

Forum

Volume XIX

Forum

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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Writing is not only an essential part of communication, but an art form. In this edition, our writers take care to express their stories with style, taking the experience of reading far beyond the perceptual. This year's eclectic mix reaches out to those emotions one may experience every day, or once in a lifetime. Whether subtle or strong, these senses are our doorway to the world.

This collection reflects the diversity of affairs during the college years that can change the way we see the world. Writing at such an influential time allows us to reflect on the past while still looking to the future. As the first edition of *Forum* under Loyola University Maryland, our college community is moving forward with an exciting spring in its step.

Thank you to the entire *Forum* staff for their commitment and patience. A special thank you to Siobhan Watson, Editor-in-Chief of this year's *Garland*, for her valuable expertise and pleasant company.

Sincerely,

Laura Nieman

Editor-in-Chief

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types...So concept becomes fashion is about stance, pose, and attitude; and attitude is where the creation of the mannequin begins." They are meant to mimic live figures: babies, children, young adults, over-weight, buff, pregnant, elderly, petite, abstract, extremely tall, and I have recently come across dog mannequins. The particular mannequins I work with have no legs. However, no matter what shape or size, each possesses a human-esque aura, and they have even been said to provide a sense of security: potential thieves feel as if they are being watched, even if the only eyes in the room are a set of plastic painted pupils.

At the start of the 1700's, French fashion artists would sketch two-dimensional drawings of clothing and transpose them onto a miniature, three-dimensional model. Designers wanted their fashions to be "representative displays rather than merely relying on verbal or two-dimensional expressions." Cloth would be draped to torsos on poles, and presented in international art exhibits, beginning with The Great Exhibition of 1851 in London. These shows would act as modern-day fashion catalogues and magazines, providing the public with a glance at growing fashion trends.

The Industrial Revolution would introduce machinery to further catalyze the high demand of mannequins and fashion. Smithsonian Magazine claims that "the manufacture of large, steel-framed, plate-glass windows, the invention of the sewing machine, the electrification of cities—cleared the way for the arrival of the full-figured life-size mannequin." Window displays would substitute for these art exhibitions in 1910, where passerby could admire clothing from the street and be lured in by the mysterious, seductive atmosphere created by mannequins.

A window allows one to look in, but teases the passerby, making them believe what they see is real. Like a magician who customizes his magic tricks with smoke and

mannequins in 1885 were made from expensive wax; although they were costly, stores made high profit from their sales.

According to my manager I am not allowed to sell the clothing off the forms; instead I must inform customers that the garments have been "torn, scrunched, ripped, sprayed, and tacked." Naive to the retail industry, I thought the clothing projected by the mannequins was the way it was sold to customers on the shelves. My first day on the job, I was assigned to remove the scarves around the mannequin's necks and place them in a box in the back room. As I reached up to untie the delicately knotted, fringed scarf, I pricked my finger on a nest of pins attaching it in place.

Finding little success at my first attempt, I proceeded with caution. After unraveling the scarf, I laid it in a box. It sat there in a helpless, shameful heap. *Who would buy such a... thing?* I thought to myself. Off the mannequin, it could have served as a tablecloth, despite the fact it had been bombarded by millions of tiny pins and a pair of angry scissors. It became apparent that mannequins fool their customers into buying items by making garments seem more glamorous than they really are.

Although they are hard plastic,

lacking emotion or warmth, the mannequins appear so seductive and alluring that they literally attract passersby. On October 20, 2006, Ronald Dotson broke into a store windowv98 77.76 319.74 Tm0 g0.0025 Tc-0.0011 Tw[(bu14 mn0.98 3

under the same common illusion in which passerby are lured into stores? As it turns out, each mannequin gets to venture into the real world as a human for thirty days. As real people, each mannequin is alluring, but hides an unfathomable secret.

The secret lies within the deft hands of the employee. Pulling strings, I am a master puppeteer. My energy, my life, my sense of style, is reflected in the demeanor of the mannequin. For this reason, they even look like me. Spraying the five-foot tall form today, wearing the same outfit as the mannequin, I couldn't help noticing that it draped around me just as it did around her. As I stood at the door beside it, a man did a double-take and stumbled upon these words: "Goodness, I thought you were a mannequin until you moved!" Propping it up on a stool, or cocking its head to a side, I become aware that these dolls are cold to the touch, hard

try to resemble mannequins with their plastic surgery, fashion, and loss of identity through time.

As the clock strikes midnight every night, I slowly close the door behind me, and gaze back into those store windows to make sure everything is in its proper place. Heads cocked slightly to the side,

entrancing stares so alluring, mannequins are so incomprehensible and nauseating at the same time. Whether they lack the warmth of a human touch, a breath of air, or the beat of a heart, still these dolls embody one factor human-beings chase throughout their lifetime: perfection.

Schneider, Sara K. Vital Mummies: Performance Design for the Show-Window

Mannequin, Yale University Press: 1995.

E. Quinn (co-worker personal communication, November 8th, 2008)

www.redorbit.com/news/oddities

www.fashionwindows.com/mannequin_history

www.tv.com/the-twilight-zone/theafterhours

blogs.kansascity.com/photos

You saw her first in the subway, up against a wall. She had red, full lips. Golden hair. Bright blue eyes. One glance and you had to have her. After that, you began to see her everywhere. She was in the mall and in the movie theatre, even on the bus. You weren't the only man looking at her and you wouldn't be the last, but it didn't matter. You wanted her. It wasn't only that—you *had* to have her. And then came the age-old question: how do you go about bringing a Calvin Klein advertisement home to Ma and Pop?

According to noted psychologist David Buss, advertisers "exploit the universal appeal of beautiful, youthful women" (64). But why are women used in advertising products for men?

Allow me to reflect upon advertising more fully. In advertisements aimed at

young people (up to mid-teens) there is a visible gender divide; products aimed at boys tend to be associated with boys and vice versa. If you want to sell a baseball bat to a 10-year-old boy, chances are you won't find a little girl hitting that home run in the commercial. Nor would you find a half-naked lady pitching to another scantily-clad woman (using the advertised baseball bat), because such an image would not be nearly as enticing to a 10-year-old boy as seeing the Los Angeles Dodgers' Manny Ramirez doing the same. As the advertiser's audience ages, their audiences' preferences grow with them; there's something significantly different in what appeals to children and adults.

Advertisers, realizing this, waste no time in helping to teach children at a young age what is considered 'traditional' in terms of behavior and gender roles (Kolbaba and Noland). In this way, advertisements appeal to children by giving them cues: how they are supposed to think, how they are supposed to act, what they are supposed to want. In actuality, there is no reason that boys must play with baseball bats and girls must play with Barbies; however, advertising is specifically designed to target traditional gender stereotypes in order to better sell products. A general target audience would be, logically, much less effective in advertising than a specific one, thus the separation between boys and girls.

But adults, well, they already know who rightfully wears the lipstick and who plays major league baseball. They need none of these petty cues and they should no longer look to advertisements for a sense of direction. So, you might inquire, how do advertisements grab the attention of a fully grown adult?

Sex.

Sorry, did I wake you up?

Sexual information grabs attention.

As author Tom Reichert assesses, "We can't help that our eyes and ears are drawn to [sex]

because emotional information has a way of piercing our perceptual fields by rising above other environmental information trying to get our attention". The same author, along with partner Jacqueline Lambiase, also did a fair amount of research and recorded their findings in a chapter of Linda Scott and Rajeey Batra's book, Persuasive Imagery: 73% of sexual ads in magazines contained a "sex-related brand benefit" (245, 263). Typically, a sex-related brand benefit means that advertisers are telling their audience that if you buy whatever they're selling - not only will you look good, but people will want to have sex with you. Your love life will be changed for the better... but even if it isn't, advertisers think positively: hey, at least still feel appealing, even if our product doesn't get you laid.

Victoria's Secret did not grow

Adriana Lima, a Brazilian model best known as (debatably) the most smoking hot of the Victoria's Secret Angels, spokesmodel for Maybelline cosmetics, seems particularly... well-fed. Caught up in the middle of the hustle and bustle of advertising, you would think a woman of 28, lusted after by boys and men of all ages, adheres to all the rules and influences of advertising. But in an interview with GQ magazine, Lima has refuted any rumors that she has had changed her morals because of her work and insists, " [the men I date] have to respect that this is my choice [to be a virgin until after marriage]. If there's no respect, that means they don't want me."

Here's the real (not-so-secret) secret Victoria isn't telling you: we have power over our influences. Repeat these two ideas in your head for a moment:

We choose.

We decide.

You can allow yourself to be fooled by advertising, by the air-brushed skin and the enticing sparkle in her eye that may or may not actually exist— but you can choose not to. You can look at your own mother, your own father, your friends and your family, and see how perfect they truly are within their flaws. Their shortcomings

make them human, make them real, make them endearing, charming, lovable. Any blemishes are what makes them yours. Your dad may not be flexing his biceps on a *Guess* ad as big as your house in the middle of New York City, but he knows how to fix the toilet when it's clogged, he taught you how to play baseball, he cooks a mean pancake, he helped your mother raise you, and he has more substance than a piece of paper in a magazine; because of this, you begin to realize that his nose hair isn't so repulsive after all.

A few weeks later, it happened again.

You saw her first in the subway.

She had blonde hair. Blue eyes. Pink lips. Freckles splattered across the bridge of her nose. She was a pretty little thing. Her cardigan was buttoned modestly. Her jeans looked a size too big, maybe her sister's hand-me-downs. (There was a possibility she had a sister.) A few men had glanced at her as she walked across the platform. It wouldn't be the last time she caught someone's attention but it was clear that she didn't notice that sort of thing. She seemed preoccupied, and she carried a small book-bag with a Platonic text visibly showing through the latch. You thought about striking up a conversation, maybe asking her name, her

thoughts on Plato's theory of recollection.
In truth, all of these things are secondary to
the most important which had already been

established: you *could* take her home to mom
and dad, it was only a matter of persuasion.

Buss, David. The Evolution of Desire: Strategies of Human Mating.
New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1995.

Kolbaba, Carolyn and Veronica Noland. "Children, Adolescents, and Advertising: The
Effects of Advertising on Children and Adolescents" Official Journal of the American
Academy of Pediatrics 118.6 (6 Dec. 2006): 16 Nov. 2008
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/118/6/2563>>

Reichert, Tom. The Erotic History of Advertising. Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2003.

Reichert, Tom. "Does Sex in Advertising Work?" sexinadvertising.com. 30 Nov. 2008

Euphoria and Health

Tom Schneider

*I mean, we're really making a quantum change in our relationship
to the plant world with genetic modification.*

- Michael Pollan

In "The Omnivores Dilemma" by Michael Pollan, the author explores the world by gathering unexpected information from industrial and organic farms as well as from sustainable agricultural regions that have been genetically manipulating a food source. Within this industrial manipulation of our food, not only is the life of vegetation and livestock in danger, but our lives are as well. In short, "We are what we eat" and should approach such a situation with a strong embrace of consciousness. Throughout his dissertation, Pollan uncovers our "schizophrenic food culture" ¹ and labels our current lifestyles as unhealthy. However, there are natural sources of vegetation that, despite today's current scale of technological empowerment, remain more beneficial than medicine itself. The tea leaf, a Chinese discovery and

delicacy, is so healthy to the human body that even Michael Pollan would consume it with the utmost acquiescence.

Tea has exerted a powerful influence on societies and cultures throughout the world for the last 4,500 years. Discovered deep within the Chinese borders, tea was a mystical fabrication of earth's soil and nutrients that were formed from the leaves and buds of the *Camellia sinensis* plant. At first, its taste required a hard tongue, but its soothing feeling was too compelling to resist. The Chinese had originally called tea "Kia", which refers to its aromatic essence and responsiveness to the human taste buds. Legend be told, tea was first discovered by the Chinese Emperor Shan Nong in 2737 B.C. At a time when boiling water was a fascination, Shan Nong found a few strange tea leaves in his majestic garden and

threw them into boiling water. The rich and alluring aroma sparked a new discovery of delectability. This beverage was enjoyed solely by the fashionable upper class due to the chic stature tea had acquired. Tea eventually arrived in Europe during the seventeenth century and became a significant establishment in connecting the east and the west.

Eventually this new brew of deliciousness made its way into America in the eighteenth century where it not only became a desirable drink but founded a suspicion in those around it. The most famous occurrence of this divine influence was given the name "The Boston Tea Party" during a time when a group of settlers boarded an English ship anchored in the Boston Harbor and threw hundreds of crates over board. This retaliation to England's empowerment stirred an American war for Independence. The twentieth century brought a new meaning of tea as tea crops began to spread throughout the world. An increase in the consumption of tea was a stringent effect of western travelers moving east and a "rise in the popularity of the back-to-nature trend and an aspiration to lead a

fifth cup I am purified. The sixth cup calls me to the realms of the immortals."

-Lu Tung, "Tea-Drinking"

Recent studies have shown that tea leaves contain an adequate amount of polyphenols, a type of antioxidant, that contribute to keeping the bloodstream free of radical bacterium that exist in the human body. In addition, the phenols found in tea prevent an "oxidization of the cholesterol, which may cause damage to the blood vessels (General Medicine, Wellsphere)" as well as lower the risk of cancer, arteriosclerosis and liver infections. Tea also strengthens "cognitive abilities and assists with weight loss." In retrospect, what more could Pollan ever ask for in a food? Tea is even famous for its calming effect caused by the L-Thiamine amino acids that affect the central nervous system, "causing certain substances to be released which cause a sense of euphoria, optimism, and serenity while neutralizing the vigor that accompanies the consumption of caffeine in tea" ⁴. Pollan would even agree that tea itself is not just healthy but medicinal as well. What makes me even

conceivably every type of tea ever made.

After these elongated steps, the black tea
tastes extraordinarily sweet and refreshing—

natural follicles.

Red tea is truly the best, because when dried, the tea leaves turn a red-brown providing the reason as to why the plant gets

4th Grade

Maria Manalac

7:45 AM—9:00 AM: Science

Question:

How does separation from home affect the life of a nine-year old girl?

Background Research:

The girl is born and raised in the Philippines. The humidity and heat, tropical thunderstorms, and cool breezes in December mold her year after year. She spends her days running with other children, basking in the prickling heat of the sun, as they pretend to be in a war over a banana tree fortress. She takes pride in the gashes on her knees and scratches on her arms; she calls them her battle scars. On the warm rainy days of summer, she splashes on the puddles and runs throughout the neighborhood. Her taste pallet consists of smooth sweetness of papaya right from her backyard and the sometimes sour slices of mango and quenching coconut juice from her family's

plantation.

She is the baby of fourteen—the family includes her one (1) grandmother, one (1) mother, one (1) sister, two (2) living uncles, three (3) aunts, and six (6) cousins. She lives with her grandmother, mother, and sister; her house is surrounded by three other houses where the others live so that from above, all their houses seem like the four corners of a square.

When she is a toddler, she is always embraced with different sets of arms. When she enters school and struggles with her cursive, all she has to do is knock on the other doors that are literally a few steps away from hers. She always makes sure that she does her homework right away so after dinner, she can join everyone else when they all gather somewhere in the middle of the square to trade stories and pretend to know how to sing. This is her definition of family: wide yet warm with its closeness. This

definition is what she grows up with.

Hypothesis:

If a nine-year old girl is separated from all she knows, then she will come to despise what, who, and why she is taken away. She will most likely not adapt quickly to her new environment.

Procedures:

On July 1998, the girl's mother will tell her and her sister that they might live somewhere else. The girl will not believe her, of course. They are all where they are supposed to be.

On June 3, 1999, the girl will feel betrayed, but mostly heartbroken. Her whole family will all go to the airport, but only eleven (11) of them will come back. The girl, her mother, and her sister will board a plane headed to this other place that she already knows she will hate.

The girl will cry the entire eighteen (18) hours on the plane. Her mother will try to calm her by telling her to look outside the window so she can see snow, something she has never seen before, on the mountains below them. The girl will continue to wage her storm, and the mother will keep pleading with her so that her father—she has a

father?—will not see her like that when they finally land.

Results and Conclusion: Not yet determined.

9:01 AM—10:15 AM: Social Studies

Until she was nine, the girl knew her father the way someone might know Ferdinand Magellan or Christopher Columbus. She can say his birthday is on September 21st, he grew up in a province five hours away from where she grew up, he left the Philippines in 1983, and married her mother in 1985; someone can say that Magellan was the first one to circumnavigate the Earth and Christopher Columbus "discovered" America. But she cannot say what his habits and pet peeves are, what his favorite food is or how he likes his coffee; she doubts anyone would know if Magellan preferred cured ham over seasoned sausage.

The first time she remembers seeing him is from a photo album, as if she is reading about him and there is a portrait of him in-between the text. "He's your father," the mother said, pointing to the man in a suit with glasses shielding eyes just as round as hers. The girl believed her for the moment, but only because her mother said so. The mother also reassured, "He's been coming

home to us every two years since your sister was born," but for some reason the girl can only recall two moments in her nine-year history when he was present. She has the vague memory of the entire family plus the father going to an amusement park where he fastened her seat belt on the carousel. The other time was when she went into her

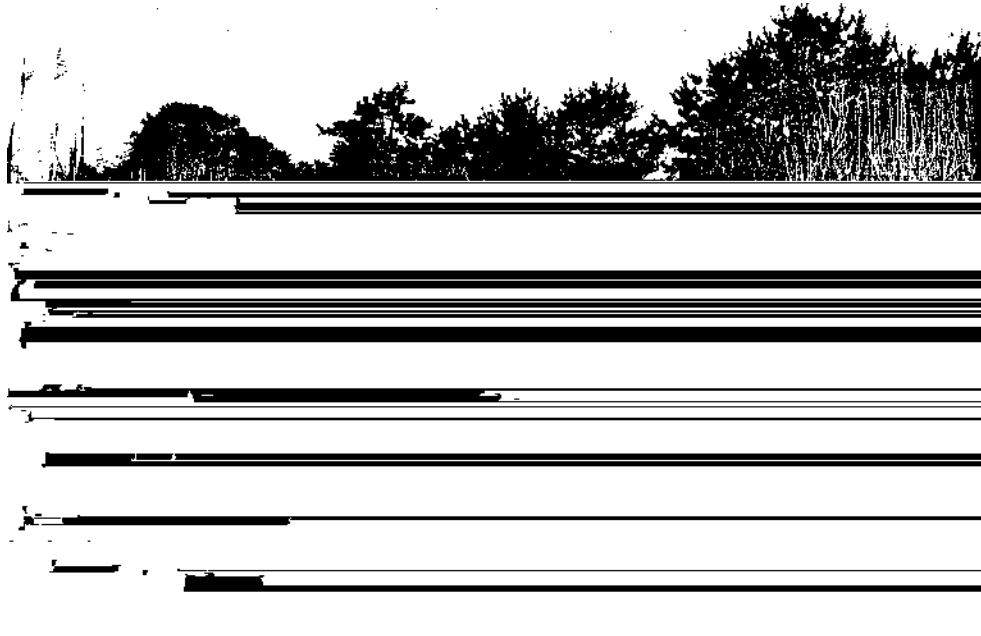
click click of footsteps , and a *squeak* as she

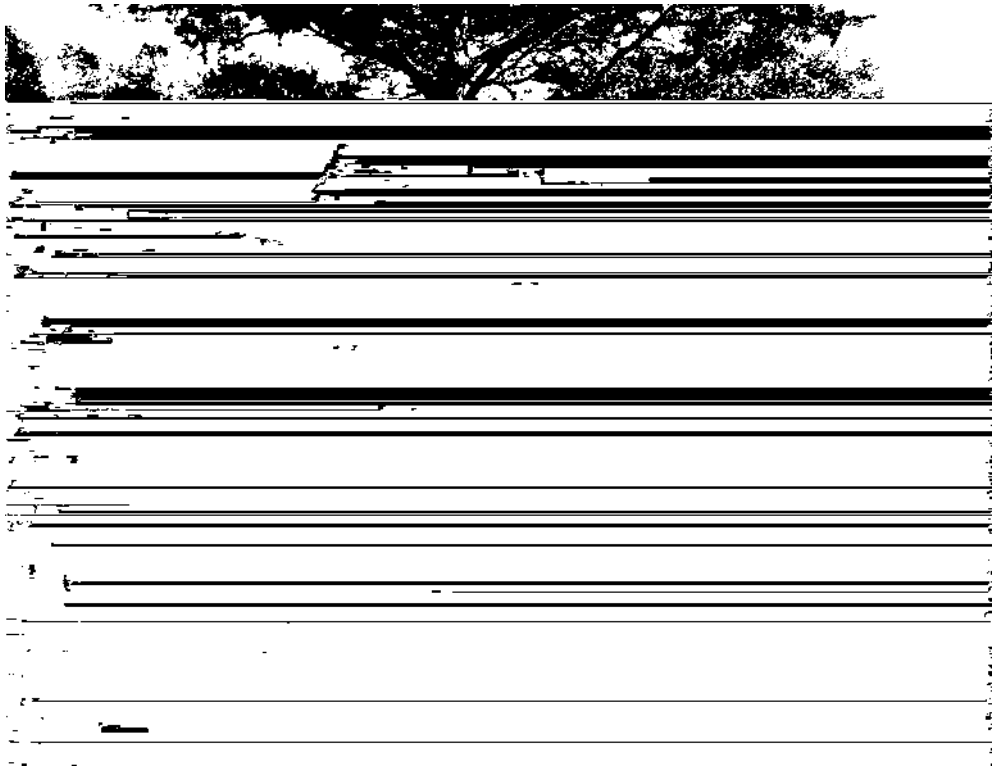
classes," her father says to her, "and your math is good."

The girl laughs silently inside. Math has never been her favorite subject, but she can add and subtract like no other. For example, fourteen minus three is eleven. But add one to that three equals four. It's a whole, even number.

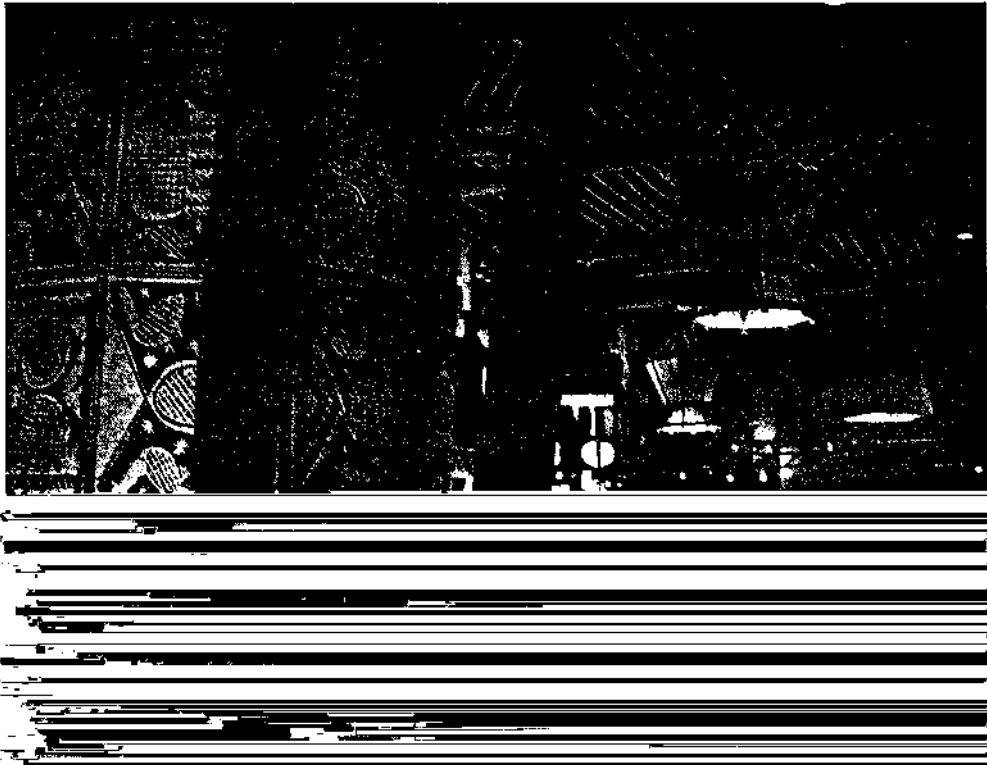
Her father has just signed her up

Michelle Cowan

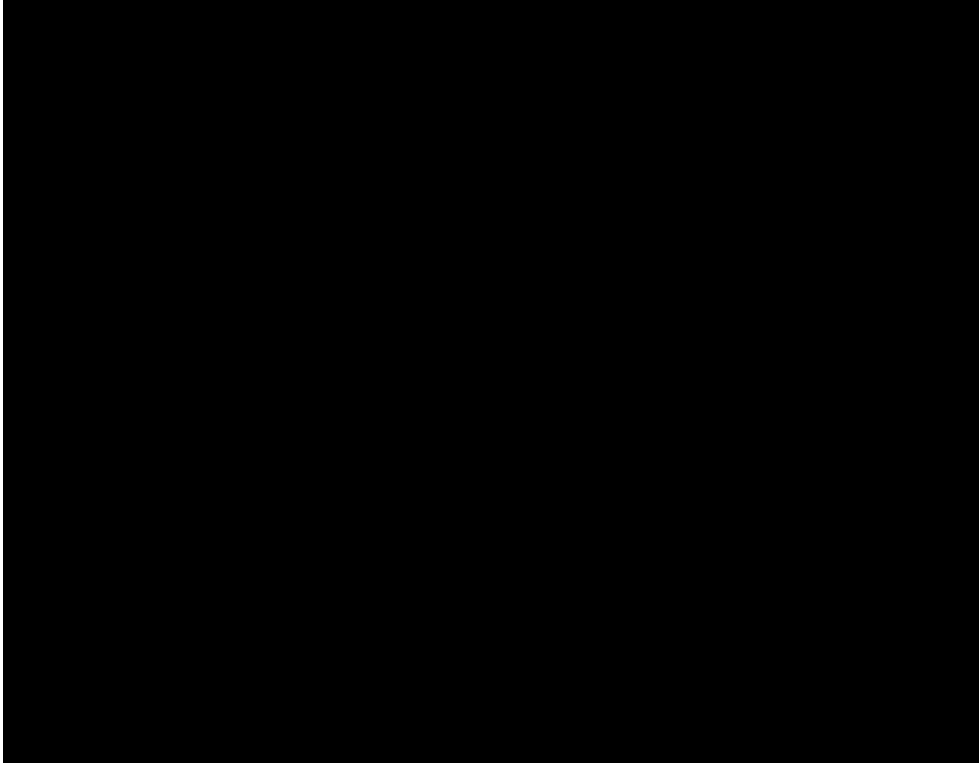


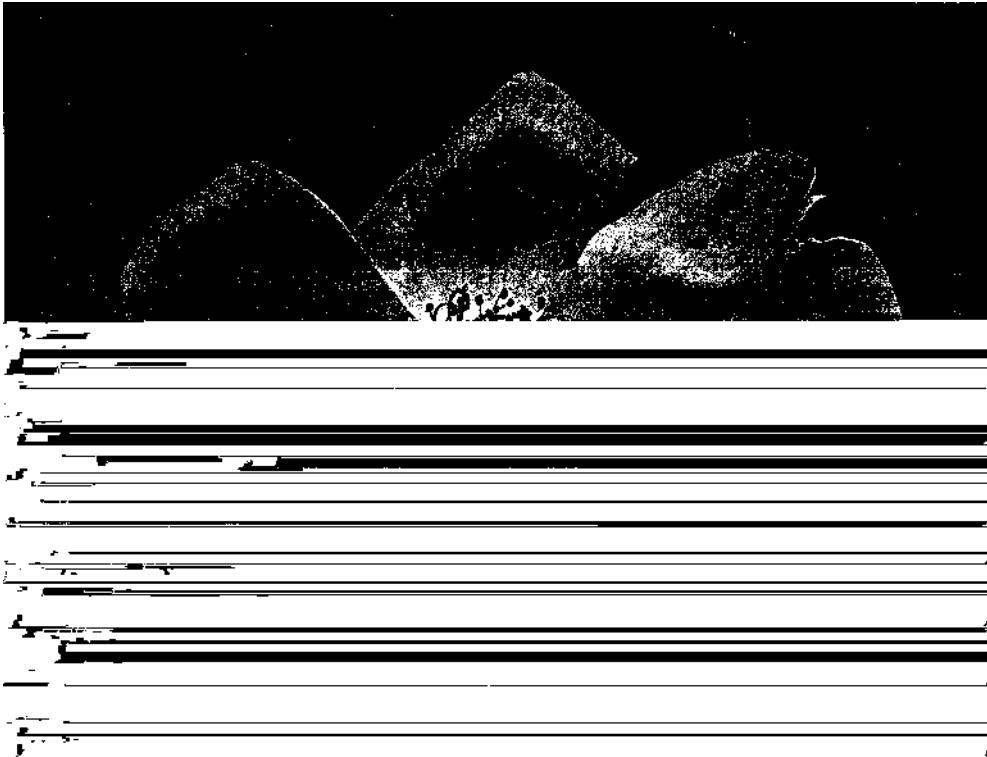






Megan Toth







Profile of a Friend

Elizabeth Smolyn

Four in the morning and the phone was ringing. I knew who it was.

"I couldn't sleep." The other end murmured.

"I figured," I mused.

We sat in silence for two more hours. I watched the sunrise against my blinds and finally heard the deep breaths of someone in slumber through the phone receiver.

"Good Morning, Boo," I whisper and then I put down the phone.

Christmas lights shone through the snowy paneled windows of apartments as I walked down quaint Main Street High Bridge County, the cold winter air stinging my lungs as it entered and coming out a thick gaseous fog. The street was mainly quiet besides the customers coming in and out of a bar a few feet in front of me. There was such little traffic going down this road that I was walking in the middle without hazard. Some Main Street.

As I passed the bar, the few people outside smoking and conversing stopped and greeted me without pretense. The bar they were standing in front, named The Byrnes, on any given night was made up of ninety-nine percent regulars, all products of this quaint section of Jersey; they were born there, were living and working there and will eventually die there in their grown children's houses who will undoubtedly repeat the cycle. As I had walked past them I couldn't help but smile, as every night in order to get from my car to my boyfriend's, now ex-boyfriend's, apartment I had passed them. I guess in some strange way I thought as I climbed the ancient stairs that led to the comfortable two bed apartment that I frequented so often, I could consider myself a regular, too.

the best places to escape to if indeed there was ever a zombie attack. The consensus at this point in time sounded like the roof of a house. He turned around as the door closed, and smiled "Hey, Boo".

of this he will never be the same after that; but no one could really blame him. And so instead of sleeping he wrote.

He likes writing rhymes. He loves hip-hop, rock, really anything with a beat. Every time we talked he had found a new artist that he loved. Right now it was some unknown in the hip-hop world. He liked him because he talked about walking on the moon, a topic that strayed away from the usual sex and drug content of the average rapper; a nice break from the world. In all that time he couldn't sleep he listened to music and wrote his thoughts and his feelings and his mind on the paper. The serenades of Roger Waters, Jim Morrison, Nasir bin Olu Dara Jones, all different generations were the only contact he needed at those times. Sitting in his room with his mind blurred after straight days of no sleep, he tried to make sense of it on paper. He made sense of his world, and those he had never seen, and those he hopes to see. There were passages about his sister, and ex-girlfriends, and girls that were just friends, and anything else you can imagine. He had his journals lined up next to his bed, every shape and size. You can write a lot if you never sleep.

Cayne got up and kissed me on

the cheek, but not before taking my coat and telling me that I looked beautiful. The best way to describe his mannerism towards all women is that of a southern gentleman with the same amount of tattoos one would expect an inmate to flaunt. He offered me a drink and then sat down and lit two cigarettes, one for me and one for him, exhaling in a manner reminiscent of an early cinema secret agent, despite the fact that he wore a bandana around his unkempt hair and his full-of-holes Marine Corps sweatpants he still looked notably handsome. His Armani mixed with the scent of the

before.

"I would rather be dirt poor and come home to house with a woman I know loves me and healthy children that I can hold, then have all the money in the world." He took the last drag of the cigarette and crushed it into a bottle still sitting out from the previous night.

"People who have tons of money but go home to an empty house, or to someone who they don't know if their love is real or superficial don't lead real lives

Lets go away. I think you and I should move, somewhere; anywhere. We could just move state to state, working any job, new faces, new everything as often as we want. Just for a few years. Just you and me. Anywhere you want, or we could stay here babe. It's up to you."

He had been born in Jersey. The government moved him to Florida for

training. Then California. Texas, West Virginia, and Florida. Then they threw him over to Iraq. When he came back he went to South Carolina to recover. But he found his way back to Jersey. He said he was meant to be in Jersey because I was there. He was there to be with me, and now that he was restless for the warm weather again he wanted me to come with him.

But we were in cold December

Permanence

what I'm talking about, "she snapped and her

air. "Your brother... " my father mediated.

I grasped my best friend's hand

wrapping me in a blanket of comfort. I
was stepping out of my comfort zone and
marking it with the permanence of ink and
needle.

Two Birds

David Hallman

The conquest of the earth, which means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it much.

-Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness

Sometimes being a fan of a bad team has its benefits. 12 losing seasons in a row means you can count on two things every September: the chase for 100 losses and \$1 tickets. This is life as an Orioles fan.

The Mid-Atlantic Sports Network (MASN) Bargain seats began as a promotion in 2008. Since the late-season collapse in August, the O's and MASN (both owned by Peter Angelos) have teamed up the past two years to offer \$1 seats in hopes of filling up a stadium known for downright embarrassing attendance.

Like any rational human being would do, I bought 60 tickets. Four tickets to 15 games in September. One dollar each. After years of driving almost an hour anytime I wanted to see a game at \$10 a pop, this was a dream come true. I was finally

living in Baltimore, my roommate Eddie was just as big of an O's fan as I was, and we were in a dorm full of people who had no friends and no idea what to do on weekends. Obviously we'd find two girls to take to every game. Or at least that's what he and I thought.

you fie dolla fo em."

"You don't want these, man. These are the \$1 seats. No one's gonna want to buy these. Save your money. You can't make a profit when the person sees where they are."

"C'mon, boy, I gih you fie dolla fo em, c'mon."

"Look, these are *bad* tickets. They're way out in right field. They were \$1 each. No one is going to buy these from you. I don't want to take your money," I said, turning my attention back to the hot dog. I was about 10 steps away when the rage of Achilles entered my body.

"It's cause I'm black, huh?"

I swung around, "What? *Are you serious?* Take the tickets. Take them for free. I don't want them. They are awful seats."

"Naw, I don wan em. I don wan no ticket from no racist. You jus lie erbody else in dis city."

"Look, take them. For *free*. They're all yours," I said, throwing them into the air. The hot dog was bad.

I tried my best to enjoy the game, but I found myself falling into mental debates inning after inning. "I have black friends. Plenty of them. He was going to lose money. He probably didn't even end up selling them," I'd say to myself probably

twenty times before I went to sleep that night.

I saw the same scalper at every game I went to in the 2009 season. "Buyin'... sellin'...eh-body got extra tickets?" I wanted to say something, but I doubted that he would have any recollection of the event. When the \$1 ticket promotion returned in September, I didn't buy a single one.

The fact that the season had gone even worse than the one before had no effect on my decision. 100 wins, 100 losses - I'll go to as many games either way. When the offseason rolls around every year, I turn to the Internet for company with fellow hopelessly deluded fans.

I read and post information on the Baltimore Sun's message board under the username birdman21. I chose the name for two reasons: both of Baltimore's major sports teams are birds, and, at the time, both had elite players wearing the number 21. For me, it's a silly pseudonym for my equally silly obsession; for the real Birdman, it's a way of life.

On January 23, 2010, the O's hosted their annual fan fest. My brother and I went

paid me \$75 in cash to cover his half.

I usually never carry cash, so when my brother paid me back in all crisp, green bills, I thought I'd take advantage of my roommate's offer to go in on a pizza together. Usually it's "I'll just pay for the whole pizza, give me a few beers this weekend," or, "I'll pay for it this time, you pay for it next time." But tonight I actually had some cash to make it even.

On January 24, 2010, I drove to Pizza Mart, zip code 21212. As I sat waiting for the pizza to make its way through the oven on its conveyor belt, I heard the jingle of the bell on the door behind me. "Who else is going to be ordering a pizza at midnight on a Sunday night?" I said to myself. I wasn't too far off.

"How's you doon tonigh, mane?"

"I'm doin' well, man. How about yourself?"

"Bah, mane. Real bah." He said, shaking his head as he descended into the chair next to me. "You see, I just heard back from ma docta, man. Ain gooh, man."

"Why? What happened?"

"I got AIDS, mane. I got AIDS and I'm uhready diabetic," he said after a pause. "I don't know wuh ta do, mane."

He was a tall, black man. Eyes

pointing in different directions, bloodshot red. Tattered jacket on top of tattered jacket. He smelled like shit.

"Well, shit, I'm real sorry to hear that. What are you gonna do about it? You're gonna fight, right?"

"I just don know how, mane. I ain got no money, no jawb. My back uhready all fucked up. My fee, too, mane. I pull em out en show you, but dey all orange and shit. I don wan scare you or nuttin."

great.

"Oh yeah, that weather's so nice down there. I go to South Carolina a lot, you ever been there?"

"Naw, man. Just Jawjuh. I be livin' in Atlanta faw a bit fore I come back to Bawlmer."

"So you're originally from around here?"

"Yeah, I jus go down there sometimes. You live here?"

"Of course."

"You go to church?"

"Of course. Every Sunday. I was just there this morning."

"Aw, no way, man. Which church?"

"The cathedral over on Charles. Been Catholic my whole life and I love it. What church you go to?" This was my first lie. I have been to church twice in the past two years. I have probably committed enough sins since I was confirmed five years ago to no longer even be considered a member of the church.

"Das good, mane. Look, I be prayn bout dis erday, but I need more help. You think you can spare me some cash?"

The pizza was being boxed up.

"You want a slice of my pizza? It's fresh out of the oven."

"Naw, man. Dis pizza got too much saws on it, hurt mah stomach wit all my prolums."

"Well, how about I buy you something else. They got sandwiches. They got chicken."

"Naw, man. I prolly gon go up the street to this place, they got a salad I yewjly get. I just need a few dollahs, mane."

"I wanna help you out, Birdman, but I don't have much money. I don't have a job right now, this pizza's the only thing I've been able to eat all day. I gotta pay some bills tomorrow, too. I'm just living on my savings right now." This was my second lie. I work five days a week for a law firm. I have my own office. I get paid \$15 an hour. I have almost \$4,000 in the bank.

"Look, mane, I unastan, but I really need ya help."

I got up to grab the pizza, and, in the process, whipped my wallet up with my back to him so that I could grab the two \$ 1 bills without him seeing the other \$70. With box in hand and wallet in pocket, I whipped around, extending the \$2. "This is all I got. This was my only change from the pizza. It's all yours."

"Aw, thank you, Dave. Thank you, man."

"No problem, Birdman. You just gotta promise me you'll fight. You gotta promise you won't let your health get you down," I responded as I walked outside.

"Oh, I will, I will. You wan know why dey call me Birdman?"

"Sure, why not?"

He closed his eyes, sticking a finger on each hand into each side of his mouth. After a moment of silence, his eyes bulged open, and he began to chirp. I mean it - he sounded like a real-life bird.

"Wow, how'd you learn to do that?" I asked after about a minute of awkwardly staring at this spectacle of man turned bird.

"Iss a giff, man. Gawd gave it ta me. Lemme bless you now."

What ensued was even stranger. Hands over me, he lowered his voice into a monotone moan, some words held out longer than others as they formed his chant. The only line I remember is, "Jeeeeeeesus, coooooooooome into Nazareth, bleeeeeest be his name." After a few minutes of being on

the receiving end of this tribal experience, he made his second approach.

"Now, Dave. I know you done help me uhready, but I need ya help, man. Can you please gih me some more money?"

"I told you, Birdman, that's all I have. I really wish I could help you, but I can't," I said as I turned to walk to my car that I had just spent \$10,000 on six months ago, with an additional \$1,000 going towards car insurance every year.

"I'll remember you, Birdman. You gotta fight," I said as I shut my car door and drove back to school (\$34,000 per year).

When I got back to my apartment (\$9,000 per year), I shared my experience with my roommate. "Dude, you don't know Birdman? Everybody knows Birdman. He probably doesn't have AIDS, he probably isn't diabetic, he's always on York Road, not Georgia. He does that to everyone."

I wasn't the only liar. But I was the only one without a good reason to do so.

I'm Not Nervous

Marie Gause

Don't take this personally, but I don't want to shake hands.

Really—it's not you. It's me. I'm aware that this abrupt breach of social decorum may create the impression of a neurotic, obsessive-compulsive hypochondriac who equates the unfamiliar human palm to a caustic cesspool of infectious disease.

"Well, we gave it our best shot," my dad said, giving me an enviably dry pat on the shoulder. The issue was put out of my parents' minds, destined to ruminate in oblivion with other petty concerns of yore. And I've sweated it out ever since.

In one memorable recent foray as an office assistant, I was assigned the deceptively simple task of putting up flyers with masking tape. To those afflicted with hyperhidrosis, the sticky side of this tape is impossible to distinguish from the non-sticky side; our fingers render them each equally non-sticky upon contact. By the time the poor, unassuming stretch of tape is done being molested by my clammy enemies of adherent materials, it has been robbed of most of its stick and the appropriateness of its designation as tape. In my experience, the resulting drenched strips can sufficiently keep a piece of paper on a wall for anywhere from several precarious hours to a few fleeting minutes. While this may not be enough time for the information on the flyers to be trapped in the minds of many passersby, it affords the perpetrator time to flee the scene of the crime. To me, the major goal of putting up flyers was the same as my governing life mantra: to avoid being caught wet handed.

"We really must get better masking tape. Half the flyers have already come down from the walls," declared my boss, mercifully failing to link this fact to the memory of the extra-moist handshake I'd given him upon our introduction. "You just put them

I have tried taking my mind off the unpleasant aspects of my condition by inventing advantages: the magical ability to spell out full sentences on poolside cement before getting in the pool, or neatly avoiding the foul taste of envelope glue by sealing the deal with naturally blessed manual dampness. In the most dramatic scenario, I envision myself rescuing a helpless goldfish shriveling on hot pavement, safely nestling its parched gills in the restorative wetness of my sweat-drenched palm.

But I am always jolted back to reality. My palms do not restore. They kill. Small pieces of technology quake in fear as I reach for them. (A helpful Apple Store Genius pointed out my implicit responsibility for the watery death of my last iPod, oblivious to the blow to my self-esteem this information caused.) If I were working with information systems technology, I'd have my hands insured under the Americans with

Disabilities Act—this is how caustic they are. Being under pressure only makes it worse. I blame hyperhidrosis at least in part for the no-mans-land that was my high school love life. How am I supposed to look effortlessly cool when my body demands I give the universal impression of nervousness?

Someday, I will find someone to shake hands with who will genuinely want to shake mine back. Upon my initial precautionary warning that my hand is not one he will want to shake, he will coyly raise his eyebrow and say, "Please. I insist." He will be a man who, with the exception of his secret fetish for hand sweatiness, is completely sane and ordinary in every respect. In the unrelenting pressure of his

Fluidity and Foundation

Christian Rees

"Thou in thy narrow banks art pent: The stream I love unbounded goes Through flood and sea and firmament; Through light, through life, it forward flows."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Does anyone know which one of these sentences would show us the longest waterfall?" Dr. Dobler stood at the head of the classroom, looking out over our clustered desks. We all turned in our chairs, the free modifier worksheet clutched in our hands. Twenty pairs of eyes flicked down, then up, in rapid succession, scanning the sheets, scrambling for some sort of answer. And our professor stood before us, the tutor to our tyro, her steel grey hair shining under the fluorescent bulbs. Our beaded sweat sparkled on our foreheads.

My eyes flicked from sentence to sentence, falling from the period that stapled each one closed to the same opening word "the" and back across, trying to decide. I glanced back up, letting my eyes slip into focus, tearing away in mid-sentence.

"Let's take a look at Christian's." She turned to the board, reading as she wrote my words in white chalk. Was it admiration in her voice? Chastisement? No, it was neither, it was a thing more fluid than that, more ambiguous. A changing thing, like a tide shifting back and forth between multifaceted possibilities, just stroking the edge of each.

"The word 'fell' seems to cut off the sentence, and we can imagine the waterfall dropping off," she sketched a knot of squiggly lines running parallel beneath my sentence, then dropped them off drawing vertically downward. "Christian's sentence seems to fall off and cascade down a line of rocks, drawing it out," Dr. Dobler drew a series of quick and ragged bumps, as if my stream had fallen onto the rocks she saw in her mind. "The sentence does work, but

where would *you* improve it?" Silence once again. We shifted in our chairs, rooted in an awkward silence. "Listen to it again, "The water fell, a thunderous cascade of

equilibrium. The constant breaking and re-bonding of the hydrogen and oxygen happens at a steady rate, so steady that it stays at a constant state of reaction. It outputs exactly as much as it inputs, throwing off its single oxygen and simultaneously catching another and forging a new connection. This, continuously happening all around us, in us. This flow of change is perpetually matched with solid states of bonding.

We have spent centuries searching for the laws of nature, the principles that hold us in place. Philosophers, scientists, writers, artists, politicians, have all delved deeply into what we see around us to find that foundation. The chemists have their table, the physicists the laws of motion. Writers cling to grammar and style, artists to motifs and themes. Politicians give us natural rights, the social contract and philosophers question, build a theoretical foundation, and tear it down again. People of every calling have their bases. And we as a species set up parameters and explanations for everything.

But there are those who seek actively to break through the foundation; quantum physicists, Dadaists, poets. We take what we have been taught, and we tear it down, and we interrogate it, and we deny it, and we

embrace it.

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Galileo said we must quantify the world around us and no longer think of it in relation to me or you, but as an objective entity. He cemented the world together with math. Water is no longer the wellspring of life, it is dihydrogen monoxide. To exist is to be quantified, and to be unquantifiable is to be non-existent. In that numbered world there is no room for abstractions, like love and justice. Creativity cannot function because a thing is what it is, water is a liquid, and therefore cannot have solid traits, unless it is ice. Color is nothing but light, sound is nothing but waves, and passion a chemical reaction. The world is a colorless place, no sound or scent, it is nothing but matter and motion, atoms interacting in a void. To pigeonhole us as quantities and realities is to strip us of our creativity.

*Hydrogen (H), nonmetal, group 1, period 1, block s, a colorless gas, atomic weight 1.00794(7) g. mol<sup>-1</sup>, atomic number 1.*

*Oxygen (O), nonmetal, chalcogen, group 16, period 2, block p, atomic weight 15.9994(3) g. mol<sup>-1</sup>, atomic number 8.*

When you think of hydrogen you no longer see balloons, or zeppelins, the

Hindenburg exploding, a great fireball  
descending to the earth, flaming canvas  
and girders, a fallen angel, the harbinger of

a river.

Life is a phase-shifter, but it always returns to its roots. You can take anything no matter how different it seems, no matter what contradictions you find, and trace it infinitely deeper and deeper until you strike its core. And when you brush away the dirt you'll find water, fluidity in the foundation. Nothing is static in this world of ours, things change, as the cliché goes, but it goes farther than that. Our roots are what hold us down, bind us to the world, but they flow according to how we move.

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I sit here and it is cloudy. In tattered lines, the clouds hang above the college, above Baltimore, above the earth, white and vaporous. Swollen with water they sit, fat balloons of water droplets, waiting for the pressure to change, the temperature to drop, for that water to liquidize and fall. Perfect baubles shaped by wind and gravity as they fall to the earth. Rounded tips, tapering to thin tails as they plummet. Maybe they'll crystallize and become the final part of the trinity, gas, liquid, solid; or maybe they will strike the concrete and shatter, throwing shards of water half an inch in each

direction. A multitude of fallen gems, molten on the ground, pools of fluid beauty.

Writing is rooted in order. Objects, subjects, nouns, verbs, adjectives, predicates, gerunds, free modifiers, all cluster together to amalgamate and form what we call "writing." Prose and verse isn't just a knot of recurring themes and proper descriptions, it is a flowing thing that drips from the finger tips, along the pen, onto the page. Each drop blurs the lines between foundation and creativity, mixing them into a swirling pool, multifaceted eyes on the page that stare into us as we stare into them. Writing *is*. Just as Descartes *was*, and I *am*, and you *are*. It is as true as nature, as disordered as science, and as dynamic as water, as solid as we make it. Writing is the universal solvent of emotion, taking on all kinds; it is a dynamic equilibrium phase-shifting constantly from letters, to phrases, to paragraphs, to pages, then to blankness, and back again. Writing is a tide and is fluidity. A waterfall of liquid sapphires and contradictions.

Our teachers reveal the foundations. But it is up to us to tap into our own fluidity. To flow freely, and shift from balance to balance, makes us. To be bonded and unbound simultaneously allows us to tap into the "must haves" and the "could be's."

And when we are water we can be liquid, and solid, and gaseous, and move from one to the other, never static.

The sun is going down behind me through the window, casting bright shadows on the clouds above. Tendrils of light stretch up and the sun flares as it dips behind the trees. Perfect drops of rain splinter as they

strike the panes, leaving threads of moisture to spiderweb across the glass. It falls faster, the world growing dark, and the rain falls in grainy sheets. A flash of sun illuminates the shimmering sheets of water, a wall falling from the sky. It looks impenetrable from indoors, is pervious to ones who run through it, and gives the world a misty glow.

Browns Have Fallen with Reds & Yellows

Jerard Fagerberg

Fall in New England was too reminiscent of winter. The cold bit with unrelenting bitterness at the gaps between our mittens and sleeves and the leaves fell to pepper our lawn where crystalline flakes would someday join. Our house was set back in the woods about a hundred and fifty yards, framed with aging oaks and stoic pines wedged deep in the earth. In September, they molted like snakes. They shed their brown, yellow and red scales and adopted the skinless look of dormancy. While they slept, waiting for new and green skin to boil from underneath, we raked. We gathered their lazy sheddings into piles, transforming our one-and-a-half acre lot into an uneven game of Chinese Checkers.

under fences until it was almost all inside. The wet leaves stuck to our palms, their stems tickling the web of skin between our fingers with revolting annoyance. I grimaced and plucked them off as if they were leeches, groaning a prayer for the clock to click faster.

There was no trash service in our town, so all rubbish (including lawn clippings) had to be delivered to the dump. My father owned a two-tone 1991 Chevy Silverado, rusted and surly by the time we got it but perfect for our purpose. The truck had a sort of pot-belly; sagg 19

dump. That way, the tarp would stay closed instead of unleashing a torrent of dead leaves onto the windshield of the poor bastard driving behind us. Often a back-draft built under the tarp and it bubbled until the edges slipped from underneath. The cinderblocks looked on dumbly as the corners of the tarp

veins, the sweat made the dirt run from our brows down into our hair. The beating drove us further and further into the pile as the pressure of the wind swooped down from over the cab and pressed our chests flat — we smiled exuberantly at each other. The wind died and the smell of wet towels was soured by the emerging pungency of diapers.

When we grew up, my mother planted a seed of paranoia in my father, and those joyrides became less and less frequent. Eventually, we w0.98 0o8nd