

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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Man Akin

Laura Geron

I'm a human being. And I want to live with people again.

*-Andrew Brink, *An Instant in the Wind**

The hours tick and all I can see are a set of eyes, impenetrable and heavily hooded from behind the glass window. Those eyes. They watch, yet see nothing. Longing for a single blink, they sit perfectly between the carved nose and arched brows upon a flawless face. The mannequin intently gazes across the department store as if intently focused on something entrancing on the opposite side of the room. However, the hours pass, seasons pass, and nothing has changed. That is, nothing, except perhaps the position of the crook in her hand, or the way her elbow bends as a means to fashion the season's new handbag or sequined glove to catch the admiring eye of passerby.

Working the nightshift at the mall, I spend long hours with these plastic figures, dressing, grooming, and spraying them with the store's most recent scent. Each hair must

be in place, and shirts must be positioned in appropriate places; a revealed midriff may make the customer uneasy. I found myself mirroring their exact outfits in order to promote the clothing, and sometimes people would even mistake me for a mannequin as I stood near the storefront to greet. Before this point, I had an inclination to think that mannequins scrunched their own jeans and changed their own clothes with the seasons, but that would become my job; I would tend to and bring life to these inanimate dolls.

After my first few moments of being in the Abercrombie at the Short Hills Mall, I began to feel and recognize their presence. Intimidating and somewhat menacing, they tower with a looming stature and elongated torsos; ironically the word "manneken" means midget in Dutch. According to one source, "different fashions dictate different

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 mirrors, a window displays a mannequin, intrigues the customers, and gets them to buy into the tricks, or in this case, the clothing. Plate glass was invented in the United States in 1868, and put into retail establishments in the 1880's. With the invention of the filament lamp and newly-popular street lights, mannequins could be placed in front of the windows where they were to be illuminated. Opposed to floor forms, the window displays are dressed in the store's latest fashions. The first window

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 window with the intention to grope a female mannequin dressed in a French Maid uniform. As florist and artist R Anderson Birch states, "Putting the real into a still life makes it desirable. They want it, they want to touch it. It makes them feel like the whole thing is possible instead of looking like something in a museum." Prior to this mannequin molestation, Dotson had been arrested more than six other times for the same offense on different mannequins. In the future, he plans to buy his own mannequin to satisfy his bizarre fantasies. The criminal was fooled by the mysterious illusions presented by an alluring yet plastic mannequin stationed beyond the glass. Freud believes that "the arousal one feels in the presence of something uncanny shows ambivalence for an object simultaneously attractive and repulsive."

In the Twilight Zone episode called "After Hours," the mannequins come to life. A woman who enters the store talks to a woman whom she recognizes as a mannequin she had noticed earlier in the store. Do her eyes deceive her or is she falling

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, and plastic. Is all it takes a little movement, a gesture, a handshake, or wave, a greeting, any act of warmth, to be considered living?

Although they give off a powerful presence, a human can never achieve being so eerie, uncanny; so lifeless, yet so alive.

Curious about other people's encounters, I dialed my friend Erica and asked for a few first-hand accounts. First

I inquired why she applied to work at Abercrombie and was told: "I really liked the clothes: they are comfortable and make my body look good." I asked her to recall a personal account of a situation with mannequins and their influence on customers in the store. "The mannequins make little girls want to become skinnier so they can fit in the clothes. This one woman came in with her daughter who was on the edge of obesity. After trying on in the outfit in the fitting room, her mom looked at her blatantly said 'No, honey...it looked different on the mannequin.' And I wanted to say, 'seriously, if you don't look like the mannequin, don't bother walking into the store."

One may chase an ideal that can never truly be achieved. People strive to be as flawless, glamorous, and trim as mannequins. Movie stars share these same qualities and have actually been made into mannequins to be set in exhibits. British model Twiggy, for example, was sculpted in 1964 and has been a fashion icon ever since. Contestants on Tyra Bank's *Americas Next Top Model* competed to stand as still, and look as lifeless yet beautiful as a mannequin to win a challenge. It is ironic how we try to embody the qualities as movie stars, and movie stars

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.

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

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A Matter of Persuasion

Justin Krajewski

Society drives people crazy with lust and calls it advertising.

- John Lahr

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.

While adults have a developed identity, children are not born with the same sense of self. They are not born knowledgeable and they have hardly any solid views of the world that they live in.

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 from a tiny boutique in San Francisco to being one of the most recognizable and influential American retailers of women's wear in the United States by telling women to cover it up for thirty years; instead, sex was marketed as sophisticated (Workman, 61-73). Walking around in your underwear could be cute, girly, natural—and Victoria knows your boyfriend would love it. Women who wanted to be associated with the likes

of the Victoria's Secret Angels, either of their own desire or for the satisfaction of someone else's, were ready and willing to pay the money for anything "PINK".

But skin is not just shown when advertising lingerie. "Sexual content in [fragrance] advertising," author Tom Reichert explains, "is manifest in the usual ways: as models showing skin—chest and breasts, open shirts, tight-fitting clothing—and as dalliances involving touching, kissing, embracing, and voyeurism." But what else are advertisers *supposed* to do? It seems as if society has forced advertising companies into a corner; I mean, in this day and age, no one buys perfume just to smell nice. And you certainly can't use cologne for practical reasons—I doubt you could persuade a bottle of Kenneth Cole's Reaction to clean your room or take out the garbage. So, for advertisers, sex is the only answer. Tom Reichert also quotes Robert Green, vice president of Calvin Klein cosmetics, admitting, "A fragrance doesn't do anything. It doesn't stop wetness. It doesn't unclog your drain. To create a fantasy for the consumer is what fragrance is all about. And sex and romance are a big part of where people's fantasies tend to run."

Advertising has turned us all into

10-year-old boys who want to buy baseball bats.

Advertising has us starved.

Advertising has us fooled.

Companies are printing ads, airing commercials, ultimately exploiting what they think they know we want, and in doing so, they are conditioning us to want it. They provide us with unrealistic expectations and expect us to give them thanks for showing us how deprived we truly are! As Duran Duran tells us, we are all hungry like wolves. And, plainly speaking, if Duran Duran says it, it must be true...

But wait a second—we are not animals!

We are reasonable, conscientious, commonsensical, substantial, dramatic humans. (Humans who are, occasionally, lazy, sloppy, ignorant, or otherwise mindless.) We have the ability to think our own awesome thoughts and form our own valuable opinions. We are not posted in front of a television set all day and all night, we do not bathe in advertisements when we step into the shower each morning. We do not only have eyes for Calvin Klein ads, and we do not have to be starved for *anything* unless, of course, we haven't eaten in quite some time.

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.

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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 healthy life"². Clearly, health has always been a primary concern for the human race dating

as far back as hundreds of years ago.

There are countless health benefits that comes with the consumption of tea that leave us, the consumers, with more hope for an obesity-free lifestyle. Michael Pollan stresses the importance of having an unadulterated diet of fresh organic foods that stimulate human health in order to avoid the genetic manipulation of animals and preservatives in such products. In a recent trip through the Appalachian Mountains in New York State, I visited a tea market and was more than perplexed at the sight of rows upon rows and columns upon columns of tea bags, plants, and leaves I saw. It almost seemed as if I was wandering through a complex maze of corn or traveling through a tropical rain forest and seeing many things for the first time. But what intrigued me the most was the naturalness of the tea itself. Tea serves as a crucial component for maintaining the balance of the body's liquids while simultaneously introducing new pleasures of taste, smell, and satisfaction:

"The first cup moistens my lips and throat. The second cup breaks my loneliness. The third cup searches my barren entral but to find therein some thousand volumes of odd ideographs. The fourth cup raises a slight perspiration - all the wrongs of life pass out through my pores. At the

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 more euphoric is that it can be grown right in your own backyard!

My grandmother is an avid

agriculturalist and has been growing tea plants in her semi-detached greenhouse in the backyard for years. She has told me numerous times that there are over two hundred different species of tea plants around the globe. Each tea leaf, once in bloom, shares a delicate fragrance with nature and blossoms into a white or pink flower with a solid hue. The tea plant must be located in a region with a warm yet moist climate, whose winter falls not as low as fifty six degrees Fahrenheit. My grandmother told me that it's not the precision of technique that makes a tea seed flourish into its mature form, but rather the tenderness you provide for its existence up until the point of its maturity that truly matters. Once the tea is fully grown, she hand-picks the tea and gathers it into the wicker basket that I recently purchased for her. After this extended exercise has subsided, she places the tea leaves in the oven to reduce the moisture in the leaves in order to naturally strengthen and preserve every individual tea leaf. This strenuous hand picking task ensures that only the best tea leaves are collected and used for producing her delectable tea beverage.

While exploring my grandmother's tea collection, she mentioned this small antique "tea room" in town that had

conceivably every type of tea ever made. Strangely interested, we stopped by. It was a quirky little shop but had an exorbitant array of teas that piled nearly two feet over my head. Within the architecture of the neatly stacked tea bags, the table tops and charcoal colored cabinets were illuminated with ruby, cerulean and emerald colors designating the different tasting and smelling teas. As if it were not overwhelming enough, a strange man then took us into the back of the room, behind the wooden mantel piece, and showed us what it looks like to dry, process, and oxidize the tea leaves and buds into a charismatic beverage. He soaked the tea leaves into a pot of boiling water and stirred it well with a wooden spoon. Next, he gently scooped the leaves out of the container and pressed them tenderly on the counter-top releasing the remaining water molecules that had been embedded into the leaf's tiny glands. He laid the leaves out to dry under several heating lamps that were set to different temperatures. That was it, it was over. There was no industry, no added preservatives, and no genetic exploitation.

The vexing question that Michael Pollan has advocated in his dissertation is how to maximize a healthy lifestyle from the foods we eat without generically

manipulating them or the products and animals that finally fabricate a final good or product. When constructing a healthy regimen of sustenance, eating a plant-based diet significantly decreases calorie consumption while providing an energy based fusion of amino-acids and vitamins that ensure a healthy lifestyle. Unlike many foods, tea can be created into many different forms without the use of added preservatives and chemically based additives to stimulate a different texture or taste that are unhealthy for the human body. Such transitions in tea include a broad range such as black tea, white tea, red tea, green tea, and Oolong tea.

Just as most other plant leaves, tea leaves are naturally green but can, depending on the climate and moisture in the air, illuminate into a sweet yellow tint. However, no matter the color, shape, or size, these tea leaves will eventually be naturally brewed into the same tea-like concoction but with different tastes. Black tea, for example, has a different drying technique that gives it its special kick. The tea leaves are spread out over mats for a process of vaporization in the sun. They are then rolled for the "purpose of releasing antibiotic liquids found in the leaf in order to allow the fermentation and oxidization of the leaf to begin" (Wissotsky).

After these elongated steps, the black tea tastes extraordinarily sweet and refreshing—with a blackened color filled with lipids that are good for the skin. By naturally straining the tea leaves with the power of the sun, the leaves begin to develop a more salubrious texture and release additional flavors that seem even far too angelic for the human hands to foster. Within this conundrum lies a creation story, one that is not told with words, but with the hands of its creator.

A well-made cup of tea has the ability to warm the heart and soul of anyone brave enough to experience heavenly ecstasy. Oolong Tea is fashioned with a slight change in its fermentation stage. The preparation and fermentation stage for Oolong tea is not counted in weeks, days or hours, but in minutes! Because of this tea's availability, malleability, and momentary evolution ability, it is less sweet. Oolong tea tastes more "earthly and natural" than every other tea and is prepared solely to maximize its atmospheric flavor. It is only rolled by human hands and cooked only by the sun, yet its unadulterated state tastes so great. Unlike many other foods, the only industry to create this flavored tea is nature itself.

Green tea is furnished by sun-drying the leaves on bamboo trays, then stir-frying

them in hot roasting pans. Green tea does not have a fermentation stage so the tea leaves maintain their original green color and taste more sweet. This is why Green tea is actually green! The green pigment in the tea leaves is naturally preserved by the careful manipulation of its producer. Also, the leaves remain green because they are picked prematurely. Green tea is perhaps one of the most healthy plant-generated food sources readily available for consumption today. There is nothing better or more rewarding than brewing something so delicious and healthy at the same time.

When White tea is made into a delicious beverage, the tea leaves are picked before ripening and the buds are sun-dried. When making White tea, there is no rolling, fermentation, or processing stage; this tea, too, is one of the most natural. After picking, the tea buds are thrown into a giant tea pot to be mixed and infused with the same tea leaves that are used to make Green tea. There is no generic manipulation in this situation, but rather a natural mixing process to blend particular flavors together to make one amazing concoction. Left in the giant tea pot until a desired potency is reached, the leaves are then taken out and beaten to release the water that has been trapped by the plant's

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 its name: *rooibos*, meaning "red bush". This tea drink is rich in minerals, antioxidants and vitamins that prevent numerous diseases. As proof to Michael Pollan, it is possible to "naturally manipulate" a food source while simultaneously maintaining its natural and healthy balance whether it is to produce more or to create a different taste.

Pollan suggests that we not eat like carnivores or vegetarians but rather eat like omnivores seeking a healthy diet. Pollan directly recommends that we should try to establish a new motive for fashioning new foods. In retrospect, the greater the diversity

is in the food sources we devour, the more nutritional and healthy we are bound to be. Tea is a malleable food source that maintains its nutritional and cleansing value even after every stage of fermentation, processing, and rolling. In following a motion Pollan calls nutritionism, "as the '-ism' suggests, it is not a scientific subject but an ideology," the manipulation of tea demonstrates that it is possible for there to be no industrial or processing additives when producing something healthy. Because "we are what we eat" in more ways than one, aren't you conscientious about what you eat and indulge? If we open our eyes we can see that health is a distinct feature of the natural world around us that requires only natural manipulation for tastes and appearance

¹ ** "Schizophrenic food culture" - Alice Waters, owner of Chez Panisse restaurant stated in a magazine article than later used on michealpollan.com.

Meaning extracted from context to mean rabid-like or very foolish.

² "The Discovery and History of Tea" Wissotsky, Copyright 2007. <http://www.thehistoryoftea.com/>

³ Lung, Lu. Tea-Drinking. New York, New York: Word Press, 1970.

⁴ "Tea, Tea You're the One for Me" : General Medicine Community, Copyright 2007 Wellsphere. <http://stanford.wellsphere.com/general-medicine-article/tea-tea-your-the-one-for-me-health-benefits-of-tea/747857>

<http://www.2basnob.com/tea-types.html>

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<http://www.teagenius.com/>

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 mom's room to find him sleeping facedown and snoring loudly even though it was already three in the afternoon. Otherwise, his figure and role in her life is just as distant as those of Ferdinand Magellan and Christopher Columbus. So when the plane lands and the father embraces her and talks about how she has grown since the last time he saw her, it's like Ferdinand Magellan or Christopher Columbus came alive and is standing in front of her.

10:16 AM—11:15 AM: Music on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

The girl arrives during the summer, so she wonders why this new neighborhood of hers that is not a square but more like straight and parallel lines is not producing high-pitched shrieks from children playing. No battles to be fought over banana trees here. In the morning, with nothing else to do, she goes outside to the front yard and sits

on the grass, waiting for anything. She only hears measures of roaring vehicles, a quarter note or two of pebbles bouncing from the street to the sidewalk, and then four whole notes of rests. After an hour, she realizes there is a repeat sign. She goes back inside, and takes part in the more upbeat notes with her mother and sister as they watch a show in which contestants try to guess the price of a toaster and then win a car. Later, there will be *tut-tut-tut-tut* as they watch a show with a wheel that spins and a word to solve. The father doesn't come home until later when the door goes *click* and his briefcase says *plomp* on the foyer. For the rest of the night, there is eight-hour's worth of whole rests. It reaches the end eventually, but there are more repeat signs.

One rainy day, the girl cannot go outside the yard in the morning, so she sits in the room with the biggest window. She finds out these kinds of days have more sound to it. There is a $3/4$ -time measure... a couple of two eighth notes linked together and a quarter note. The rain goes *tick-tick, tick-tick*, and then her stifled cry goes something like *shnpdh*. Later that night, she finally hears something. While she feigns asleep, there is a half note of *creaaakkk* as the door slowly opens, and four quarter notes of *click click*

click click of footsteps , and a *squeak* as she feels the bed dip beside her. A hand *swishes* her hair aside and lips make a silent *bpwa* on her forehead. She knows it is not her mother, but she finally falls asleep.

12:45 PM—1:00 PM: English (After Lunch)

The father is working late, so one night the air feels colder and the house is muter than usual. The girl tosses and turns in her bed for over an hour, wondering why the jet lag still hasn't disappeared after four weeks. She desperately wants sleep to come. Her mother said they all have to wake up early tomorrow to head to another place that is not home. The sudden thought of the mother gives her an idea, and she makes her way silently to her room, crawling on the bed to lie beside her. "I can't sleep," the girl whispers.

The mother smiles and opens her eyes, gathering her daughter closer. "Can I tell you a story?" The girl nods.

"There was once a girl. For as long as she can remember, she wanted to be a doctor, but her family didn't have enough money to send her to medical school. Although she was upset, she knew there was nothing she or her family could do, so she settled on becoming a midwife. It wasn't her dream job, but what

else could she do? Then one day, she met a boy. For as long as he could remember, he wanted to be a lawyer, but his family didn't have enough to send him to law school. They fell in love and decided that when they have kids, they would make sure nothing would get in the way of their success."

The girl stuffs her face on the pillow.

"You do know what I'm trying to tell you, right? You understand?" the mother asks, shaking the girl's shoulders gently.

The girl nods.

"Your father's hard work bought us all the comfort we had back there. His money purchased all those plantations you like to walk through so much. He even helped pay for your grandmother's medical bills. That house you grew up in? All your toys and clothes that arrived in bulk packages every year? Who do you think they're from?"

The girl faces her mother, who wipes her cheeks with her thumb and embraces her tightly. "Now go to sleep. Your father said we're signing you up for school tomorrow. I can't believe you're already going to be in the fourth grade."

1:01 PM—2:15 PM: Math

"The teacher said that your English is great, so you don't have to take ESOL

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.

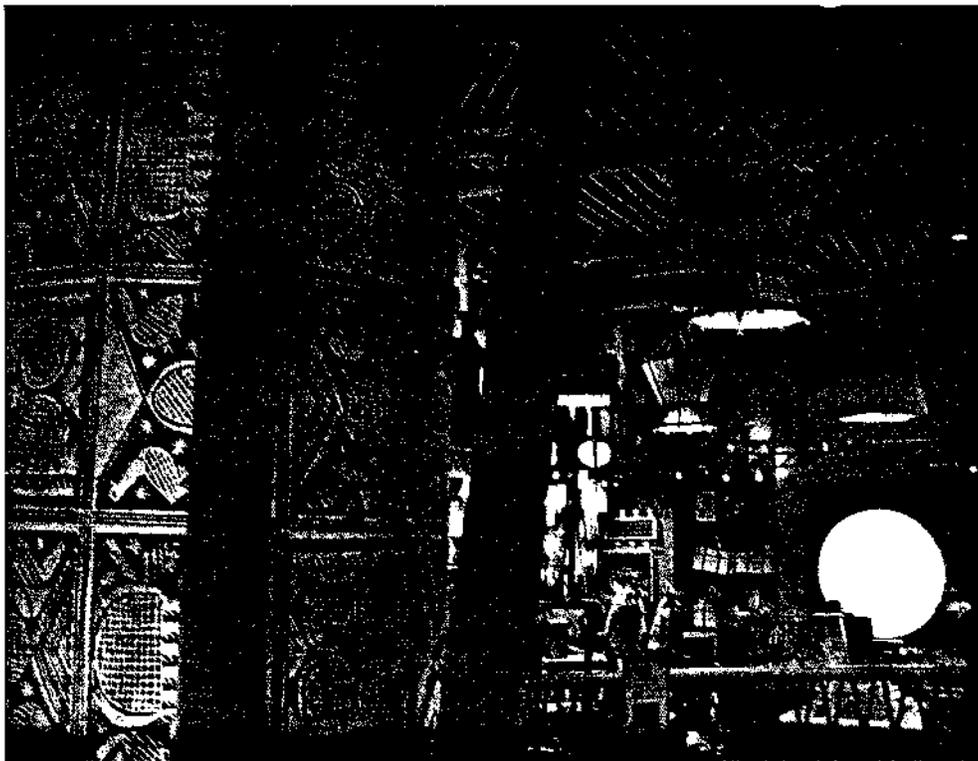
Her father has just signed her up for elementary school and her sister for something called "middle school." The family decides to eat on the way home for lunch. They reach the door, and a hostess in black smiles at them: "How many?" Her father smiles to himself, ushering for the girl, her mother, and her sister to come forward. "Four," he says.

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.

Cayne sat with his back to the door watching television with his roommate. From the sound of it, they were discussing

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".

Cayne is 23 years old. Rewind three years and this is when he was deployed to Iraq, four and you will see him graduate high school, somewhere in between this time was when he joined the Marine Corp. Nine years and some days previous to this day his parents got divorced, ten years and he first found out what it felt like to be a teenager, eleven and he had bought his first Bob Marley poster, which he always joked, should have been a sure sign to his parents that he was doomed. Twelve years he lived happily in an unbroken household with his sister, his mother, father and a dog in the woods. The residence was a small house surrounded by foliage, not too small, just enough for every room to serve a purpose. Rewind eleven more years on top of that and find infant Cayne, eight pounds twelve ounces, in the arms of his mother. He smiles a toothless grin and squirms in her arms.

"Look at those blue eyes," a nurse says. "How beautiful."

23-year-old Cayne looked at me with his deep blue eyes, his white teeth

exposed in an all out grin. His complexion was perfect with the exception of the dark circles underneath his eyes. As of five thirty-seven this morning when he called me he had been up for at least forty straight hours maybe more; he got up every morning not quite sure if he had slept or not. Serving our country had not treated him well. When it came to the government, taking care of their boys who came back came in the form of pills: anti-depression, anti-anxiety, pills to help you sleep, pills to numb your mind—Klonopin, Lazapan, Xanax, Valium, and Ativan. He had an alphabet collection of pills, the bottles filled up the first two drawers in his dresser. He knew pills would not fix everything but that was the only thing that his government was willing to pay for. He took handfuls of pills a night, and wash it down with some Crown on the rocks; enough to kill a horse he would say.

And still he couldn't sleep.

Because he lost friends in Iraq. Because he had been shot at, and he had shot back. Because he killed a man, or two or three, he did not want to think about it. And this is why he couldn't sleep. This is why he never slept. Because he had seen children drinking water with raw sewage. Because he had seen a woman beaten to death. Because

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 Marlboro Light he was exhaling; It was a familiar scent that I breathed in. I turned my focus to the television briefly to see an advertisement with wide-eyed contestants flailing around in a desperate attempt to collect as much money as they could before the timer would down to double zeros.

"I'm not a fan of money," Cayne mused one early summer morning as we sat on his porch sharing a cigarette. The sun was barely above the horizon.

"Just enough to get you by, to take care of your kids, to buy a roof over your head. Any more than that is just too much." He smiled at me and then took a sip out of the mug of tea he had made for us minutes

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 now. We sat in his kitchen as he made me dinner at two in the morning. He smiled and asked me about my life since he saw me last. He always made it about me. I wanted to tell him that I still loved him after everything, that I could take him back now, but I just kept telling him the pleasantries of my new life, smiling at my pointless stories of drunken stupors of a new world away, all the time still staring at the black circles underneath his eyes.

Permanence

Krista Hayward Basile

My mother hated tattoos. "Do you know what a tattoo indicates?" she'd ask. "Financial independence," she'd respond to her own question. "Can you pay for Loyola all by yourself?" It was another rhetorical question that I'd pretend to absorb.

My teeth chattered. My palms sweat. I clenched my fists tightly as the pain curved left and right. Lifting up my head, my body quaked as I looked at the permanence below.

Ryan, my brother, had been marked by permanence the day he was born. While I played football with the other boys in the yard, Ryan sat aside and found his deepest passions within a set of paints and colored pencils. Even at a young age, Ryan stunned everyone with his means of self-expression: art. All the hints were there, but none of his audience could have read the underlying picture he could never paint.

"Are my teeth supposed to be chattering?" I questioned.

"It's normal. I'm right on your pelvis," he said. It was slightly ironic that I

allowed a total stranger to touch the inside of my hip.. .and make me feel entirely comfortable to a new, painful yet addicting sensation.

My mother had been throwing up for days, snapping at me for asking what's wrong. Peering out onto the patio, I witnessed my father, the visage of fortitude, collapse into his hands, weeping. His body quivered. What's a father to do?

"Almost done, you okay?"

"I'm okay. Keep going." I assured the stranger in attempt to calm myself. Drawing in a deep breath of cold air, it somehow found the heat deep within me and passed between my lips, returning to the rest of the room.

"How long have you known?" My mother demanded to know. For the first time, she did not know the answer. The answer wasn't lingering in the air in front of our faces. My mother did not have the upper hand in this one. "What are you talking a-" "You know

what I'm talking about, "she snapped and her voice boomed, severing my thought out of mid air. "Your brother..." my father mediated.

I grasped my best friend's hand tightly. I felt two sets of eyes peering at me, 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.

"Three years," I admitted. My mother's eyes swelled with tides of tears and remained fixed upon mine. My father was left speechless. "How could you? How could you..." my mother faded. My father was defenseless.

"Breathe," the artist reminded me. "You're all done." I slipped off the table and held one side of my pants at a downward angle, peering into the mirror at what I had done. "Your brother would be proud," my friend assured me, still clenching my hand.

"She's gonna kill me if she ever sees this." I regressed.

My son is gay and I am fully responsible.

The thoughts of my mother were loud and clear, without speaking a single word.

Your father wasn't around until you were 14.

I was your caretaker. I am fully responsible.

Responsible? *No one can be "responsible". He was born this way. He is a Hayward, like my mother. He is a Basile, like my father. He is anchored to that. And that will never change.*

My fingers graced over the swollen black lines on my hip: over the hooks, over the rope, over the H, and over the B, over the *anchor*.

At the end of the day, Ryan is my brother and I am his sister.

And to me, *that* is permanence.

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.

As the season came to a close, I went to my fourth and final \$1 game with my brother. We picked up the four tickets from the will-call box office and crossed the street to buy a hotdog from a vendor.

"Buyin'...sellin'...eh-body got extra tickets? You got extra tickets, boy?"

"Yeah, I do," I said, pulling the tickets out of my pocket to show to the usual Camden Street scalper. I'd ignored this guy plenty of times before.

"Weh dey at, boy? Weh dey at? I gih

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 to ease our offseason depression. While there, we decided to invest in some new merchandise. I charged the \$150 tab, he

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."

I could see the pizza was only about halfway down the conveyor belt. "I suddenly remember why I stopped carrying cash when I moved to the city," I said to myself. I was alone with a Pizza Mart employee, my new friend with AIDS, and three \$20 bills, one \$10 dollar bill, and two \$1 bills left over from my purchase. I decided that talking nonstop for the next few minutes was my only option.

"Whasya name, man?"

"I'm Dave, what's yours?"

"I'm Birdman."

"Well, I'm glad to meet you, Birdman, but there's got to be something to look up about. The weather's been awesome lately, huh?"

"Yeah, I guess so, mane. I jus got back from Jawjuh so all dis don't seem so

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.

But it's me who is disgusting. On a typical day, my palms expel more sweat than the inner thighs of a suited obese businessman speedwalking through the city on a mid-August afternoon.

I have hyperhidrosis, an overactive glandular disorder born of a metabolic defect. It's just how God made me, I guess. Appropriately enough, my crippling self-consciousness caused me to duck conveniently to the restroom before the fateful Lord's Prayer hand holding ritual at every Tuesday morning elementary school mass. Call it passive aggressive revenge against He who afflicted me.

One magical evening in my

adolescence brought a news program featuring an operation for sufferers like me. A swift pierce of a gland in the shoulder ceased the excess sweat for good. I was entranced. Not only was I not alone, but there was hope for future normalcy.

My mom made an appointment for a consultation with the dermatologist. I observed the painful looking acne of my fellow waiting room occupants, the most memorable of which was actively oozing pus. Understandably, the expression on this particular kid's face exposed his extreme discomfort and self-consciousness. But my bitter, prepubescent self had limited sympathy for anyone who took his normal hands for granted. That kid doesn't know pain, I remember myself thinking. He doesn't know what true embarrassment feels like.

The doctor wrote me a prescription for DrySol, an over-the-counter extreme strength anti-perspirant for the hands and feet.

It made no difference.

"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 up yesterday, if I'm not mistaken, Marie? I guess they just don't make office supplies like they used to, do they?"

I shook my head gravely in response, trying hard to look personally offended by poor quality adhesives while suppressing any outward traces of guilt.

Sometimes, when wallowing in self-pity (as many fellow silent sweaters often do), I ponder all the celebrated career paths I could have chosen had I not been born with such a limiting disease. Politician of any kind is naturally out, or any self-promoting celebrity for that matter. In such professions the ability to shake a stranger's hand *without* causing him to grimace is absolutely essential. Forget any career as a pro athlete or instrumentalist, since both require manual traction. Surgery and dentistry are both out—I can't wear plastic gloves without dehydrating. I guess I could save on aromatic oil if I became a masseuse, but it seems doubtful that people would want to pay to be sweated on.

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 eager grasp of my soaking wet palm, I will know that I have finally found my soulmate.

Until then, I'll politely keep my hands to myself.

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 refractions, a fistful of sapphires tipped from a clenched palm, tumbling from rock to rock..." She paused to let it sink in, "Sapphires are too solid for this description. When we think of water, we think of a fluid, flowing thing, and sapphires are way too solid."

I piped in, "But I was thinking more along the lines of a box of jewels being poured out, you know, so it gives the illusion of water." We stared at one another for a moment, each knowing that the other would not consent easily.

"But water can't be solid, it's a liquid."

"Not a frozen river, like ice drifts or something, it's like a slushy." Dr. Dobler looked at the clock hanging above my head and told us that we would continue this discussion on Friday. I left the room with ice on the brain, rivers of slush flowing through my synapses, and molecules of hydrogen and oxygen floating before my eyes.

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On that day, February 18th, it had

snowed in the morning. By eleven o'clock it had changed to sleet, then rain and then nothing. The water stained the ground, and the moisture in the air clung to my jacket. It was a fitting day to discuss water, to think about foundations and fluidity. Dr. Dobler's comments on my description being too solid had set something in motion. Chemistry bubbled in the back of my mind, a thing I had not thought of since junior year of high school.

H<sub>2</sub>O, dihydrogen monoxide, that which makes up seventy percent of the earth's surface, ; odorless, tasteless, colorless, it is the basis for life. A foundation, but a fluid one. The molecules of dihydrogen monoxide are constantly moving, breaking the bonds between themselves and re-bonding in fractions of a fraction of a second. Yet it has enough stability to be a key component of life. It is malleable, form fitting and yet at the same time solid. The universal solvent. It is strange how something seemingly so inconstant is our only constant. One hydrogen and two oxygen, two sapphires and a pearl. Water is forever fixed in a double state, never fully fluid and never completely solid.

In nature it is the only substance found that has an inherent dynamic

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⁻¹, atomic number 1.

Oxygen (O), nonmetal, chalcogen, group 16, period 2, block p, atomic weight 15.9994(3) g. mol⁻¹, 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 doom. It is just a gas, flammable and ever present. To think of oxygen is to think of snaking lengths of air, trailing from nature into the throat, down deep into the lungs, roiling around, tempestual, then released in a single huff, back out, up, into nature. Out into a wide expanse above a rocky outcropping; you feel the breeze on your face, you feel true air. But all we see now are numbers and a quantifiable world.

Molecules colliding in the void, that's what it is to the foundation seekers. If we do not challenge the base, we may become static in our phases. The grey void all around us may stagnate and quantify us, steal our individuality and potential for creativity. Writing, as with science, has had its innovators. People have challenged the foundations, looked closer, and delved deeper. Physics had Einstein, politics the philosophes, art the Dadaists, writing has free-verse poetry, stream of consciousness; it had Lewis Carroll and his Jabberwocky, Eliot and his Wasteland. To stay dynamic in writing is to look at the void through emerald glasses, to see color where the base says there is none. Saying a cascading

waterfall is like "a fistful of sapphires" is a way to irrationalize the rational.

Creativity is full of seeming contradictions, just like science. How can water be constantly falling apart at the seams, and at the same time perpetually bound together? When it changes its phase from liquid to solid, how can it still be water? How can a man write a sentence that lasts four pages and still have it be grammatically correct? How can a sapphire be a drop of water? All of this can be because of a fluid foundation. The rules we discover and create to order the world are malleable like water. If you fill a cup with liquid does it not take the cup's shape? And if you look at a piece of writing, a sentence, a phrase, that challenges your own parameters and opinions can it not be beautiful or just as true as your own? Science has proven this again and again. Theories are brought to life in an instant and leveled as quickly as they came. Scientists look past what is, into the realm of "could-be" and bring back beauty and paradox. It is not to say that science is rigid, no. I say that people are rigid when it comes to realms of contradiction, where beauty can be found in anything, where values and nature coexist, because they cannot bend without breaking. Beauty is farfetched, and science is as fluid as

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.

In their infinite premeditation, my parents had the sense to conceive two boys as future caretakers of the one acre yard our colonial house sat on. From the time that Jeffrey and I were seven years old, we were put to the task of raking up the leaves into soggy geometries and coarsely stuffing them into barrels. At the time, a half hour of work

seemed like a prison sentence and the pain of a stiff back set in at an earlier age than expected. We thought of any excuse to escape — feigning disease or even *homework* — but none worked. Invariably, we were sentenced to the yard for another infinite shift of collecting scales.

We worked in the dark corners of the yard, where the leaves were thick and matted from the rain, where the sun shone only in spotlights through the canopy of maple branches. Each time my plastic claw disturbed the organic carpet of leaves and pine needles, I would expose insect cultures thriving in the rotten plant matter. Centipedes scurried away in sharp s-patterns, worms poked half out of the ground and twisted viscerally as if they were caught in some unseen hurricane and potato bugs curled into the defense position when startled by the sudden intrusion of oxygen. The leaves had a musky, moth-like smell - reminiscent of damp towels left on the laundry room floor. We laid the barrels on their sides and straddled them, pawing at the pile like dogs digging tunnels

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; sagging in the middle as though the cab was fastened to the bed with thinning rubber bands. Before he came in the house to indenture my brother and I for the day, my father would spread a blue tarp over the bed of the Silverado for us to empty the barrels into - a second skin. Each deposit into the truck bed aroused the hope that a trip to the dump would soon follow. We gleamed with anxiety as the leaves cascaded from our barrels and gradually filled the tarp — lusting for the momentary relief that a trip to the dump would offer. Every time we thought the truck was at capacity, my father would climb in the back and stomp the leaves down, opening up the unfortunate opportunity for more work. After a few more full barrels ("*really* full this time boys, you're

only making more work for yourselves") we'd satisfy my fathers expectations and he'd relent, "Good work boys, let's go."

The dump was a thoroughly unappetizing place to vacation. However, after a day spent growing blisters on my palms, it might as well have been the Bahamas. That is, if the Bahamas was lined with pick-ups and smelled like discarded diapers. The lines of trucks took turns tossing their inorganic trash into the hungry, gaping-mouthed compactors. I liked to stand over and watch as the compactor's one iron tooth pulsed to the hum of pistons, eventually popping the trash bags and releasing the pungent odor of their insides. I imagined bits of black trash bags caught in the inner cogs, flecked with evidence of curdled cottage cheese yellowed by decomposition. A man operated the teeth from a control panel in a fenced-in tower. From the fence he hung discarded walkers, stuffed animals, baseball bats, and other miscellanea he could not let *others* part with — a veritable art gallery of useless junk. I knew very little about him, only that he wore a neon-yellow vest and his mouth contained no predictable pattern of teeth.

Typically, my father employed cinderblocks to hold down the edges of the tarp as we fumbled down the highway to the

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 flailed loudly in the wind, undoing the tight interweave of blue fibers. On these occasions, I would look back in with a mix of horror and curious mischief and expect to see the car behind us veer off the road to avoid an onslaught of blinding leaves. A short stop and then he'd get rear-ended then domino effect and, before you know it, there'd be a ten car pileup. We would be cast all over the news as the ignorant family who trusted the safety of all the other motorists on Route 3 to the will of two cinderblocks at seventy miles per hour. To avoid such a humbling tragedy, my father would pull the truck over in these instances and give a resounding, "F\*\*\*!"

After the second or third failure of the day, my father gave up. "Go ahead boys, climb in." he'd say invitingly. We had been waiting for him to cave all day. Jeffrey and I exchanged excited looks and we beamed, excitement burning in our eyes. Hurriedly, we climbed in the back of the truck and

vaulted from the tailgate like swans touching down on a glassy lake. Our bodies held down most of the uneven ends, the rest we gripped tightly or weighed down with our shoes — by then stuffed with vagrant leaves and browning socks. The tarp was slick in the hold of our greasy palms so we stuck our index fingers between the metal-lipped eyelets to keep the ends from escaping. We reamed with the delinquent joy and felt the cool dampness of the leaves below us. "Hold on tight now, I'm not pullin' over again," my father reminded us through the back window as the sound of rushing wind in our ears steadily picked up.

The way to the dump was mild, except for the two miles of highway where the tarp typically disobeyed. We prepared ourselves for this leg of the trip with diligence. We were guilty with the pleasure of this duty; no one was supposed to derive such joy from a chore. We heard the engine kick and shift gears as we joined the cacophony of shotty mufflers and pulsing exhaust. Stray leaves flew from behind our ears, between the tarp and the bed. These would be the only ones we let escape our dirt-sheathed clutches. Two miles felt like twenty five. Seventy miles per hour felt like a hundred and seventy. Our hearts pumped harder as our glands mixed adrenaline cocktails that exploded in our

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 worked longer, more tolerable, hours and drove the loads to the dump ourselves. One autumn afternoon, I pulled in the driveway to discover bright orange dots on the bellies of fifteen trees in our yard. They had been stricken with a strain of some mystery disease, the indiscriminate pox of a spray can. Within a few weeks, men were at

the house grinding the stumps into mulch. My father bought a new truck and, together with my mother, lined the bed with barrels teaming with leaves - obviously packed-down as much as possible. By that point, the tarp had deteriorated to a pile of synthetic threads and sat under the same cinderblocks behind the shed, beyond use.

I'll always have a strange tinge of sentimental glee remembering how the wind died as we pulled into the dump. Jeffrey sat up and threw a handful of leaves at me. I retaliated with laughter and combed the clingers out of my hair. By now, our shirts were damp with sweat and our backs ringed with dirt. We took off our shoes and shook the residual twigs out, our nails brimming with the filth from a long day.