I hadn't realized being so young that this image would come back to me in later years. I hadn't realized that I was attracted to him.

"Grown-ups are stupid."
He nodded.

RAT RAT RAT the chain linked fence agreed.
Brady became my only friend that summer and possibly the only real friend I have ever had.

I asked him once about Janice.

"Is your sister okay?"

"What do you mean?"

"Brady," I began passing the ball to him, "you know what I mean."

"Look in her closet," he told me.

He did not say anything else.

Well that night when stupid skeleton Janice was asleep, I got off that hard floor and tiptoed to her closet. I opened the door, unsure of what I was really looking for, but I knew one thing, her closet stunk... bad.

Well, here's where I wish I could have turned back time, shut the door and just gone back to sleep and spent the rest of the summer normally, but I didn't.

On the floor of Janice's stinking closet was a bright blue duffel bag. The smell seemed to be coming from there, so I reached down and unzipped it.

My eyes bugged out like a rubber duck.

The duffel bag was filled with zip lock bags of chunky liquid...vomit.
Suddenly, there was brightness and a voice asking what the hell I thought I was doing.

I turned around, finding the lights were on, and Janice was standing there, jaw to the floor, so shocked it looked as if I told her she just won the Mega Millions Lottery Dad always played on Sundays.

Uh-oh.

Busted.

To make matters worse, when I had turned around, the zip lock bags fell out and spilled onto the floor by my feet. I felt like those dumb criminals on TV when they find out they're on a hidden camera.

Janice stared on like a wax figure.

Nothing was said.

Finally, although my legs could barely make the journey, I stumbled across the room, gathered my things and left quietly. The door shut behind me. Inside, I could hear Janice sobbing. That night I slept in Lance's old room in the attic.

"I saw it, Brady," I said to him the next day.

He didn't say anything.

"How long has she been...?"

"Since Abby Phelps, the cheer captain showed her

how to stay skinny," he said quietly. He looked embarrassed.

"And you haven't told your mom, you big, stupid head?"

"She knows," he added defensively.

What? She knew? Aunt Linda must have been dumber than I could have ever dreamed. Who would let their daughter do that? I couldn't understand her. I couldn't understand the mind of the adult.

"Yeah," he said, "Since Dad died and Lance, well, Lance did what he did, Mom tries to make everything perfect. She lives in a fantasy... ask her about Lance. She'll look at you dead in the face and tell you she never had a son."

Well, I couldn't believe it! A family that was just as much of a freak show as my own.

"She's going to die," I told him.

"Janice?"

"Yes. Bulimia kills, you know."

"I know."

"But you don't care?"

"No...do you?"

“I don’t know.”

We were silent. Then I said, “She’s a stupid skeleton anyway.” And we laughed like the children we were. I have not laughed like that since.

For some time after that I did not see Janice. She remained hidden in her room, and Brady and I played outside all day. We spent a lifetime together in one summer.

The last weekend I was ever there, Aunt Linda announced she was going to a realtors conference in Columbus and would be gone the next two days, and on her way out the door she called for us to please be good.

That day Brady and I were playing in Lance’s room. That’s the day I realized that I liked him. He was sprawled out on the floor by the bed. Outside, rain fell in buckets. RAT RAT RAT said the chain linked fence in the wind outside. The air was still, the room was silent. I wished we could have remained that way forever.

On that stupid afternoon, I went to get a snack and found Janice scarfing down food at the kitchen table.

She ignored me and I tried to do the same to her. I couldn’t. In the end, it was foolish for me to do what I did. But, oh well.

I looked at her and said, “You’re killing yourself.” And she stared at me as she had that night I found the puke. For once Janice didn’t have one word to say. She remained blank like a piece of paper.

Suddenly, I felt a wave of an indescribable feeling that I have never felt since. I wanted her to say she was sorry for my Dad dumping me off here in this shithole, for her to be sorry she was bulimic, and most of all, I wanted to grow up. I didn’t want to be a child anymore. And, then, I felt guilt. It was not her fault. I was the one who was mad. Looking down at the thin frame placidly sitting there, I just felt sorry for her.

I said, “That was not my place and I apologize.”

When she replied, she seemed distant, somehow. It was the not the Janice I had known.

“It’s okay,” she told me.

I went back outside.

It was the last time I ever saw her.

When we came in later I should have known what I was going to find. I went upstairs to get out of my wet clothes. The house felt dead, the stupid old rain let in its gray light splashing against the walls. I said my poem aloud to myself as I wondered about to Lance's room where I kept my belongings, "As I was going up the stairs, I met a man who wasn't there. He wasn't there again today.

I wish, I wish he'd go away."

At the top of the attic steps, I remember blinking several times and gasping. Lance was before me, hanging from the ceiling, swaying to and fro like a pendulum on a clock. And, then, I realized it was not Lance, but my cousin, Janice, with a kicked away chair beneath her feet.

I wish I could tell you how I reacted, and what happened, and all that good stuff. I guess it would make this stupid story somehow better. Well, I don't. I don't remember. The next thing I can recall is Sunday, in the yard

with Brady. In, silence we kicked the ball at the chain linked fence. It did not talk to us that day. Inside, stupid skeleton Janice was now stupid dead.

Aunt Linda came home that night and I hid from her eyes. Brady was the one who led her inside. I gave one last hard kick and one last time I heard RAT RAT RAT. Then, I heard nothing but Aunt Linda's screams three stories above me.

It was August when Dad came and got me. I liked August then, but I don't think I do now. I won't tell you about the police, or how Aunt Linda almost tried to stab me. I don't want to. So tough. All the way home Dad did not say one word to me.

Well, that's fine. I did not kill Janice.

I only killed the adult and became the child. The child, who was going up the stairs, met a man who wasn't there, found he wasn't there again today, and wished and wished he'd go away.

And so he did, hiding behind the chain linked fence the whole time.

Powerful message: stop violence against women

by Brittany Cook

It takes a lot of courage to stand up in front of a crowd and talk about domestic violence, rape and sexual abuse. That's just what a group of Heidelberg students will do as the University presents its adaptation of Eve Ensler's play, "The Vagina Monologues" on Thursday night.

Ensler wrote "The Vagina Monologues" in 1996. It is an episodic play performed by various female characters who relate personal accounts about these raw yet sensitive issues that affect women around the world.

In conjunction with the play, a movement called V-Day was initiated to raise money and awareness to help female victims of sexual abuse and violence. This has led to the documentary "Until The Violence Stops," along with walks, marches and festivals. In the last decade, the movement has gone international.

Heidelberg's production is directed by graduate resident coordinator Mike Giacolone, who is making his debut as a director.

"The Vagina Monologues' was assigned as a semester project through my graduate assistantship in the Student Activities Office," he said, "Part of the play requires an inclusion of the 'male voice.' My work as director and the support of men backstage and out front the day of the show bring that voice."

Giacolone assembled an eclectic group of women for the powerful and emotional show.

"We have first-year students all the way through seniors, a graduate student, a staff member and the wife of a faculty member here. When selecting cast members, I was looking for confidence."

Junior Jackie Scheufler is doing three monologues in the

show, including “Wear and Say,” “The Vagina Workshop,” and “The Memory of Her Face.” The last is the most powerful out of the three, as it talks about the crimes against women that are happening in the Middle East. “I’m learning a lot about how different women view being a woman,” Scheufler said, “The show is really powerful and I’m happy to be part of it.”

Sophomore Maggie Kesling is performing “I Was in the Room.” “I get to relay a woman’s emotional experience of the birth of her granddaughter,” she said. “Some of the women on the cast I knew before the show and some women I just met. Every woman in the cast is unique... from different ages, to different majors and different social circles. During rehearsal, we can put all of the differences behind us which will help make the show amazing.”

Tragically, the Heidelberg community lost one of the cast members in “The Vagina

Monologues” on Monday, Feb. 21. Maggie Kesling died in an auto accident. The interview for this article was conducted several days prior to Maggie’s passing. We chose to include her comments in honor of her commitment to the show and its messages.

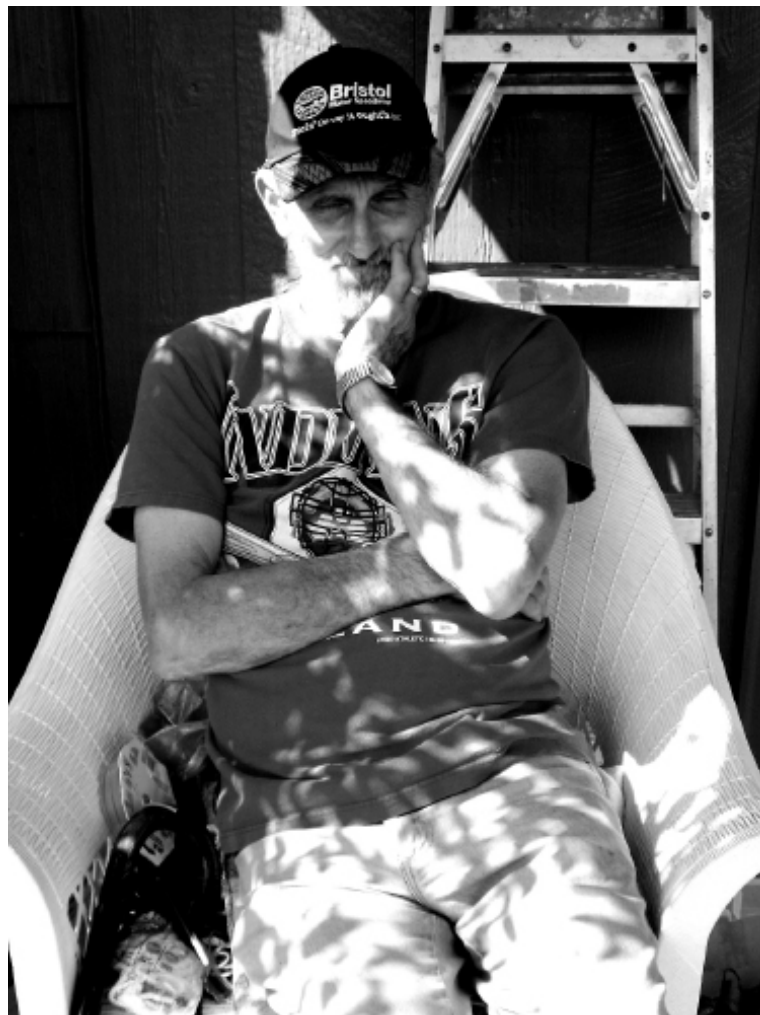
Freshman Chaylene Hardy explains “The Vagina Monologues” at the beginning of the show. Hardy and two others tell about its origins, the various names for “vagina” and the problematic opinions of others. “Being in the opening monologue allows you to set the tone of the show,” she said. “I am also honored to be a part of such an amazing show that touches many people.”

“The cast has an excellent dynamic,” Scheufler added. “We all bring different things to the show... this is one of the shows that really causes people to think. By the same token, I’m hoping that it’s well received by the audience.”

“The Vagina Monologues” is intended to be informative, funny, thought-provoking and a bit uncomfortable. The various pieces are drawn from the experiences of hundreds of women around the world, Giacalone said. “I am appreciative of all the Heidelberg women who stepped up and accepted the challenge of such a difficult piece. It is my hope that these monologues will inspire us all to stand up and take action against violence towards women.”

The remainder of the cast includes Liz Kurtzman, Brittany Green, Rachael DeRosa, Monica Bryant, Diana Amaya, Erin Crenshaw, Deanna Laubis, Heather Jones, Sandy Kimmel, Amanda Honer and Natasha Hopkins.

Show time is 7 pm in Ohl Concert Hall. Students have free admission. Tickets are \$6 at the door for faculty, staff, and community members. All proceed go to Open Arms—Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Services of Findlay.



“Old Man”
Tyler Terwilliger

1st place, visual arts

Morpheus

**Senior
Projects**

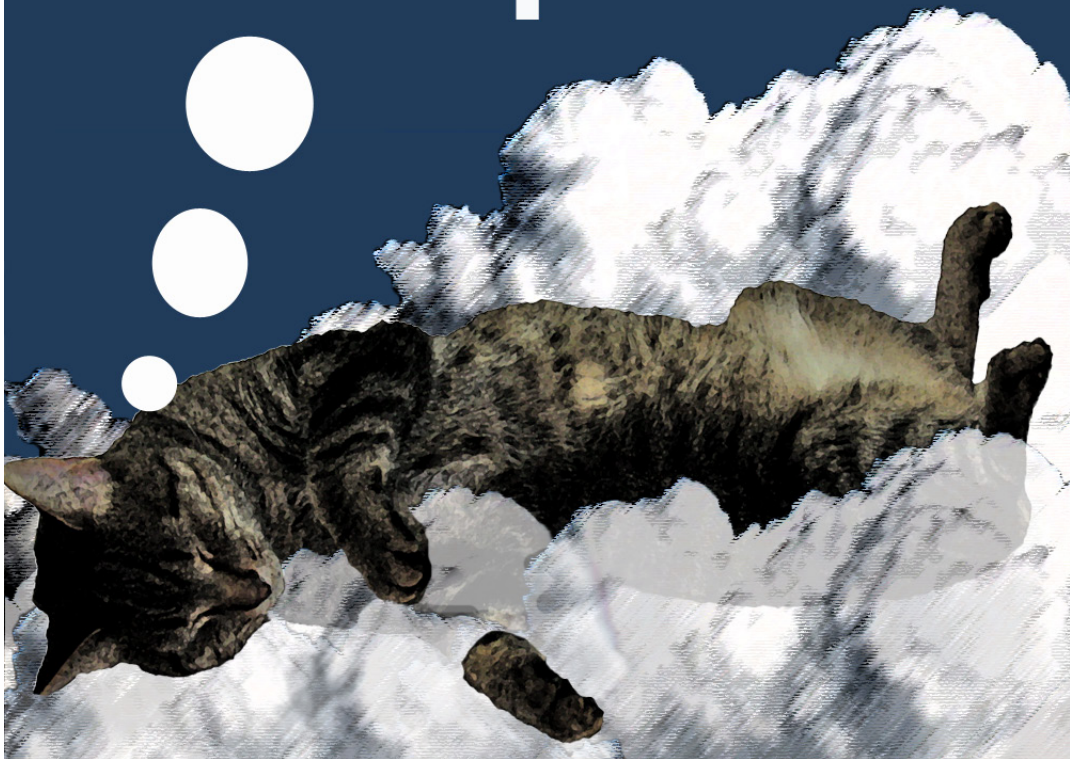


Table of Contents

Author Biographies.....	68
Brittany Cook.....	70
Lexie Pinkelman.....	109
Laura Van Valkenburgh.....	140

Author Biographies

Brittany Cook

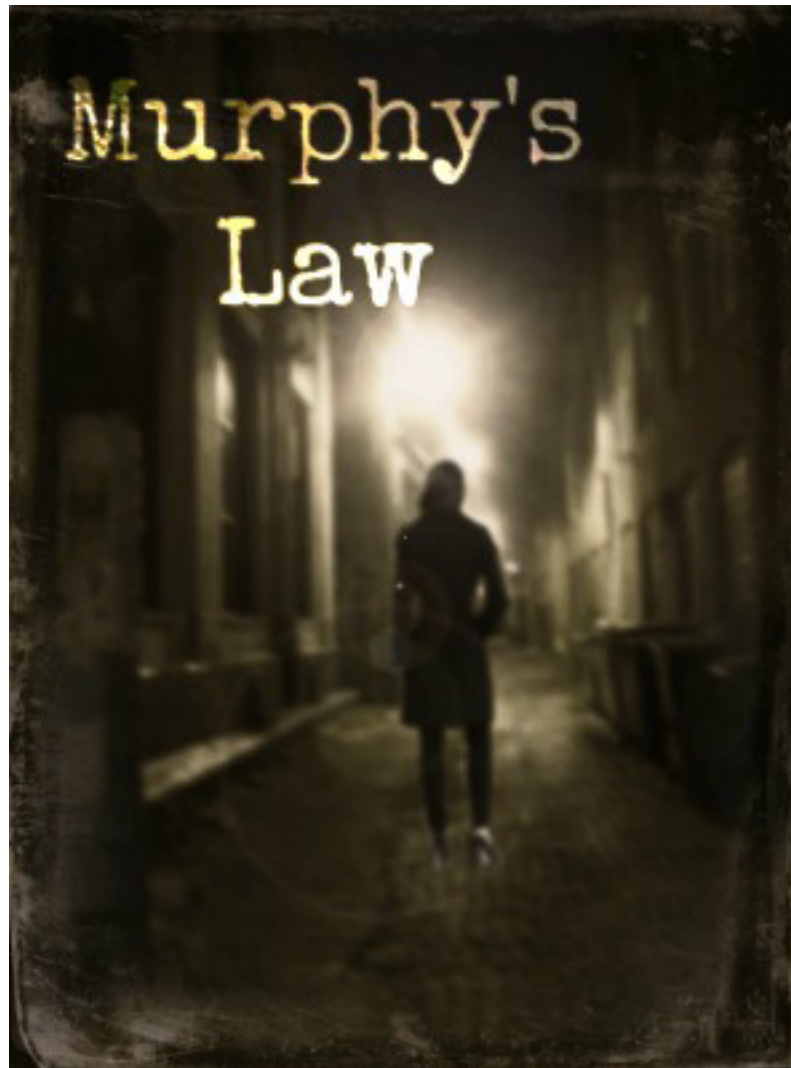
Brittany Cook is an English writing major with literature and history minors. She is actively involved in the Euglossian Society and the Singing Collegians, along with being the president of the Concert Choir. She really doesn't do anything in her spare time besides write and sing. After graduation, she intends on going into public relations or journalism. Ultimately, she would like to be an author.

Lexie Pinkelman

Lexie Pinkelman is a double major in AYA English Education and Feline Analysis. She enjoys cats and long walks on the beach. In her spare time she plays the cello and builds shelters for homeless people of Tiffin out of peanut butter Ritz crackers. After graduation, Lexie plans to travel the world by foot and become a famous rap artist. Lexie would like to give some advice to all her fellow English majors: "YOLO!"

Laura Van Valkenburgh

Laura Van Valkenburgh likes cats, cheese, and Third Eye Blind. She's afraid of feet, spiders, misspellings, and clusters of ants. The worst thing, then, would clearly be a misspelled foot covered in ungrammatical spiders and ants. Her advice to fellow English majors: HERH!



by Brittany Cook

As soon as I get into the office, I know that I'll be on a case from the sound of Louis Armstrong's "West End Blues" filtering out from Teddy's closed door.

I pull off my coat and sling it over the hook, causing the coat tree to shake for a moment.

It won't fall.

"Don't know what's going on, but he's been waiting on you to get in. Something big, I'm guessin'." Vera, our secretary, speaks over Teddy's voice as he sings off-key; her voice gets louder as his grows. With a flick of her wrist, she straightens the files on her desk.

"Oh, he's got a new song today," I say, pushing open the door to my office and ignoring his attempt at sounding like a trumpet. I can practically see his theatrical sweeps of his arms as dances around his office. Vera just sighs and goes back to typing

on her typewriter.

Some things just don't change.

Peering around my windowless office, I notice the similarities between it and the events of the morning—Vera's deadpanning, Teddy's singing—months go by, yet everything stays the same.

Even the case. Six months, and they still haven't been able to give us answers.

Dom hasn't been doing well, and I'm starting to worry.

I pull my locket out from underneath my dress and pop it open. I know what's inside, but it helps to look. My brother, Dominic—still looking the same as he always has—then his wife, Grace, and his daughter, Allegra, God rest their souls.

Six months. Six months since they were killed.

My blood begins to run cold and I refuse to let it, so I snap shut my locket before it

can get to me.

I tuck the locket back under the collar of my dress. Dom'll be in his little clock shop on Clark Street, all alone, fiddling with some rich man's pocket watch. And he'll be thinking, like he always does, about the things he would have done differently. Not gone to the party. Not let Allie and Grace go with him. Not let them out of his sight when things started to get unsuitable for their presence. Not let them take the shortcut home.

I can still see them in my head—

I shake the images away. Can't think about that now. It's business.

The case of my dead—murdered—niece and sister-in-law.

Resting my elbows on my desk, I lay my forehead on my hands.

Someone's going to have to pay for this. That's all I know.

Stop thinking about it, Accardi—think about something else. Think about—

I'd probably be married now, to be honest. I would've found a nice man, fallen for

him, had a family. Too late now, I guess. Twenty-six and no man to speak for me except for my brother and my boss.

My boss...

I meander out where Vera sits, and she just glares at the glass door that locks Teddy out from our haven. His wailings of "In the Jailhouse Now" only makes me want to open the door less.

Attempting to procrastinate, I touch each one of the letters of "Theodore B. Whelan, Private Investigator" that he had pressed to the glass. The "B" falls off as my fingers graze it, and I watch it fall to the ground, crumpled and old.

"Jacqueline! What a pleasant surprise!"

He tries to scare me, but I just sigh. He says that every day.

I turn my attention upward to the now open door and the man who saunters out. Surprised, I look over his gray three piece suit, slightly wrinkled, his holster empty on his waist. His .38 Special would be on his desk, unsafely stored in one of his drawers. I swallow the lump in my throat

as my heart jumps. “What’s with the outfit, Whelan?” I cross my arms over my chest, hiding the pangs of wanting to fix his hair, adjust his collar. Make him more presentable.

He straightens his tie, flattening his dark hair closer to his head. Part of it keeps sticking up, and I resist the urge to fix it. “Important meeting today. Gotta look good for the Chicago Police.”

“What are ya doin’ with the Chicago Police?” I drop my pretense. Maybe it has something to do with—

He shoots me a glare. “I gotta talk at a hearing. Don’t get excited. Jesus. You know I’ll tell you if it comes up, Jack.”

“I know, I know,” I say. It’s gonna be a cold case. Muggings don’t really get solved around these parts—too many happen and people come out of the woodwork much too late. “Was that the big news I heard from Vera?” Turning over my shoulder, I give Vera a look. She merely brushes her light brown mane of hair over her shoulder, gives me a sad smile,

and goes back to typing. Not much to work with.

“Calm down, Jack,” he says. His face gets serious. “I’ve been watching the cops. I think we’ve got a lead.”

I feel my heart drop. He’s never serious. And if he’s serious about this—he means the case. My case.

“Well? Who? What? What happened? Did they find a suspect— “

He raises his eyebrow at me, holding out his hands in order to make me slow down. Giving me a tentative smile, I cut off.

“Hold your horses. If you’re gonna act like this, I ain’t gonna tell ya,” He says. “Time to get yourself in motion, Jack. Can’t have you actin’ like this for this long.”

His attitude is something I’d like to comment on, but I don’t have the time. Instead, I just cross my arms and look at him expectantly.

“The name’s Charlie Callaghan,” Teddy says, pulling on his gray coat. The collar of his shirt still lies disheveled. I start to reach out, but I brush my hair back instead. “Lives down on Web-

ster. Alone. You'll probably find him there." He picks up a manila folder from Vera's desk and hands it to me. "Be careful, Jack. I'm only putting you on this because I've got to go. You sure you can handle this?" I stare at the manila folder in confusion.

A suspect.

Someone they think—

Business, Accardi. Think business. "That's North Side territory," I say, breaking from my stupor and following him to the door, "I hope you know what you're doing, Teddy—"

He adjusts his collar, and the urge to fix it recedes. Pulling a cigarette from the case in his pocket, he slips it in his mouth. "This is all North Side territory. Where've you been?"

With the sweeping gesture of lighting his cigarette, he leaves the office and goes out into the late January cold.

"Charlie Callaghan, then," I murmur, grasping my own coat from the coat tree. I throw the file back down on Vera's desk without looking at it. I've got enough information milling about in my mind.

"When should I expect you back?" Vera says, not looking

up from the typewriter.

"Not 'til tomorrow," I say.

"Be careful, Jack," she says. This time she stops, giving me a cursory side glance.

I adjust my collar. "Don't worry about me," I say, but I know she will anyways.

Her eyes dart across the paper she's gone back to typing. "Have a good day."

She presses enter and the typewriter dings.

§

As I walk down to Webster Street, I decide to take a detour and head a little more northward towards the shop fronts. The streets lay vacant, probably due to the snow fall, but that doesn't stop me.

At least for now.

But Teddy's attitude stops my thoughts.

He's been acting harsh lately. Probably the stress of the hearings, I know; something's not right in his head.

I wish I could just ask him, but I know that's impossible.

My feet take me where I need to be and I stop outside the clock shop, letting my eyes rest on the shop's front window.

Dominic Accardi, horolo-

gist.

He's always been the more ostentatious type.

The door jingles as I step inside, and the clocks on the walls provide a bizarre Greek chorus to my thoughts. Each second ticks by and it's marked in place by the ticking of the clocks: the ones lined up on the walls, hanging in lines like sections of a choir. The cuckoo clock in the back corner—my favorite—shoots out. Dom still hasn't fixed that one. It's seven minutes off.

"I'll be right out—"

"Take your time!" I touch one of the small mechanisms on his worktable, the tiny gears smaller than the nail on my pinky finger.

"Jack?" A relieved voice says.

I peer into the back room, waiting for him to appear. "The one and only."

He steps through the door, ruffling his hair nonchalantly. I survey him, making sure he's all in one piece, and I see that he is, despite the vest of his suit being off a button. The chain of his pocket watch dangles out,

and I know that it wouldn't be ticking away like one of his other projects. All these machines whirring away, while the one clock that's supposed to keep ticking—my brother's pocket watch—is silent.

"You're a sight for sore eyes," he mumbles, scrambling to clean up the mess he's made on the counter. I don't know what use he has for that many broken clock faces and gears, but it's not my thing. It's his.

He doesn't have as many as he's had in a while—business isn't going well. This doesn't bode well for his future.

"Nice to see you, too," I say, putting a hand over his fussing. He's still wearing the gold band of his wedding ring. "Stop it. It's me. You don't have to clean up for me."

He shrugs, not making eye contact. "Yeah, but I'm gonna have to do it anyways, so..."

"You fix everyone else's watches, but won't fix your own," I say off-handedly, shaking my head.

Dom looks up at me, wounded. A lock of dark

hair falls over his eyes. “You said you wouldn’t bring it up again, and you did.”

“Dom—”

He walks around the counter, avoiding my gaze as he goes to fuss somewhere else. Always fussing, never completing anything. That’s the way of the Accardis.

“Jack, no.”

I realize I’m fumbling with my locket, and I stop myself. “Dom, it’s time. You need to stop blaming yourself.”

He sighs, dropping his hands to his hips and staring at his shoes. “Don’t tell me what to do, Jack.”

“I will if I have to.”

“But you don’t have to. This isn’t—I can’t—” His shoulders fall dejectedly.

My voice raises unintentionally. “You’re my brother, Dom. I can’t have you actin’ like this.”

Dom runs a hand through his hair again, and his face turns to panic. Fear. I don’t know what else. “What made this come on, huh? You come over here, pretending it’s a social call, and all of a sudden you’re tellin’ me how to live my life. Is that what we’ve

been reduced to?”

“Dominic—”

He approaches me, his arms crossed defensively across his chest. “Did Teddy threaten you again?”

I huff and glare at him, pursing my lips. “No. I—”

“He did, didn’t he? What was it, ‘do this job, or you can kiss your job goodbye, yadda, yadda, yadda, what would Dom think?’” He does a perfect imitation of Teddy’s dry voice. “And now you’re checkin’ up on me, just to make sure I’m ‘doin’ fine’.”

“Stop it—”

He shakes his head. “Dammit, you’re still sweet on the guy, aren’t you?”

I glare at him, refusing to answer.

He already knows the answer.

With a sigh, he pulls the broken watch from his pocket, letting it rest in his hand without opening it. “You know why I’m not gonna fix it.”

I take the broken timepiece from his hand and slip it back in his pocket. “I’m worried about you.”

“I know you are.”

I unbutton his vest and fix

the alignment of the fabric, then brush the rogue piece of hair from his face.

“I would’ve gotten that.”

“I know.” I reach up on my tiptoes and drop a kiss on his cheek.

He cringes and wipes away the remnants of my lipstick.

“What’re you doin’ out? Thought you were working.”

God. Do I tell him? Should I let him know that I’m tailing a suspect in the murder of his wife and child? I scan the room, attempting to find something to talk about to give me more time. Instead, my eyes hit the framed photo that matches the one in my locket—

I don’t look away. “Tailing a suspect. Just taking a break.”

“You hidin’ something from me?”

Blinking, I finally tear myself away from the pretty brunette and the two year old girl. My niece. Instead of reacting, I fake a smile.

“No. Never. Why would I hide something from my big brother?” I readjust my coat collar at the sight of the flakes of snow outside and change the

subject. “You know where I am if you need me.”

“Under the watchful eye of Theodore B. Whelan, private investigator. I know.” Dom leans on the glass of his counter, carefully piecing gears together on the watch in front of him. “You know I’m trying.”

I know what he means. I think I know what he means, at any rate.

The door jingles again as I leave.

When I exhale, my breath makes a cloud in front of my face and I walk through it, making it dissipate into the air.

Teddy’s right. I’ve gotta get myself in motion.

Time to catch me a killer.

§

Hours pass and I’m still wandering around this neighborhood. Does this guy even exist? Am I being watched by Teddy, so he knows I’m doing the work he’s assigned me?

Who the hell knows at this point?

I brush the snow off the park bench and sit, shivering in the process.

Teddy wouldn’t do that to

me. He wouldn't send me on a wild goose chase—

I close my eyes, trying to rest for a moment.

“—you need to give yourself a break, Charlie. Goin' like this is only gonna kill ya.”

A woman's voice. Her accent is unrecognizable. It's not from here—she was raised somewhere far from here.

A man's voice this time; his accent is thicker than hers. It almost sounds Irish—he must be Charlie. “It's my job, Maggie. What else am I supposed to do?”

“Reopening the Accardi case? That was not what—”

“The case was never closed. It's been six months. I've got a lead.”

I look nonchalantly down the street, trying not to look at them directly. They're just talking so loudly, I can't resist—

She speaks again. “I don't want this taking over your life. You're almost thirty, you know.”

At the door of 11 Webster stands a young redheaded woman, her arms crossed over her chest. Charlie mirrors her gesture by crossing his own

arms. He's not wearing a coat, so he's not leaving—but she is.

“I don't need anything else. I've got my job and I've got you,” he says. I definitely don't believe him, from how weak it comes out of his mouth. I don't think it's good enough for this Maggie either.

The door opens and another man comes out, holding a bundle in his arms. He casually passes it to Maggie, and I hear a small cry. A baby's cry. This man, in his long dark pea coat, drops a hand on Maggie's shoulder.

“I'm sorry, but we've got to get back home before dark,” he says curtly to Charlie. “We'll call again when we can.”

Maggie shares a brief look with Charlie, but I can't see his face. Instead of saying anything, he drops a kiss on her cheek. “Thanks for comin' to visit. Don't be a stranger.” He puts his hand on the bundle in her arms, and I can practically hear the smile in his voice. “You can bring Charlotte back any time you want.”

“You can call her Charlie,

you know,” she says, smirking. “Or is that too much for you to handle?”

He shakes his head. “I’ll never be ready,” he says.

Putting out his hand, the man in the pea coat—her husband?—shakes it.

“Nice to see you again, Eddie,” Charlie says. “Take care of her and Charlotte, alright?”

Eddie’s hands immediately go behind his back in something that looks like attention.

“Yes, sir.”

Looking at my hands, I tap my cold fingers on my legs.

Reopening the Accardi case.

A lead.

This guy’s a cop—

Why does Teddy suspect a cop?

Maybe it’s the perfect cover. He could destroy evidence—

I look up again and he makes eye contact with me briefly. I can feel the heat in his glare from where I sit.

I look back down to my hands, hoping that he won’t approach, won’t say anything, won’t—

The sound of a door shutting cuts me off.

The heat gathers in my face.

He’s got me investigating a cop—

Teddy doesn’t know what he’s getting into.

§

I come in the next day ready for war. Vera figures this out when I slam my hands on her desk upon entering the office, making her jump.

“What the—” She starts. “Jack, what’s wrong with you?”

“I need to talk to Teddy,” I say angrily. Not even a night’s sleep can rectify my fury. She points to his office with her thumb. “I think he’s on a phone call—”

Vera cuts off as I storm over to his door—wait. Don’t do that. Anger is not attractive on a lady—but when has this bothered me? No matter. Breathe, Accardi.

I hear his voice, muffled by the frosted glass.

“I don’t have to explain myself to the likes of you! Look—I arranged this. You can take it and fix everything,

or you can leave it and make the biggest mistake of your life.” There’s a pause, and I catch my breath. I hadn’t realized I was holding it. “I’m not the kind of guy you want as an enemy.” I hear the loud clang of him slamming the phone back into the receiver, and I give him a moment to calm down before opening the door.

“Hello. I just got here. Am I interrupting anything?”

Teddy shakes his head, obviously trying to act cool. He flutters the pages on his desk with reckless abandon. “I was just setting up a... a meeting between some old friends.”

Automatically, I’m skeptical. But I don’t have time for this right now. There are bigger things on my plate.

“So,” Teddy continues, changing the subject in a way that is anything but subtle, “Was there something you needed? Usually you don’t honor me with your presence right when you come in.”

I flush a little at the comment, laced in sarcasm as it was. I stutter a little trying to get the words out after that, but this is more important

than an infatuation with my boss.

“He’s a cop. You have me tailing a cop!” I began.

Teddy shrugs, giving me a cold, unsettling glower. “Perks of the profession. You learn anything?”

His candidness throws me off. “Did I learn—did I—” My voice hits an octave only dogs can hear. “Teddy! I could get in huge trouble—obstruction of justice!”

Crossing his arms, he glares at me. His lips barely upturn into a smirk.

“I don’t understand why this is so funny—”

“Oh, you just seemed so ready to go when I told you I had a lead on the murders of your family, and the moment you find out he’s a cop, you’re done,” Teddy says.

I have to take a deep breath in order to settle the acid rising into my throat.

“Don’t guilt me into this.”

Teddy stands, adjusting the unbuttoned cuff of his shirt. He rolls it back to his elbow instead of trying to make it presentable. “I’m not trying to guilt you, Jack. I’m just trying to help you.”

I take a deep breath, letting it settle in my lungs as I lean my hands on the top of Teddy's desk. I want them caught. I do. But I don't want to get myself caught in the process.

Then again, jail would be better than not knowing, wouldn't it?

Obstruction of justice or an unsolved murder?

"Fine," he says, and I adjust one of the stacks of white papers on his desk. "If it makes you feel better, fall back. Don't follow him today. I still want you on his tail, Accardi. I need more information on him. I need more information on this case."

Teddy stands and adjusts the collar on his jacket as he puts it on. He doesn't bother to fix his shirtsleeve.

"Hearing?" I ask angrily. "Another one?"

He gives me a dirty look. "Justice doesn't work in a day, you know."

"Teddy, I need you here—"

"I know, darling, but you'll just have to get by without me. I'll be in late tonight if you're that concerned." He tosses one of the files that

he has sitting on his desk. Several sheets of paper inch out, and I see the name 'Callaghan.'

Another deep breath. Come on, Jack. You can deal with him today.

He gives me a smirk, pulling a cigarette from his pocket. "Get some paperwork done here today, if you're so worried. I think you're just overreacting."

I flex my fingertips, purposely not looking at him as he brushes past me.

He shouldn't make my heart race like this. I watch him as he dramatically winks at Vera, leaving in another rush.

I refuse to watch it. I can't watch it.

Slipping past, I head back into my office and slam the door.

Resting my back on the door, I peer at my messy desk.

I need to remind myself that nothing's going to happen between him and I.

Take a breath, Jack; sit down and get to work.

Allegra and Grace.

I stare at the empty folder.

In my neatest penmanship,
I write on the front: Charles
Callaghan. It's time to start
putting together this file.

§

The ceiling has thirty sev-
en panels. I don't like it, be-
cause it's off. It's not even, nor
is it rounded to a multiple of
five or three.

I have successfully avoided
paperwork for three and a half
hours, and the clock strikes
two in the afternoon. Two in
the afternoon, and I still know
next to nothing about this
cop.

Charles Joseph "Charlie"
Callaghan, Jr. Aged 29. Has a
sister, Margaret Maeve "Mag-
gie" Callaghan. Aged 25. No
parents. Working for the Chi-
cago Police Department, Pre-
cinct 18.

I put down the file.
God.

I should visit Dom.

But I hear voices from
Vera's desk, and something in
her tone makes me worried.

"I need to talk to her.
Now."

"You can leave your infor-
mation, or set up a meeting if
you'd like—"

"Don't have time for that."

That voice.

The slight lilt—

I remove myself from my
leather chair and head to the
door.

After a quick catch breath,
I open it.

His long, dark coat hangs
open, the wetness along the
bottom dripping on our wood
floors. He doesn't hold an
umbrella, because he knows
better—it's the Windy City—
and he shakes out his fedora,
causing some of the snow-
flakes to hit my skin.

I survey his face: strong
jaw, set, looking angry; brown
hair, parted above his left eye,
colored light hazel; the curve
of an unintentional smirk on
his lips.

After a moment, his eyes
squint.

"You were on the street.
Yesterday. You were watchin'
me and my sister—"

I act dumb. "What? What're
you talkin' about?"

He doesn't waste time. "Why
were ya following me?"

I shake my head, giving
him my best 'I have no idea
what you're talking about'
look.

He blatantly runs his eyes

up and down my figure, but not in the way I expected. He's sizing me up, deciding if I'm a threat. Sometimes I get it, sometimes I don't, but this one doesn't need setting straight. There's a different sentiment in his eyes—maybe sympathy?

I unintentionally soften, extending my hand in order for him to shake. "Jack Accardi."

I wait for him to shake it, and he considers not doing it, until he pushes his hand into mine. "Charles Callaghan. Detective. Chicago PD."

"We can talk in my office...?" I suggest. He follows, and I sit down in my desk chair. I wait for him to sit down in the chair across from me, but he doesn't. Instead, he starts to talk without warning.

"I need to talk to you about the case of your family." I shrug. "Go ahead. I'm listening."

He curls his fingertips across the chair's back, looking down into the brown leather. "I've been put on the case of your brother's family. We're still working on trying to find

the murderer."

Tell me something I don't know. I roll my neck, trying to avoid his eyes. "Continue." "In the past week, a witness has stepped forward supposedly having information connecting a suspect and the location and time of the murder."

I rise up in my chair. "Someone new?"

He takes off his fedora, twirling it in his fingertips. "The name's Danny Murphy. We think he has a connection to the North Side Gang."

I try to think. Why would the North Side Gang want to kill Dom's wife and child?

Okay, okay. Just play along. See what's happening. Don't panic.

"What do you want from me?" I say sharply.

His fingers sink into the leather as he starts to respond. "I need your help. The precinct wants to close the case. Make it cold. But I think I've got a lead, and it's my job to figure it out." Something in his eyes makes me wonder if he's telling me the whole story.

Squinting my eyes, I piece

some of the puzzle together. He needs my help. I'm tailing him. If I work with him, I could get more information about him. Maybe figure out if he's done it, I can get the information back to Teddy. Keep my enemies closer, that sort of thing.

This is the closest I've been. I could figure this out. We could finally know— So there it is, Accardi. Trust no one.

I make eye contact again with the young Irishman. "Are ya gonna take the job or not?" He says, running a hand through his hair.

I consider this all for about half a second. "You got a location on this Murphy?"

The anger, left seething in his eyes, drains from his face. "He's been visiting a mob contact—our witness—the past couple days. Frank Gusenberg."

He didn't mention gangs. "I don't wanna get caught—"

Callaghan gives me a glare that felt strangely like he was saying 'I'll arrest you if you try to walk out now'. I rethink my statement.

"Meet me at the corner of

Clark and Dickens. 8:45." He spins his hat in his hands, flipping it back onto his head. Callaghan traces his fingers across the brim. "You'll be there?"

This could turn out well for me if I say yes.

Or it could be a resounding failure if I say yes—

But think of Dom.

"Yes," I say decidedly, "Yes, I'll be there."

But what if I don't end up with an answer?

What if this just leads to more questions?

Or worse—

He turns on his heel and leaves, interrupting my inner monologue and making me lose my train of thought. His back hunches as he opens the door, and things start to piece together.

I feel like for this puzzle, I've only been given the inside pieces, along with throwing in a few pieces from a different puzzle for good measure.

This isn't gonna be easy.

§

The closer it inches to nine, the more apprehensive I get.

Teddy's not back yet. He

should have come back.

Why does his return make me so nervous?

Because I know that each tick of the clock leads me closer to the time of the meeting.

And the closer we get to the time of the meeting without seeing Teddy, the more nervous I'm becoming— Has he really had that many hearings lately? What case did he just complete? Did he even have a case? I sit up on my chair. If he had any case, he'd give me all the info.

I don't know who's put the tail on Callaghan.

Teddy never told me.

"Vera?" I call out, wandering into the main part of the office. She sits at her desk, drawing circles on a page of scrap paper. I remember when we had hired the girl—just out of secondary school at the end of June of last year. Two months later, the situation with Grace and Allegra happened. Her family was one of the reasons Dom and I stayed afloat. Even with their three kids—two boys, nonetheless—they made sure

we were fed and alive. She's quiet, but she's always been there. Been a few times when I've come back worse for the wear, and she's been able to fix me up. I think it's been more than a few, actually—"Jack," she says tiredly. I lean on the front of her desk and she peers up at me. "Can I go home yet?"

"Yes. Please. But I want to ask you a favor," I say, playing with the pencil can near my knee. She doesn't respond, so I continue. "Would you be able to come back later tonight to see if Teddy's come back?"

Vera raises her eyebrow at me. "I guess I could... any particular reason?"

I look down at the stack of papers marked 'For Teddy'. I resist the urge to look at them. "Has he told you anything about these hearings he's goin' to?"

She searches about her desk, and, finding nothing, she shakes her head. "Nope. He's told me nothin'."

I hop off her desk. "I don't like it. Not one bit."

"You think it's like last November?" Vera asks, tap-

ping her pencil against the side of her typewriter. I consider the events she's referring to. Nah, I've got a feeling this has less to do with arson and Prohibition. No, this is more secret operations, I feel. "Not sure. Let's put it this way: I'm doin' a tail and he hasn't told me who put it on the guy. You think you can try to figure it out for me tonight?"

She considers my request. "I can get my brother to come with me. He'll wait while I check. What time?" I cringe. "Midnight, maybe? I'd cover you in the morning," I plead. "You wouldn't have to come in."

Vera gives me a grin. "I'd like to do a tail, I think. You always make is sound so exciting."

I snort involuntarily. "Really? Tails are boring."

"And paperwork isn't?"

She snaps, giving me a saucy smirk.

"Okay, okay," I concede.

"You've got me there." I grab my coat from the tree, and she starts to collect her things happily. "I've got my own tail tonight. You alright locking

up?"

She nods. Maybe we should've given her a chance before this—

Hey, Accardi. Don't get too ahead of yourself.

Make it through the meeting tonight and then you can think about putting in a good word with Whelan.

Whelan...

Before she leaves, I run back to my office and silently grab my gun.

The clock's ticking reminds me—

I have time to visit Dom.

I can't procrastinate it any longer— he has the right to know.

§

By the time I get down to the clock shop, he's been closed for a while but the light is still on. My breath makes condensation appear on the window, and when I knock, Dom jumps practically out of his skin. He brushes something he's working on into his hand and drops it to the floor.

"I have to talk to you," I say through the glass.

He immediately unlocks the door and I fall inside, not knowing where to begin.

“I’m on a case. I’m following a cop that supposedly had something to do with—with—Allegra and Grace,” I reveal, not breathing. The faster I go, the less I think about it. “But when I tailed him, I figured out that he’s actually investigating the case. He thinks that this guy—Danny Murphy—was involved. Now I’m in the middle of it, and—and—”

Dom has tears rolling down his face, and I search his eyes for any help.

There are tears running down my face, too.

“When the hell did this happen, Jack?”

“Yesterday morning. When I, uh, came in to see you. I was on the tail.”

He crosses his arms and I immediately step back, knowing he’s angry. Stepping towards me, he comes into the light, and I see a spidery black and blue bruise around his eye—something I couldn’t see in the shadows.

“What the hell happened to you?” I say. Where the hell did he get a bruise like that? It wasn’t there yesterday. All my thoughts take a seat to

his black eye. “Who gave that to you? Dom—”

He pushes my hands away and turns around, avoiding me.

“It’s not important.”

I start towards him. “To hell with that—”

Dom slams his palms on the top of his work table and I jump.

“God dammit, Jack! Listen to me for once, okay?!”

He’s never like that. He never snaps at me like that.

I back away.

“Fine,” I say. “Fine. It’s not important. I’m sorry for caring about you.” I head towards the door.

He calls for me but I leave the clock shop, causing the door to jingle as I leave.

If he’s going to act like that, I’m not going to try. I’m done trying to take care of him. He’s gotta take care of himself for once. And if he’s gonna let someone walk all over him, then it’s his cross to bear.

He’s got his messes, and I’ve got mine. He can deal with that on his own, and I can deal with mine on my own.

Right?

I approach the corner of Clark and Dickens, and don't see Callaghan.

Did he set me up?

Could be a possibility. He doesn't know I'm following him. But if he's the murderer, eliminating me would end some of his troubles for a while.

God dammit—

I reach for my gun in my pocket, but a hand pulls me back into the shadows.

"You're late, Accardi."

Wrenching myself from Callaghan's grip, I readjust my collar and glare at him.

"Thought you were gonna shoot me."

He gives me a sly grin from underneath his fedora. "Who says I won't?"

Glad I trust so easily in this town. Suddenly, I get the feeling someone's gonna get shot before the night's over.

"Where's Murphy?" I ask, feeling the sharp taste of iron in my mouth. I swallow it away and slink into the shadows next to Callaghan.

With a tip of his hat, I look caddy-corner across the street.

A pair of men stand outside a closed garage door. I recognize the saunter of the taller man, his hand on his hip. I can plainly see the outline of a .38 Special in its holster.

Under the light of the streetlamp and a lit cigarette, Teddy Whelan's face shines out like a spotlight.

Callaghan drops a hand on my shoulder, pulling me back.

But if Teddy—

"I'm gonna get down to business," the other, heavier man says. He's not wearing a fedora, so I can see his shapeless face in the low light. "Moran doesn't want you back." Teddy drops the cigarette into the snow, smashing it with the toe of his shoe and I hear him let loose a few curses. He begins to pace and the man gives him a confused look.

I rack my brain. Moran. Why does that sound so familiar—

"I'm dyin' out here, Goosey! I'm tryin' so hard for you, and this is what you give me?" Teddy grasps the lapels of the man's jacket.

Goosey pushes at Teddy's hands and eventually gets

him away. “Not my decision! I don’t make the calls! You’re the one who messed it all up—”

“What was it?” Teddy says, his voice dropping low. “What did Moran call it? ‘Bad publicity’? Bad publicity, my ass.”

Goosey inches closer, and I see a cloud of his breath in the cold air. “You killed the mark’s wife and kid, Danny! How is that not bad publicity?”

I can’t feel my heart beating anymore.

Danny. Teddy—same man?

“I can fix this.” His voice runs colder. “I can fix this. Then you can’t say no.”

Goosey grabs Teddy’s—Danny’s—whoever he is—collar and shakes him back to the present. “What the hell you think you’re gonna do, boy? Ain’t nothin’ gonna fix this now. You’re out. For good.”

With a calloused laugh, Teddy looks up into the snowfall. His eyes take on a fiendlike glow and I step further into the shadows.

This is completely falling

apart—

“I’ve got a plan. It’s a fantastic plan, if I do say so. I’m working on it now, actually.”

Goosey lets go of Teddy and eyes him expectantly. “Moran’s gonna want to know. He’s gonna shut you down.”

“He’s not shuttin’ me down. I’ve got a girl, you see. She’s enjoyin’ playing detective. She’s distraught and emotional and I’m leading her on a wild goose chase. And with her big brother still dealin’ with the Mafia, it’s playin’ right into my hands—”

Goosey holds up his hands in surrender, backing away to the garage. “This is outta my hands, Murphy. It’s your head on a platter on this one. Just know you’ve got no backing from us. You’re on your own.”

He opens the side door and slips in, shutting it behind himself. Teddy slams his fists on the wood, but it doesn’t give.

Gruffly, he adjusts the collar of his coat and looks around the quiet street.

Girl playing detective. Wild goose chase. Big brother with

the Mafia. Danny Murphy—

Hands fall on my shoulders and I throw them away. God dammit, I should have known—

It had always been Teddy, from the start. His behavior—it started changing six months ago.

God dammit. I should've known—

“Jack, c'mon. Jack, focus—”

I flail, but hands grab me, pulling me back into the shadows. Callaghan turns me around and drops his heavy hands on my shoulders again. His hazel eyes even shine in the dark.

Focus, goddammit.

“He—Allegra and Grace! He—Teddy—”

He nods. “I know. I know.”

“Teddy is Danny! Did you know?” I pull him down to my level by the collar of his coat. Goddammit, if he knew—

The tears roll down my face unhindered now, and he carefully pries my fingers off his lapels. Grasping my hands, he gazes into my eyes, trying to calm me. It's not working.

“I need your help. I need

your help getting the files.”

I panic. “What files? I don't have any files—”

“We need to get into his office. If he has any records of what he's done.”

“Why?” I breathe. Why did it have to be him? “Why would he have records? Why would any—why—”

The tears flow, causing streaks of heat to permeate the coldness of my cheeks.

“There is something wrong with him, Jack. There always has. We need to stop him, okay?”

The double life. The different name. Who the hell is Teddy Whelan? Or Danny Murphy, for that matter?

Dom and the Mafia. The bruise.

My shoulders shake and Callaghan pulls me back.

“Hey. Hey—Jack. Listen. We need to go.”

I push his hands away. “Why'd you bring me into this? You didn't need me. You never needed me. You're a cop, for Christ's sake! You—you don't need me. And this is just—” I touch my hand to my forehead. My head is pounding and I can't do anything

to get rid of it. My boss is a murderer—the man I wanted to be with, the one I loved—he killed my family and I had been too blind to see it—

“You needed to see this. Because we need to stop him, okay? Stopping him will end all—”

I fling the tears away from my face with my palm and step towards him. “Why do you care so much? You’re real interested in this case and now that I trust absolutely no one, why should I trust you?”

He shakes his head silently, looking down at his spectators in the dirty snow. “You ever think this may have happened to someone else besides you?”

I freeze. And not because it’s already cold.

Callaghan addresses me directly. “It’s been long since it’s happened, but I’ve had to deal with this too, alright? My parents...” He drifts. “No one should have to deal with what we’ve been through. That’s why we’ve gotta catch this asshole.”

The cop’s face loses some of its edge in the night. I

should’ve known.

I should’ve known a lot of things, though.

He nods towards the street and the lit sidewalks. “The office. Now.”

I’m not going to lose Dom. I’m not going to let it happen this way.

I start running and I just hope to God that Callaghan’s behind me and that Teddy isn’t.

We get to the office get into the building and head up the stairs to the second floor; I unlock it—the place is dark when the door creaks open.

The door of Teddy’s office is closed, but I pull a bobby pin from my hair. With a few turns of my wrist, the lock gives and the door opens.

“Impressive,” Charlie says under his breath. He turns on the light, casting the room with the incandescent glow. I immediately go to his desk, searching through the files on the top.

“Where does he keep his files?” He asks, opening the top desk drawer and pushing papers around. Everything’s such a mess that I can’t even read the subject headings.

Even his handwriting is terrible.

“Just keep looking,” I say under my breath, peering through the files on his desk. It’s not even in any semblance of an order.

Evidence. That’s what we need. Something about working for the North Side Gang. Something about a hit. Something about Allegra and Grace.

The cop tosses a file at me, and it falls on the top of the other things on his desk.

With a tentative hand, I open it.

Inside are news articles.

Dozens.

All with the same type of headline: “Mugging declared double homicide”. “Young wife and daughter killed in Lincoln Park”. Their obituaries.

He had saved them.

All of them—

Before I realize it, I’m crying again.

“If my sister and niece were killed because some insane mobster got carried away, I would’ve went after him and killed him a long time ago. Granted, I’d be in jail, but it would be worth it.”

He slams shut the drawer of Teddy’s wooden filing cabinet. “She’s got the perfect life with a perfect husband, and now they’ve got a daughter. Who they named Charlie, by the way.” He takes his fedora from his head and runs a hand through his hair. Offhandedly, he says, “All I know is that I’ve tried to live my life on my own, and you can’t do it alone. I’ve tried to keep her out of the bad things of my life—tried to keep her locked in her ivory tower—but I’m tellin’ ya, it don’t help anyone. Keepin’ your brother in the loop of things may seem like a good idea, but I’m sayin’ from experience, it just hurts you and him.”

After his little speech, I give him a side glance.

“Sorry,” he says quickly. “That’s what I get for takin’ cases I can’t handle.”

But I think about what he’s said.

“I’m perfectly fine the way I am,” I finally say, wiping away my tears.

He harrumphs. “Seems to be working so far, isn’t it?”

I raise my eyebrow at him. “Don’t appreciate your sar-

casm. We're in the middle of an investigation."

"Yeah, and you're doing a right job of it, too." He replaces the hat on his head.

"I can't tell if you're being genuine or not." I go back to looking through the file, but then I decide I don't want to know more. I can look at it later.

"I don't know if this'll be enough evidence," he confesses, stepping towards the window.

I turn back. It should be enough. Why wouldn't it? I don't know. We knew well enough. We had all the information we needed—

Charlie curses behind me, and I see him peering out the window.

My stomach drops.

Teddy's back.

I transition from calm to fear. Do we have time to run—no. We don't have time. "Get in my office," I say, tossing him my key and grasping the file in my hand. Immediately, I turn out the light and lock the door from the inside, slamming the office shut. Charlie fumbles with my key, but makes it in and slams the

door shut behind him.

I have a few moments to throw off my coat, grab some sheets from the file in my hand and sit myself down on the floorboards to make it seem like I'm working before—

"Didn't expect you in this late."

I don't look up, trying to regulate my adrenaline-fueled breathing. If he can't tell I'm seeing red—"Didn't expect you to come back this late, either," I growl.

I stare down at the papers cascading around the wood. On the uppermost page on the pile, an image pops out with a caption underneath. Allegra Jacqueline Accardi, aged two and a half at the time of her death.

I feel my nails dig into the palm of my hand as I attempt to regulate my breathing.

If he sees—

"You find anything more on Callaghan?" Teddy says, putting his hands on his waist.

"I've been trying, you know that," I attempt, and I hear him sigh heavily.

"Do you have any more in-

formation on this guy or not?" "I don't," I say tersely. "I need more from you, Teddy." I turn my head up at him, and he raises his eyebrow. "Excuse me?"

"Who ordered the tail on Callaghan?" I ask as innocently as I can muster. Instead, he narrows his eyes at me. "Why does it matter?"

I eye the papers on the ground, and Teddy touches them with his wet, snow covered shoe. He leaves water droplets on the paper, soaking into the ink and causing it to run.

"How the hell else to you expect me to do my job?" I say, standing up. I step over the papers, causing him to take a step backwards, nearing the edge of Vera's desk. "Tell me who put out the tail," I enunciate.

"That's the way you're gonna play this one?" Teddy asks, shaking his head. "Damn, Jack. Didn't know you had it in ya." He smiles like he knows he's been caught.

He knows.

I feel something metallic pressed against my side.

When I look down, I see

his the .38 in his hand.

"Oh, c'mon, Jack. Even with the slight confession you heard from me on the street and the 'evidence' you found in my desk, you know it's still not enough."

He's right.

He taught me that.

The gun feels cold against my skin.

I speak, but my voice comes out hoarse. "How'd you know—"

Teddy's grip tightens on my waist and I try not to cringe.

"I've been followin' you for days. I'm not as dumb as I look, you know." He raises his voice and I can hear the anger boil in his tone. "Detective! You can come out now!"

Teddy's voice echoes in my brain as the edges of my vision start to blacken.

Stop it, Accardi, focus—tunnel vision won't help you now.

The door opens slowly, and Teddy turns me around, holding a hand tightly to my shoulder.

The barrel of the gun settles into the space under my ribs.

It's just a gun. Just a lousy gun.

He's not going to shoot—he's not going to shoot. He can't shoot.

Charlie holds his hands up. Why didn't he pull his gun—he should have pulled his gun, he's a damn cop—I close my eyes, trying to regulate the sound of my heart beating.

All I can do is feel the metal on my side.

"You don't have enough evidence, Callaghan. You don't, not even now," Teddy says near my cheek. I can feel his hot breath moving my hair as he talks. He grasps my arm tighter, pushing me further into him. "Nice try. But you're outta luck."

"Killing her isn't going to get you back in the gang," Charlie begins. Teddy just pushes the barrel of the gun further into my skin.

Sounds drown out as my heart beats in my eardrums.

He's going to shoot me.

He's really going to shoot me—

"What the hell do you think's gonna happen, Murphy?" Charlie tries again, his

hands still raised. "Killing them in the first place gave you—what did he call it?—'bad publicity'. You really think they're gonna take you back if you kill more?"

I can feel Teddy's hands begin to shake.

He's going to snap. He's going to snap and shoot me—

"Six months ago, I was just working for the North Side, and I would've never expected a job of roughin' up a Mafia asset's wife and kid would've led me to this," Teddy starts. "At first, I didn't mean to kill 'em. I swear."

He pushes me away from him and towards Charlie. He catches me, grasping my arm. I feel a bruise already forming from Teddy's grip on my side. "But you know, it was kind of refreshing."

The gun shines in the light of the incandescent bulbs and I know that he's got the entire chamber full. Now the weapon trains on Charlie and I as Teddy steps forward, extending his arm full length in front of him.

"Once you get that kind of control, it's kind of hard to say no, isn't it?"

The voice is the same, the inflection is the same, but the cold sound of a murderer finally slips through his tone.

He's always been Danny, hiding behind the guise of Teddy Whelan.

"You think killing us both is going to fix the problem?" Charlie says, casually stepping around me. I slip behind him, and he blocks my sight with his shoulder as he tries to protect me.

I know that two steps in front of me, my coat lies on the floor, hiding my own gun.

If I could just reach it—

"I do think it'll fix the problem. The two people who think that they're onto me are at the end of my gun."

That's where he's wrong.

The sinking feeling settles in a giant hole in my stomach. My breath becomes strangled. Oh my God—

He tilts his head. "Someone else knows."

I've given it away.

Teddy looks up into the ceiling faux-thoughtfully. "Who would it be?" The name comes to him and he gives us both a look like he's discovered the meaning of the world.

"Your brother. Who else? Still mourning the loss of his lovely wife and daughter. To help him cope, you tell him about me. Right?"

I try to go after him, but Charlie pushes me back.

My cheeks fill with blood and heat as it boils in my body.

"What is with you people and givin' me messes just to keep cleanin' up?" He says. "There's this old saying. 'Anything that can go wrong generally does go wrong sooner or later'." His voice turns from nice schoolteacher to cold blooded killer. "Well, guess what. Things have gone wrong, Jack. Things have gone wrong and I'm just going to clean up this mess the best way I know how."

Charlie's fingers twitch. He wants to go for his gun. I can see it. But one of us is going to get shot if he does that.

"Come down to the precinct and we can get this all sorted out," Charlie says calmly. "No one else has to die, Teddy."

"Yeah, like that's gonna work out for me. If I come with you, what good's that gonna

do?” He steps closer to us. “I wish I could be sorry that it’s gotta be like this, but I’ve got no guilt in my mind.”

I try to avoid his sharp look, but I know that in the end, he will win.

He always wins—that’s the problem in this place—

Nothing ever changes.

I feel like I’m falling as the truth of the matter hits me.

Teddy nonchalantly pulls a cigarette from his coat pocket and slips it between his lips. He gives me his classic smirk-and-wink. “Someone’s gonna have to die, darling. And it ain’t gonna be me.”

Teddy holds the gun to Charlie’s chest, reaching out and taking my hand. His gentle touch causes my skin to burn cold. “Kind of a shame, don’t you think?” He drops a kiss on my cheek, and I resist the urge to brush the imprint away. “Wish you would’ve stopped prying, darling.”

Teddy holds onto my hand as he backs through the doorjamb. And he slams shut the door.

I immediately launch at the wood. The door doesn’t give. I have to get through—

“Move!” Charlie pulls me aside, throwing his shoulder into the wood. As he moves, once, twice, three times—

He’s going after Dom. I know he is.

“Jack, this probably isn’t the appropriate time to say so, but I think we have a bigger problem right now—”

“A bigger problem than what?” I ask, my voice going higher. He steps back pointing down to the floor.

Roiling smoke is inching in underneath the door.

I curse, and he just gives me a wide eyed look. “Thought you were a lady.”

Ignoring Charlie’s statement, I say, “Not right now. Get the door open.”

My heart beats in my ears and I can’t hear the sound of Charlie trying to smash the door down.

He throws himself at the wood one more time.

If there’s a fire—

I can’t believe Teddy. Or Danny. Or whoever he is.

I should have never gotten involved in this.

Now, someone’s gonna die, and it’s gonna be us—

“I’m not gonna go down in

a fire,” I decide, joining Charlie at the door. I face him, and he looks down at me tiredly.

“Thanks. For the record, I just wanted to tell you thanks.”

I shrug. “At least if you go down, we go down fighting. And on your own terms.”

With a push of his fingers, he tips his fedora upwards. “I’m not goin’ down.”

“You’re locked in an office, possibly which is on fire in order to kill us and destroy all the evidence, the son of a bitch that killed my sister-in-law and my niece is now trying to kill us, and now he’s going after my brother to eliminate the final string in his psychotic plan.”

He seems to think about it for a second, then smirks a cheeky grin. “Not bad odds.”

“Everything is going wrong,” I say, my shoulder on the wood growing warmer. “Those are horrible odds—”

A voice sounds from the office. “Jack!”

Charlie cuts off, looking down at me with wide eyes.

“Vera!” I scream through the wood. “Vera, in here!”

“How are the odds now?”

Charlie says, laughing and running his hand through his hair.

“Hang on!” She says. The sound of wood against wood hits my ears—Teddy put something in front of the door, and expected us not to get through—Charlie slams his shoulder against the door, and it splinters the doorframe. It creaks open, and Vera grabs my hand, her hair silhouetted in the orange light. She pulls me forward, and Charlie grasps to my waist, coughing through the smoke.

But wait—the files. We couldn’t just leave—

“Wait!” I drop to my feet, gathering up the papers on the floor.

That was what we needed if we could track down Danny Murphy.

Those papers would be the incriminating evidence.

If the place had to go down in smoke, that was the only thing we would need to survive. And I’m not letting him get away with this—

“C’mon, Jack, the damn building—” Charlie grabs at my collar, but I push him away—another silhouette,

another man, pulls at me, but Charlie just pushes him towards the door.

I gather them, shove them in my coat pocket—he pulls me up by the wool of my coat, now too heavy in my hands amid the flames—

He pushes me towards the door, and I stumble, but Vera catches my hand. I let the primal fear take hold as I almost slide down the stairs, and I throw the door open.

The February air hits my throat like a thousand needles, and I cough to get the smoke from my lungs. Vera and Charlie join me, along with the unknown male, pulling me down the street. It's quiet on the street; I don't even hear any sirens as the flames shoot out of the second floor windows. First, his office, then mine.

There goes everything. All my files, all my cases, all my history with Teddy—

Teddy isn't Teddy anymore.

He's a murderer that just tried to kill you, Accardi. Get it in your head.

He killed them—

Thank God for Vera. We

would have died—

I let out a laugh, grasping Vera by the shoulders. "I knew you would come through—"

"You're so lucky I was so curious," she cuts me off. "What happened? How'd you get stuck—"

Charlie chimes in. "Teddy. Except he's not Teddy. He's behind the Accardi murders."

Vera pushes her lion's mane of hair back from her eyes, leaving dirty streaks from her hands as she tries to understand.

I look down the street, waiting for law enforcement to arrive. Shrugging on my coat, I spin on the sidewalk, listening for the far away sirens.

"I'm gonna get her home," interrupts the young man with the same light brown hair and green eyes as Vera.

"Yes. Yes," I vigorously nod, "Do that. In fact, don't leave your house tomorrow. At all." I begin to back up, following Charlie's footsteps. The sounds of sirens finally echo through the neighborhood—someone called the cops. "Be safe, please," I call

down the street. “And Vera—”

She turns over her shoulder. “Jack?”

I give her the best grin I can muster at this point. “Thanks.”

Vera finally gives me a genuine grin. “Be careful.”

I can’t help but laugh. “Don’t worry about me.”

The brother and sister duo—the ones who saved our lives—walk swiftly down the street, out of sight and out of mind.

Sometimes things change, sometimes they don’t—

Charlie pulls on my collar again, turning me around to face him.

“Listen. Focus, Jack. He’s goin’ after Dom—”

I eye the detective: the man had walked into my life knowing what had happened to my family and how it felt for him to deal with it. He’d done a big thing, getting me involved. Probably would get him fired. Too emotional. Too fired up. Never get a family member involved on a case.

But he had a hunch and he followed it.

Now buildings are burning, and more people are sched-

uled to die.

I change gears, grasping onto his wool encased arm. He doesn’t let go.

He looks in the direction of the sirens. “Where would Dom be?”

“His shop.” The answer comes out before I can think about it.

Teddy wouldn’t—

I take that back. He would.

But now that he thinks we’re dead—he wouldn’t expect us to find him, will he?

Charlie takes my shoulders again and forces me to look up at him. He has dust and ash trailing down the side of his face.

“We need to get to Dom,” he says. I try to look away, down the street, not in his eyes, but he forces me back. “Listen. We gotta do this together, alright? I know you’d like to think you’re okay by yourself, but you’re not.”

He’s right. I’m not okay by myself.

That’s why I need to find Dom.

Without a second’s deliberation, we start running.

§

We approach the clock

shop on the opposite side of the street, and I can see the light on inside. Either Dom's working or Teddy's already got to him—

I blink, trying to get the thoughts out of my head.

Worry about that when the threat of death is not eminent, Accardi.

But you know, I'd still really like to shoot him—

"You alright?" Charlie angles the brim of his hat upwards so I could properly see his face.

Yeah, I want to say, I'm just fine, trying to figure out why my boss is trying to murder my entire family and how we got caught up in this mess— instead, I don't answer.

The silence on the street makes me uncomfortable. "I'm not alone, you know," I begin, peering across the street.

"Maybe not, but you act like it," he says, not looking at me as we walk. "You care about your brother, yes; you like to think you're a loner. You think you can function well enough on your lonesome. But you can't. Don't

think you can. Because I thought I could, and that's how I got into this hellhole, workin' with a rogue private eye whose family were killed in the case I'm workin'."

"I'm not a PI," I correct halfheartedly.

He steps in front of me, slipping his hands in his pockets. "I'd think you'd make a pretty good PI after this. Despite the whole not knowing about your boss."

"I didn't know my boss was a—a—" I stop, dumbfounded. "I don't even know what the hell he is!"

"A double crossin' coward of a man, that's what he is!" He snaps. "Stop holdin' a torch for him, Jack. You know who he is now, and it's not worth the pain. You know that."

I close my eyes, trying to get the image of Teddy from my head. "I know, alright. I know."

He shouldn't care so much.

Back on task, Accardi.

Dom—

Mafia connections.

I can't afford to wait any longer.

I rush the door without a second thought.

The sign blatantly showing the word 'open' makes me stop in my tracks.

He's here.

With a gasp of breath, I toss open the door, and it smacks the wall behind it.

Teddy has his gun drawn, pointed at a dark heap on the floor.

Dom pulls himself up on his palms, and I see the shards of broken glass strewn about the wood.

"Well, it seems like the fire didn't take you out," he muses, not looking up at me. Instead, he trains his gun on Dom's chest.

"They threatened me, Jack," Dom says, exasperated. I see blood all around him: droplets and bigger, darker puddles. "It started last year. They wanted me to make bombs. Time bombs. I said no, but they threatened Allegra and Grace."

I refuse to look up, because I know that Teddy's face is probably beaming.

"The North Side found out and wanted it stopped, so they sent Teddy," I say, piec-

ing the stories together.

"To take care of the problem, no less," Teddy snarls. "Then you all had to go and ruin my good fortune."

"Chicago PD."

Over my shoulder, Charlie appears, holding his own gun in his extended hands.

Teddy just gives him a judging look. "You'll need a little more than that to stop me, Callaghan."

"You can try all you like. You're done, Murphy. You know you've been done as soon as she showed up," Charlie says, gesturing with his head towards me.

Teddy, maintaining his look of arrogance, takes a deep breath for a moment.

Charlie takes his silence and continues. He pushes me behind him. "If we were dead, then Dom was the last piece of your puzzle. And you, in your infinite wisdom, could stage his death to look like a suicide. The case would close as a murder-suicide, under your influence."

The handle of my .38 is cold to my touch. I can draw and aim before he has time to blink.

The anger's back, seething in my stomach, my chest, my head.

For the first time, Teddy looks flustered. He peers down at his spectator shoes, collects himself, then bears his baby blues into me.

"Jack. I would say something cheesy about us being beautiful together, to try to make you come back to my side, et cetera, but it would just be another lie." He smirks, looking from me to my brother, still silent on the floor. "And you know, I'm just too proud to lie anymore. So I'm just going to kill you." He gestures towards Dom with the barrel of the gun. "Well, first him. Then you two, since you wouldn't die when I wanted you to."

I'm on the verge of shouting.

Charlie has his gun trained on Teddy. Teddy has his gun on Dom.

Neither is going to shoot. But I can.

I approach Teddy again. I can feel the gun, cold, in my fingertips.

I wanted to do it. I could do it.

"Is that the entire plan?" I take a shallow breath. "Anything that can happen, will happen?" There is no possible way for you to be able to plan for everything. It's not humanly possible."

He winks at me again, and I resist the urge to shoot him then and there. "Sure it is, darling."

My fingers curl around the gun in my pocket. "What other sadistic things do you have planned? Am I going to have to live constantly looking over my shoulder because you've orchestrated some other horrible event just to take me out, because you're Danny Murphy, 'no one crosses a Murphy', 'anything bad that can happen, will happen?'" "Jack, stop—" Charlie says, but I don't.

The gun's right there in my hand. I can stop this right now. We could end this little party with one bang— Would that make me as bad as him? I don't think so. No; he's done enough to screw over my entire family to hell and back. And Charlie's, too. Why do I care so much about Charlie's family? Why do I

care so much about Charlie? I refuse to glance at him. I'm sure his hands are wavering. I'm too close in his shot now. He won't shoot. That's why I care so much. He knows Dom and I are just trying to protect each other. We've been through enough together and we just want to survive another day. Is that so much to ask? To survive another day? And all I wanted was a comfortable life. Teddy could have been that for me. The gun feels comfortable in my fingertips. More comfortable than Teddy could have ever been. But Teddy doesn't exist. Only this murderer, this man who's messed with me too many times.

And I wouldn't have figured any of this out without Charlie.

He'll lose his job for bringing me into this, but what would give me more peace—watching my life fall apart around me, or have it go to Hell on my own terms?

One shot to Teddy's chest, and things could change.

I could have that life.

We could all have that life. It wouldn't change the past, but it would change the future.

I swallow my heart back into my chest.

Could I really make that decision?

Would I be able to live with that decision?

Instead of thinking, I speak. "You know what, Teddy? I always thought things wouldn't change in the office. I was okay with that. Then you had to go and tell me what change was. It's pain, and hatred, and sometimes death, but in the end, I think that things can be better." I glance to Charlie. To Dom. The .38 settles into my fingertips. He had his gun trained on Charlie before. It wouldn't be hard to take him out this time.

"You also said that 'anything that can go wrong does go wrong'. Well, you messed with the wrong people, so naturally, things are gonna go wrong for you."

I don't have long. I need to pull the gun and shoot him. He can't have time to react.

Can I really just kill him—
Breathe, Accardi.

Just breathe.

He tilts his head. "Doubt that, darling. I've thought of everything, you see. Even thought about what would happen if you pulled that gun in your pocket. Go ahead and try it."

I hesitate. Dom looks up to Teddy, and I know he's looking down the barrel of the gun.

There, he sees Grace. He sees Allegra.

He sees a way out.

But I'm not going to let him take it.

I can't let him take it.

I think I can be alone, I consider that I could live all by myself, when in reality, I can't. Charlie's right. I'm not okay by myself. You can't shut yourself away just because you can't face the bad parts of life. Experiences shape who you are, and I can't do that without Dom. "You've got no one," I sneer at Teddy. His face falls. "You had the mob, and they kicked you out. You had me, but you messed that up, too. You can't fix us. And you can't fix your past. So you've got no one. Not even you can make

people stay in your life. You push them all away. No master plan is going to mend what you've broken. You think you're smart, but no one can do this alone." I say with finality. "Not even you."

I pull the gun.

Slow motion.

I hear Dom's voice, Charlie's voice, melding into one; I can't pick out words.

Just sounds.

The ticking of the clocks around me.

Just the sound of me pulling the trigger.

The sound of the bullet exploding from the chamber.

The sound of the bullet hitting him in the chest.

He drops to the ground, the red blossoming across his disheveled three piece suit- His blue eyes hit the wall of clocks, blinking once, then staying open.

A slight smirk stays on his lips.

The life is gone. Teddy's gone. I close my eyes, letting the tears run loose.

I'm free from him, I'm free from what he's done.

That's all I needed from him.

That's all I ever wanted.
Change.

I couldn't get it from him.

Hands pull me backwards,
and the world spins.

A sick shade of green
skirts my vision—my eyes fix
on Teddy's body and the up-
turn of his lips—

§

I blink.

My ceiling of bedroom
greet me.

When had I fallen asleep?

Racking my brain, I start
to remember.

Teddy. Dead?

This feels like the plot of
a Poe story. Or that German
film that came out a while
back. The Cabinet of Dr. Ca-
ligari?

"Jack. You awake?"

I blink the sleep away from
my eyes, and the gray tinted
light streams in from the win-
dow.

It's morning.

Dom shakes my shoulders,
and I finally focus in on his
face.

His dark eye is encased
in black and blue; a long cut
above his eye appears like it's
been sewn shut.

I wish I could say my heart

didn't fall, but it did.

"That didn't really happen,
did it?"

He swallows hard. Closes
his eyes. Nods.

"Teddy's dead."

"He's a murderer, Jack."

"And I shot him."

I sat up. I'm still wearing
the clothes I had on all day.

"Where's Charlie?"

Instead of answering, he
puts the midday newspaper in
my lap.

The headline of the Chica-
go Daily News reads "7 Moran
Gangsters Slain".

Moran gangsters? The
North Side Gang—murdered
at their garage on Dickens
and Clark, just down the
street, at 10:30 in the morn-
ing.

Before I realize what I'm
doing, I slip on my shoes and
run out the door.

§

"Charlie? Charlie!"

When I get there, the ga-
rage has police milling about.
I decide it's better not to poke
around. I'm sure that they're
going to find me sooner or
later to talk about Teddy. And
the office—

"Jack, you shouldn't be

here right now.”

I whirl on the voice, almost slipping on the light dusting of snow. Charlie raises his eyebrow at me as I regain my footing.

“You’re still working,” I manage.

He adjusts his fedora so I can properly see his face. “I gave them my resignation. I’m done at the end of the month. They’re gonna fire me anyway. Might as well make it easier.”

Shaking my head, I avoid looking into the garage. I don’t want to see any more carnage.

Charlie nods towards the building. “They think that the Mafia was involved. Tryin’ to shut down Moran’s gang once and for all.” He squints his eyes, and I know he’s reconsidering that deduction.

“You think Teddy had something to do with it,” I say.

He slips his hands into his pockets and starts walking down the street. I follow, waiting for his response.

“I don’t know,” he finally says. “I wouldn’t be surprised. It coulda been his

last hurrah. If all else fails, kill the ones who told him he couldn’t come back. In the end, someone was gonna die. I guess if it had to be him, he wanted to take them down with him.”

“But it could’ve been an isolated incident,” I counter. “He may not have been involved.”

Charlie shrugs. “Who knows. He’s dead now, and we don’t have to worry about it.”

I shake my head. “I don’t know anymore. He certainly did show he was capable.”

Charlie just nods slowly. “It was perfect. No matter what happened, he would win.”

Nothing ever changes—Teddy was a man who would always make sure he won.

“What’re you gonna do now?” He says, changing the subject. He doesn’t look at me when we stop at the corner; instead, he looks down the length of Clark Street.

“I’ll need a new office,” I begin. “Vera can be my secretary. Or my partner, for that matter. She’s already proven to me she’s worthy.”

“You already startin’ plans?”

I scoff at his disbelief. “Well, I’ve done enough private eye work on my own the past couple days. Who’s to say I can’t do it myself?”

He grins, then starts to chuckle.

“What? Don’t ya think I can do it?”

Charlie merely shakes his head. “Gotta be desperate to go talk to a dame for help.”

I glare at him, looking him over with a harsh eye. “You came to a dame, thank you.”

“Exactly. I was desperate.”

“Plenty of desperate men in this town.” I turn to face Charlie, and he takes my hand, linking his fingers with mine.

“Plenty of desperate women, too. You sure you’re gonna be okay? After all this?”

First, Allegra and Grace. Then the fire. Then Teddy.

Who knows if I’m going to be okay?

I look around the street. Mostly cops, some passers-by. Some people looking at the carnage. That was the glory of this town—you never know when you’re going to

find someone’s blood gracing the sidewalks. All I know is that it’s not going to be mine. The only way to do that was to make sure I saw things coming. Had to be on the top of my game. Only one way to do that.

“I’m gonna need some time off,” I finally say. “A lot of time off. And then I’ll be okay.”

Charlie seems to accept my answer.

“What’re ya gonna do?” I ask.

“You need an assistant?” He says, taking off his hat and twirling it in his free hand.

I snatch the fedora from his hand and I place it on my head. The brim sinks low over my eyes. “Oh? Are you asking me for a job?”

“Yeah, yeah. Guess I’m askin’ for a job.” Charlie flicks his fingers under the hat’s brim, and it moves up far enough so I can look up at him. “We work well together, what can I say?”

“Accardi and Callaghan, Private Investigators’. Doesn’t sound too bad,” I give in.

I’m just being hard on him. We would make good partners.

2012

Senior Seminar Final Writing Project

By Lexie Pinkelman

This is a multi-genre short story project that I may assign to my students one day for a creative writing assignment. I would want them to tell me a creative story through the use of different genres. Here is my example.

Announcer:

“Hello ladies and gentlemen! It is now time to present the Homecoming attendants for your 2012-2013 school year and Bangshaw High School!”

“First up, we have Mrs. Catherine Willis. Catherine is the daughter of Mollie and Timothy Willis. She is a member of the Bangshaw Volleyball and track team. Catherine wishes to continue her education after college and go to nursing school to become an RN. She enjoys being with her loud and crazy family and hanging with friends. Please, give a round of applause for Catherine!”

“Walking with Miss Catherine is Adam Bradfert. Adam is the son of Cindy and Marcus Bradfert. He is a member of the Bangshaw basketball and baseball team. Adam wishes to continue his education after graduation in the field of business management where he hopes to run his own restaurant someday. Adam enjoys playing catch with his dad, going to scary

movies, and mowing the lawn. Give your welcome to Adam Bradfert!”

(Clapping in the stands amongst the chattering of the crowd, the band plays as they ride in a silver mustang convertible around the field, eventually parking in front of the crowd)

“Next we have miss Lydia Davis!” Lydia is the daughter of Cheryl and Henry Davis. She is a member of the Bangshaw swimming team and the secretary of Student Council. Lydia plans to continue her career in psychology after graduation to become a sports psychologist. She enjoys going to the lake and reading in her spare time. Everyone welcome, Lydia Davis!”

“Assisting Miss Davis is Mr. Bradley Douglass! Bradley is the son of Stacy and Steven Douglass. He is one of the advanced trumpeters in the Bangshaw marching and concert band. He also participates in Honors Art, Band Club, Photography, and Pep band. Bradley plans to con-

tinue his education by going to college to major in music and fine arts. He enjoys writing his own music, painting, hanging out at the local coffee shop, and having good conversations with his friends. Congratulations to Bradley Douglass!”

(The clapping continues and a loud whistling is heard. The couple does their round around the field and their small jet black BMW convertible pulls up next to the Mustang. Two couples now sit up in their cars in front of the anxious crowd)

“Following, contestant Gwendolyn Ackers! Gwen is the daughter of Jerylin and Anthony Ackers. She is the captain of the cheerleading squad, member of the National Honors Society, and a Spanish Club representative. She has also participated in dance, band, Pep club, Yearbook Staff, and Prom committee. Gwen plans to continue her education at the collegiate level where she wishes to study creative writing and journalism. She enjoys spending her free time reading, writing poetry, hanging

with friends, and spending time with her boyfriend, how cute, Vallen Boone. Please, everyone give a cheer for Gwendolyn Ackers!”

“Lastly, assisting Miss Ackers is Mr. Vallen Boone! Vallen is the son of Peggy and Arnold Boone. Vallen is a member of the Bangshaw football, basketball, baseball, and track team. Vallen plans to continue his education wherever he can get the best football scholarship to. His major is unknown. Vallen enjoys playing sports, eating lots of pizza, and going out on the town with his friends. Everyone, give a cheer for Vallen Boone!”

(The couple is holding hands in the back of their maroon Mazda MX Miata. Once they pull up in front of the crown, Gwen places a kiss on Vallen’s cheek. The crowd claps even harder than before. The band ends their cheery tune.)

“We have such a wonderful group of attendants this year! You have all done an excellent job representing our school. It’s that moment you’ve all been waiting for

ladies and gentlemen! The results are in and it was the closest turnout in Bangshaw High history! Your 2012-2013 homecoming queen this year is...wait for it...Miss Gwendolyn Ackers!”

“And now, for the announcement of your 2012-2013 Homecoming king, the one, the only...What does it say here?...Mr. Vallen Boone!”

(Vallen and Gwen embrace and the crowd goes wild on both ends. They step down from the car and two girls from the cheerleading squad place crowns on both their heads. Gwen’s smile can be seen from the top of the stands perfectly clear; while it is obvious Val is still focused on the game. Gwen turns to kiss Val and realizes he has already hurried off to the locker room, leaving his crown sitting on a nearby bench. Gwen hides his disappointment and continues smile and waving all alone at the crowd.)

My Everything

By Gwendolyn Ackers

You can tell me anything.
We have no secrets between us two.
Like that time you wet the bed
Because booze took over your bowels
I'm listening.
You know I'd hold it; your reputation depends on it.

Your smallest actions excite me.
I love to watch your every movement.
The muscles that flex in your back,
when you pretend to stretch so innocently.
I'm watching.
I bite my lip, knowing those muscles are mine.

You understand me like no one else.
When my parents are fighting
Yelling things they thought I couldn't hear.
every insult burning my insides.
I'm falling.
You hold me close, and I know it is okay.

You and I are very different.
The pen is mine and the ball is yours,
But I know whatever path takes us,
They'll always meet for eternity.
I'm waiting.
Forever is our fate, I know we'll meet endlessly.

Hey hunny ;)

Hey

You had a great game tonight. Sry I cant come out and celebrate. Have to get an A on that anatomy exam Monday :)

Its cool. Figured u wouldnt

U kno why I cant silly. My gpa is very important rite now. The scouts seemed pretty impressed when they wer talking to yur parents @ halftime.

Yeah bc im the man

Haha! oh Val you are so silly.

Ha

Will u txt me l8er 2nite? I want to make sure u get home safe.

Please don't drive drunk again

No I wont need u. I'll be fine. The sheriff is a fan of mine

Ok just b safe please. well I need to hit the books. I'll see you tmr. Cant wait for our movie date. I love you! :)

u 2



From: The Office of Admissions
Email: bgableon@Stanford.edu

Gwendolyn Ackers
5474 Harrison Lake Dr.
Aurora, Illinois 60504

20 December 2013

Dear Ms. Gwendolyn,

Congratulations! I am pleased on behalf of Stanford University to offer you admission to our institution to further your studies in our creative writing program for the next four years.

Your admission to Stanford University has been reviewed by the admissions staff and we are confident in your potential due to your fine scholastic achievements. We also admire your individual qualities and your participation in many extracurricular activities which strongly define the characteristics of Stanford University.

As one of the best universities specializing in creative writing, we are convinced that Stanford University will give you the best educational experience. Our faculty is constantly striving to push writers beyond their expectations and use new techniques to combine real life experiences with learning. Creative writing classes are small and therefore more personal. Our diverse student body and beautiful campus create an inspirational learning environment.

Evaluations are mailed within the few weeks of your acceptance. Please have your final senior year transcripts sent after you complete your current courses so they may be recorded. If you are applying for financial aid, this information will be sent to you shortly for approval.

Your housing and meal plan information is included in this letter. Also, you will find a form that secures your place in our fall 2013 semester. These forms will need to be filled out and mailed back using the “Return Address” envelope. Please do not return these any later than May 1st 2013 for billing purposes.

We hope to see you on campus for one of our Freshman Weekends over this coming summer. You will receive a formal invitation in the mail in the next few days. Once again we would like to congratulate you on your admission and the best of wishes from all of us at Stanford University!

Sincerely,

Sarah Silverstein

Sarah Silverstein
Dean of Admissions
450 Serra Mall
Stanford, CA
94305-000

facebook

Gwendolyn Ackers: Got accepted to Stanford! Bittersweet feeling though. My man will be all the way in Florida!
(23 people like this)

Bobby Valentine: Don't worry Gwen, you will be so busy becoming a famous author you won't have time to worry about Val!

Bridget Moran: You are so smart! I'm jealous.

Sami Williams: I bet Val is so proud! I bet hes taking you somewhere really special to celebrate!

Gwendolyn Ackers: haha no no Sami! He has to focus on football right now. Says that's his top priority!

Lexie Timberlake: What! He cant take one night off for his amazing and beautiful girlfriend! Humph.....

Gwendolyn Ackers: Haha you guys are so funny!

Jami Wagner: Be happy Gwen! You will do so well!

Shanna White: Don't worry Gwen! You guys are perfect for each other! The distance won't even matter.

Ryan Boomer: I'm so happy for you Gwen, you've been working so hard I knew you could do it!

Nancy Ackers: I am so proud of my niece! You will be successful in anything you put your mind to!

Gwendolyn Ackers: Thanks everyone! I know Val and I will be just fine :) I can't wait to move in! <3 <3 <3

HEY!!!

Ya

I got in to Stanford! I really did it!!!!

Congrats

R u happy 4 me?

Ya

Have u heard from FSU yet.....

No. but im sure I will soon

Yeah you played great @ homecoming. I'm sure they can't wait to call you.

I'll get in. no worries.

I kno. We will be so far away :)

Ya tht sux

I think we'll be ok. Don't u?

Sure

Well ok. I'll see you tmr @ school. Meet me by my locker b4 class?

Nah I'll prolly be late.

Lol you dummy. Well don't b 2 late. Lovee youuuuu!!!!

U 2.



From: Office of Admissions and Financial Aid

Email: rkahler7@floridastate.edu

Vallen Boone
210 S Menor St.
Aurora, Illinois 60504
22 December 2013

Dear Vallen,

Congratulations on your acceptance to Florida State University! We are looking forward to your attendance and want to help you achieve greatness in athletics and academics this coming year.

We have reviewed your current academic records and due to your acceptable GPA and excellent athletic ability we are proud to welcome you to the Florida State freshman class of 2013. The FSU staff is pleased to have you represent our school in the classroom and on the football field. We hold high standards for our student athletes and we believe you would be most successful at our institution.

Our institution not only includes an excellent educational experience but a warm and welcoming environment to promote individual growth. Our growing campus also gives you the opportunity to meet many new students and members of the community. There are always events taking place that bring students together to learn and experience new opportunities. Ninety percent of our faculty holds PHD's in their field and will help you in determining what future path you want to follow.

Please send your final high school transcripts to our admissions staff once they are available in the spring. The forms are included in this letter and the return address in which they need to be sent.

Also, you will need to be approved by the NCAA to be eligible for the 2012 football season. You will not need to deal with the financial aid forms on account of your full ride athletic scholarship to FSU.

We encourage you to come to one of our freshman weekends in April due to the fact that you will be on campus because of summer training for the football season. We wish you luck in the rest of your high school classes and would be honored to have you represent our school athletically and academically.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Kahler

Richard A. Kahler
Dean of Students
Florida State University

facebook

Vallen 'SwaglikeMe' Boone: Got accepted to Florida State University! Hell yeah! Their starting quarterback better watch out! I'm coming for his spot!
(48 people like this)

Mary Kolasinski: Congrats Val! I know you will do great!

Peggy Boone: We love you so much hunny and are so proud! No cussing in your Facebook status!

Allison Ainley: Wow Val! Great job! Can't wait to watch you on the big screen!

Chelsea Vondriska: You are so amazing! I want tickets to all the home games!

Jessie Creakbaum: You will look so good in that FSU uniform!

Mason Lang: Dude lets get shit faced 2nite to celebrate! I'll bring the booze!

Meagan Baird: You da man Vallen! Kick some booty!

Aaron Sanders: I take it you won't be studying for that government exam tonight! Haha way to go buddy!

Brian Brockhurst: Dude I got some good green! Lets toke it up my man! Great job!

Melanie Brock: This is so awesome! When are you taking me out to celebrate ;)

Vallen Boone: Thanks everyone! I better see all you at a game or too, and Mel, I will def take you out to celebrate sometime!

Dear Diary,

Last week I was accepted to Stanford University. I am so excited because this has been my dream since I was a little girl. I don't know why diary, but I'm so nervous about Val. He has been so distant from me lately. I am so in love with him but I don't think he feels the same way about me. I mean, I know he cares about me but not as much. Now that we'll be on different sides of the country I don't know how it will work. I want to marry him. If he asked me right now I would say yes, but I know he does not feel the same. I know Val's Facebook password and I got on it the other day. I know I shouldn't be jealous, but all these freshman girls from Florida University are requesting to be his friend. I denied a few of them because I thought they were way prettier

than me. Is that crazy? I don't know why he would want to be friends with all these girls anyways. He doesn't even know them. Well, anyways, we agreed last night that we were going to stay together and see what happens. I know he will be surrounded by beautiful girls all the time but I can't think about that. He didn't seem too enthusiastic about us staying together, but I know he is just so focused on football right now. After all, he plays in the state championships tomorrow! I can't bother him with my silly girl drama. He has so many important things going on. I'm sure after this game he'll turn around. I truly believe he is worth the distance. Wish me luck!

Love,
Gwen

The One

By Gwendolyn Ackers

The one who never calls first.
Even when the night is late
The one who doesn't say it first
Even when the awkward silence persists
The one who is first to leave
When you want him to be the last to stay
The one who is the last to leave the bar
When you want him home early in your arms.

The one who forgets that special day
When you've been planning ahead for weeks.
The one who buys the first card they see
When yours required glue, sparkles and fabric.
The one who goes through the motions
When all you want it to be sincerely touched.
The one whose eyes remain shallow
While you beg him desperately to understand.

The one that never shows up to support you,
Unless you ask him to come
The one who is the first to fall asleep,
When you toss and turn in unhappiness.
The one who never does anything nice
Unless he knows he'll be in trouble
The one who wants to keep his life simple
When all you want, is for him to fight for you.

What do you think about this upcoming season? Do you think you will be a strong force this year in the Big East?

Coach Jimbo Fisher: “Yes I feel like we have got some top recruits coming in this year that will really benefit our program.”

Are there any player in particular that you feel will lead to success?

CJF: “Well we are coming to an end of summer preseason practices and I would have to say our freshman quarterback from Aurora, Illinois is going to be one of our most dangerous assets this year on offense.”

Yes, there has been lots of talk about this new quarterback. Can you elaborate more?

CJF: “Well, Boone is a strong kid. Works hard every day and he doesn’t play like a freshman. He’s not afraid to keep his teammates motivated and even the upperclassmen look up to him. We just gotta’ make sure he shows this same dedication in the classroom.”

A lot of the times, freshman athletes have a hard time adjusting to the fame and pressures of the college lifestyle. How do you think Vallen Boone will be able to handle this new environment?

CJF: “Like I said, he’s a strong kid and he’s confident. I strongly believe he will keep up with his grades if it means keeping him on the field. So far he has proven to be a good team player and he’ll get done what he needs to do.”

We are out of time folks, thank you coach Fisher. We look forward to watching another great season of Florida State football and I’m sure everyone is anxious to witness our new freshman quarterback.

CJF: Thanks Stan, I’m sure he won’t let our fans down!

Hey

What up

u had a great game. We watched u on the tv in our dorm common room

Yeah I played pretty awesome

I wish I cld have been ther.

u never will be

u know why I cant Val. And u kno I wld be ther in a heartbeat if I cld. Y do u have to make this so hard

Y don't u stop writing stupid fruity poetry and just transfer here

I cant and u kno this. I have 2 much homework, and tht poetry contest is soon. My professors think I have a good chance of winning. I wish u wld support me

Y? u don't support me. At least the cheerleaders here do

Y would you say tht

If yur feelings r so hurt y don't u go write a poem about it

Wht is wrong with u??? Football and fame has gone to yur head. I feel like we r drifting farther apart an u don't seem 2 care. Will u just call me l8er so we can tlk?

No im goin out 2nite to celebrate. Wont be home til late

Okay, be careful. I love you

Ya. Nite

Vallen Boone @SupaStarQB11
Wastedddddddddd! Bout to be a good nite #eyecandy

Cody Carr @Ballin4life
@SupaStarQB11 get it boi! Save some of that ass for me when I get there!



Sasha Cortez @SexyLady69
@SupaStarQB11 I know you be talkin about me Val! Don't hurt your eyes too much #prettygirlproblems

Gwendolyn Ackers @GwenPen008
Starting to realize I am not a priority anymore. There are more important things in life. Wish you knew how you make me feel #brokenhearted

Vallen Boone @SupaStarQB11
There are more things to life than books. #getalife

Gwendolyn Ackers @GwenPen008
There is nothing more I can do to make you understand. I was a fool for believing #agirlcandream

Mackenzie Lynn @Kenz4life2
@GwenPen008 Don't worry Gwen! Boys are jerks! Just remember how much you have going for you! #staystrong

Bailie Anderson @BailsTails43
@GwenPen008 You are smart and beautiful! Just remember, football only last for 4 years and then you're out in the real world! #jerkforlife

Vallen Boone @SupaStarQB11
@Kenz4life2 @BailsTails43 #BitchesBeTrippin

Tight Leash

By Gwendolyn Ackers

You don't get it do you?
The things you say
You are blinded by arrogance
You think you're a god
Your words are from scriptures
Your shoes are destructive
You walk all over me without notice

What did I do?
Was I there for you too much?
Was I too forgiving when you were wrong?
Wait, you are always right
And even when I know better,
you blind me from the truth.
Silly me, I forgot, I'm the crazy one.

You're like dating a rock.
You don't need feelings.
Why would you need feelings?
When you can throw a perfect pass?
Why do you care what you say?
When you know I'll always come crawling back.
I can't control it; every damn time.

Hey Gwen. This is Michael. From Dr. Markles creative writ class.

Hey Michael. Wuts up?? Is ther a prob w/ the PowerPoint? I can email it again to ya

No no. Its actually perfect.....I kno this isn't class related, but I was wondering if I cld take u out sometime?

Oh. I dunno. Im going thru a really rough breakup right now. I don't kno if I could handle it.

Ok. I completely understand. Your poem you read in class yesterday was beautiful. I haven't stopped thinking about it.

Awww thanx Michael :) u r too sweet.

Im bein honest. U r a very talented writer.

:) :) :)

facebook

Gwendolyn Ackers went from being “In a Relationship” to “It’s Complicated”

Vallen ‘SwagLikeMe’ Boone went from being “In a Relationship” to “Single”

Hey Michael.

Yeah, wts up?

Wht time r u picking me up?

Lol how abt 8ish? Charlie's Café??

Sounds perfect. C u then!

Revelation

By Gwendolyn Ackers

Something inside me has awakened.
Is this freedom?
The worrying is gone.
Who you're with?
I don't even care.
I actually feel bad for her.

This feeling is foreign.
I can't describe it.
The stomach aches are gone.
Are my tear ducts broken?
Should I be hurting?
For the first time, I don't.

I want to see the world.
I want to write about everything.
I don't want miss an instant.
A strangers laugh.
A distant breath
A blink of an eye.

The world is finally important again.
So much more matters.
The knots have untied
The nervous sweats have drained.
My life is taking a turn
And I'm liking where it's going.

From: Vallen Boone
Subject: Help
Date: October 10th 2013 9:16am
To: Gwendolyn Ackers

Gwen,

I'm sorry for everything I did in the past. I still have your email from when you typed my Comp paper for me and sent it to me last month. You blocked me on twitter, facebook and your cell phone so this is my last resort. I know we haven't talked in a few weeks but I need your help. You have always given me the best advice. I got drawn for a random drug test by the NCAA. I didn't mean to but I was so drunk the other night that I smoked a little pot with a few girls on the cheerleading squad. I am so scared Gwen. What should I do. I don't know who else to talk to.

Love,
Vallen

From: Gwendolyn Ackers
Subject: Re: Help
Date: October 10th 2013 10:47am
To: Vallen Boone

Val,

I had to do what was best for me. Seeing you disrespect me was too much for me to handle. I am too busy working on my poetry collection for the Stanford New Writers Poetry Contest. I am sorry that your pathetic life choices are having such an excellent effect on your life. I guess I will just stick to my books. Good luck!

Gwen

From: Vallen Boone
Subject: Harsh
Date: October 10th 2013 11:01am
To: Gwendolyn Ackers

Gwen,

Okay, I know I deserved that but Gwen please. I can't tell my parents because they will disown me. And I can't tell my teammates because they will be so disappointed in me. I don't know who else to talk to. All the girls here are dumber than sin. Please Gwen. I took advantage of you.

Please help,
Val

From: Gwendolyn Ackers
Subject: Moving On
Date: October 10th 2013 12:52pm
To: Vallen Boone

Vallen,

I've met someone. Someone who appreciates me for who I am. He would not appreciate me talking to you right now. The only advice I can give you is to be honest with you family and teammates. Telling them before will be less harsh if they find out from the coaches. You chose this lifestyle, and I'm glad I got out. Please don't email me anymore, or I'll have to block you from here too.

Have a nice life,
Gwendolyn

It Gets Easier

By Gwendolyn Ackers

I never thought I could do better.
Everyone who didn't matter envied you and I
Our perfectly white smiles were so blinding
Blinding them all from the truth.

"You will make the prettiest babies!"
"You two were made for each other"
"You are perfect and will last forever"
These words sound so stupid now.

With him everything looks new
I know now the words of many are sincere
No more forced smiles among friends
This warm, foreign feeling now comes naturally.

I see him there waiting in the hall
Waiting to ask me about my day and interests
He doesn't do it because I ask him to.
He does it because he cares.

And finally, finally, someone cares.

International Shocker! FSU Loses Star Freshman QB to Failed Drug Test

Florida State fans were shaken early Monday to discover that their star freshman quarterback, Vallen Boone, would not be finishing the season. Boone failed to pass a random drug test set by the NCAA Monday, November 17th. The test showed that there was a high amount of marijuana present in his blood stream.

“All athletes are required to sign a random drug test permission form at the beginning of the season. This is mandatory by the NCAA to allow students to participate at the collegiate level. He knew the rules, and he knew what the consequences would be,” commented head coach Jimbo Fisher.

Boone will be suspended for four games of competition, and since there are only four games left, he ends his first season with FSU early. He is also unable to practice with

the team. During this time, Boone will be missing games against Georgia Tech, Virginia Tech, Texas A&M, and The Ohio State University. This is the meat of their season and will be a strong determiner in whether they will make it to the playoffs.

“This is such a moral tragedy here. The whole campus is talking about it. How could someone be so selfish?” says Miranda Jones, a communications major at FSU and also a member of the varsity cheerleading squad. “He really let everyone down,” she continued.

It is rumored that Boone will be leaving FSU at the end of this semester and returning to his home in Aurora, Illinois. Others are saying he may try to enter the NFL draft next year.

“I don’t know what my future holds for me now. I just hope I can learn from my

mistakes and become a better person in the future. I'm sorry for disappointing my teammates, coaches, family, friends, and fans," said Boone after the Big East Conference interview Tuesday night.

No one knows how Florida State will be able to handle this blow to their offense. It is apparent however, that fans have not given up hope.

"My players have a lot of heart. They will pull through this together. And our fans have been loyal all season. I know they won't desert us now. We are still a force to be reckoned with," ended Coach Fisher.

Florida State University continues play this Saturday at 1:00pm Eastern Standard Time Zone where they will face the Yellow jackets of Georgia Tech.

Talented Freshman Poet Shocks Stanford Staff at Writing Competition!

Stanford faculty members were amazed Monday morning with freshman creative writing major Gwendolyn Ackers and her collection of poems. Ackers is only in her second semester of writing classes and has already finished composing her first collection of poems.

She entered her collection of poems, titled "Time Heals Most Wounds", into the Stanford and Ms. Magazine Fiction/Creative Writing Contest last November. Judges included famous authors John Green who wrote *The Fault in Our Stars*, Gillian Flynn who wrote *Gone Girl*, and Jodi Picoult who wrote many famous bestsellers such as *My Sister's Keeper*, *The Tenth Circle*, *Nineteen Minutes*, and *The Pact*.

The submission were also judged by the Stanford Creative Writing Program staff Dr. Elizabeth Tallent and

Dr. Tobias Wolff who both specialize in Fiction, and Dr. Eavan Boland and Dr. Ken-Fields who both specialized in Poetry.

"We could not have asked for a more professional and accomplished group of judges," stated Eavan Boland, the Director of Stanford University's Creative Writing Program. "Our this writing program and contest has been established for over 50 years, and I must say, this year's submissions were some of the most brilliant works I have ever read. The competition was fierce," she continued, "But nothing could match Ms. Gwendolyn Acker's collection of poems. Simply phenomenal."

Gwendolyn Ackers will receive a five thousand dollar Scholarship for the next three years of her undergraduate term. She is also currently talking to a small publishing

company from southern California, Martin Sisters Publishing Co.

“I can’t believe how lucky I am. It is almost unreal. I could not have done it without the support of my family friends, and of course. The wonderful creative writing staff here at Stanford. They have really taught me to push myself beyond my limits and I have truly become a better writer thanks to them,” stated Ackers after the announcement of the writing competition winners.

When asked where Ackers received her inspiration to write her one hundred and fifty-nine page collection of poems she simply replied: “When you think the world is perfect, and a wave of reality washes over you, you learn to let the past go, learn from it, and become a better person. That wave is what inspired me to write, and I’m thankful for it.”

The Stanford University Creative Writing staff has high hopes for Ms. Ackers in the near future. She is currently working on her second collection of poems titled “Dreams

Carry You On”. Ackers ended her victory speech Monday with the following quote: “My advice to beginning writers is to not let the hardships keep you in the dark, instead, share them to benefit others. Everyone goes through hardships, and people like to relate to your honest feelings, thank you.”

Ackers plans to graduate 2015 with a Bachelor’s degree in Creative Writing. She then plans to continue her education at Iowa State’s highly reputable MFA program. We can plan on seeing more of Ackers’ works for many years to come and wish her best of luck!

It Gets Easier

By Gwendolyn Ackers

I never thought I could do better.
Everyone who didn't matter envied you and I
Our perfectly white smiles were so blinding
Blinding them all from the truth.

"You will make the prettiest babies!"
"You two were made for each other"
"You are perfect and will last forever"
These words sound so stupid now.

With him everything looks new
I know now the words of many are sincere
No more forced smiles among friends
This warm, foreign feeling now comes naturally.

I see him there waiting in the hall
Waiting to ask me about my day and interests
He doesn't do it because I ask him to.
He does it because he cares.

And finally, finally, someone cares.



**A Molotov Cocktail of
Linguistics**

by Laura Van Valkenburgh

In the last five years, I've written quite a bit of poetry, but I started to realize I tend to have a similar voice in almost all of my pieces. I wanted to attempt a different style and voice while approaching topics that are new to me.

Since I have a fondness for music as well, I thought I would try to imitate the style and topic choices of some of my favorite bands. For this project, I ended up choosing seventeen bands: Radiohead, Garbage, blink-182, Flogging Molly, Barenaked Ladies, Baroness, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Simple Plan, Pink Floyd, Evanescence, Third Eye Blind, The Who, Sum 41, Green Day, System of a Down, Say Anything, and Modest Mouse.

At first I was really unsure how to approach these poems. I didn't want them to seem like "inside jokes" that only people who loved the bands would understand. I wanted them to be stand-alone pieces that would just be strongly influenced by the bands. With that in mind, I researched each of the bands through hours of listening to music, reading lyrics, reading oth-

ers' interpretations of lyrics, and reading some information about the band members. In addition, I decided I wanted a direct link to the bands as well, so the first one to three lines of each of my poems come from a song by each band. The names of each song the lines come from are listed at the bottom of every poem in this collection. I tried to link those lines to the ones following them – the ones that came from my interpretation of every band's voice and style.

I jotted down notes in my notebook to keep in mind when I began writing the poems. I wrote down my list of bands, and after each band I wrote some ideas of topics and themes for the poems I'd construct. I ended up abandoning two of the bands I originally intended writing through (Avenged Sevenfold and Jimmy Eat World) and replaced one of them with the band Baroness. Therefore, I had no notes about Baroness; the process of writing that poem was somewhat different from the others. I listened to a few of Baroness's songs (namely "Eula," "Steel that Sleeps that

Eye,” and “Cocainium”) and just got a feeling for what I wanted to say. For the remainder of the bands, I had written down at least one or two ideas, and those descriptions can be found on each poem. The works cited at the end of this collection can either be used for your reference to find the original lyrics – or to create a soundtrack while reading these poems.

Though each of these poems has its basis in the style and themes of each of the bands I chose, I’m sure some of my personal voice comes through. Of course, that’s the beauty of music and lyrics. They can all be interpreted differently depending on the person. I’m also sure these poems can stand on their own – a person doesn’t have to know in depth the bands that are behind the poems. Each poem can be understood in its entirety and has a message that a reader may either relate to or enjoy discovering.

Table of Contents

1. Elastic
2. Imperfections
3. The Perfect Girl
4. Lager Blood
5. Not Worth It
6. Saline Solution
7. Lonesome Recovery
8. High School Lament
9. Celestial Bodies
10. Egg-Cracked Skull
11. Self-Destruction
12. It's All the Same
13. Elitists
14. Portrait of an American
Man
15. Out of Body, Out of Mind
16. The Affair
17. Speak
18. Works Cited

Elastic

She lives with a broken man -
a cracked polystyrene man.
He sits next to her,
reminding her she doesn't work hard enough.
Though she's averted her eyes for so long,
she turns to look at him.
He's so far away -
he's down the hall,
he's in another room,
he's in a dream.

His voice bubbles
and cracks
while he scolds her,
as if he's yelling underwater.
All she can hear is the bass beat of his voice
throbbing her ear drums.

He looks into her eyes,
pebbles of his polymer
falling into her lap.
But she can't see him, only through him -
she's looking through his clear sheen
like his body has become Saran wrap.

She sits, and her legs
feel locked with concrete.
She would step toward him,
but he's right there.
She would step away,
but he's already so far back
on the horizon.

He's breathing Styrofoam pellets
into her air –
she inhales them into her lungs,
filling those cavities with urethane
as he melts into
a puddle of petrochemicals
on the floor.

The first two lines of this poem are taken from "Fake Plastic Trees" by Radiohead. Radiohead music often has a sort of disillusionment – a disconnect usually due to drugs or society. I combined that idea with their tendency to write about loneliness and recreated a particular situation I liked in their song "Fake Plastic Trees." I really desired to flesh out the idea about this cracked, polystyrene man.

Imperfections

I'm no Barbie doll –
I'm not 5'9"
and I don't weigh 110 pounds.
I'm not blonde,
and I don't have size DD boobs.
I don't excel at every occupation,
I can't afford seventy dresses,
I don't have flawless skin
as scars line my wrists and stomach,
and I don't think math is hard.

None of that means
I can't see through your shit –
your condescending attitude
about my desire both to dance
and shoot guns,
your declarations
that I'm the only girl you've ever loved,
and your dislike for my belching.
These personality scars
have been imprinted on me
for so long.

I'll allow you to open the door,
to pull out my chair for me,
and to send me flowers.
I won't allow you
to keep me in the kitchen,
to keep me out of school,
to hold me back
from my singing career.

You can take me for my scars,
but you can't take my scars away from me.

The first two lines of this poem are taken from "Why Do You Love Me" by Garbage. Garbage seemed quite different, to me, from most of the bands I chose in that the lead singer is female (though Evanescence's lead singer is, too) and addresses issues that are considered more feminine. With that in mind, I decided to take the "Barbie" line and continue that metaphor. I wanted to explore the issue of feeling inadequate due to media expectations.

The Perfect Girl

My love life was getting so bland -
there are only so many ways
I can make love with my hand.
So I decided to go to a party
and find that brunette with the sun-kissed tan.

My friends and I walked there
knowing we couldn't drive back.
I hit a few bongos
and had a few shots
before I noticed her short shorts
and tank top.

She was jamming on an air guitar
sometimes taking a swig of her beer
when I asked her if she wanted to hang.

She said, "Let's play Super Nintendo,"
so I thought I'd kick her ass at Mario Kart.
Instead she called me a noob
and said a your mom joke
while she passed me up every time
in the game.

Then she prank called
all her friends
leaving me to rot on the couch.
I called her over to make her mine
but soon saw she was too busy
making out with her girlfriend.

Morpheus

The first three lines of this poem are taken from "M+Ms" by blink-182. blink-182 wasn't incredibly difficult to figure out; a common theme I found in their lyrics was "adolescent aimlessness," as well as broken hearts and just being a kid. I incorporated some of the humor they tend to use in their lyrics while still trying to address the aimlessness.

Lager Blood

Your empty glass is but a tear-filled eye –
you need another to cheer you up.
You may be a glutton
but I'm lusting after your indulgence.

You're the first rebel
to walk into these pub doors
and probably the last
to exit them
like when you left me
dying on the floor.

I admired you like a goddess,
a queen – you stabbed a dagger into my heart,
you cruel mistress,
but it still lies in a prison cell
where you tease it with your sultry stare.
It bleeds lager blood for you,
pooling on the ground.

You stepped over the puddle,
saying, "Drown yourself!"
like you're the Celtic Sea from my days as a sailor,
holding me down under your waves.

The first line of this poem is taken from "The Kilburn High Road" by Flogging Molly. I found Flogging Molly to be a particularly difficult foundation for a poem. Their Irish influence always comes into play with their music, and they typically write about drunkenness, politics, love, and death. I incorporated some of these ideas into the poem, also referencing the sea, as they have some songs about pirates.

Not Worth It

I like vanilla 'cause it's the finest of the flavors.
Sometimes it's good to have a fallback
because the danger of Ben & Jerry's Schweddy Balls
is just not worth it.

I like blankets 'cause they keep me warm
and they're simple,
unlike Snuggies. I'm not fashion-forward,
but this fad is just not worth it.

I like curly hair 'cause that Rachel haircut
is getting old – I've seen enough Friends
to know that watching all the episodes
is just not worth it.

I like you because you're the finest,
you keep me warm, you're simple,
you have curly hair, and you don't get old.
Everyone else just isn't worth it.

The first line of this poem was taken from "One Week" by Barenaked Ladies. It is hard, in general, to pinpoint a specific topic they tend to write about. I scribbled in my notes that they reference pop culture (their hit "One Week" comes to mind, here, too) and address nonconformity. I fashioned those ideas into a love poem of sorts, as they often compose quirky love songs.

Saline Solution

I can't forget the taste of my own tongue.
I wake up with the flavor of my dreams,
the smell of your voice permeating
my every pore.

You ran away to the shore,
through the ocean waves.
Your legs dripped with salty disdain
which has now landed upon my mouth.

My lips are cracked with the blood
I hear pouring from my mind
to my rusty-tasting ironic words
that slice you open.

When you emerge on the other side
of the ocean
you'll split down the middle –
parted like the Red Sea
you dared to cross without a weapon,
your sodiumized limbs
disintegrating into the water.

The first line of this poem is taken from the song "Eula" by Baroness. As I mentioned in the introduction, I listened to their songs "Eula," "Cocainium," and "Steel that Sleeps the Eye," then incorporated what I felt from those into a new poem. I'd explain it as an "in the zone" moment.

Lonesome Recovery

Sometimes I feel like my only friend.
One left me through overdose on heroin,
and some are still using,
leaving me to walk past the Higgins Building
on Main Street alone.

Others have left to the Midwest
to marry their wives
and have their kids
and have their jobs at the realty agency.

I continue to stroll down Main Street,
nodding at the clouds
as if they're waving at me
the way my friends used to do
when they'd spot me
walking down the road,
looking at the sun hidden behind the clouds.

I climb the hills with my mind
as I see them disappear in my rearview mirror –
the way my friends' minds
have floated out with the smoke
from their lungs.

The first line of this poem is taken from "Under the Bridge" by Red Hot Chili Peppers. For the Red Hot Chili Peppers, I noticed themes with suicide, drugs, love, anguish, and poverty. I tried to address a smattering of these topics in a poem about a recovering user. I'd researched that Anthony Kiedis, the lead singer (and songwriter) of RHCP went through a period of recovery while Flea and John Frusciante (other members of the band) continued to smoke marijuana, leaving Kiedis to feel left out.

High School Lament

I'm just a kid
and life is a nightmare.
I walk into the school
and realize no one here
even waves at me
or stops by to say "hi" at my locker.

None of them understand what it's like
to wake up to a father who doesn't appreciate
that I'm in a band
or to listen to a mother
who isn't grateful for my 2.34 GPA.

None of them understand what it's like
to have a best friend who stole
the brunette with the gap-tooth who sits behind me
in chemistry, even though I said I liked her first.

None of them understand what it's like
to fall off their skateboards a few times
on the way to school and skin their knees,
the blood pouring out like my tears
when I go home and hide in my bed.

Some day in the future,
after I graduate from this place,
I'm going to move to the West Coast
and never see any of them again.

The first two lines of this poem are taken from "I'm Just a Kid" by Simple Plan. Simple Plan was the band, in my opinion, with the least amount of skill when writing lyrics, which may be why it seems that this poem is the weakest in this collection. Generally, this band addresses adolescence and the inability to live up to expectations as an adolescent.

Celestial Bodies

You run and you run
to catch up with the sun, but it's sinking.
You chase the golden rays
knowing the moon will reflect them soon.

The moon rays aren't real light,
but they're close enough.
They're not as strong as the sunshine,
and they're wrinkled –
tired eyes that have seen too much.

They've seen the wise men
carrying gifts.
They've let men walk
on them, through them,
with them –
they've been ignored
as everyone sleeps,
waiting for the return of Helios.

You still run
thinking you're just like the sun –
hot and so bright,
but you're the moon –
ignored and warm
only through the face
of someone who's never touched you.

The first two lines of this poem are taken from "Time" by Pink Floyd. Pink Floyd covers a myriad of topics in their lyrics. They address huge issues like life and death, time, empathy, illusion, truth, and absence. Often, their lyrics are much less "down to earth" as contemporary bands, which made this poem slightly more difficult to write. I attempted to form an image from the abstract concepts presented.

Egg-Cracked Skull

Save me from the nothing
I've become.
I can't sleep –
the moon is so bright,
and it's staring through my windows
upon my face.

I rest my head
upon my pillow
only because it's too heavy
with the thoughts of your death –

slow and bloody.
Your face smashed into the ground
like a plum fallen from a tree.
Your eyes dripped crimson tears
onto the cold cement
beneath your black Cadillac.
Your skull cracked,
the flat bones flaked through your skin
like the shell of an egg.

I ran away,
mist trailing behind me
in the fog that enveloped
your corpse.

I can no longer run from you
since the man in the moon
is now your face
that never turns away.

Morpheus

The first two lines of this poem are taken from "Bring Me to Life" by Evanescence. Evanescence seemed particularly "gothic" to me, with some rather visceral imagery. I incorporated death and imagery relating to it into my poem. One of their songs, "Hello," is said to reference the death of someone close to lead singer Amy Lee, so I took that, initially, as inspiration.

Self-Destruction

I want you to love me
like you did before you knew me,
when you were doing lines
from your trailer's kitchen table
using a dollar bill
from your job at the gentleman's club,

when you were selling heroin
to pay for the abortion
you needed after sleeping
with the man who left you for Jack Daniels.

I want you to love me
like you did before I knew you,
when I was using my Springer
on any available skin,

when I was sleeping
on a bench, using *The Tribune*
as a blanket.

I want you to love me
as if you never knew me.

The first two lines of this poem are taken from "Darkness" by Third Eye Blind. Third Eye Blind is a band whose lyrics I've always looked up to in terms of literary abilities. They frequently reference drugs, sex, violence in the media, and failed relationships. I combined some of these to form a poem that is much like their song "Slow Motion," which shows the violence and drug abuse often found in urban life.

It's All the Same

The world looks just the same
and history ain't changed.
Though we've got our cell phones
and e-mail now,
we have the same conversations
we had forty years ago.

We talked about the Man,
tying us to our chairs in school,
locking us into our minimum wage jobs,
taking our cash,
using his pretty words
so we'd overlook these issues.

We're still allowing Noah
to park his ark in our lakes,
Adam to sit naked in our garden
talking to the snakes and eating
our forbidden fruit,
still allowing Moses
to part our Red Sea.

I still play my guitar
and write to an audience
that wants to hear the thoughts
they agree with
instead of the politics
of those who were never them.

The first two lines of this poem are taken from "Won't Get Fooled Again" by The Who. With The Who, I'd written in my notes, "rebellion, politics." I tried to capture some of the things the Who would say about the American government.

Elitists

We're the elite of just all right.
We walked to school
because we didn't get our licenses –
we couldn't afford cars, anyway.

We smoked our cigarettes outside
after school, but the teachers
still wanted to hit us with rules
or make us clap erasers.
They didn't need clean chalkboards, anyway.

We hung out at Hairy Bob's Skate Park
instead of the diner,
falling on our knees, our elbows,
sometimes our heads.
We didn't need helmets, anyway.

We walked from our shambled houses
with the crumbling stairs
and stained carpets
to our jobs at the Tara Inn.
The customers with their Prada purses
didn't need us to clean the dishes, anyway.

We never went to college.
We kept working at the Inn
because we still didn't have cars –
we couldn't afford education, anyway.

We didn't need it, anyway.

Morpheus

The first line of this poem is taken from "Underclass Hero" by Sum 41. The notes I wrote for Sum 41 read, "class struggle, being a kid." I ended up using both of those ideas in my poem, adding some politics. The seventh line originally contained "rules" as a typo, as I'd intended it to be "rulers." I realized how much better I liked the typo than the word it was supposed to be.

Portrait of an American Man

I'm not growing up –
I'm just burning out.
I'm sit around watching MTV –
it frames my life –
but there are no fucking music videos
on it anymore –
not even pictures
of your average mainstream rockstar.

I'm on the Ramen diet
because it's the only way
I can afford a one-bedroom apartment
and Marlboro
with my job at Wendy's.

I'm smoking with Mary Jane
even when I'm by myself,
but also with friends –
or anyone, really.

I'm waiting for you to call,
but I can't tell what day it is anymore –
you may have forgotten weeks ago.

But I guess that's okay.
You'll forget this snapshot, anyway,
if you keep watching that MTV bullshit
with me.

The first two lines of this poem are taken from "Burnout" by Green Day. Green Day is somewhat of a political band, often referencing anarchy, nonconformity, and the overall ignorance of Americans. I tried to show, through their eyes, the class struggle of many Americans and how we tend to ignore the lower-class people.

Out of Body, Out of Mind

I had an out-of-body experience
the other day. Her name was Jesus.
She told me not to watch
the kids killing each other
every fucking day.

She asked me
why we hold the hands
of children in the classroom,
then push them with M16s
into battle
while the rest sit at home and complain
about the heathens running through our country?

She played the commercials
we have for spas, memory
foam mattresses, Ferretti yachts, cognac,
and Aspen ski resorts.
Yeshuah then ended this mindfuck
with a question: why do we tell our homicidal kids
to stop being materialistic?

The first two lines of this poem are taken from "Suite-Pee" by System of a Down. For this band, I jotted down "anarchy, drug abuse, politics, sex, Dadaism." The final poem didn't contain drug abuse, sex, or Dadaism, but these were just ideas to get me going. I settled on their use of politics in their lyrics.

The Affair

In stealth, I check a thesaurus –
it's become my guilty mistress.
Roget's gives me a reason
not to concentrate
when my head wants me
to force out the words on my own.

That thesaurus is the only book
I crack open, and it's only
so I can finish the songs I used to be able
to write with no trouble.

I'm cheating on my brain
with the words I used to know.
All I do now is speak in favor of Zoloft
and protest the Tax Act of 1937.

I tell my mind
the book and I are just friends,
but the truth is it holds my hand
and I stare into its scripture eyes
every night.

I hope one day
to stop hugging that book,
so my psyche quits accusing me
of infidelity.

The first two lines of this poem are taken from "Try to Remember, Forget" by Say Anything. Say Anything's list was a bit extensive: "mental illness, addiction, self-deprecation, literary sense of humor, pop culture, hypocrisy, anarchy." For this poem, I mostly ended up including addiction (Max Bemis, lead singer of Say Anything, sometimes refers to his losing brain cells through use of drugs), self-deprecation, and hypocrisy.

Speak

Language is the liquid that we're all dissolved in.
It's a badly mixed drink.
We swim around in each other's words,
but some are potent like vodka
while others aren't strong enough,
like the orange juice swirled in.

Some words could catch on fire
and start a revolution –
a Molotov cocktail of linguistics.
Other words induce vomiting
that spring from a hangover.

Words make more and less sense to me
on days when I fire it up so much
to the point I can't get off the couch.
Everyone says twice as many words to me
but I only hear half of them -
the verbs are so loud as they churn the air.
The words are no longer words
but symbols.
My attention turns to the sound
of my heavy breathing and I wish
the world were silent.

The only truly intelligent people
are the dumb and the drunk.

The first line of this poem is taken from "Blame it on the Tetons" by Modest Mouse. I've always admired Modest Mouse's lyrics, so I attempted to recreate some of the fascinating ideas they address. I love the starting line of the poem, and I really wanted to continue with that idea. When I wrote "fire it up" in this piece, in the thirteenth line, I was not only referencing their song "Fire It Up" but also the colloquial meaning of smoking marijuana, which they also reference in their music.

Works Cited

- Armstrong, Billie Joe. "Burnout." Dookie. CD. Reprise Records. 1994.
- Baizley, John, Peter Adams, and Allen Blickle. "Eula." Yellow & Green. CD. Relapse Records. 2012.
- Bemis, Max. "Try to Remember, Forget." Menorah/Majora. EP. Say Anything. 2002.
- Bouvier, Pierre. "I'm Just a Kid." No Pads, No Helmets... Just Balls. CD. Lava Records. 2002.
- Brock, Isaac. "Blame it on the Tetons." Good News for People Who Love Bad News. CD. Epic Records. 2004.
- Garbage. "Why Do You Love Me." Why Do You Love Me. CD. A&E Records. 2005.
- Hoppus, Mark and Tom DeLonge. "M+Ms." Cheshire Cat. Cassette. Cargo Music. 1994.
- Jenkins, Stephan and Kevin Cadogan. "Darkness." Blue. CD. Elektra Records. 1999.
- Kiedis, Anthony. "Under the Bridge." Blood Sugar Sex Magik. CD. Warner Brothers Records. 1992.
- King, David. "The Kilburn High Road." Drunken Lullabies. CD. SideOneDummy Records. 2002.
- Lee, Amy, Ben Moody, and David Hodges. "Bring Me to Life." Fallen. CD. Wind-up Records. 2003.

- Robertson, Ed. "One Week." Stunt. CD. Reprise Records. 1998.
- Tankian, Serj. "Suite-Pee." System of a Down. CD. American Recordings. 1998.
- Townshend, Pete. "Won't Get Fooled Again." Who's Next. CD. MCA Records. 1971.
- Waters, Roger. "Time." The Dark Side of the Moon. CD. Harvest Records. 1974.
- Whibley, Deryck. "Underclass Hero." Underclass Hero. CD. Island Records. 2007.
- Yorke, Thom. "Fake Plastic Trees." The Bends. CD. Parlophone. 1995.