

Garland



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Garland

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Editor's Note

Rarely are writers and artists awarded the luxury of immediate perfection. Perhaps this is why writing those first few lines of a poem can be so intimidating: from this point on, the writer commits himself to a craft, one that requires diligence and patience. The beauty of the greatest art and literature lives in this craft, which often evolves as much as the work itself. I'm happy to share the work of those at Loyola College who have dedicated themselves to a craft.

I invite you to muse over a balloon slipping from your fingers, consider the weight of a rose and sunflower, and reflect on the tale of a watchmaker's son. I hope you enjoy the art and literature of *The Garland* this year.

Thank you to my editorial staff and designers, who have excelled at another kind of craft. Thank you for your hard work, your careful eye, and your patience as we grappled with a few unexpected bumps in the road. Thank you to Ron Tanner and Jane Satterfield for your help and guidance. Lastly, thank you to the contributors, whose work invites admiration for the artist's craft.

Jessica Henderson
Editor-in-Chief

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Poetry

Leon Malloy

In the Field

Green cedars stand at the edge of the farm,
Framing the field debris of late fall.

My father rests a rifle on his right shoulder
As he walks along the bank of an overgrown ditch—
I try shadowing the long stride of his work boots, but,
Fall short. The farfetched gaps
Of his slipshod footprints mark the red clay.
Barn swallows and black crows pepper the gray sky
And just muted clouds rambling through wind like sheep
—I imagine them
Feeble, timid, and shy. The clearing is full
Of pocketknives of cornstalks folding and unfolding the distance,

My father stops suddenly, fumbling for a pack of Marlboros
From the breast pocket of his fleeced denim jacket,
Leaning the gun between his clenched knees.
He lights a cigarette with his brass lighter,
And a delay of smoke seeps through his pressed lips—
He dispatches his heavy gun into my sprawled arms,
Snapping terse directions on how to aim.

When we were young & my sister let go,

the string uncoiled from her fingertips & the balloon
floated faster, faster & farther away than we ever expected,
somewhere over our little gray house & little green yard,
beyond the leafless trees with tiny branches reaching like us—
to a sky filled with simple white afternoon clouds & light.

Siobhan Watson

Rose and Sunflower

Rose

Wet, wilting—sorry mass of red,
and the violet underside of wrinkles-
waiting for me when you said
I forgot to get your coat. So I stomped
up the creaking stairs, each one more shrill
than the one before, and grabbed the damn coat
by its rough black collar, and turned to the door
but not before I saw it atop your mountainous pile
of empty boxes, and playing cards
clothes that still won't fit (keep trying!),
—the finest rose Exxon had to offer.

Sunflower

The post office called an hour
or so before—a cheery woman asked me
how I was doing, politely requested that I come
collect my *perishable*. And there, inside of
a corrugated cardboard shrine, yellow petals poised
like a fist, inside of a box half the size of me—
orange iris pollen beds (with round, green pupils)
waiting to see, balanced atop green stems thick enough
for branches. A balloon read: *Happy birthday*.
The quiet hint told months ago, in a garden where
you seemed ready to run, fed up with such girly things-
Don't you think those yellow ones are nice?

Pescatarian

She asks the waiter: is there meat in that?
explains: I'm a *vegetarian* now. And with a dainty
flick of the wrist, hands her menu over.

She smiles thinking of each cow she's saved,
the free-range chickens' eggs she lovingly scrambled
that morning. The change is really dramatic.

Her tuna sandwich is delicious—she licks her
pink sausage lips with satisfaction, so proud—
because everyone knows fish don't feel.

Amanda Marano

The Morning Hours

The phone will not ring
and I am pacing.
The porch light is on,
our own North Star. Still,
you have lost your way among
clouded skies and thoughts,
and empty bottles.
The compass you have forgotten
keeps me on course from hallway
to window pane. There is only a
repetitive procession
and troubled breath
fogging glass. The clock is broken,
or maybe the progression of time
does not work in my favor.

Alexander Van Horn

Garden Party

Violin strings vibrate with Mozart's melody *Jenamy*
Guests sip on glasses of Romanée Conti
Telling jokes, mingling, enjoying the evening
As servers offer silver platters of Abondance and Brie
And I sit on a stone bench amongst the roses
Conversing with the tulips
Joking with the carnations
Feeling like a traitor to my roots
The wallflower at the garden party.

April Nicotera

Exhibit

You wanted to keep me
Forever.
Saying that I was pretty:
A butterfly.
You wanted me to meet
Your friends, family, pets
You wanted me to be
Yours.

But I couldn't.

If I am a butterfly
You must think that I'm
A monarch;
Poisonous when attacked
But who can blame me—
You bit,
Hard.
You wanted me in your
Exhibit.
Vice grips holding on as I
Tell you to let me
LIVE.

But you wouldn't.

You wanted me to
Yourself.
But a butterfly is meant
To soar
To explore
You wanted to be the
Only
Flower I ever saw.

But you're not a flower
 At all.
You're a scientist
Preserving me in your
Quest for what you thought
 Was
Happiness.
 And I was dying.
Suffocated and crucified
Beneath your display
 Glass.

And still, you smiled
 Holding me there till
You tire of me
 And set my wounded,
 Torn wings to the
Wild.

Didn't you ever notice
That butterflies
Don't thrive when pinned
On a pedestal behind
 Plexiglas?

So now I've gone
 Flown away to find
A *different* garden

More flowers.
 Less pristine science.
 Less you.

Tony Levero

To A Fullback Aging Young

You threw the block that won the game
The papers clipped that held your name
The scouts they stared held clipboards tight,
The crowds they cheered on Friday night.

You prowled the field with leopard grace
But now resent your boss' face
All saw your swagger in the halls;
Now you await your children's calls

Foolish to think about it now
The knee that tore or why and how
The scouts who, relaxed their grips
Followed others planned other trips.

Your wife at least she left a note
But now she's gone beyond your hope.
As your hair too soon recedes
She forgets your adolescent deeds.

So now you glance at papers clipped
Clutch at trophies worn and chipped
Your records passed by some younger hand
Still blissfully unaware of the hourglass' sands

If death had but taken you in your youth
Before you grayed, your shoulders drooped
Perhaps they'd still recall your name
Or the block that won the game.

Samantha Harvey

Silk Market

"Ni hao, hao bu hao?"
"Oh, you such a pretty lady,"
"You want to buy a watch?"
"You have boyfriend?"

"I just get this from factory,
I give good deal, just for you, cause you my friend,
just you."

The Chinese salesladies throw clothes
In my face. They grab my wrists,
Tug on my sleeve.
They ask if I am American: "Ni shi meiguoren?"
I lie.

Bought in the U.S.
Made in Mexico, India, Japan, Germany, Canada, Taiwan.
Made in China.
Slaved in China.

The smell of Asian squatters spreads
Through all five floors,
Three selling fake designer brands of
Purses, jackets, glasses, watches, pants, shoes,
Hats, t-shirts, gloves, make-up, ski goggles, scarves,
Backpacks, blouses, bootleg DVDs, CDs,
One floor of real silk,
Another to make your own jewelry,
Personalized calligraphy,
And standard Beijing memorabilia in every corner:
Paintings, pottery, fans, chopsticks, lanterns, teapots,
Tapestries, The Little Red Book, tea leaves,
Silk robes, maps, Olympic tees.

Bargaining, bickering, buying.
Bags full, I step outside.

Inhale the smog,
Buy some fruit off the street,
Wave off five fuwuyuans selling socks,
And collapse into a yellow cab.
Ignoring rules of tone and accent,
I direct the driver,
"Eh, Dui Wai Jing Mao Da Xue."
I sink into a sea of
"Made in China," and
"Stolen in China," and
Exhale
My guilt.

Brand Name

I hoisted
Myself onto
The camel. Long
Eyelashes, I assumed
It was a she, Betsy, I decided,
Since she deserved a name
For carrying me to the
Top of a sand dune
In the Gobi
Desert.
And
She waited
While I watched
The Chinese sunrise,
Her knees buckled beneath
The weight of her body and my
Saddle. Betsy brought me back to
Basecamp. Long lines of tourists
Waited for a ride. One man
Slapped a camel who
Had collapsed in
Exhaustion.
He hit it
Right
On the camel's
Butt, where it was
Branded, matching the
Others, just slightly different.
And I thought about how
Much that must have
Hurt.

Christian Rees

Sunsets Over the Derricks

Worn jeans and battered boots are our uniforms,
Our kingdom expands far to the horizons, over dusty hills
and dry grass fields;
There is nothing to protect out here but hearth and home.
We traded in the horse for the horse powered,
The round cylinder for the cell,
Quick on the draw, our fingers still nimble
We misfit children of the electronic age,
Refined yet uncouth,
Seek to revere our elders
And at the same time forget them.
The sun sets on our wild homes, shines off the lacquered finish
of our trucks,
The cattle rove in their cages, the derricks still pump
Like bleached automatons, bones of the old age
Pumping the blood of the new.

Laura Marlin

Colonizing a Park

By the evergreen's long scented needles,
The brother announced from the crows' nest
The name of the island - Land Aho.
All scrambled down the ship's monkey bars
On emerald and gold slopes laced by Queen Anne,
The sister tumbled down without her land legs,
The cousins ran like natives
Flying neon wings with maniac tails.
The crew built solid twig forts,
Adults who over looked from their folding chairs,
Have been forgiven for sitting and talking.

Then the Mind Came

All things were together.

Then the mind came and arranged them,

- Anaxagoras

The Ocean
 expanse of blue
 fading to lighter
 expanse of blue
Separated by a name
 the horizon
 sets the limits
 an orange ball
Marks the difference
 yet its rays color
 the blue below
 must they be
 so different?
 they each hold
 hidden islands
 sunken planets
 visible to those
 who search
 Pompeii and Atlantis
 Neptune and Mars
 all where tails swim
But some tails belong
 to comets
 others to fish
 one marvels
 the same with
 strained neck
 or stooping knees
What is the difference
 if one is made
 of rock and ice

the other of
scales and blood
if they both tug
the line of curiosity?

Jerard Fagerberg

Luckiest Man on the Face of the Earth

It's true what they say, the Iron Horse is rusting.
Oxidized by my namesake disease, good friends,
I have traded my pinstripes for a hospital gown.

Intravenous tubes flood and re-flood, mixing the
smell of grass and pounding clay in my blood.
Out there, beneath the lights in the park,

batting averages and RBIs weigh more
than mortality rates and grim likelihoods. Here
the lights flicker in peaks and valleys.

Seventy thousand visit me every night.
Together, they call to me from the stands in the Bronx-
crackling through the cloudy static of my bedside radio,

I wave my hat, step to the plate and adjust my shoulders.
Atrophic, my knees lock, my strength wanes as I
knead the bat in my hands. With all remaining will, I swing,

make solid contact, and drive the ball to deep left, back
- back to the wall.

I flare into the baseline and match the awe of the crowd
as I safely slide into
sleep.

Andrew Zaleski

Father's Day

We don't talk much.

You sit there,
buried with books and facts and forms-
Paperwork—papercuts,
paper
cuts
through the biological sinews connecting us,
It's late.
Past 10.
You're asleep; I'm awake.
I'm home now, but you're not around.

We don't talk much.

Disappeared from my life:
my feelings, my thoughts-
all emotions redeemed in a bankrupt treasury.
So I take out credit—I substitute.
A mister here, a mister there,

I don't need you, —
We don't talk much.

I don't know what to say to you,
you're not around; I'm never around.
Graduation; I leave; I don't need you.

We don't talk much.
Asleep and dreaming—
dreaming to sleep.
Jostled, shaken

Wake up.
Huh?
Get up, it's Dad—upstairs.

Mom's crying...pill bottle...bathroom...echoes-
lonely.

suicide death dreams
nightmare.

Tears

i still need you, dad.

i don't know anything, dad.

Tears

who will *take care of me, dad?*

We don't talk much.

Maria Pia Negro

What I Couldn't Find in the Storm

Five droplets of water.
Translucent gems tilted
To the right, barely shining when
Hit by the distant light.
Spilled water in a rush,
Its curve is surrounded by
A pink halo with a blue infusion.
Life injected sprinkle.
All this, I could not find in the storm.

*

Fire contained by logs. Looking for release.
Bodies around the fire,
Interlock thoughts that melt in orange.
Flames
Searching for light. Community,
Trying
To release souls, ignite spirits,
Share life, and feed each other's heat.
Soothing -almost hypnotizing- blaze,
Relieving and unleashing fire.
All this, I could not find in the storm.

*

Fingers, tiny fingers, wrapped around mine.
Maribel carried her for seven months.
Brought into light,
Because the dark warmth became dangerous.
Pitch black eyes when facing the light,
Espresso brown any other time.
She wrapped her tiny fingers around two of mine
And held onto them. Tight.
Asleep, cradled in my arms.
So small, so pure... so alive.
Woke up with a yawn
And a curious stare into my eyes,
Then back to my fingers still carried by hers.
All this, I could not find in the storm.

*

What I tried to find in the impressive events,
My mind did not discover.
Then it came to me unannounced, gently:
Simple water, humble fire, caring touch.
I found His presence.

Donald Vincent

Sincerely Mr. Caulfield

I mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That's all I'd do all day.

-The Catcher in the Rye

Dear Fakes, Imitators, and Phonies,

In a world filled with the needy, I don't want help.
Puppets wander through life without a sense
Of self and privilege. I'd rather be all about me, alone
Until something gives in and creates change.
Where is hope? *Life is a Game,*

Boy, Yeah, some goddamn game
It is when the world's a stage full of phonies.
I got my little red hunting hat and I'll never change
This hat will hold up against all forms of help.
Alienation secludes myself. A chance for me to be alone.
A museum never changes. Always the same like me in a sense

But why is there corruption? Since
This life is a gambling game, my aim
Is to catch those bodies through the rye alone
Phoebe, my kid sister, is unlike phonies
And no one will stretch out to her for help.
I hate the pessimists who persist with change.

I'm talking to those sonuvabitches, pockets full of change
But can't help a begging man with a few cents.
If I needed a hand, would anyone help?
The hotshots, Stradlater or Ackley make me an underdog
in this game
Of life. Can't tell the difference between melodies and cacophony,
And that's when I want to be with my dead brother or alone

Like the ducks during the winter. Are they alone?
While time never ceases, the seasons change
And the ducks still manage to come back. The phony

Adults able themselves to let their senses
Down and can't smell corruption. The game
Hinders those who need the help.

Maybe I'd ask for it, Maybe I'd ask for help.
But for what? I got myself. Don't need anyone
Nor do I need the same
Game plan that will come to some inevitable change.
All adults are hypocrites because children lose their innocence.
Let's just talk it out for a while, Mr. and Misses Phony.

Through all the blatant phoniness
I don't want any help in this *terrible, terrible fall* at the end
of the game
As I mature into a man, I want to save the children's
innocence alone.

Dear Lady Balletomanes,

1872- *Dance Class at the Operac*
by Edgar Degas

Corps de Ballet

On our floor, we are all equal.
Bodies bending bullishly across
The earth. We'd rather stride than walk.

Piqué

Strain. Muscles pain. All the weight
On one toe, like burdens of the world
On a single man's shoulders.

Penché

I embrace my own, dearest on-looker.
A leg amidst in thin air, a freezing stare
Capturing every current second of silence,

Pirouette

Ready for the *Grand Jeté* with subtle
Stealth. Precise movements in real time.
Being me, a ballerina, waiting for my...

Sickling

Few refrain from the fall of youth.
An incorrect step and posture
Signaling the significance of simplicity.
With an unbalance kiss, I bid thee farewell,
La Ballerina...

P.S.

Like simple sea creatures synchronized with the ocean,
Schools of fish meddle the darkness of the ocean's currents.



Photography
and
Painting

Forbidden City



by Caitlin Enz

Yellow River



by Caitlin Enz

Cascade



by Sarah Sweeney

Endless



by Sarah Sweeney

Afternoon at the Evergreen



by Michelle Bonkowski

Configuration



by Amanda Marano

Stoney Run



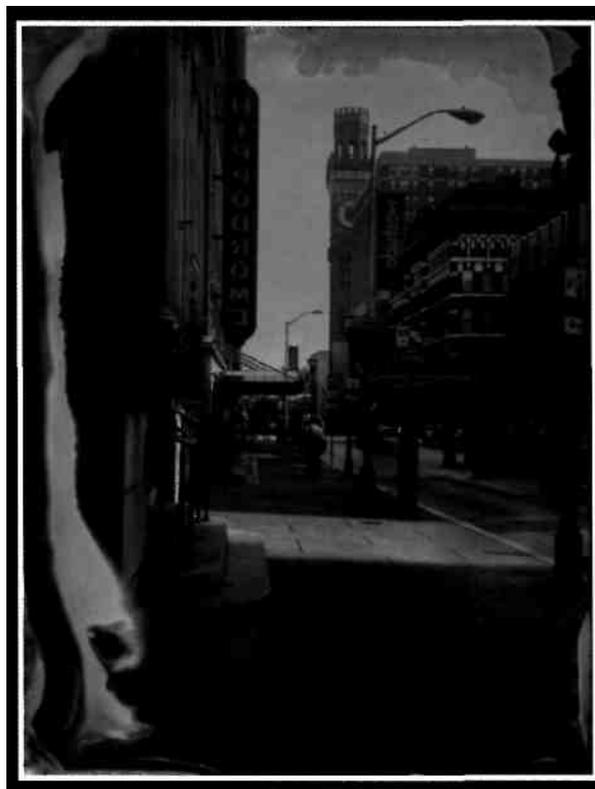
by Cameron Beattie

Valet Parking

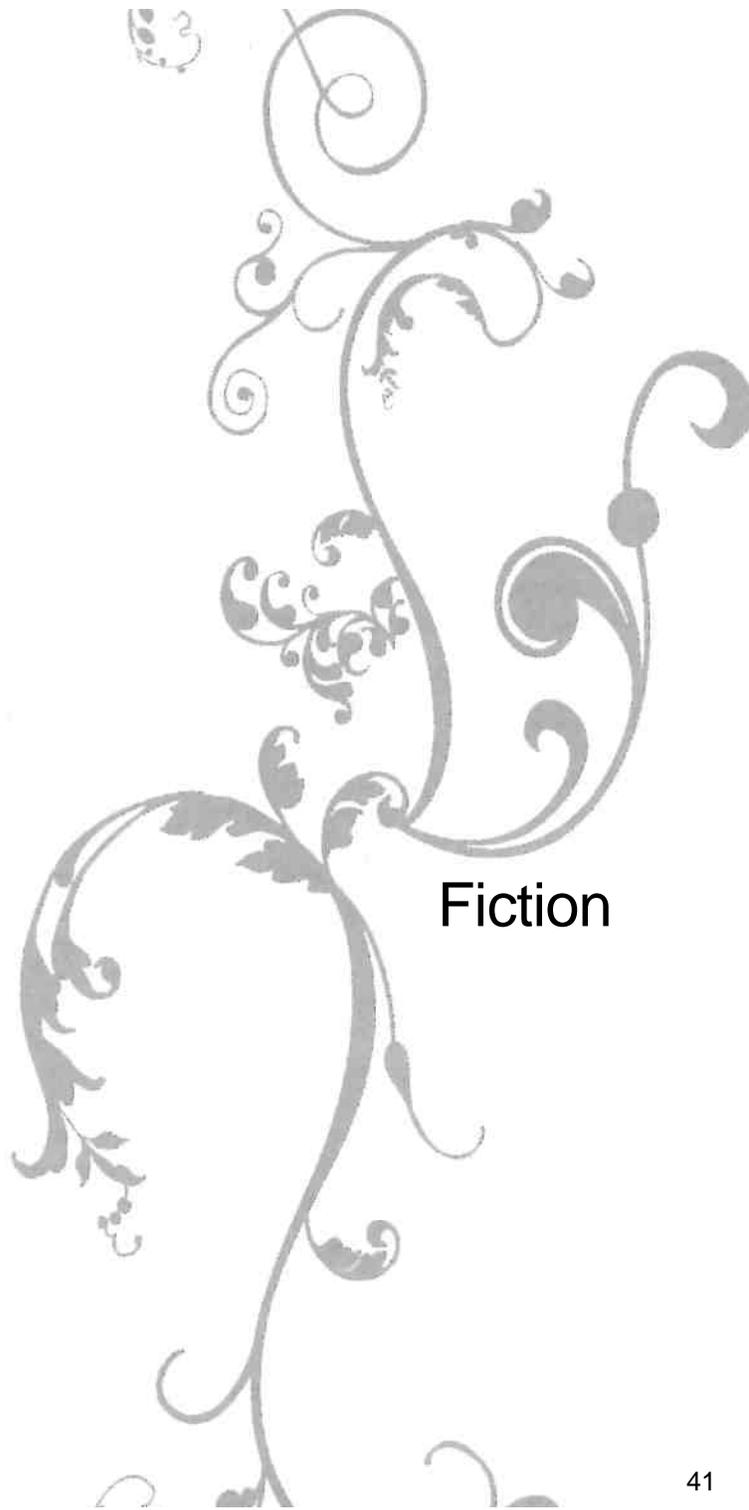


by Kevin Smith

Hippodrome



by Kevin Smith



Fiction

Other Cities & How They Speak to Me

by Jerard Fagerberg

A NOTE TO THE READER:

The following account was found scribbled in the margins of a copy of James Joyce's A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man (beginning on page 98) in the bathroom of an independent bookstore in Prague. The text was then re-constructed as seen below. On the stall where the book was found, a statement reading: "In Portugal, the Lisbon Girls are just as pretty and quite alive" was found written in the same handwriting. Nothing is known of the author or his current whereabouts.

I embarked on this tour of the world's finest cities in search of a perfect, all-encompassing phrase. I selected cities dripping with the juices of culture, pungent with the fragrance of perspective, and combed every street corner and coffee shop they had to offer, exploring their respective charms with a detail-seeking eye, looking for a short and simple phrase which would simultaneously employ every conceivable facet of human psyche and emotion when examined close enough, A phrase with the camouflage of vanity meant to be overlooked by the imperceptive: a built-in filter system, A phrase which, when flipped over and vigilantly inspected, would reveal infinitely more complex and meaningful decipherings - and hopefully some transcendence locked between the clandestine spaces that link letters and punctuation.

The hunt is universal in literary history. The great minds of the past - the think-boxes we so greatly admire - defied themselves to push the right words through the pen, as if the pen had some supernatural ability to translate the incoherent misfiring of brain waves and synapses into something more tangible and permanent. They defied themselves to speak with millions of voices at once. Historically, Abraham Lincoln is the only person to ever orbit success.

Albeit a backhanded sort of victory.

Instead of chancing the near-incomprehensible task of coining a new phrase, he used the tool of resurrection to dredge a relic of wisdom from our deep past. I'm not quite sure of the context, but (as you will

soon discover) this does not limit the profundity. He adapted a piece of Hebrew folklore involving King Solomon and the eternal phrase "this too shall pass." In the Lincoln version, a monarch is charged with the task of delivering "a sentence which should be true and appropriate in all times and situations." "This too shall pass" was his contribution. As I write, a sink-hole forms in my chest.

"This too shall pass." The duality of the statement is so striking that it almost hurls me into tears. It is a phrase of both celebration and despair. A phrase that is infinitely larger than its quadra-syllabic composition would immediately suggest. It not only speaks to the hope for relief in times of insufferable pain, but also the despair that bliss will someday surely fade the same way. As forward is backward, and so on and so on. It evokes the tertiary appreciation of what we have in the face of eternity - the *Carpe Diem* effect. If all we have is sure to pass, if good or bad is regardlessly temporary; then the present ceases to become the present - it becomes the *now*. A sense of urgency and duty appears.

Ah, the power of words.

As a poet (yes, I'm a poet and no, I'm not gay) that's my job: to try and concoct some magic serum of words to sedate readers with awe. I piece steadily in the latest hours, hands pressing into the page, trying to fit the right set of passwords to unlock passion and release inspiration. My brain is the Rosetta Stone of emotion and translation is the task of my heart. The reason I set out on my trip - no, call it an *excursion* - was to see if anyone (else) had beaten me to it.

Instead I found subway cars where the windows were blessed with the inking of grease pens, not the territorial scribbling of urban teenagers. I found churches cleverly victimized by the spray cans of vigilante street poets, not the indiscernible signatures of slapdash graffiti artists spilled simply to declare "I was here." I found public bathrooms whose flesh was tattooed with the beautiful insight of black Sharpie, not the furrowed mind-droppings of intolerably bored shit-takers.

I found places where no one mused as to what the walls would say if they could talk- because they never shut up. They conversed fluently in their native dialects. Sometimes they speak of politics, or love, or hope, or desperation, or sarcasm, or sincerity, or defiance, or bliss. Sometimes the walls weren't walls at all. Instead words sing from soapboxes of stray plywood, or bridges, or train sides, or apartment buildings, or traffic signs, or construction sites, or billboards or even discarded mattresses. I found places everywhere were canvases.

Sometimes the walls wore words like crucifixes- proudly touting them on their chests, despite the minor sacrilege. Sometimes the walls

wore words like cigarette burns- keeping them in shameful secret beneath their long sleeves but unable to erase them. Sometimes the walls wore words like crosses - burdensomely carrying them, but with a sense of duty; like their rebar skeletons also housed plaster souls bent for something higher.

The words were not *exactly* what I was looking for. They were, however, words. Beautiful words. Words that exploded impatiently from pens and spray cans. Words as art, but words like music. I never found my singular phrase. Instead, I found freckles. Little phrases that inspired smirks of enlightenment and chuckles of absurdity. Some of them were searching for an audience to illuminate with their wisdom, those I found. Some of the words were merely ticklers of the soul.

And bless the street poets for that. Bless their altruistic hearts which leapt to share the tiny wonders they knew. Bless their fingers which worked with fervor to illegally broadcast something uplifting. Bless their eyes which searched for the telltale blue lights in the purple of the night, pushing inside themselves ever faster. As the custodians came with whitewash and solvents every morning to erase their hard work, the poets came back at night to again sully the same walls.

I think I'll never return home. I sit here too comfortably with a renewed sense of obligation to take up the pen and craft, craft, craft new combinations. I carry with me the concrete quotations of the finest cities. A catalogue of samples. These are the words the cities gave me to remember them by. I implored them to offer me *one* all-encompassing phrase- *one* piece of eternal insight that I could tattoo on my brain the same way their walls were tattooed, something to exist beyond and to all time. Instead, they slapped me right in the fucking soul.

ANOTHER OBTRUSIVE NOTE TO YOU GENTLE READERS:

The following list was discovered scrawled on the inside of the back cover.

London: I know I have lost

Fucking up the programme

Johannesburg: Whatever you destroy, we'll create it again

New York: ^Vote Here^ (Trash can)

Beware of Dog! He is very sarcastic!

Kiev: I'd rather be spooning

Barcelona: Where an endless torrent of love began

Melbourne: We always forget how strange it is to be alive at all

Atlanta: We are wolves. We are not loved.

Ljubljana: You forgot to kiss my soul
Calcutta: Jesus was homeless like us
Somewhere I cannot now recall:
Think of this as a window...
My heart has never been this open
I need some levity. I need some severity.

Baby Georgia

by Lizzie McQuillan

Dale stood in front of his sophomore Honors "Introduction to European History during World Wars," wheeling the stroller back and forth in short motions on the floor ahead of him. His daughter, Georgia, slept soundly in the tiny seat—eyes closed, a speck of drool rolling off her lip. His class had never been so attentive.

The summer had been refreshing for everyone, apparently, but him. He tried not to look at the girls as they crossed their long, tan legs over one another. Before the bell rang, he motioned his students to be quiet as they gossiped about their short romances or time they spent cooped up in their grandmother's retirement home in Naples. But when he took the head of the class, he felt like the person he'd left behind in June, when his wife, Nancy, left to pursue her doctorate studies on the Romantic Movement in San Francisco. Her decision, made on her own, seemed like an impulse at first as she took off for the conference with no promise of returning. But as the days passed on without her, Dale realized she hadn't left suddenly at all. She'd been pulling herself away since Georgia's birth, when she insisted on reading her Keats and Shelley rather than *The Rainbow Fish* or *Goodnight Moon*.

Unlike his wife, who had taught at a prep school a half hour away, Dale flourished under the attention of naïve, high school students, content in their ignorance of world wars and genocides, corrupted governments, and presidents' mistresses. He didn't hold anything back, especially from his Honors students.

"You've signed up for a lot of reading," he said, still rocking the stroller, "but you won't regret it. You're here because you've earned it, because you're willing to be pushed. It would be a shame if you didn't take advantage of that." He explained his late policy and insisted that he was not afraid to give out detentions. He could use the extra help around the classroom this year. "I have a daughter now, as you can see. Her name is Georgia, and she's beautiful, but she's a piece of work." The class giggled.

For a moment, he thought he could do this forever. He may not need a babysitter at all, or surrender his hypothetical life to reality by

paying another woman to care for his own child. The publicity convinced him, for a moment, that he could handle fatherhood.

At lunch he had more explaining to do. No one, under any condition, was allowed to bring his or her child into school under any circumstance. He rolled the stroller into the teachers' lounge and saw Allen Greene, the school principal, sitting in one of the blue plastic chairs. "Dale! Good to see you!" he said. Allen stood up with effort, and offered Dale a hug. Dale had called Allen at home the night before, in a panic after he'd turned down his seventh potential babysitter after an interview. Allen was an old, round man ready for retirement. He wore a gray suit to school everyday over a different brightly colored shirt. His glasses often slumped halfway down his nose. After his near death experience two years ago, when his car sped out of control on an icy highway, nothing seemed to bother him. Not kids with severe behavioral problems, grumpy cafeteria ladies, or (in Dale's case) visiting babies.

"I'm sorry to hear what happened," he said. He sat down in his chair and rolled the stroller close to his side. Georgia had awakened from her nap. She reached her hand toward Allen's pinkish, shaven face and smiled.

"Look at you! Hi there! Yes, hi there honey!" he said, as his voice raised several octaves. "She's beautiful Dale, you're lucky."

Allen had a way of putting life into another perspective, to focusing on the new toddler, happy and untouched, rather than her mother's absence.

More teachers filtered into the room, also tan, carrying their lunch bags: Jerry, from the physics department, Colleen in Spanish, Dr. Griffin in English.

"So it's true!" Jerry said. "There is a baby in the house!"

The crowd gathered around the stroller.

"We're making an exception, at least for today, until Dale can figure out full-time day care that he can trust," said Allen.

Jerry laughed. He'd known Dale for years. They'd gotten their Masters in Education at the same time and continued on to Brown Middle School. He placed his brown bag in front of him at the table. "I guess that makes sense. Not fair to force Nancy to stay behind. You know it's taken her long enough to get started on her dissertation."

"No, it's not that at all Jerry—" Allen said. Dale cut him off. He hadn't explained himself to everyone.

"It's fine, leave it, Allen. He's right. It's not fair. I'll find one by tomorrow."

When he left the school in the afternoon he saw kids playing basketball on the side courts. Some he recognized, some he didn't. He

strapped Georgia in her car seat in the back. She'd been good that day. He was proud of her. She really was a good girl. She slept through the night and didn't throw her food at the wall. She'd done everything right. In the first year of her life, she'd made no mistakes. Yet, he worried about the damage outside of her control—the questions she'd soon ask, the missing presence in the house that Nancy once held. He knew that she could sense the emptiness that followed the two of them wherever they went: in the car, the cold aisles of the grocery store, their living room. She had a patience that he'd never seen before, and an awareness that frightened him. She turned her head to every noise, and touched the face of every new person who held her. He knew that she was searching for Nancy, and that she looked for her in every person who walked through the door.

Dale drove home slowly, and Georgia fell asleep in the backseat. When he pulled in the driveway, he twisted the key and listened to everything end—the engine, the talk radio, and the air conditioning. He lifted Georgia from the seat, careful not to wake her, and brought her into the silence of the house. He set her down in her crib, and pulled a list of contact numbers from his desk drawer. He would call one of them, he thought. Georgia was not yet old enough for school.

Typical Days

by Lauren Loeffler

Career Day

The day that I got a promotion was one of the worst days of my life, right next to the day when I showed up at my ex-girlfriend's house, dozen roses in hand to surprise her, and I walked in the door to find her on the couch straddling Jay Stratton, whose tongue was so far down her throat that I'm shocked she didn't asphyxiate. Seriously. I hope she does.

I'm not bitter by nature.

So anyway, the day I got promoted sucked. That sounds out of whack, doesn't it? That being promoted, moving "up," could in fact, suck? Well you see, much of my experiences in this world have been out of whack. To be honest, I'm not so sure if at any point I've felt my life to be in whack.

My point is that my promotion sucked because I'm twenty-six years old, and I work at a Day's Inn in Ithaca, New York. I don't know which is worse for my psyche, my job title or my location. Furthermore, while my buddies with MBNA's or CPA's or whatever God damn acronym they have that I don't are getting promoted to corner offices with spectacular views and foxy secretaries, I've been promoted to a room with two filing cabinets, I have no window, and Margie's working reception. Margie is a seventy-two year old comically senile widow who constantly smells like paraffin and garlic. Oh, and one of the filing cabinets doesn't even open. Joe, before he retired last year, broke the key off in the lock, so now I just tack the W-2 forms to my corkboard. Here's my nameplate:

Sam Quincy
MANAGER

As a new, pathetic and emotionally draining day begins at the Day's Inn, a new-age hippie walks through the door. A walking advertisement for Urban Outfitters, she's wearing skinny jeans, a loose fit-

ting shirt probably made from flaxseed or something equally weird, and her head sits on a brown scarf instead of a neck. Five bucks says she's got something by Salinger in her bag.

"Excuse me, I was just *wondering*, is the coffee you'll be serving at continental breakfast fair trade?" Seriously? Sweet Jesus, please just take me now and ease the pain.

Margie, god speed.

"Fair *what*? It's free. It's a continental breakfast included with your stay, ma'am."

"*Fair trade*. Do you know where the beans are shipped - "

Thank god this door is soundproof. I shut out John Q. Public and get back to my busy day. This morning I challenged myself to drink a full pot of coffee. Accomplished. Nice. Sixteen sugar packets and a cup of half and half later; a victory.

"No more coffee?" says Jamal, entering from the awkward Willy Wonka door in the back of my office. He's rocking his grey jumpsuit, holding his mop like a spear and the "Caution Wet Floor" sign like a Spartan shield.

"Sorry, Jamal, it's all gone."

He closes one eye, groans, and puts on that expression that clearly says what the hell and says, "*What the hell*? Why's it gone already? I'm hung over man, and I have to go clean bathrooms. How do you expect me to *do* that if I can't have me a little-pick-me-up first?"

I don't feel too bad. Jamal's jumpsuit smells enough like weed to get me high just from standing next to him, and yesterday he explicitly told me, "Coffee makes me shake like an addict, man." Did I happen to mention that in reality, his name isn't even Jamal? It's Kevin. Jamal was another janitor who got fired, and this company is too cheap to buy new uniforms, so they just recycled the old one with "Jamal" sewn on the chest. Kevin decided the name Jamal better represented his inner self and he now refuses to respond to Kevin. Seriously.

I told him I'd make some more, and he retreated mouse-like back into the recesses of the wall.

Task two. Pencils in the ceiling. We're up to eight today, stuck up there like little warrior's arrows. I'm training myself to make patterns. I'm going to start with a circle, I think. Then maybe I'll shoot for a square, and possibly a pentagon when I'm getting really ambitious. Or my name, but I imagine that to be quite difficult.

All in a day's work.

Sam Quincy Witnesses a Robbery at a 7-11

Saturday at noon. Day off.

I'd like to toss this out there: Slurpies are proof that God exists. Honestly, they give me a reason to carry on. I mean, today, the sole reason I plan to peel myself from these glorious sheets is because I'm suffering from a thirst that can be quenched by nothing other than a dose of frosty-blue-raspberry deliciousness.

"Sam?" My mom squeaks from the other side of the door.

"Yessss?" I groaned.

"Are you awake?"

I hate it when people do that, I mean seriously, if I respond, doesn't that answer your question? Reasoning should tell you: I'm conscious.

"Yeah mom, I'm awake."

"Okay well I was just checking. It's noon."

I close my eyes and the green lights of my clock stay in my vision, tattooing the inner side of my eyelids with "12:02 pm."

"I know mom. I have the day off."

"Alright well...okay. Sam?"

I haven't gone anywhere. "What mom?"

"I'm taking your sister shopping. Don't forget your light box. It was dark by eight last night, you know."

God. As if living with my parents at age twenty six isn't enough to depress me, I'm also afflicted with seasonal affective disorder. Yes, S.A.D. Cute, isn't it?

December blows.

Every day, I have to sit under this fluorescent light for a while as if I'm solar powered and I have to charge or something like that. It's called my "light box" and it's supposed to "elevate my mood and alleviate my anxiety." I couldn't make this up if I tried.

I flip the little happy switch and lay my head back, and all of a sudden I remember my dream. Last night during my eight hours of sleep, my REM cycle found me in a boxing match with my ninth grade history teacher, Ms. Anderson. Ms. Anderson was a twenty-something teacher, a graduate of Syracuse University, and she wore her opinions like a cocktail dress. She wasn't "Miss" Anderson either, she was "Ms" Anderson, you know, pronounced "Mizz."

The woman had flair. She was really intelligent, I mean *really* bright, so thinking back on it, I wonder why she wanted to stand in front of thirty young teens, fueled by Mountain Dew, testosterone, and estrogen, all at dangerous levels. I really liked Ms. Anderson; in fact I had a serious crush on her. She would lecture about the Legislative

branch, and it sounded to me like Mozart. She had me at "checks and balances." I was head over heels.

She, however, hated me. For a number of reasons. For starters, she once caught me with a note during class that included a crude sketch of her in a skimpy outfit surrounded by a symphony of lewd comments written by my classmates. The note had been passed around, and like musical chairs, when the music stopped and she turned around at the chalkboard, I was left shit out of luck. She snatched up the note, turned a brilliant shade of crimson that was only beaten out by the shade seeping through my own face, and told me to stay after class.

"Mr. Quincy," she'd said in a stern and slightly uncomfortable tone, "this is one of the most disrespectful and rude things I've seen. How would your mother feel if she saw what her son was doing in class?" My mom would say *"more therapy!"*

"I-I don't know, Mizz Anderson," I stuttered, "but I didn't write any of it." That wasn't a lie. That unholy piece of frayed notebook paper was a product of Jay Stratton, resident jock and douche-bag, future stealer-of-my-girlfriend. But Jay was the golden boy, and more importantly, the son of the headmaster, so I didn't even bother with an innocent plea.

I had detention for a week after that, and she continued to resent me. She'd always ask me questions when I was clearly daydreaming, and I never got more than a C+ on any paper I wrote for her. I wonder if she's still teaching.

So anyway I dreamt we were in a boxing match. What've you got for this one, Freud?

I decide to leave my subconscious alone and roll out of bed. After a silent refusal to make my bed, I put on my corduroys and my Chuck Taylors, throw a sweatshirt over my Radiohead t-shirt, make a point to avoid mirrors, and go to the driveway, where my faithful steed awaits. I drive a light blue scooter. Back in high school it made a statement like "I'm trendy and environmentally conscious," whereas now it says, "I'm an idiot because I live in up-state New York and drive a scooter in the winter."

So I'm plugging along, and surprisingly enough I'm in a good mood. I had kind of forgotten how this feels. Maybe I'm high off of UV exposure, or maybe Oasis's "All Around the World" that's playing in my headphones is just that therapeutic. Who knows? I'm headed for a tasty iced beverage, and I've forgotten my troubles.

7-11 is conveniently located 4.5 miles away or .064 gallons of gas worth of travel, and as I roll up and take the closest parking space, the journey is worth every penny. If I were a dancing man, I would dance

into the store. I'm not though, so I don't. I just walk in. I make a beeline for the back of the store, where the choir of angels sings and the doves flutter away to reveal the illustrious frozen treat generator. I choose the 16 ounce cup because I'm pretty sure I deserve it, fill it up, ending with a classy twist at the top. I take the last plastic dome left at the station and swagger toward the counter. Adding to this sublime 7-11 experience, I already know the cost - \$1.95 with tax included - and low and behold, I have exact change. I hate it when I have to pay \$2 and get a nickel back. I truly despise nickels. They're pointless coins. Seriously. So anyway, I walk up casually to the counter and have a nice polite interaction with a woman named Cindy. Her haircut remains stuck in 1986, but she's nice and I'm having a good day so I let it slide. I'm picking up a bag of sunflower seeds, considering if I'd like to "eat, spit and be happy," when my life takes its typical shitty turn.

Like some sort of Spanish bull, this guy busts through the door, wearing all black, a ski mask, and brandishing a gun. I drop the seeds. Cindy panics.

"Gimmie all you got in the counter," yells the masked bandit.

At this point I've begun my retreat, army crawling back from the counter. I'm looking up at some tasty cakes on the shelf, wondering why my life has to suck this much. Cindy's screaming her head off, and while I fully understand that she's terrified due to the gun she's staring down, I really wish she'd just stop and give the man his money so we could all be on our merry way. Her shrill scream breaks every, we'll say, fifteen seconds, as she inhales and reloads, and after a while the robber is frustrated. He's got one hand on the gun and the other up to his ear, trying to block out the auditory assault.

Then, suddenly, and most unfortunately she remembers my presence. "Aren't YOU going to do anything?!" She yells directly at me, as if I'm supposed to be able to do something about this. Seriously? The last time I tried to throw a punch, I was thirteen, and the end result involved me, a gym locker, and an onset of claustrophobia. Thus I continue to crawl, at this point reaching the peanuts, hoping I can go unnoticed.

No such luck. Our dark avenger storms after me. Still keeping an eye on Cindy, he stares at me, sliding on my stomach, and tells me to, "Get up off the floor, kid." God. I roll over clumsily and stand up, stare at the gun, and just to reiterate, question why my life must suck with such intensity. I wait for my instructions, expecting "turn around," or "just shut up," or "prepare to die."

"Quincy?"

He knows my name? Oh God, this really is the end - wait. I recog-

nize that voice.

"Jamal?!"

The thief rips off his mask to reveal none other than one of my employees.

"Aw, what's good man?"

Enter Ithaca's finest men in blue, stage left. "Drop the gun!" They bellow.

"Shit," Jamal says, dropping his gun to the floor.

The police chief waddles over to Jamal and arrests him, while Cindy continues to squeal, and I stand there looking sadly at my Slurpie spilled all over the counter.

Meeting Her Parents

by Edwin Pochè

Honey, something came up at the hospital and they need me to pull a double shift. I tried everything I could to get out of it, but they're simply too understaffed. I called my parents to reschedule and they said they'd still love to have you over. So, it's completely up to you if you want to go through with it by yourself, or we can make up an excuse to postpone. Just give me a call back when you get this and let me know.

It was my third time listening to the voicemail since I had gotten on the train. I considered listening to it a fourth time, but realized that no amount of playbacks would help me realize how I got to this point. No sane man would agree to meet their girlfriend's parents for the first time alone.

A million and one things that could go wrong, a handful that could go right, and without the daughter there as a body shield, no guarantee the father won't answer the door with a shotgun.

Well, when I called back and valiantly agreed to go alone, she promised that no one in the home even owned a firearms license. However, with gun laws the way they were, that wasn't a real guarantee. That point aside, there were plenty of other insecurities and questions left to zip through my brain at the same speed as the tree tops and power lines outside the train windows.

How should I refer to her father? Should I keep it formal with Mr. Roberts? Can I pull off calling him Eric? Was two months into the relationship too early for Pops?

What if they serve something I'm allergic to? I can force myself to eat whatever they put in front of me, but will they take the breaking into hives as a sign of rudeness? Or, what if they serve something I'm morally opposed to? Like veal or a small child. How could they allow me to date their daughter after I thumbed my nose at the culinary offering of toddler? Should I bring a fresh orphan as a sign of good will?

I was overreacting. She had said the night before that the dinner was more for her parents than her:

I haven't put much stock in my parent's choice in boys since grade school. Even if they hate you, I'll still be madly in love.

While she had sounded sincere, I also knew that more than three-quarters of the pictures in her apartment contained at least one of her parents. I had overheard a few of her almost daily calls home, where she recounted her day's events in an eager tone. Read the family newsletter that had first announced our dating. I knew their opinion meant the world to her. And that opinion would be decided tonight.

I emerged from my thought bubble just in time to feel the train pull into the station.

As I stood up from my seat, I stared down into little Mikey's pleading eyes and tugged gently on the leash.

It was time for us to go.

The Watchmakers Son

by Edwin Pochè

The watchmaker returned home from work late into the evening, as he was prone to do more often than not. After hanging his coat in the hallway closet, he made his way towards the refrigerator, thoughts centered on the half-pan of lasagna on the top shelf from two nights ago. Flipping on the kitchen lights, the watchmaker's eyes found themselves drawn instantly to the floor, where his son Phillip lay motionless across the black and white tiles. In his outstretched hand lay a sterile, yellow-colored pill jar that had once contained the pain medicine for the watchmaker's back. A flurry of nervous steps brought him beside the body, where he knelt. His hand grazed the boy's head, then his chest, where even through the t-shirt the watchmaker could feel the chill in the boy's bones. He checked Phillip's heart more out of formality than hope. It was dead.

With a quiet sigh and loud grunt, the watchmaker lifted his son off the kitchen floor. He carried the body through the living room to the back foyer, where he put down the body only momentarily to open the cellar door and turn on the lights. The watchmaker took each step slowly, making sure to avoid the same fate as his only child, until at last his right foot hit the rough concrete that signaled he had reached the basement floor. He walked through the remainder of the cellar, until at last he reached his workbench, where he laid Phillip down.

The watchmaker looked down at his son, then at the timepiece on his wrist and saw that he had already missed the first five minutes of Jeopardy. Making sure to turn out the light on his way up, he scampered up the stairs, stopped back in the kitchen to reheat the lasagna, and then hurried into the living room to catch the rest of the program.

When the show ended, the watchmaker took the lasagna tray back into the kitchen. While washing the dish, his eyes kept being drawn to the pill bottle and found he couldn't help but shake his head back and forth in the heavy silence.

"How could I have been so blind? The clues weren't blatant, but they were still there. Of course it was the Mayflower that decided to end their journey in Massachusetts because they ran out beer. I mean,

how many other famous ships landed there in 1620? That's the second easy final Jeopardy I missed this week."

After rinsing off the last dish, the watchmaker dried his hands and walked back down to the basement. His son still lay across the work table, as cold and lifeless as he had been an hour ago.

"Oh Phillip. You really couldn't have picked a worse night than this."

Out of his right back pocket, the watchmaker pulled out a small skeleton key. Then he pulled Phillip's shirt off to reveal his torso. Using the tip of his fingernail, the watchmaker found the small crevice under Phillip's right nipple and flipped it outward to reveal a small keyhole. He inserted the skeleton key, turned it, and after hearing the click, opened up the left half of Phillip's chest.

It didn't take long to see what the mechanical reason for Phillip's demise was. While the larger wheels had crushed the pills into dust between their cogs, the smaller ones found themselves ground to a halt by the prescription menace. The watchmaker would have to remove several of the organs, take them apart piece by piece, remove the pill fragments, and put them all back together.

It would be tedious work, but easy. No, the real problem lay with the brain. Phillip's brain was made up of a multitude of miniature knobs controlling the intensity level of his various emotional outputs. The watchmaker would have to scour these various knobs until he could decipher which mistuned feeling had driven him to suicide this time.

When the watchmaker had originally created Phillip, he had assumed the emotional inputs would be the easy part. Simply crank the happy knob to eleven and let the boy live his life. Except living in constant happiness meant the boy had no means of self-preservation or sense of morality. The boy was just as happy watching television as he was slicing his fingertips off or sticking the cat in the broiler.

The watchmaker had found the obvious solution would be to add guilt and self-preservation knobs. When he woke up the next morning though, he found Phillip standing on a stepstool in his bedroom holding a noose. The guilt wouldn't allow Phillip to live with what he had unflinchingly done to the cat, but his sense of self-preservation wouldn't let him hang himself. So, he just stood there. Curious what decision Phillip would make, rather than intervene, the watchmaker watched his son for almost an hour before hurrying off to work. When he returned home that evening, his son stood in the same exact position as when he left.

It took weeks, but eventually Phillip was crafted into a stable enough emotional state that he could live day-to-day life in the house

on his own. At that point the watchmaker decided to test the waters by enrolling Phillip in school, which brought along with it a new set of challenges.

At first the teacher found Phillip to be remarkably bright, understanding each lesson with perfect clarity at a speed she had never seen in a pupil.

Scared of drawing too much attention, the watchmaker began tinkering again with his son's brain. After spending so much time dealing with emotions, the watchmaker wasn't sure exactly how to change the boy's intelligence. The answer came to him that evening while he watched Jeopardy. He realized the difference in winning and losing wasn't whether you knew the answer, but how quickly it took you to find it. After getting the final Jeopardy for the third time that week, he went into the basement and opened up Phillip's brain. There he found the speed dial for interpretation of new thoughts and slowed it to a crawl.

Phillip's teacher scheduled a conference with the watchmaker a week later. She discussed how quickly Phillip had fallen to the back of the class. However, that wasn't what upset her. The teacher said that lately Phillip had begun acting very strange, to the point where it was scaring the other children. When the watchmaker pried for more information, the teacher remarked that sometimes one of the other children would make a joke aloud. While all the other classmates would laugh, Phillip would sit there in silence. Then, two to three minutes later, after she had quieted the class back down again, Phillip would burst into laughter. At first she had thought he was trying to be funny too, but had become convinced he was genuinely laughing.

Two days later the watchmaker withdrew Phillip from the school and moved to a new town. It would take three more moves before Phillip would be able to pass in the school environment as normal. Or, at the very least, as normal as any of the other children.

The watchmaker had thought all of it was done, though. It had been more than four months since he had last gone inside Phillip's brain to make any adjustments. He had thought for a brief moment that it was all over. He finally had a son.

It seemed, though, he had been mistaken. While the watchmaker was taking apart Phillip's liver, he began examining the pin-up board above the work station. Tacked on there was a list of all of Phillip's programmed emotions and their current settings. Scattered throughout the basement were the countless previous renderings, with small scribbled notes on each explaining what had gone wrong and the proposed correction.

Looking over the list, the watchmaker tried to remember all the exchanges he had with Phillip in the previous week. This was a fairly easy task; with him leaving for work before Phillip even awoke for school and getting home late enough into the evening that Phillip would be preparing for bed, there weren't too many instances where their paths crossed.

No, the hard part would be in trying to decipher from these murky memories which of the thirty-seven programmed emotions was so slightly off that it had taken four months before it sent Phillip over the edge. Or worse, which combination.

By the time the watchmaker had finished disassembling then reassembling all of Phillip's vital organs, he had already racked his brains for any clues of peculiarities in his son's recent behavior. Despite his best efforts, he couldn't think of a thing. During the first few months of Phillip's creation, the watchmaker had been so meticulous in noting every one of Phillip's choices to make sure they were the appropriate, normal response to the situation. With the four month calm, though, he had slackened his watch, thinking he had finally figured it out and any peculiarities from here on out were nothing more than mere hiccups in the programming. His focus changed from Phillip back to his job.

The clock above the workbench indicated that it had long ago crossed the boundary between late evening into early morning. It was obvious to the watchmaker that he simply wasn't going to solve the mystery before the sun rose and the wisest course of action might simply be to call in sick for the boy and return to Phillip after work.

The watchmaker shut down all the lights in the basement and walked upstairs to his bedroom. When he flipped on the light, he saw the note, covered in handwriting so neat it looked as if it had been typed, lying on his pillow.

Dad,

I'm so sorry you had to find me like this. I honestly am. If there was an easier, cleaner way to do this, I would have. I wish there was.

I remember you telling me about her once. How she was beautiful. And caring. And smart. But she simply couldn't understand the importance of your work. Why you constantly had to choose it over her. Why your time was so precious.

So she left.

I don't remember her. And that's the funny thing, because I remember everything, Dad. Every moment of every day. But I don't have a single memory of her.

I have plenty of memories of you, though. They're all the same. You explaining why you can't get home earlier from work. Why you can't take weekends off. Why you can't see me off to school in the morning. And how every time I convince myself you actually do love me, I have to remember that every single time you've had the opportunity, you've chosen to remain at work rather than spend time with me.

I've known for a while that I wanted to do this, but I couldn't figure out the timing. Today I picked up the bottle of pills in my hand and it felt right. I thought for an instant tonight might be different. Tonight you might come home a little early. We would eat dinner together and I would tell you about my day. You would tell me how it reminded you of one time while you were growing. Then we would both laugh. Maybe tonight would be the night you chose me. But then I remembered.

I don't want you to have to choose anymore. But I don't want to have to remember either,

I hope you can forgive me one day.

Love,

Phillip

The watchmaker read the note over several times, shaking his head back and forth as he did.

It seemed he wouldn't have to spend the next few days deducing what the problem was after all. Phillip had told him exactly what the problem was. Phillip didn't feel he was getting enough attention, that he wasn't loved.

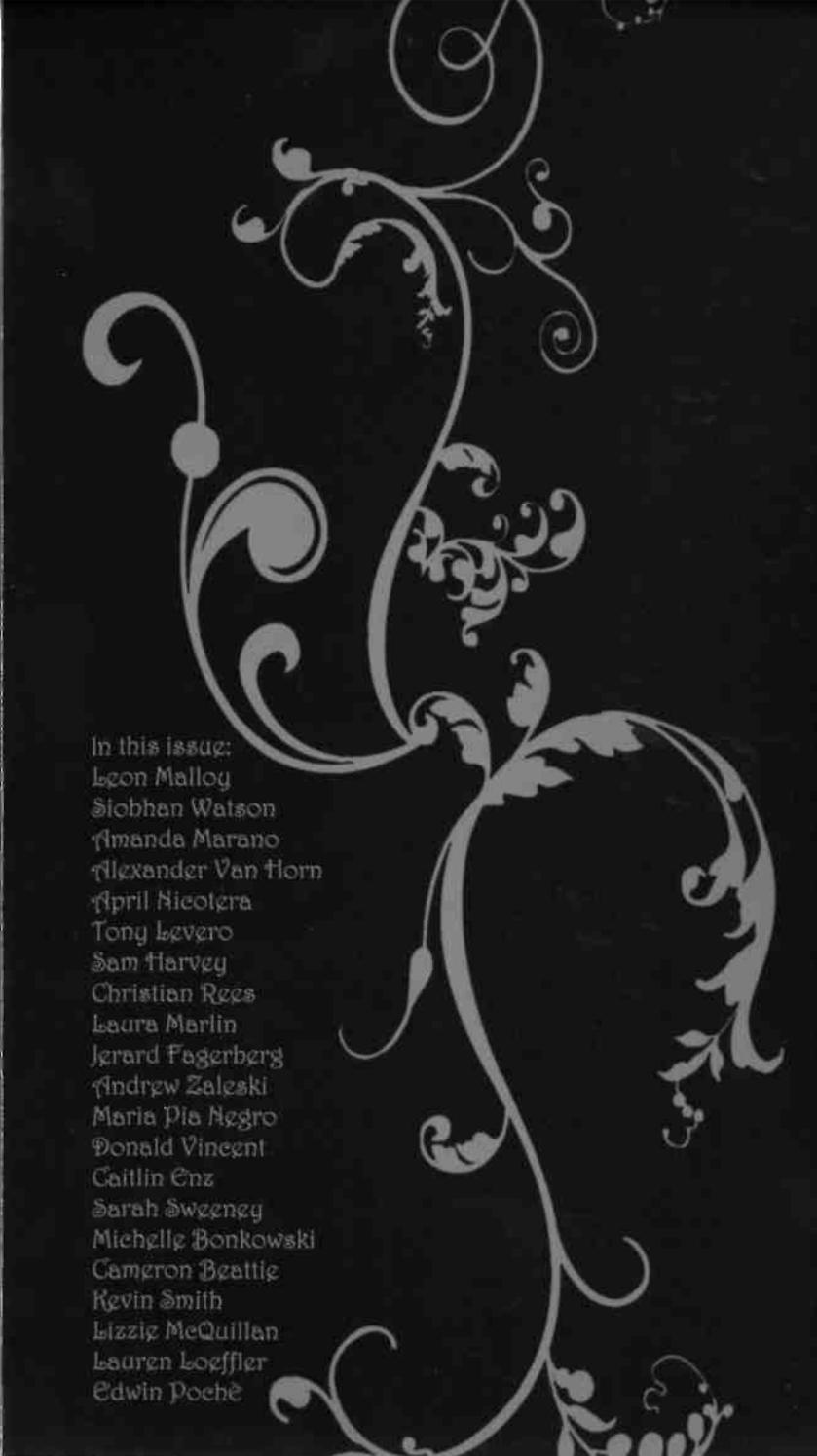
The watchmaker would have to build knobs for that after work.

A Note on the Type

The text is set in 10 pt. Gentium, a typeface designed by Victor Gaultney and released under the SIL Open Font License in 2005. The typeface is designed to eventually allow "the diverse ethnic groups around the world who use the Latin and Greek scripts to produce readable, high-quality publications" through a vast set of diacritical marks and alternative glyphs, according Gaultney.

Titles and page numbers are set in Optima, a typeface designed by Hermann Zapf and released in 1955 by the D. Stempel AG Foundry.

The Garland logo is set Harrington.



In this issue:
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