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Bill Pauly, our Alpha haikin, conducts Haiku Seminars. Some of the haiku in this 2007 Alpha are creations of that group. These writings are not part of the DES Writing Contest, just Basho's frog-relatives for our "old pond."

Special thanks to Helen Kennedy and Mary Kay Mueller, institutional marketing-graphic arts, our special helpers "to put things in order."

elegy

Jody Iler

snapshot

Jody Iler

Thomas McNamara

haiku

Donna Bauerly

Forever a Farmer

Zachary Bader

Memory

Amy Hall

Kebobs

Michael Danaher

haiku

Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff

Snow storm

Sanjit Pradhananga

haiku

Bill Pauly

“Must We Be Servile?": The Socio-Historical Impact
of Female Subjugation in Lady Mary Wroth's
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Lisa Dreznes

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haiku

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The Divine Feast

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A Talk by the River

Kate Gross

haiku

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Home

Margaret McNair

Welcome to the Mighty City on the Mississippi

Jana Hosek

Then and Now: Romanticizing the US

(On being asked about my transition into the
American Society.)

Sanjit Pradhananga

A Dream or Not A Dream: That is the Question

Lindsey Ehlers

Saturday Night

Matt Balk

Bobby

Kelly McIntyre

haiku

Donna Bauerly

Last String

Zachary Bader

Silver and Gold

Matt Balk

Refuge

Barbara Simon

“The mind-forg'd manacles I hear:" Post-Lapsarian
Confinement in Blake's *Songs of Innocence and
Experience*

Thomas McNamara

i once knew a man

(An imitation of Lucille Clifton's poem by the same
name)

Kelly McIntyre

haiku

Donna Bauerly

haiku

Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff

The Seed Took Root

Francis C. Lehner, Ph.D.

Rules for the Contest

Contributors

elegy

Jody Iler

Scattered coins lie
across a crumpled dollar bill
next to your watch
on the kitchen counter.

It used to irritate me –
the way you emptied your pockets at night,
and hung your faded Levis
over the bedroom door.

The coins wink at me
in the dusky light.
The worn jeans hold your shape
in their emptiness.

There are little parts of you throughout the house –
a blue bathrobe smelling of Brut and you,
old slippers on the closet floor,
askew, but together.

You left me one night
riding on a siren's scream.
I don't recall following you
yet there I stood, in the hospital,

squeezing your hands,
begging you to come back,
rigid in the bright bare room,
watching the flat green line.

snapshot

Jody Iler

You sit on the floor
trying to put on your shoes,
fingers fumbling,
face flushed red
with anger.
“Don’t help me!” you shriek.

Shoes on,
you jump up and run
unsteadily, but fast –
dart across the faded carpet
like a sun shadow.

Years later,
in the empty room
still echoing with laughter,
I whisper, “Slow down.”

“The fallen angel becomes a malignant devil:” Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Coleridge’s “Frost at Midnight,” and the Notion of Individualism

Thomas McNamara

The legend of Mary Shelley’s early fascination with the verse of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a member of her father’s intellectual circle, provides little aid in the explanation of the allusions and parallels to Coleridge’s literary work present in her adult writing. Though the image of a youthful Mary Shelley hiding behind a couch to hear Coleridge read lines from his poetry provides a romanticized explanation for Coleridge’s influence on her work, Shelley’s allusions to Coleridge serve a reactionary purpose. Many who read Shelley’s *Frankenstein* discover manifold references to Coleridge’s “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.” Both works are written in a narrative form typical of the Gothic genre, utilizing an embedded narrative to convey the core of the work’s action. Shelley even directly lifts lines from “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” and places them in Victor’s narrative, as when he

Like one who, on a lonely road,
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And, having once turn’d round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread. (Shelley 55, Coleridge 446-51)

Shelley’s treatment of Coleridge’s literature is more subliminal than appears, however.

While many references to “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” are embedded within the text of *Frankenstein*, a critical reading of Shelley’s novel reveals an overarching preoccupation with the theme of individualism prevalent within other works by Coleridge. While Coleridge, in “Frost at Midnight,” for example, explores the necessity for an individualist education to form a mind able to acquire truth, Shelley’s treatment of individualism works to undermine Coleridge’s assertions on the topic. Shelley, according to the school of contemporary feminist critics who model their interpretations of literature on critic Adrienne Rich’s concept of “re-vision,” enters the work of a male fountainhead of literary tradition and revises his precepts from a feminine standpoint. In light of literary critic Marilyn French’s observation of the female value of community, it seems fitting for Shelley to offer such a counter to the individualist educational philosophy as present within Coleridge’s poem, which denies the child the experience of forming community with his or her peers through a traditional classroom setting. Through the novel’s attempt to dismantle the individualist education esteemed by the Romantic poets and philosophers, *Frankenstein* more thematically reacts to Coleridge’s treatment of education and individualism in “Frost at Midnight.”

Before exploring the reactionary nature of Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, one must survey the type of education that Coleridge advocates in the poem, which closely resembles the prevalent thought of the age and was largely based on the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Emile*. Coleridge and his contemporaries interpreted *Emile*, which curiously takes the form of a narrative, as a manual that highlights the steps necessary to educate a man to take a place in society that has not been predestined for him by a rearing within a static social structure (Conroy 83). Peter V. Conroy, Jr., in his *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, remarks in the section studying *Emile* that “educating a man is an ideal process, whereas educating a citizen is tainted by existing human institutions” (83). The poets and philosophers of the Romantic age, under the influence of Rousseau’s *Emile*, believed that an education through natural experience would allow a child to live autonomously in adulthood, thus diminishing the negative influence of society. Coleridge, in “Frost at Midnight,” enlivens educational philosophy of the Romantic poets and philosophers life.

In “Frost at Midnight,” one of Coleridge’s conversation poems (which trace the progress of an individual’s thoughts as a result of contemplation on a natural scene), the speaker of the poem dreams of the education that the slumbering child in his arms will experience. Unlike the speaker’s childhood instruction in a confining London schoolroom, Coleridge, widely assumed to be the speaker of the poem, hopes that his child’s education will occur in the English countryside. Through such an experience, the speaker hopes that the child will use nature as a means to ignite questioning that ultimately leads to the acquirement of truth, which results due to God’s presence in the natural world: “Great universal Teacher! he shall mould/Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask” (Coleridge 63-64). Coleridge’s belief in nature’s power to spark contemplation that leads to knowledge is reflected in the conversation poem style of “Frost and Midnight,” both portraying the success of the process of meditation and questioning he hopes will arise as a result of his son’s rearing in a natural setting and exhibiting the poem’s theme.

Demonstrating the ability of the human mind to arrive at truth after contemplation on a natural scene and illustrating the form of education the speaker wishes for his child, “Frost at Midnight” begins with the speaker’s thoughts on the frost’s “secret ministry” (1). The extreme silence of the midnight and the beauty of the frost leave him in solitude “which suits/ Abstruser meanings,” depicting that as the poem begins, the speaker already values his pensive powers (6). As the speaker’s observances continue, he describes the soot fluttering on the grate of his fireplace, “the sole unquiet thing” (16). Further exhibiting nature’s power to allow reflection, Coleridge finds the soot to be a companionable form:

Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
By its own mood interprets, every where
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of Thought. (20-23)

Coleridge’s reflections support his belief in nature’s divine power to lead the thinker to enlightenment.

When the poem moves to the second stanza, the speaker uses the fireplace’s soot as a transitional image, showing nature’s ability to begin contemplation that moves one towards enlightenment, which in this case validates the form of education he anticipates for his child. Within the second stanza, the speaker of the poem describes his memories of a restricting London classroom education. Through most of the day, the speaker dreamed of his home in the English countryside as he gazed upon the soot of the classroom fireplace, spending most of his school day in daydreams and “mock study” (38). Coleridge looked forward to sleeping in class so that he could prolong the dreams begun as he gazed towards the fire. The speaker’s disgust with the city’s lack of natural stimulation and a classroom setting leads him to remember stealing a glance outside whenever the schoolroom door would open in hopes of seeing a familiar face, especially the sister he played with as a young child.

The mention of his childhood playmate shifts the speaker’s attention to the child slumbering in his arms, nearly completing the speaker’s journey to illumination that will end the process of thought begun by the frost’s “secret ministry,” reflecting the conversation poem’s mimic of the process of thought the speaker hopes his child will attain (72). In the third stanza, the speaker describes an education for the child cradled in his arms, one that will contrast his own in every way:

My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore
And in far other scenes! (48-51)

In contrast to the confining instruction of the speaker, the babe will “wander like a breeze” freely through the countryside (54). Therefore, from a young age, the child will be familiar with that eternal language, which thy God Utters, who from eternity doth teach Himself in all. (61-62)

A close relationship with nature during childhood will, as the speaker states in the closing lines of the third stanza, create the ability within his child to ask (64).

As the speaker moves into the final stanza, he concludes the thoughts that, in the poem’s beginning, arose as a result of his contemplation on the midnight frost. Coleridge wishes that his child, as a product of an education in nature, will value each season as a means to further his search for truth. Each season, according to the speaker, partakes in the “secret ministry” of the frost, which seeks to lead one who meditates towards truth and understanding (72). By the poem’s end, the speaker not only has successfully depicted nature’s ability to begin one’s journey towards understanding but also depicts his belief that God is found in nature. His arrival at conclusions through contemplation that have arisen through reflection on the frost supports his belief that his child’s education will be more fruitful in a natural setting.

Despite Coleridge’s triumphed promotion his vision of individualistic education in “Frost at Midnight” through the manner in which his practice of individualism has allowed him to attain enlightenment, Mary Shelley, in *Frankenstein*, rejects his assertions, instead choosing to explore the injurious potential of the individualism latent within Coleridge’s ideal. While her contemporaries argued that community and society stunted one’s moral and educational growth, Shelley’s novel examines the repercussions that individualism may have on the development of the human person. In the terms of the contemporary literary critic Marilyn French, Shelley’s attitude in *Frankenstein* embodies the characteristic of the feminine associated with the “feminine in-law” pole of human behavior: “...it values above all the good of the whole, the community. It exalts the community above the individual, feeling over action, sensation over thought” (French 24). Despite that the feminine in-law female would generally avoid assertion of her voice against male standards, Shelley’s criticism of individualism arises from a distrust of a prevailing value that threatens the female communal soul. The female within the feminine in-law realm of behavior reaches for “subordination for the good of the whole and finds pleasure in that good rather than in assertion of self” (French 24). However, when Shelley must quell her communal nature to adhere to a male standard, she chooses to retain her feminine character without falling into the realm of the rebellious feminine out-law.

Frankenstein, then, in the terms of the poet and feminist critic Adrienne Rich, offers a “re-vision” of male thought from a feminine perspective. Shelley, in fact, nearly a century and a half before the publication of Rich’s article exploring this concept, produces a literary work that mirrors what Rich calls female writers to create:

Revision—the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction—is for women more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves. And this drive to self-knowledge, for women, is more than a search for identity: it is part of our refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society. (Rich 518)

Through her exploration of individualism in *Frankenstein*, Shelley refuses the “self-destructiveness of male-dominated society,” offering a “re-vision” of the educational concepts of Coleridge and others by illuminating the harmful effects of their individualistic philosophies. Individualistic thought is clearly that of men, who, according to French, value the individual over the communal (French 21), and to Shelley, their view remains incomplete despite their confidence.

Like Coleridge, Shelley utilizes the underlying movement of her literary work to convey her perception of the educational philosophies prevalent among the Romantic poets and philosophers. Although Coleridge had utilized a process of contemplation to arrive at the conclusion of his poem, Shelley employs narrative movement to aid in her critique of Coleridge's ideals. Each of the novel's three narrators—Walton, Victor, and the creature—exemplify attitudes with which Shelley associates individualism. Within the novel, these three characters embark upon a personal journey from which an amount of growth can be expected. The novel's form as a Gothic narrative, which allows her to present the journeys of each of the novel's major characters, aids in her critique through the manner in which each of the highly individualistic characters fails in his mission.

The journey of Victor, often viewed as the novel's central character, begins by a tracing of his educational background, laying the foundation on which Shelley bases her criticism of education. The early education of Victor Frankenstein, in many ways, mirrors the rearing that Coleridge glorifies in "Frost at Midnight." Victor, unlike Coleridge, was educated outside of the traditional classroom setting by his father. Despite that Victor's schooling did not allow him a community of companions, his education, he believes, was effective: Perhaps we did not read so many books, or learn languages so quickly, as those who are disciplined according to the ordinary methods; but what we learned was impressed more deeply on our memories. (Shelley 32)

The freedom that Victor's father allowed in his children's education, however, eventually led to Victor's demise. When Victor encounters the work of Cornelius Agrippa, a Renaissance philosopher discredited by the Enlightenment era, he turns inward to avoid the disapproval of his father, who had chastised his son for his study of Agrippa's "exploded" science:

I read and studied the wild fancies of these writers with delight; they appeared to me treasures known to few besides myself; and although I often wished to communicate these secret stories of knowledge to my father, yet his indefinite censure of my favourite Agrippa always withheld me. I disclosed my discoveries to Elizabeth, therefore, under a promise of strict secrecy; but she did not interest herself in the subject, and I was left by her to pursue my studies alone. (34)

The individualism which had come to define Victor's educational pursuit, though harmless in the novel's earlier sections, later brings great destruction.

Shelley's conception of individualism as destructive to the communal family becomes apparent during Victor's study in Ingolstadt, further demonstrating Shelley's response to the prominent philosophy of individualism due to her communal, female nature. Even before Victor begins his pursuit to create life, he ignores his family, in whom he had earlier placed much confidence, for his education:

Two years passed in this manner, during which I paid no visit to Geneva, but was engaged, heart and soul, in the pursuit of some discoveries, which I hoped to make. (45)

When Victor discovers his capability to animate lifeless matter, his individualism becomes more pronounced as he seeks to create a being akin to human: "My cheek had grown pale with study, and my person had become emaciated with confinement" (49). His father, not having heard from his son during his pursuit to create life, writes him asking for his correspondence: "I know that while you are pleased with yourself, you will think of us with affection, and we shall hear regularly from you" (50). Victor, however, remains immersed in his work, further denying the community esteemed by Shelley due to her feminine nature.

Shelley's conception of individualism's destructive nature becomes especially pronounced after Victor's creation, the result of his individualistic pursuit, brings devastation to Victor's family, the only community on which he had ever relied. The creature's destruction portrays not only the

emotional destruction of family through individualism but also the physical, beginning when the creature murders Victor's youngest brother, William. Next, Justine, who had been adopted into the Frankenstein family during Victor's childhood, is accused of William's murder and executed. Rather than make known Justine's innocence, Victor falls more deeply into his individualism and refuses to share the secret that may save her life:

A thousand times rather would I have confessed myself guilty of the crime ascribed to Justine; but I was absent when it was committed, and such a declaration would have been considered as the ravings of a madman, and would not have exculpated her who suffered through me. (79-80)

The creature next murders his best friend, Henry Clerval, and Victor's new bride, Elizabeth. Though the creature had said, "I will be with you on your wedding night," not once does Victor entertain the thought that Elizabeth may be endangered; he rather believes that he will meet his own destruction (181). The creation of familial community with Elizabeth now impossible, Victor places sudden value on the lives of those yet unharmed: "My father even now might be writhing under his grasp, and Ernest might be dead at his feet" (213). The last character to meet his death by the creature, though not directly, is Victor's father. Upon gaining knowledge of Elizabeth's murder, Victor's father falls into critical illness, leading to his death: "He could not live under the horrors that were accumulated around him; an apoplectic fit was brought on, and in a few days he died in my arms" (214). Victor has, at the death of his father, lost his closest family members, the possibility of creating family with Elizabeth, and his most intimate friend.

Shelley's critique of individualism also surfaces through her treatment of Victor's creation, in whose journey she illustrates the indispensable role of community in early development that is absent from Coleridge's vision of childhood in "Frost at Midnight." The creature, during the initial stages of his growth, displays a benevolent nature that seeks the formation of a communal bond. Aware of his physical deformities, though, he decides that he will first observe the behavior of the DeLaceys, the family whose home is adjacent to the hovel in which he lives, so that he may approach them in a manner in which they may overlook his appearance:

...for I easily perceived that, although I eagerly longed to discover myself to the cottagers, I ought not to make the attempt until I had first become master of their language; which knowledge might enable me to make them overlook the deformity of my figure; for with this also the contrast perpetually presented to my eyes had made me acquainted. (117)

During the period of the creature's surveillance, he learns the French language of the DeLaceys and begins to read, both of which become key elements to his moral development as they allow him to observe human behavior. Through the knowledge the creature has gained from the DeLacey family, he becomes more aware of his deplorable condition, drawing comparisons between himself and the characters of Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

Like Adam, I was created apparently united by no link to any other being in existence; but his state was far different from mine in every other respect...Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition; for often, like him, when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me. (135)

His increasing awareness of the importance of the communal through his education prompts the creature to actively assert himself into the DeLacey family, upholding Shelley's notion of the necessity of community to development.

When the DeLacey family rejects him due to his aberrant form, however, the creature shifts his goal from the attainment of community to the destruction of his creator, sustaining Shelley's commentary on individualism by detailing the extent to which the creature has departed from his benevolent nature. The creature had, prior to his intent to destroy Victor, developed an awareness of

integrity through the DeLaceys' unknowing education of him: "I felt the greatest ardour for virtue rise within me, and abhorrence for vice" (135). From this consciousness, the creature develops a sense of retributive justice and seeks to punish his creator for the manner in which Victor abandoned him with no communal bonds or means to unite with others:

There was none among the myriads of men that existed who would pity or assist me; and should I feel kindness towards my enemies? No: from that moment I declared everlasting war against the species, and, more than all, against him who had formed me, and sent me forth to this insupportable misery. (143)

As the creature notes, he has become the most malevolent of beings due to the neglect of his creator: I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity: but am I not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow-creatures, who owe me nothing?" (102)

For the creature, individualism has evolved into isolation, exerting a destructive force upon Victor's life and compelling the creature to act in a manner oppositional to his original nature and the morals he had developed during his education by the DeLaceys. Shelley's treatment of the creature's development supports her perception of individualism as oppositional to humanity's communal nature and aids her attempt to destabilize the individualist philosophies championed by her male contemporaries.

The conclusion of the journeys of Victor Frankenstein and the creature without an attainment of a moment of enlightenment highlights individualism's exertion of a deadening force upon one's moral development. To the Romantic philosophers and to Coleridge in "Frost at Midnight," individualism serves as a vehicle by which one arrives at a moment of truth. The speaker in "Frost at Midnight," for instance, reaches illumination through his solitary contemplation of the quiet, natural setting. To Shelley, however, individualism prohibits one from such a moment, as is seen through the manner in which Victor, upon the novel's end, has failed to conclude his journey with the realization of truth. Rather, Victor approaches his death with the same attitudes of revenge he exhibits throughout the novel:

I feel that I shall soon die, and he, my enemy and persecutor, may still be in being. Think not, Walton, that in the last moments of my existence I feel that burning hatred, and ardent desire of revenge, I once expressed, but I feel myself justified in desiring the death of my adversary. (235)

The creature's treatment of Victor's death also exhibits his incapacity to attain a moment of enlightenment that transpires from his journey within the narrative. He, too, continues to exemplify the attitudes of revenge by which he had been motivated throughout the novel:

You, who call Frankenstein your friend, seem to have a knowledge of my crimes and his misfortunes. But, in the detail which he gave you of them, he could not sum up the hours and months of misery which I endured, wasting in impotent passions. For whilst I destroyed his hopes, I did not satisfy my own desires. (241)

Individualism, from the perspective of a female imagination, leaves one in a moral stasis with terrifying results.

However, the most disconcerting treatment of individualism occurs within the journey of Walton, who, by the novel's end remains steeped in his individualist pursuit despite witnessing the destructive repercussions of Victor's individualistic attitudes. Walton, at the novel's opening, displays a wish to abandon the individualism fostered by his youth and education:

But it is still greater evil to me that I am self-educated: for the first fourteen years of my life I ran wild on a common, and read nothing but our uncle Thomas's books of voyages. (16)

The individualism typical of his education has, similar to the case of the creature, transformed into isolation, becoming a defining factor of his adult relationships:

I have no friend, Margaret: when I am glowing with the enthusiasm of success, there will be none to participate my joy; if I am assailed by disappointment, no one will endeavor to sustain me in dejection. (15)

During his voyage through the Arctic in search of a passage to the Pacific, Walton encounters Victor, who is in pursuit of his creature. Victor, in relating his story to Walton, attempts to impress a distrust of individualism upon Walton:

Seek happiness in tranquility, and avoid ambition, even if it only be the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries. Yet why do I say this? I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed. (237)

Victor's warnings, however, remain ignored; despite counsel to avoid individualist pursuit, Walton reacts in disappointment when he is forced by his sailors to abandon his voyage and return home to family:

Thus are my hopes blasted by cowardice and indecision; I come back ignorant and disappointed. It requires more philosophy than I possess, to bear this injustice with patience. (234)

Shelley's treatment of Walton essentially supports her criticism of individualism by portraying the manner in which the most flexible of characters cannot escape the allure of individualist triumph.

By the novel's conclusion, Shelley's treatment of her characters exemplifies the extent to which she has engaged in "re-vision" of the prevalent philosophies promoted by her male contemporaries. The vision of education exemplified by Coleridge in "Frost at Midnight" closely resembles that of most Romantic poets and thinkers, who argued that the result of such an education allows the grown child to live autonomously amid societal corruption. Within "Frost at Midnight," however, Coleridge extends the educational philosophies of his Romantic counterparts past seeking to reform society, arguing that education should form an adult able to seek and obtain philosophical truth. Despite Coleridge's seemingly noble motivation, Shelley, due to her value of community, illuminates the flaws present within the thought of Coleridge and his male counterparts. To Shelley, the solution to what Coleridge perceived as educational inadequacy presents the same moral danger with which her male literary counterparts associated traditional classroom learning. Through the emphasis placed on community within the journeys of Victor, the creature, and Walton, *Frankenstein* offers a uniquely feminine perspective on the thought associated with the Romantic poets and philosophers as it has become embedded in the canon of traditional literature.

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haiku

Donna Bauerly

MARIANNE BAUERLY

October 11, 1899 to July 8, 1989

finger tips at her pulse
the beat
of my heart, too

Dad's picture
still smiling
after all her years

Forever a Farmer

Zachary Bader

No matter where I go, I'm never too far from home. Time changes people and places, but it can never erase early memories of my family's farm in Eastern Iowa. As my childhood slips further away, I have gained a greater appreciation for the environment in which I was raised. Throughout my youth, I planned to become a professional baseball player, rambling on and on about the millions of dollars I would earn as Minnesota Twins outfielder. "Almost as good as farming," my dad would reply jokingly. Now those days on the farm are gone, and I wonder if he was right.

Teeth and Tails

One of my earliest memories is clipping the teeth and tails of young pigs. As a five-year-old, I would follow my dad and younger brother Ben out to the farrowing huts in the weeded pasture behind our barn, where a group of sows had recently given birth to a new litter of piglets. We clipped the piglets' teeth and tails to discourage tail-biting, which could lead to tissue damage and infection.

The huts were small, A-shaped tin shacks with low ceilings, designed to keep the mother sow close to her piglets. They were ideal for trapping body heat and ensuring that the piglets had access to their mothers, but tough for human adults to enter. Dad needed Ben and me to climb inside each of the 50 A-huts, snatch the week-old pigs, and hand them to him so he could clip them.

After Dad moved each sow into a small gated area outside her hut, Ben and I ducked inside the four-foot entrance. With their mother gone, ten to twenty piglets squealed, scurried, and stumbled across the straw-covered wooden floor. Ben and I chased these terrified animals around their small, tin confinement. Picking up the piglets by their hind legs, we handed them to Dad, who operated quickly and returned them to their homes. Alerted by the ruckus, the nearby mother bellowed and rammed her skull against the plywood panel that separated her from her young. Through a small opening in the panel, I was able to observe the furious sow as she chomped, foamed, and butted her head against the rickety plywood.

To avoid causing unnecessary stress to the piglets and their mothers, my dad, my brother, and I worked fast. Within minutes, we finished each hut, leaving the exhausted piglets and their mothers to rest together. Two hours later, Ben and I would emerge from the final hut, sweaty, poopy, and dusty, but pleased to be done with a morning's work.

Ben and I were proud of our role on the farm. "Just think, now you can become professional pig-grabbers if you want," Dad used to tease. Even then, we knew he was kidding, but his words were meaningful. We were useful. We were important. We were farmers.

Rock Farm

I used to believe that the previous owners of Dad's corn and soybean fields had scattered rocks throughout them. While my theory wasn't accurate, it didn't seem far-fetched when my family and I picked up thousands of rocks from our fields each spring. We spent hours walking through fields, looking for rocks that could damage a field cultivator or combine; hours of mind-numbing walking, kicking, and picking, all because an ancient glacier had passed over our ground, leaving layers of rocks in its wake. Every spring, the thawing earth and raking plow tested our commitment to the land by bringing a new layer of rocks to the surface.

I learned to oversee twelve rows of short corn, discerning rocks from dirt clots, even from a distance. I taught myself to throw rocks into the tractor bucket without having them bounce out, and I learned to dislodge rocks with the side of my shoe rather than the toe. "I'm really doing you a favor," Dad would kid. "You can pick up rocks for living." I never took him seriously, but I was

proud of my responsibility. No one enjoys picking up rocks, but every farmer does it diligently to avoid damaging valuable equipment.

Cleaning Up

By age nine, I was a seasoned veteran of farm work and was introduced to the farm's pressure washer, a high-powered water gun. My task: clean up months' worth of crap and damp feed left behind by hogs that recently had been sold to the local meat packing plant. Finally, the pigs would have their revenge.

At first, the job wasn't bad. I pretended I was in the movie *Ghostbusters*, using my high-powered gun to destroy ghosts. That fantasy ended the first time I sprayed a large pile of manure that had accumulated in the corner of a pen. Instantly, my face was covered in crap, and I was looking for backup.

Fortunately, I quickly learned to obey the laws of physics and geometry when washing hog buildings. Over time I managed to spray less of the manure on me and more into the pit below. Dad always jokes, "You boys do a great job pressure washing. You can always pressure wash hog buildings for a living." I don't take him seriously, but I am proud to receive a high compliment from the hardest working man I know.

Every day, beginning before dawn and often ending after dusk, my dad works on the farm. He tirelessly works to provide a comfortable life for his family. He has no time for excuses or complaining and expects the same focus and consistency out of the workers he employs. I've learned a lot from my dad, and, over time, earned his respect as a worker. I don't have the desire to pursue farming as an occupation (my passion for professional baseball drives me to work on or around the ball diamond), but I'll always have the approval of one farmer.

Graduating (from the farm)

Now, I've left the farm for college. Like my early years on the farm, I'm learning how to work again. The pigs, rocks, and dirty pens have turned into essays, tests, and projects. This harvest, while I was riding the combine through fields of golden corn with my dad, he commented, "The work you're doing in college is going to set you up for a good job in the future." "I hope so," I replied. He wasn't joking; neither was I.

I've always tried to follow the model of diligent work my parents embody, and I feel that I've achieved a small degree of success. I'm proud of the work I have done, and I believe that the work ethic farm work has instilled in me will benefit me throughout my life, regardless of which field I work in. No matter where I go in life, I'll always hold onto the memories that keep me close to home. I will always be a farmer.

Memory

Amy Hall

Munching on Kix and crunching
the leaves under our feet,
we walk towards the park.
To our left is the metal playground,
the one with the twisty slide that burns
my legs in the summer. But
Today we walk past the slides and swings.

There he is. The emu.
Along with the horse and goats and sheep.
Dad hands me two quarters and I drop them
into the machine that would normally hold
plastic rings or temporary tattoos at supermarkets.
But this one holds that earthy smelling food,
just enough pellets to fill my small hands.

My fingers are outstretched through the metal fence.
The goat's grey beard tickles my palm
And the emu's beak is a sharp jab bringing me
Back to the present where I'm simply reminiscing on
Childhood.

Kebobs

Michael Danaher

When we rode into Belfast, I expected to see men with AK-47's running through the streets in army fatigues and ski masks. I didn't, though. I didn't see tanks patrolling the streets or cars exploding on the roadside, either. Military police units no longer surveyed the city, controlling it in a violent manner against cold-blooded terrorists as they had in the past. It was nothing like what we'd been told.

I did, however, see the remnants of a long-standing political unrest. Buildings were worn, abandoned and forgotten about. Filth covered the city. Dublin wasn't spotless, but it put Belfast to shame. Everywhere I looked, graffiti covered the houses, shops, pubs, restaurants and office buildings. Everything was a monotonous red brick, even the twenty-foot walls dividing Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods – each one topped off with rusted barbed wire. Newspapers and assorted colored flyers created a whirlwind of garbage in every alley. Dumpsters overflowed. Old, grizzled beggars wandered the streets, staggering clear of stray dogs and puddles of piss.

Visiting Belfast – the capital of Northern Ireland – was mandatory in the study abroad program. Luckily, my college had placed trust in Belfast and scheduled the trip, because under normal circumstances, I would've never planned a trip to one of the most war-torn cities in the western hemisphere. The day before the trip, our professor briefed us about the situation, devoting an entire class to the city's history. The majority of the lesson focused on the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland – car bombings, gunfire, rioting, military policing, tanks, grenades, the IRA, the RUC – a crash course on every blemish and scrape that scarred the Northern Ireland capital.¹ We were also told that in the past few years, the terrorist IRA had made strides with Great Britain, who rules over Northern Ireland, to cut down on violence and strive for peace. But nothing had prepared me for that weekend. To eighteen college students seeing Ireland for the first time, the idea of visiting Belfast seemed ludicrous. She warned us to stay in groups, not get into arguments, and not wander outside a block or two of our lodging.

Growing up, my Irish-American Catholic family had always told me the horrors of Belfast and the long-standing war between Ireland and England concerning the Irish struggle for independence. I had always swallowed everything they said as fact: the IRA were freedom fighters, England was an oppressor. I never had any reason to doubt it.

We arrived at the hostel, a weathered brick building that squeezed itself between two other dilapidated houses. The place had a small living room, a kitchen, two bathrooms, one shower. The rest of the building consisted of creaking stairs and floorboards, covered in faded red carpet with brown stains – definitely not the best accommodations.

As quickly as we dropped off our bags, we were rushed onto a private tour bus that would take us to parts of the city we weren't safe walking in. We boarded the vehicle and picked our seats. At the front of the bus stood a slender British man with thick glasses, greased black hair, and crooked yellow teeth. He explained that he would be our tour guide for the day, and he would show us many historical parts of Belfast that highlighted the turmoil of Northern Ireland's situation.

He first explained that the Catholics – synonymous with republicans and separatists – had a violent past with the Protestants – also known as unionists, loyalists, or Orangemen. The strife was clearly visible throughout the tour. I sat on my seat's edge as I watched the battered city slowly creep by. The sides of buildings were completely covered with gigantic murals. Each one illustrated an important political point – either for the unionists or the republicans. Republican murals depicted the Potato Famine as a holocaust, the IRA as heroes and saviors, Bloody Sunday as a merciless massacre, and the Guildford Four as innocent victims of British oppression.² One mural showed two hands bound together by barbed wire, and there were several portraits of Bobby Sands – a member

of the IRA who starved himself to death in prison to protest British oppression. Unionist murals showed the Union Jack, the Red Hand of Ulster, the IRA as bloodthirsty murderers, the republicans as terrorists.

My throat tightened.

We rode through the downtown district, a Protestant area. Great Britain guarded the district, as opposed to the poverty-stricken Catholic neighborhoods. The section seemed to be looked after and maintained better than most. Our guide pointed out the curb, which was painted red, white and blue – the colors of the Union Jack. I felt safe. But the neighborhood too had a violent history.

“You see that street over there?” our tour guide asked us.

We nodded.

“And you’ve heard of Bloody Sunday, right?”³

“Yeah,” some said in unison.

“Have you ever heard of Bloody Friday?”

No one spoke. Some shook their heads.

“Well, Bloody Friday occurred a few months after Bloody Sunday. It was the retaliation of the IRA for what happened in Derry. They placed car bombs in random parked cars on the street – killing men, women and children. Twenty-two bombs were planted, killing 9 people and injuring another 130. So please, listen to both sides before you judge.”

I thought of my family. Their words didn’t ring so true to me anymore. I knew they hadn’t lied to me about the horrors, but they hadn’t told me the whole story. They, like many Irish-Americans, had been given a biased and skewed version of history – a past so blinded by injustice, that it could no longer see truth. I sunk into my seat and let the horror of reality play in my mind.

Our guide spoke more of the Troubles in Belfast – the battles between Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods – the burglary, the arson, the kidnapping, the murder. He spoke of the dangers of leaving those areas – the safe havens for Catholics and Protestants. He informed us that the IRA had actually invented car bombs, and that militant groups in the Middle East had actually stolen the idea, along with other terrorist tactics from them.

Our guide told a story that happened a few years ago. A Catholic, wearing a football jersey favored by republicans, walked into a Protestant neighborhood and pub. He walked into the wrong place at the wrong time, wearing the wrong thing. A group of unionists made him kneel on the ground before shooting him in both ankles with a pistol. This was to make sure he would never walk in their neighborhood again. The true terror of the place was so vivid now that we were actually there. He warned that even though we were Americans, and neither group had hostility toward us, we should still be careful because anything could happen at any moment.

When the tour finally ended, we were uneasy. The tales of violence, hatred and distrust had taken their toll on us. Students looked at their digital cameras, studying pictures they had taken of the murals and barbed wire walls. They’d given us more insight than any classroom or book had. We went back to our hostel to rest and make food we had brought, and later we had a few drinks in the living room. No one went out. The thought of car bombings still ticked in our minds.

* * *

The next day we were thankful to get out of Belfast. We took a trip to Antrim, Northern Ireland, to see Giant’s Causeway – a natural phenomenon. Millions of small stone octagons and decagons fashioned stepping stones into the water. They formed small rock pyramids which linked to each other, and they served as a sort of natural pier into the ocean before gradually descending into the cold, gray ocean. We spent an hour climbing. It was as if we were little kids again, and our parents had turned us loose. For most of the day, our heads had cleared. For a moment, we were no longer plagued with the death that had been drilled into our brains a day earlier.

That evening, though, we rode back to Belfast. Night had fallen, and the city looked even more threatening. In every dark alley we passed by, we awaited a murder or a mugging or a car-bombing.

Even the well-lit area of downtown looked particularly threatening. No one was friendly or trustworthy – the complete opposite of Dublin. On the other hand, we were sick of the fear and caution. We didn't want to stay bottled up in the hostel living room for a second night in a row. And so people made their way downtown, about a five minute walk from our hostel.

For some reason, we didn't stay in large groups like we probably should have. People took too long to get ready, so I didn't wait. I decided to head out with my friend, Michael Fitzgerald. One of the pubs we'd seen during the tour was called the Crown Bar – the oldest bar in all of Northern Ireland, we were informed. We instinctively decided to make our journey there.

We pulled open the heavy, wooden doors and walked in. The sound swallowed us whole – shouting and laughing, glasses clinking, conversations humming, lighters clicking, bottles opening and hissing, pints thudding on the bar and tables. Smoke and warmth enveloped our bodies. The smell of cigarettes and body odor filled our nostrils. The pub was like nothing I had seen before. The white and black tile beneath my feet looked centuries old. The ceiling shined with polished, hand-carved wood designs. Chandeliers with gigantic circular bulbs lit the dim haze that hovered above our heads. A long bar stood to our left, and old, circular booths on our right took up the majority of the space. Each booth was divided by wooden walls and small closed doors – like their own private sitting rooms. It reminded me of the neighborhoods the day earlier. I imagined each booth planning an attack on an adjacent one. With standing room only, we weaseled our way to the bar. We stood amidst the predominantly Protestant crowd, sipping our pints, keeping a careful eye watching for any danger. We didn't feel this uneasiness in Dublin. It was new to us.

We found a corner so we could blend in, go unnoticed. I hid beneath my navy, wool peat coat, while Fitz veiled himself beneath a plaid-patterned, tweed Irish cap. The only thing that exposed us was our accent. Not long after our first pint, seven of the girls on our trip walked in. Most of them, covered in makeup like clowns, wearing jeans, glimmering shirts and large earrings. They stuck out like a six-foot leprechaun. We tried to avoid them, but they spotted us after ordering their fancy drinks, which no one in Ireland had heard of. The bartender eyed them carefully as they walked over to our corner.

After another drink, Fitz and I decided to leave. The pub made us nervous, and we were uneasy about drawing attention to ourselves. So we planned to grab some food and head back to the hostel. We walked the streets past drunks asking for cigarettes, past Gaelic graffiti on walls, past darkly lit alleys and poorly lit street curbs, past store after store gated shut and locked three times. We grew anxious.

We stopped into a small kebob shop, completely desolate of customers. A lively middle-eastern man sat behind the counter reading the paper. His face lit up when he saw us. We asked him what he recommended to eat. After hearing our accents, he launched into a frenzy, ignoring our question.

“You Americans,” he said, “you need to learn how to trust people.”

We were used to anti-American talk by now. I didn't let it bother me much, but Fitz took offense.

“Oh, yeah?” he said.

The man continued. “Americans have no trust for anyone different from their selves.”

He cut off a few pieces of chicken kebob and held it in his hand. “You trust me, don't you?”

We nodded uncertainly, unsure what he had in store.

“Good. If you trust me, you eat this.” He held out the meat to us – his stubby, bare fingers pinching it before dropping a piece into each of our open hands. I chewed reluctantly. Fitz did the same.

“You like? Yes?” he asked.

“Yeah,” I said. “It's pretty good.”

He then yelled some foreign language to someone in back.

“I just ordered you both kebobs. You trust me, don't you?”

We nodded nervously. Even though the man wasn't a unionist or separatist, we still had to worry. Here we were, away from home, in one of the most dangerous cities in the world. Trying to ignore that fact, though, we paid him and sank our mouths into the kebob – a fusion of chicken and au jus, lettuce and tomato and onion. I instantly wondered if he had poisoned the food – half jokingly and half seriously concerned. If we had learned one thing on the tour, it was that you can't trust anybody.

"Well," said Fitz, "America's not as bad as this place. You wanna talk about people trusting each other, at least we don't have walls dividing our subdivisions."

The man agreed. "It's just like Americans, though. You don't trust anyone. No one trusts anyone."

"We're trusting you, aren't we?" I asked.

A smile spread across his face and he laughed. "Very good, very good. The first steps to peace."

The kebob revived us. After forcing down the last bite, we thanked the man for his kindness and headed back into the cold darkness of Belfast. Suddenly the place didn't seem so chilling. Somewhere, not far away, a police siren rang. I didn't care. Fitz was mumbling something derogatory about the kebob place, about the Middle East. I didn't pay attention. For the first time on the trip, it was clear to me. No one in Belfast trusted anyone. People couldn't trust their neighbors, or their shopkeepers, or bartenders. They couldn't trust their mailmen or policemen. The Northern Irish detonated bombs because of a hate that stemmed from their distrust. The man's ankles had been shot because they distrusted his intentions in an enemy neighborhood. He didn't belong there; they didn't trust his intentions and struck him before he could strike them first. I imagined everyone watching their backs when leaving their homes. I envisioned people deciding to walk to the store because they were too terrified to start their cars. Everyone watched their backs. Both sides struck first because they were terrified of the other. People murdered because of the mistrust that Ireland and England had for each other.

I lay in bed that night, not anxious, but thankful I had survived the terror – relieved I hadn't fallen victim to so much hatred as so many had before me. I could have easily made a scene and stormed out of the kebob shop. But I hadn't. The man had shown me we just needed trust. And as my eyelids fell heavy and my breathing slowed, I felt that maybe peace could be achieved. The man was right. The world needed trust – something the people of Belfast still hadn't figured out. His generosity toward us, Americans – his nation's enemies – had shown he could rise above that prejudice, and peace was an attainable, tangible object. I could taste it.

* * *

The next morning we all rushed to shower and get out of the hostel – happy to leave the place, though glad we'd seen it. I soon discovered that after we'd left the Crown Bar, the girls were refused service and forced to leave, simply because they were Americans. Our Loras professor had worse news, though. She informed us that a murder had occurred the night before. At a pub called Magennis's, about a block away from the Crown Bar, two members of the IRA had beaten and stabbed a man to death. He was a unionist, loyal to England – the man's only crime. He had trusted his fellow countrymen enough to walk into a Catholic pub and get a drink. The IRA did not understand this, however, and robbed him of his life for no other reason than his political belief.

I sat on the bus and waited for it to move. I thought about the children of the murdered man. I thought of the uproar this would bring in Northern Ireland. I thought of the hatred and mistrust that would only be magnified by a simple act of defiance and brutality. I remembered what my family had told me – that the IRA fought for their freedom. I thought of the peace that would now be impossible. I wondered what would've happened if Fitz and I chose to go to Magennis's Bar? Would I have been trusted? Would my throat have been slit simply because I was different?

Then I thought of the man in the kebob shop reading the newspaper that morning, shaking his head. My stomach knotted. The small spark of hope that I felt leaving the kebob shop had smoldered away. I thought of my own country. Mistrust would never leave the Northern Irish's blood, just as it would never leave America's or the Middle East's. It poisoned our brains, infected our thoughts and actions, and paralyzed us, just as it had the Irish. The idea that these people could finally rise above their abhorrence fizzled. Peace was impossible, I knew. For them, for us, for everyone.

I sat silently and leaned my head against the bus window, watching the filthy city of Belfast disappear beyond my own reflection in the glass.

¹ The Guildford Four was a term given to four innocent Northern Irishmen who were imprisoned for a London bombing that they did not commit. Three of them were acquitted after 15 years of a life sentence. The fourth died in prison without hearing his name cleared.

² The Guildford Four was a term given to four innocent Northern Irishmen who were imprisoned for a London bombing that they did not commit. Three of them were acquitted after 15 years of a life sentence. The fourth died in prison without hearing his name cleared.

³ Bloody Sunday (1972) occurred in Derry, Northern Ireland when British paratroopers opened fire on unarmed Irish protestors, marching in a Civil Rights Movement. The incident is the cause of most of the violence Northern Ireland has endured recently.

haiku

Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff

old woman walks
through a rain of leaves ...
the gathering geese *

* Winner of the Hawaii Education Association Haiku Contest, Season Word Category First Place.

Snow storm

Sanjit Pradhananga

This empty afternoon,
The heaven tears open
And cries
For me.
In myriads
They fall.
All the same,
Yet all their own.
Little diamonds,
Dangling in the wind;
Most of the time.
The odd rebels
Rising,
Reaching for the heavens,
Or trying to trace a way back home.
Yet
All disappearing
Into nothingness
Like you,
and me.

haiku

Bill Pauly

blizzard--
she dies waiting for her son
to come back home from war

“Must We Be Servile?": The Socio-Historical Impact of Female Subjugation in Lady Mary Wroth's "Sonnet 16"

Lisa Dreznes

*"The wife, her duty is, in all reverence and humility,
to submit and subject herself to her husband
in all such duties as properly belong to marriage."
A Godly Form of Household Government (1598)*

Introduction

Characterized by a cultural awakening to vigorous artistic and intellectual activity, sixteenth and seventeenth century Renaissance England erupted into modern times with classically influenced musical, philosophical, and literary creations. Figures such as William Byrd, Francis Bacon, and John Milton impacted English society with their notable artistic social criticisms and opinions. Aristocratic males monopolized the intellectual world with the ideas and works of art that epitomized the English Renaissance.

While the voices of English males predominated, the statuses and opinions towards English females plunged into the social depths during this time. The works of male authors, for example, only allow modern-day readers one angle of a two-sided world; the opinions of men during this time appeared to unanimously envelop the attitude of the entire English nation. Until recently, the literature by the questionably small amount of early modern English female authors was undiscovered, unrecognized, and unpublished. Through their own voices, women writers such as Katherine Philips, Elizabeth Cary, and Mary Sidney Wroth, depicted their outlooks of Renaissance England.

Lady Mary Wroth, "the first Englishwoman to write a full-length work of prose fiction and the first to write a significant body of secular poetry, was castigated for that achievement" (Hannay 552). Today, however, her famous sonnet sequence, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, appended to *The Countess of Montgomerie's Urania*, presents Petrarchan courtly love traditions from a seventeenth century Englishwoman's point of view. Lady Wroth's Sonnet 16: "Farewell Liberty" reveals that the artificial, clichéd Petrarchan style of writing is actually a realistic illustration of the sexual constraints imposed upon women during early modern England.

Petrarchanism in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*

By the time *Urania* was published in 1621, writing in a Petrarchan lyric sequence was out of fashion. Even though it had "long served as the major genre for analyzing a male lover's desire, passions, frustrations, and fantasies, it was the obvious beginning point for a woman poet undertaking the construction of subjectivity in a female lover-speaker" (Adams 1422). Petrarchanism conventionally portrays the lover-speaker in a state of oscillation between misery and hope, between imprisonment and freedom. In typical Petrarchan sequences, the male speaker asserts that he has been victimized by the power of the female lover. Despite his entrapment, the male remains active because he pursues the female, who remains constantly unattainable.

A female lover-speaker would have the same dilemmas as a male lover-speaker in a Petrarchan sonnet except that she does not remain in the imprisoned or free liminal state for a long period of time. Generally, she merely crosses into the realm of retaining her freedom once, then hastily sways back towards the protection of a man, where she ultimately submits to Love. Male lover-speakers wallow in misery caused by a female, asserting that women ensnare men, destroying their lives by not providing them with love. However, unlike the female lover-speaker in a Petrarchan sonnet, the male speaker can constantly pursue his unattainable woman, even while his is "ensnared." A woman

under the same circumstances would have immediately succumbed to Love's power, tied down by the chains of sexual constraint, and remained trapped for the rest of her life.

Wroth's Pamphilia, a Petrarchan lover, is not a simple reversal of gender roles: she remains faithful to her personal independence, longing for a life apart from Love and Amphilanthus, but is unable to escape Love's relentless grip on her, and ultimately succumbs to Love's demands. Pamphilia's role in Wroth's sonnets allows the reader to recognize that women had the same desires, wants, and thoughts as their male counterparts, and, her voice, tinged with suffering over her inability to free herself from Love's chains, mourns Love's ultimate domination over her.

In Sonnet 16, Pamphilia submits to Love and his forces because, she assumes, they are out of her control. This surrender of power is reflected in Pamphilia's melancholy voice and feelings which are primarily negative ones of entrapment, loss, and bondage. A male lover-speaker in a Petrarchan sonnet would not regard his situation as forlorn because he, unlike Pamphilia, remains active, pursuing his lover. Love has consumed Pamphilia's emotions and strengths and conquered her thoughts. Love, in Wroth's Sonnet 16, as well as other Petrarchan sequences, is viewed as an unyielding tyrant, imprisoning the shackled speaker-lover. Wroth uses military images and words such as "captive," "prisoner," and "darts" in the first two stanzas to express her focus on Pamphilia as Love's victim.

However, in the third stanza, Pamphilia considers thoughts of rebelling against Love, resisting his "purblind charms" and refusing to "be servile, doing what he list" (9, 10). "Purblind," in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century had a double-meaning: "dim-sighted" as well as "dim-witted," and this play on words exemplifies Pamphilia's assertion against Love's foolishness. Her questionable thoughts demonstrate a desire to escape from Love's power and no longer endure his oppressive "babyish tricks" and deceptions. The last two lines of Sonnet 16 allows Pamphilia's strong, independent voice to shine through, and are a disjunction of her defiant thoughts, describing her return to Love's agonies. "But O, my hurt makes my lost heart confess / I love, and must: So farewell liberty" (13-14). Relenting to Love is a typical Petrarchan element, and in this poem, it is revealed that Pamphilia cannot live her own life and is unable to overpower Love. Pamphilia reluctantly agrees to relinquish her life and liberty to Love, for the sake of continuing to love Amphilanthus.

Socio-historical Tension and Oppression of Love

Successfully implemented as a Petrarchan sonnet sequence, Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* exhibits the form's typical element of the despair of being in love. Yet Wroth's sonnets are unlike those of her male contemporaries because she describes love from a woman's eyes. With consideration to the historical background of sixteenth and seventeenth century England, the oppression expressed in Wroth's sonnets mirror the social and gender circumstances of women's realities. The Petrarchan elements of Sonnet 16 highlight the social trend during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of women losing their identities to male power.

Stripped of rights and identity, women were appendages of men—they had to essentially rely on them for everything. In *The Law's Resolutions of Women's Rights*, T.E. states that women had no power in society, that "they make no laws, they consent to none, they abrogate none. All of them are understood either married or to be married and their desires are subject to their husband." A Petrarchan female lover-speaker attempting to act similarly to a male mocks the real-life potential freedom of females that was hardly ever realized because the social and sexual constraints absolutely prevented her from living on her own. To be considered "married or to be married" severely limits the opportunities of an autonomous woman because the rest of her life is decided by a mere two choices: submitting to an oppressive relationship or rebelling against social mores and freely struggling as a spinster without a man's aid.

The Law's Resolutions of Women's Rights describes the impingement of seventeenth century English legal norms onto women's lives, and especially illustrates the few rights of a married woman. As stated in Book III, Section i, "A woman is a covert baron as soon as she is overshadowed with her husband's protection and supereminency." Essentially, a father relinquishes to his future son-in-law the power over his daughter. When married, husband and wife are legally fused together into one person: the man. In Wroth's sonnets, she places a woman in a typical male role and does not modify it to fit the real female social norms of the time. The woman, Pamphilia, has all of the same potential as a male counterpart, but, because of social constraints she has to relinquish her power to a man. Through Pamphilia's surrender to Love, Wroth illustrates that women during this time never actually had any power, unlike men in both Petrarchan sonnets and real life, because they were owned first by their fathers, then their husbands.

When a woman married she lost legal, economic, and social independence, but she also gained respect and earned privileges from her family and the community. However, if a woman was not married, she would have minimal, if any, support from her kin or townspeople. Families, in some cases, begrudgingly allowed the single woman to remain as a dependent living in their home, where she usually stayed until the parents died. In the patriarchal society of early modern England, women were regarded as submissive inferiors, and some authorities were concerned about unmarried women because they "represented a threat to the patriarchal social order by living outside the authority of the household and a male master" (Froide 240). Because of this threat, the administration of laws against unmarried women was strictly enforced by authorities. Without a husband, a woman had no identity at all and could not protect herself from the persecutions of society.

Explication of "Sonnet 16"

Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* describes Pamphilia's point of view of the confusion between having a life chosen by Love or having a life chosen by herself. In Wroth's Sonnet 16, "Farewell Liberty," Pamphilia struggles to admit that she can never escape Love's control.

The poem opens with the Pamphilia's acknowledgement that she has "lost the powers that to withstand, which joys to ruin me" to a stronger force (1-2). The "that" in the poem is Love; its presence in her life has forced Pamphilia to admit that she is in its grip, but also that she has not relinquished herself entirely. Yet, the fact that Pamphilia begins the sonnet with questions implies that she doubts Love's strength; a woman entirely void of independence would not have the audacity or idea to second guess Love's decisions. The first stanza is composed of three questions voicing concern towards Love: is Pamphilia conquered? Has she lost the abilities to resist his might? Does she have to remain immobile, unyielding as her "captive leads me prisoner, bound, unfree?" (4). The second inquiry: "have I lost the powers that to withstand..." indicates that Pamphilia previously had the strength to repel any Love's influence, but somewhere in her life she lost that battle and succumbed to the societal pressures to obey Love and submit to a man.

Based on the first stanza's inquiries, the reader feels that Pamphilia understands her potential for an independent life more than her female contemporaries because she recognizes the dangers of falling into Love's snare. The second stanza argues that the impossible must happen before she surrendered to love. Pamphilia articulates that even though Love aims his arrows at her, she has not submitted. Pamphilia's language suggests a woman who goes against the grain of society by questioning Love's motives and the results of his actions.

Love first shall leave men's fantasies to them free,
Desire shall quench love's flames, spring hate sweet showers,
Love shall loose all his darts, have sight, and see
His shame, and wishings hinder happy hours.

In order for Pamphilia to accept Love's decision about her, he must abandon his weaponry and see his past mistakes of fulfilling the desires of only men.

However, Pamphilia knows that Love will never change, and that he will always be "purblind" in his actions, meaning Pamphilia will continue to resist his wrong decisions. Pamphilia's hopes in stanza two are unrealistic events that will never in her mind occur. They are opposites of reality: Love encompasses "men's fantasies," Desire kindles love's flames, igniting a flurry of passion, and Cupid releases his arrows without discretion. She believes that Love is unwise but powerful, and his deeds result in unfavorable conditions for most women punctured by his arrow. Pamphilia argues that women depend on men when Love conquers rational thought. Love, in his unheeding exploits, is the tyrant who forces submission with the piercing of his darts into the hearts of knowledgeable women, destroying their capacity to make decisions. Not displaying remorse for his actions supports Pamphilia's claim that Love is an uncaring, suppressive master who enjoys making women his slaves. When Love abandons his rambunctious outings and finally acknowledges "his shame" and "has sight" of his wrongdoings, only then will Pamphilia submit herself to nuptial confines.

Again, Pamphilia addresses more questions to her audience in stanza three, asserting that Love is a domineering oppressor, capable of reducing women to hostages. Based on the context and tone of the first two lines of the third stanza, the reader feels as though Pamphilia is rallying up troops for a revolution, boosting their confidence. "Must we be servile, doing what he list?" she demands, invigorating a call to arms and hoping to ignite a flame of change in herself and her female counterparts. The questions Pamphilia asks are not just for her audience, they are also intended to release her from the shackles of domination and into a life of freedom. Her internal perceptions are conscious convictions that Pamphilia must resist "Love's purblind charms" and emancipate herself from his grasp.

From the onset, Sonnet 16 builds tension. The reader sympathizes with Pamphilia in the first stanza, sensing her despair of Love. In the third stanza, Pamphilia's voice comes alive, encouraging all women to overthrow Love: why should they *not* resist? Answering on behalf of women, Pamphilia directly addresses Love: "No, seek some host to harbor thee;" Love will never fulfill her life's desires, and she refuses to be a vessel for his "babyish tricks" (11-12). Pamphilia appears to be rising from Love's suppressing hold on her and exerting her power to rip his arrows from her breast.

Continuing through stanza four, the reader expects a dynamic climax of Pamphilia's determination to absolutely leave Love behind. Suddenly, as Pamphilia shoves Love to the ground, he grabs her back into his embrace and Pamphilia does not fight back; she yields to his force. An unexpected disjunction, "But O," indicates Pamphilia's inability to leave Love's clutches and that she is a prisoner to him, unable to ever escape. She surrenders to Love, weakly admitting "my hurt makes my lost heart confess / I love, and must; so farewell liberty" (13-14).

Conclusion

Since the American women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s, new laws regarding equal rights for women have been passed, inhibiting Love's (male) dominance, but before the twentieth century, women were considered by men simply as domestic, subordinate objects. With the passing of the nineteenth amendment, women were finally rising from the confines of male domination, and because of this historical milestone, women seized newly-available opportunities and identities apart from men. However, some women have hardly progressed with the advancements, regressing into old-fashioned male-sanctioned female roles because they cannot free themselves from their prisons. Similar to seventeenth century English women, some American women today are trapped by subjugation that restricts their potentials and advancements in life.

Male superiority is seen in modern America's workforces and households. If a couple has a child, who of the two would generally assume the responsibilities of the baby, and who would go out in the world to work? The woman would stay at home while the man would roam the world,

experiencing all of life's opportunities. While women have the capabilities to enter the workforce, society still pressures them to stay at home and let men take care of them. Four hundred years after Lady Mary Wroth's generation, women are still bowing to Love's tyrannical demands.

Unlike the women of Renaissance England, twenty-first century American women can live on their own if they desire. Granted, society may disapprove of her unconventional lifestyle decision, but a woman has the power to successfully live her life without the aid of a man. In the time of Mary Wroth, women were incapable of expressing their thoughts, exerting their voices, or exercising any rights, of which they had few of, if any, but women today have the strength to decide how they want to live; women's voices are no longer silenced by males' rules. The rights of women have come a long way since the English Renaissance, but many women still see Love's arrows quivering close in front of them and others feel his inescapable chains around their necks.

Sonnet 16

Am I thus conquer'd? have I lost the powers,
That to withstand which joyes to ruine me?
Must I bee still, while it my strength devoures,
And captive leads me prisoner bound, unfree?

Love first shall leane mens fant'sies to them free,
Desire shall quench loves flames, Spring, hate sweet showers,
Love shall loose all his Darts, have sight, and see
His shame and wishings, hinder happy houres.

Why should we not Loves purblinde charmes resist?
Must we be servile, doing what he list?
No, seeke some host to harbour thee: I flye

Thy Babish tricks, and freedome doe professe;
But O, my hurt makes my lost heart confesse:
I love, and must; so farewell liberty.

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A Reflection of Sorrow: The Woman in the Mirror Speaks

Sarah Cunningham

The day had arrived. The time has come for me to begin writing my paper on Sylvia Plath. My friend, Jessica, had to write a paper on her as well. Before we got down to business, we thought it might be advantageous to talk to each other about what we thought of Sylvia Plath. We were sitting together in the study room of our dorm hall.

“Honestly, I have no idea what she did to deserve such tragedy in her life. God must have really had it in for her. No wonder she stuck her head in an oven!”¹ Jessica noted.

“*Really*, Jess, I do not think you mean that. Yeah, her life was full of tragedy,² but I do not believe it was really necessary for her to kill herself” I responded. “I know most of the books we looked through focused on all of the horrible things that happened to her, but I have to believe there was more to her life than suicide attempts, death, and a failed marriage.”

“I guess you are right. But, if none of the books tell us about that part of her life, how are we ever going to know? Sylvia is dead. We cannot exactly ask her what she thinks.”

Suddenly, the room became colder. The lights flickered several times. Jessica and I had a feeling we were not alone. Then, Jessica’s eyes became very wide. I turned around to see what she was staring at. A woman sitting in the chair next to the window. She had on a black house dress and her hair was pulled back in a tight bun. Several unruly strands were falling out of the bun.³ I had an eerie feeling about this woman.

“Sylvia?” I asked timidly.
The woman stared back. Then, a smile crept onto her face.

“You think just because I died years ago that I cannot come back and visit students in need of my help?” she asked. Jessica and I could not believe our eyes. Her words confirmed our suspicions. Sylvia Plath was really in the same room as us!

“But...but this is impossible! You are not supposed to be...well...” Jessica finally sputtered after what felt like an eternity.

“Alive,” I finished. “Sorry. It is just that...” my voice trailed off.

“I think I know what you mean. Do not worry, I am not offended. You are probably wondering why I am here. I am guessing you also want to know how I got here” Sylvia asked.

“Yeah, I was wondering about that” Jessica asked. “I mean, thanks for coming and everything, but...why *are* you here?”

“Because you ladies truly want to understand. Both of you are tired of reading books that claim my entire life was dark and full of sadness. The fact that you are taking the time to figure me out says a great deal. So many people read the books and assume they explain everything. You two, you will not give up. You believe I was a real person with real thoughts and feelings. Something is making you believe there was more to my life than death and darkness.” She paused for a moment. “I would tell you exactly how I got here, but I do not think it is that important. I came because I want to help. Does it really matter how I got here?” Jessica and I shook our heads in unison.

“Sylvia, I mean, Ms. Plath, I mean...” I stammered. I was still a little shocked that Sylvia Plath was really here in my dorm hall talking to me.

“Sylvia is fine.”

“Ok. Sylvia. Wow! I cannot believe I am really talking to you. This is amazing! I guess we should get down to business, though. We do not want to keep you all day.”

“Do not worry about that; I will decide when it is time for me to go.” Sylvia said with a hint of a laugh in her voice. “So, what are you ladies stuck on?”

“We are not necessarily stuck on anything. We want to make sure we have everything correct. For example, I had to write a paper earlier in the year using two of your poems I thought incorporated some element of the cosmogonic cycle,” Jess chimed in.

Sylvia raised an eyebrow. “The cosmogonic cycle, eh? And which element of this cycle did you chose? I must admit, I am very curious. Not many professors would have enough faith in their students to let them work with such a thing at such an early time in their college career. You ladies must be quite intelligent.”

“I guess so” I replied.

“What poems did you select?”

Sylvia asked Jessica.

“I chose to deal with the element of the guide. The poems I chose were ‘Mirror’ and ‘Cinderella.’ I came across ‘Mirror’ in the textbook and I found ‘Cinderella’ towards the back of a poem book. I guess I will begin by explaining why I chose ‘Mirror.’”

She began. “I chose ‘Mirror’ because the guide in the poem was so different from those in other poems I had encountered. You wrote ‘Whatever I see I swallow immediately / Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike. / I am not cruel, only truthful.’⁴ Before I read these words, I had never thought about a mirror in that sense. The next morning, when I looked in the mirror, I really understood what you were saying. My hair was all askew and my clothes were all ruffled. This was not what I wanted to see. However, I knew the mirror was not trying to be mean to me; just telling me the truth.”

“Ahh, you *do* understand,”

Sylvia said softly. “There was something else I wanted this poem to say. Most guides in our lives can be distracted by human emotion. For example, if a person loves you, they may allow you to make a bad choice. Your guides may love you too much to stop you. They do not wish to disagree with you. The mirror is different. No human emotion can ever change what the mirror shows.⁵ The mirror is always ‘silver and exact.’”⁶

I spoke up. “I thought the mirror also represented time. Time is a lot like the mirror. No human emotion can ever stop or change it. In a sense, the mirror reflects time. You wrote about a woman looking into the mirror and crying because she saw that she was no longer young.⁷ Time had aged her and she was not happy about it. However, the mirror had to tell her the truth. It knew nothing else. Her human emotion could not turn back time to make her young, just like her wish to be young again could not be reflected in the mirror.”

“Well, I believe you ladies have that one down. Sarah, you are correct about time as well. I wanted this poem to show that there are guides out there that can *always* be trusted. To make the journey along the cosmogonic cycle, we need guides; good ones that we can trust. The mirror is definitely a good choice.” She turned to me,

“Now, back to what you mentioned about time. That carries us directly into ‘Cinderella,’ does it not?”
Thankfully, I was well versed in this poem as well, so I knew exactly what she was talking about.

“It most certainly does! Aside from her fairy godmother, time was Cinderella’s main guide. The last two lines make direct reference to it. ‘As amid the hectic music and cocktail talk / She hears the caustic ticking of the clock.’”⁸

“And what was time leading her to? Where do you think she ended up?” Sylvia asked.

Jessica took this one. “I do not believe we can really say where time is leading her. I keep thinking of how time never stops. There are also windows of time that may close before we get through them. I think that is what ‘Cinderella’ is about; using the time we have wisely. There is more to this poem than a girl trying to find her true love. Even so, I wonder; did she talk to the prince? Did they make plans to see each other later? You wrote the poem in such a way that the reader cannot really tell. When I read the last stanza, I saw Cinderella as little frantic. She seemed to know her time was almost up and was not sure if she had used it wisely.”

“Again, I am impressed with your deduction skills. You caught something very important in the poem. You really cannot tell how the story ends. Time will do that to people. They will flitter about life, and then when those last few moments come, they hear the ‘caustic ticking of the clock’⁹ and suddenly realize all the things they forgot to do. Time works in such a way that people do not know when the end is coming or where they will be led. They just assume everything will turn out alright. Assuming such a thing often causes problems later. People need to think about how they use their time. Some of us will not be here as long as others. Decisions must be well thought out.” Sylvia became quiet then. She seemed to be thinking about some of the decisions she had made during her life.¹⁰

Jessica tried to remedy the situation. “Oh, Sylvia! Do not worry! Things go badly for some people in their lives. You accomplished a great deal while you were here.¹¹ You are being studied in college writing classes; you must have done something right. Do not fret; you used your time well.”

Sylvia eyed both of us. Then, her frown became a small smile. “You do have a point. Just promise me the both of you will pay attention to how you spend your time and do not become frantic when you hear the ‘caustic ticking of the clock.’ You can have happy endings. There is still time. Just follow your guides. I feel as though you two understand the meanings of these two poems. Were there any other poems or ideas you ladies wanted to ask about? I am enjoying this conversation. I think I can afford to spend some more time here. However, before you answer, I would be interested to know what caused you to choose ‘Cinderella.’ That is a rather early poem of mine;¹² not many are aware of it.”

“To be completely honest, I was just flipping through a book of your poetry and was struck by the title. I knew your tendency to make poems dark, so I was very interested to see where you took that one. However, I also wondered if the poem might have a lighter feel to it. You wrote it in your earlier years, so I thought you may have been less sad at that time,” Jessica responded.

“I am glad that poem struck you. I always enjoy hearing what students think about a poem few professionals have written about. When the reader has only their mind to rely on, I hear some very interesting ideas. Many people simply skip over my early poems.¹³ I am glad you took the time to skim the whole book.” Sylvia sat back in her chair for a moment. She sighed before beginning again. “Alright, now I am ready for your questions again.”

“I had to write a paper discussing two of your poems I thought made excellent use of tone. I chose ‘Morning Song’ and ‘Daddy.’ I think I understand them, but do you mind if I ask you about them anyway?” I inquired.

“Not at all! We should begin with ‘Morning Song.’ Before we discuss the tone, tell me what you think I was saying in that poem. Did you believe it uncharacteristic of me to write such a piece?”

“Well,” I began, “you were writing about the birth of your first child in the poem.¹⁴ You seemed full of awe.” I continued by quoting some lines from the poem. “...your nakedness / Shadows our safety. We stand round blankly as walls.”¹⁵ Blank walls cannot talk. You were comparing yourself to such a wall because you, like the wall, had no words to describe the wonder surrounding your new baby. The tone of this poem could be described as awestruck and light. The only way you could effectively express yourself was in your poetry.”

“This was definitely a far cry from what you usually wrote,” Jessica commented. “So many of your poems are dark and cold. I was not pulled under by dark subject matter in this poem as I am with many of your other works, and I do not only mean your poetry.”¹⁶

“May I assume you have both read my novel, then?” Sylvia asked. We both nodded. She continued, “Well, maybe we can speak of that another day. We must continue with the poetry. Sarah, do you believe my word choice affected the tone at all?”

“Oh my, yes! My favorite stanza is a perfect example of how your word choice influenced the tone. ‘All night your moth-breath / Flickers among the flat pink roses. I wake to listen: / A far sea moves in my ear.’¹⁷ Normally, when a sentence is full of short, one syllable words, the tone becomes harsh. However, you chose words with soft ending sounds that flowed right into the next word. Thus, the tone becomes calm and reserved. You are still in awe and do not wish to break the spell with harsh sounding words.”

“I can see you have been doing your homework,” Sylvia said with a smile. “You are correct about my intentions for ‘Morning Song.’ I realized I was responsible for the existence of this child, but at the same time, I felt so distant. When I wrote ‘I’m no more your mother / Than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow / Effacement at the wind’s hand,’¹⁸ I was trying to explain that I was in awe of my child’s presence and was not sure how real I was. I felt so far away. The experience was amazing.” She paused for a moment, letting her words sink in. “Now that you have proved to me that you understand where I was going with ‘Morning Song,’ why don’t you explain to me what you think of ‘Daddy’ and the tone it holds. Jessica, you start.”

“Awhile ago, we were reading the poems aloud to each other. After reading ‘Daddy’ I felt very tight inside. I was almost angry. Honestly, I had to sit there for a minute and collect my thoughts before I could move on.”

“What about ‘Daddy’ caused this reaction? I think I know, but I would like to hear you explain it,” Sylvia said to her.

“Well, at first, I was grabbed by the lines ‘I was ten when they buried you. / At twenty I tried to die / And get back, back, back to you. / I thought even bones would do.’¹⁹ I know that was a direct reference to the death of your father. However, weren’t you only eight when your father died?”

“Yes, he died on November 5th, 1940.²⁰ I stated I was ten because it fit better in the poem. He left me before I had time to get to know him. I did try to kill myself when I was twenty. I wanted to be with him so badly. Let’s not talk about that just now, though. What else struck you in the poem?” she asked.

“You compared your father to Hitler...and to the devil!” I exclaimed. “I understand that you were making a comparison and trying to help the reader understand how you felt, but that seems awfully harsh!”²¹

“My wish was to make it known how angry I was at my father. Those examples are ones many understand and can appreciate.” Sylvia then quoted the last stanza. “‘There’s a stake in your fat black heart / And the villagers never liked you. / They are dancing and stamping on you. / They always knew it was you. / Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I’m through.’”²²

“The words in that particular stanza hammer the nails into your father’s coffin. The content, the harsh sounds of the words, almost everything in this poem screams anger and bitterness. The tone is so strong!” Jessica noted.

“You said almost everything in this poem screams anger and bitterness. What makes it ‘almost everything?’” Sylvia asked her.

“You start out with a very childlike, almost sing-song rhythm. ‘You do not do, you do not do / Any more, black shoe.’²³ Then, you get into the content and the comparisons. There is no way such a light tone can hold up such dark subject matter. The sing-song tone falls away very soon after that first stanza. I tried to make it work, but the subject matter kept throwing me back down to the ground” Jessica responded.

“I agree. You can try to use whatever tone you want. However, when you add in subject matter like that, any light quality the tone had is suddenly taken away. The tone cannot really be anything *but* dark and harsh,” I added.

“Well done! You both saw exactly what I was trying to do. You saw how I tried to trick the reader into thinking the poem was going to be light and peaceful. You also saw how I chose my words carefully. The idea about the words being the hammer that drove the nails into his coffin is absolutely correct. I wanted to rid myself of my father. Writing this poem was the only way I knew how to do so.” She paused and looked carefully into our eyes. “I want you ladies to know how amazed I am by your work. It means so much to me when I see people trying to understand what I was saying in my poetry. It means even more to me to that you want to know who I really was. You do not always trust the books. Keep questioning like that. You can be your own best guide in your learning if you know how. I believe both of you ladies are doing wonderfully.”

“Sylvia...to hear you say that...I don’t know...it means so much to me,” I stammered.

“Yes, and to know that you believed us worthy of your presence. That alone is enough for me,” Jessica added.

“Thank you for your gratitude. Thank you also for allowing me to live on by reading and thinking about my life and work. I am afraid I must leave you now. I am getting the feeling that a student in another campus is in need of my assistance. Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts with me. I had a wonderful time.”

Then, the lights flickered again. When they were fully restored, we saw that Sylvia was gone. Jessica and I sat there, just staring at each other. Sylvia Plath had just had a conversation with us. She had even told us we were correct in our interpretations. We did not want to break the spell of peace and joy that now surrounded us. Therefore, we decided it was time to get down to business and write our papers using our new-found knowledge of Sylvia Plath.

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Appendix A

"Mirror"

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
Whatever I see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful,
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

Appendix B

“Cinderella”

The prince leans to the girl in scarlet heels,
Her green eyes slant, hair flaring in a fan
Of silver as the rondo slows; now reels
Begin on tilted violins to span

The whole revolving tall glass palace hall
Where guests slide gliding into light like wine;
Rose candles flicker on the lilac wall
Reflecting in a million flagons' shine,

And glided couples all in whirling trance
Follow holiday revel begun long since,
Until near twelve the strange girl all at once
Guilt-stricken halts, pales, clings to the prince

As amid the hectic music and cocktail talk
She hears the caustic ticking of the clock.

Appendix C

“Morning Song”

Love set you going like a fat gold watch.
The midwife slapped your footsoles, and your bald cry
Took its place among the elements.

Our voices echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue.
In a drafty museum, your nakedness
Shadows our safety. We stand round blankly as walls.

I'm no more your mother
Than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow
Effacement at the wind's hand.

All night your moth-breath

Flickers among the flat pink roses. I wake to listen:
A far sea moves in my ear.

One cry, and I stumble from bed, cow-heavy and floral
In my Victorian nightgown.
Your mouth opens clean as a cat's. The window square

Whitens and swallows its dull stars. And now you try
Your handful of notes;
The clear vowels rise like balloons.

Appendix D

“Daddy”

You do not do, you do not do
Any more, black shoe
In which I have lived like a foot
For thirty years, poor and white,
Barely daring to breathe or Achoo.

Daddy, I have had to kill you.
You died before I had time---
Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,
Ghastly statue with one gray toe
Big as a Frisco seal

And a head in the freakish Atlantic
Where it pours bean green over blue
In the waters off the beautiful Nauset.
I used to pray to recover you.
Ach, du.

In the German tongue, in the Polish town
Scraped flat by the roller
Of wars, wars, wars.
But the name of the town is common.
My Polack friend

Says there are a dozen or two.
So I never could tell where you
Put your foot, your root,
I never could talk to you.
The tongue stuck in my jaw.

It stuck in a barb wire snare.
Ich, ich, ich, ich,
I could hardly speak.
I thought every German was you.

And the language obscene

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

The snows of the Tyrol, the clear beer of Vienna
Are not very pure or true.
With my gypsy ancestress and my weird luck
And my Taroc pack and my Taroc pack
I may be a bit of a Jew.

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

Not God but a swastika
So black no sky could squeak through.
Every woman adores a Fascist,
The boot in the face, the brute
Brute heart of a brute like you.

You stand at the blackboard, daddy,
In the picture I have of you,
A cleft in your chin instead of your foot
But no less a devil for that, no not
Any less the black man who

Bit my pretty red heart in two.
I was ten when they buried you.
At twenty I tried to die
And get back, back, back to you.
I thought even the bones would do.

But they pulled me out of the sack,
And they stuck me together with glue.
And then I knew what to do.
I made a model of you,
A man in black with a Meinkampf look

And a love of the rack and the screw.
And I said I do, I do.
So daddy, I'm finally through.
The black telephone's off at the root,
The voices just can't worm through.

If I've killed one man, I've killed two---
The vampire who said he was you
And drank my blood for a year,
Seven years, if you want to know.
Daddy, you can lie back now.

There's a stake in your fat black heart
And the villagers never liked you.
They are dancing and stamping on you.
They always knew it was you.
Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through.

¹ On February 11th, 1963, Sylvia Plath ended her life by breathing in the gas from her oven. Hall 10.

² Tragedy made its first attack when Sylvia was only eight years old. Her father, Otto Plath, died from complications due to diabetes. Sylvia never forgave him for this. She wanted so much to know him. Due to her strong feelings regarding his death, she tried to kill herself when she was 20. Four years later, she married Ted Hughes. The marriage lasted only six years. At that time, their oldest child was two and Sylvia had recently given birth to their second child. She had been pregnant once before this, but that particular pregnancy had ended in miscarriage. Therefore, the marriage was already on the rocks. The discovery that Ted was having an affair with Assia Gutman effectively ended the marriage. Throckmorton.

³ One of the more well-known photographs of Sylvia shows her with her two children. She has a rare smile on her face. In this photograph, she is wearing a black dress and her hair is pulled back as described here.

⁴ Appendix A. 2-4.

⁵ Broe 92.

⁶ Appendix A. 1.

⁷ Appendix A.

⁸ Appendix B, 13-14.

⁹ Appendix B. 14.

¹⁰ Many of the large decisions Sylvia had to make about her life came directly out of her hardships. For example, after her divorce, she had to make the decisions on how to raise two small children in a small flat in London. It was one of the worst winters on record and Sylvia was doing all she could to keep what family she had together. Eventually, it became too much for her and she made the choice to end her life. A decision such as this would most likely weigh heavily upon her if she came back and thought about it. Throckmorton.

¹¹ In addition to writing some amazing poetry, Sylvia held writing positions with magazines such as *Mademoiselle*, *Seventeen*, and *Harper's*. She also graduated summa cum laude from Smith College and received a Fulbright fellowship to Cambridge University. Hall 4-6.

¹² The actual date this poem was written was not recorded. However, in most poetry books, it is classified under "Juvenilia." The way the poems are organized in this particular book leads me to believe it was written before 1956. Other than that, there is really no way to be sure. Plath, The Collected Poems.

¹³ When I was searching for information on this poem, I found very little. Many of the books that analyzed Sylvia's poetry did not say anything about this poem at all. That was the case with many of her early poems. When I looked online, I was able to find printings of the poem, but that was about

it. I had to come up with the main analysis on my own. It seems as though many sources simply do not recognize her juvenilia.

¹⁴ “Morning Song” was written on February 19th, 1961. The previous year, on April first, Sylvia gave birth to her first child, Frieda Rebecca Hughes. Plath, The Collected Poems 157. Hall xiii.

¹⁵ Appendix C. 5-6.

¹⁶ In addition to Sylvia’s often dark poetry, she also wrote a novel with very dark subject matter. In 1963, she published The Bell Jar. It is often billed as an autobiography. Throughout the novel, Ester Greenwood, the narrator, experiences many psychological problems as she comes of age. Periods of hospitalization are explained along with a suicide attempt. As time progresses, Ester’s ability to deal with the events of her life diminishes. In the end, Ester Greenwood recovers. The same cannot be said for Plath. Hall 30-39.

¹⁷ Appendix C. 10-12.

¹⁸ Appendix C. 7-9.

¹⁹ Appendix D. 62-65.

²⁰ The death of Otto Plath had a great affect on Sylvia’s life. Many critics explain many of her mental problems with this event. Phelps.

²¹ In stanzas 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, Sylvia compares herself to a Jew and her father to Hitler. She feels like a Jew in the sense that she could trust no one. Her father was the person she most feared; much like how the Jews feared Hitler. Phillips. In stanza 11, she compares her father to the devil. “A cleft in your chin instead of your foot / But no less a devil for that...” Appendix D. 58-59. In making this comparison, she makes the hatred even more palpable. Phillips.

²² Appendix D. 81-85.

²³ Appendix D. 1-2.

haiku

Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff

this snow moon
hearing you sigh
even from in here *

* Published in *Acorn*, #15, 2005

The Divine Feast

Matt Balk

Hey! What are You doing up there?
Hanging half naked for all the world to see;
like a prime cut of meat being haggled over by petty
street merchants in a dusty marketplace.

Men have butchered themselves in Your name,
devoured kingdoms, lusted over Your
blood. Yet all You do is dangle there, tiny thorns
eating into Your head.

There was a time I felt for Your sacrifice.
I raised my voice in thanks for the meal.
But my voice grew hoarse, my ears deafened
by the silent sky. Now

Wrinkled old men in musty black cassocks masticate Your
words in their dry mouths,
spewing them out like a mother bird regurgitating
rubbish to her young, while

I sit in Your house, eating moldy bread and
drinking bitter blood as part of my daily ritual,
all the while staring at Your copper carcass on the wall,
willing it to move.

A Talk by the River

Kate Gross

I sauntered slowly out of the double glass doors, feeling the cool breeze on my face and breathing in deeply the fresh autumn air. I made my way to one of the long benches along the stone path bordering the Mississippi, all the while savoring what I cherish as the most beautiful view in the city, my city. As I settled down onto the cool, green metal bench, I found myself reflecting back on the words of the speaker I had heard only moments before. I was lucky enough to be one of the 250 women invited to attend the 2006 Women in Literature Conference held at the Grand River Center in Dubuque. Today was the closing day of the conference, which culminated with a presentation by the keynote speaker, Lucille Clifton. Her speech had been nothing short of inspiring, and as I sat outside I pondered Clifton's closing statement:

"One of the things I think I might have done in my life is just to try to speak for those who have not yet spoken, to try to tell the stories that have not yet been told. Maybe that's what a poet does. Maybe what a poet does is try to keep alive the whole story of what it means to be human, to try to tell the truth."¹

When I first heard her speak these words, they made so much sense and yet I could not help feeling overwhelmed. How could I even begin to know how to speak for others when half the time I have trouble putting my own thoughts on paper? How can I sort out the truth amongst the never-ending facades that people try to play off as their true selves and the fallacies we all try to pass off as the truth? How...

Lucille: Excuse me, would you mind if I sat down?

I quickly glanced up, startled back into reality by the woman standing before me. As I shaded my eyes from the sun and took a second look, I nearly gasped in surprise as I realized exactly who it was who wanted to share my bench.

Kate: Ms. Clifton? Of course! Please, have a seat. It's so nice to meet you in person!

Lucille: I thought I recognized you from inside, what's your name?

Kate: Kate, Kate Gross.

Lucille: It's a pleasure to meet you Kate. Thank you for sharing your seat with me! There were so many people clustered around in the lobby inside. I just needed a bit of fresh air before I'm cooped up on a plane again later this afternoon to head back east.²

Kate: Well you certainly picked a good spot. This is my favorite place in town. I come here whenever I need a little time to think away from my busy schedule.

Lucille: You're from Dubuque then?

Kate: Born and raised. I left for a couple years to go to college in Minnesota, but I ended up transferring back to Loras College right here in town. I didn't realize how wonderful home was until I left.

Lucille: I know just how you feel. So much of my inspiration for writing comes from simple things that surround my home and the people dear to me who live there.³

Kate: You know Ms. Clifton, just in hearing you speak today, I was able to connect to so many things that you said. But I found myself sitting out here wanting to know more. If you don't mind...I mean...I used to be a journalism major, so I'm kind of naturally curious. Would it bother you if I asked you a few questions?

Lucille: Not at all, Kate, ask away.

Lucille smiled, crossed her right leg over her left and turned toward me. Just in the way she sat I felt that she really cared about what I had to say.

Kate: How did you know that you wanted to be a poet? I mean, were you suddenly inspired one day by a certain event, or, what happened?

Lucille: At the time it almost seemed like an accident. Poetry really found me. I started out at Howard University as a drama major on a scholarship, and I lost it. I decided that I didn't need college, that I could become a writer, and so that's when I really began writing.

Kate: Was it hard at first, doing something you hadn't really done much of before?

Lucille: Sometimes I think our calling in life just surfaces from the ordinary and extraordinary experiences that fill our daily lives. It was certainly scary at first, because I realized many times when I was writing I wasn't including the whole story. It seemed too personal or too painful. But as time went on, I realized I was doing my readers, people in general, a disservice by not giving the whole story. I came to understand that I had to face those fears because they weren't going to go away.⁴

Kate: Is that what you were talking about in that poem about the fox that begins your collection, *The Terrible Stories*?

Lucille: Listen for a moment, Kate.

*the fox came every evening to my door
asking for nothing, my fear
trapped me inside, hoping to dismiss her
but she sat till morning, waiting.*

*at dawn we would, each of us,
rise from our haunches, look through the glass
then walk away.*

*did she gather her village around her
and sing of the hairless moon face,
the trembling snout, the ignorant eyes?*

*child, I tell you now it was not
the animal blood I was hiding from,*

*it was the poet in her, the poet and
the terrible stories she could tell.⁵*

Kate: So you just decided that even though you were afraid you had to do it? The poem makes it seem like you were afraid but the fox wouldn't leave you alone, it wouldn't release you from that responsibility you had to share your stories.

Lucille: That's exactly it Kate, and what you may not know is that this poem is not just a metaphor, it really happened!

Kate: You're telling me that an actual fox came to visit you and turned you into a poet.

Lucille laughed heartily as she nodded.

Lucille: I was living in an apartment at the time, and the fox kept showing up outside my door, and I was scared, really scared! The strangest thing was that after a while I moved to a new home, and the fox showed up again! I don't know if it was the same fox or not, but I figured it was enough of a sign for me!⁶

Kate: Wow, and here I was trying to be all philosophical when I read that poem and figure out what this "metaphorical fox" could possibly represent. It's an amazing story!

Lucille: And you see, the most beautiful thing is that it was only the beginning. There have been so many times in my life, Kate, so many times where I've had to stand up and face my fears, whether it be in my writing or just in life in general. Did you know that my husband died?

Kate: Yes, I'm sorry. I had read that in some background information I came across when I was researching after I found out I was going to hear you speak.

Lucille: Twenty-two years ago today.⁷ Sometimes it's so hard to believe that it has been that long. Some days the pain still feels so fresh, so new. You know Kate, you have to make the decision each day to get out of bed and live, not just go through the motions, but truly live. Anything less is cheating yourself. Would you mind if I shared another of my poems with you?

Kate: Please do!

Lucille:

*after he died
what really happened is
she watched the days
bundle into thousands,
watched every act become
the history of others,
every bed more
narrow,
but even as the eyes of lovers
strained toward the milky young
she walked away
from the hole in the ground*

*deciding to live. and she lived.*⁸

Kate: That must have been so hard for you. I can't even imagine losing my fiancée...he's the best friend I've ever had.

Lucille: As was Fred for me. I just had to remind myself that I wouldn't be doing myself or anyone else any favors by wallowing forever in my misery. Fred would have wanted me to keep living. Deep down I knew a part of me wanted to keep living despite the pain, and so I did.⁹

Kate: I admire you so much for how strong you've emerged after your difficult family life as a child¹⁰ and your husband's death. I just don't know if I could do the same. How do you do it? How do you find that strength?

Lucille: As hard as you may find it to believe Kate, I'm truly just an ordinary woman.¹¹ I gather my strength from the people that surround me today, the people that surrounded me yesterday and the wonderful new people I know I will meet each day, such as yourself.

I smiled, reflecting on how at home I felt with this famous, yet humble woman.

Kate: Who have some of these people been for you?

Lucille: I find that I get much of my strength from the women in my family. We have shared such a beautiful bond, and I often reflect back on them, asking them for help in my weakest moments. Here, why don't you listen again...

*woman who shines at the head
of my grandmother's bed,
brilliant woman, i like to think
you whispered into her ear
instructions. i like to think
you are the oddness in us,
you are the arrow
that pierced our plain skin
and made us fancy women;
my wild witch gran, my magic mama
and even those gaudy girls
i like to think you gave us
extraordinary power and to
protect us, you became the name
we were cautioned to forget,
it is enough,
you must have murmured,
to remember that i was
and that you are, woman, i am
lucille, which stands for light,
daughter of thelma, daughter
of georgia, daughter of
dazzling you.¹²*

You see, Kate. I come from such an amazing line of strong women, and I'm sure you do as well. When I do not know what to do, or if I will have the endurance and strength that I need to keep writing, I lean on them, and they carry me. I think that in order to survive and truly find happiness in what we do, we must take this strength and love that we have seen in our mothers and our grandmothers, in our sisters and our women friends, and use it to give us hope. Hope that, as women, we will endure, and the things that we do not...that we cannot accomplish, are not failures, but are the gifts that we give to our daughters and our granddaughters so that they might fight the same courageous battles that we did during our lifetimes.¹³

Kate: That's a beautiful outlook. How do you keep so much hope? Don't you ever get discouraged? So often I want so badly to forget the difficult things in my life and the bad things in the world, all the struggles and inequalities, and just be happy, but I feel like I can't.

Lucille: Kate, when I write, I write out of my whole being. I do not hide anything, and I leave nothing behind. I bare my soul to my readers, because I feel that if I excluded some things, if I left out the struggles or the pain that I hold deep inside me, I would be cheating them somehow, and I would be cheating myself.¹⁴ But when I do write with everything I have, and I see it there, lying before my eyes on that crisp white page in black and white, I can see that the words of struggle, the words of obstacles, and of pain are surrounded by words of hope, words that embody the power that we have as women, and the love that we share, and this makes me happy, truly happy.

Kate: I think that is exactly the reason that I have enjoyed your writing so much. I can feel the moment I begin reading one of your poems that I am experiencing a part of the woman that you are. I can feel that you put your whole self into your writing, and unlike so many other poets, I can understand and connect to your writing so easily. And that's really amazing when you think about it. I mean, you're seventy-years-old, you're an African American, you come from halfway across the country, and you're an acclaimed poet. I'm 21-years old, I'm white, I'm a mid-western girl at heart, and I'm just a student in the process of learning how to be a good writer, yet I can connect to you on levels I never imagined possible.

Lucille: It is hearing young people such as yourself say things like you just did that is one of the key motivators that keeps me writing. *I use a simple language. I have never believed that for anything to be valid or true or intellectual or "deep" it had to first be complex. I deliberately use the language that I use. Sometimes people have asked me when I was going to try something hard or difficult, as if my work sprang from my ignorance. I like to think that I write from my knowledge not my lack, from my strength not my weakness. I am not interested if anyone knows whether or not I am familiar with big words, I am interested in trying to render big ideas in a simple way. I am interested in being understood not admired. I wish to celebrate and not be celebrated (though a little celebration is a lot of fun).*¹⁵

Kate: (*chuckling with Lucille*) Celebration is a lot of fun, and it seems that despite the hardships in your life you have truly found many things to celebrate. It's so interesting to hear your insights about writing and life. Both seem to be closely connected for you, your writing seems to be a beautiful way of expressing your life energy. I think this is one of the biggest things I still have to learn. So often I find myself sitting for minutes on end staring at my laptop screen, just trying to think of that one big fancy word that will make me sound smarter in a paper, when I should really just be writing from my heart and concentrating on communicating the lessons that I have to share from my own life.

Lucille: And I truly think that is what's important, Kate. You can throw in all the twelve-letter adjectives that you want, but when it comes down to it it's the feelings behind the writing that matter the most. It's the emotions interlaced between the lines and the blood, sweat and tears that lie within the paper. The world that we live in already has so much clutter and so many messes that we've created through hatred and animosity toward one another. Writing is one of the few places to which we can still turn to for simplicity.¹⁶

Kate: I think I'm beginning to understand what writing poetry is all about. I always thought before that in order to be really outstanding, a poem had to rhyme or be written in iambic pentameter with lots of old-school big words, but I can see that's so far from the truth. An outstanding poem just has to come from the heart. You're so wise, Ms. Clifton.

Lucille: Wisdom comes with time, Kate. Speaking of time, I better be getting back inside so I can head off to the airport. My flight leaves in a couple of hours.

Kate: Oh! I'm sorry Ms. Clifton, I didn't mean to keep you!

Lucille: First of all, Kate, please call me Lucille. And please don't apologize. I've enjoyed our conversation as much as you have, talking with young women like you keeps me from getting old!

We laugh together.

Lucille: Before I go though, there's one more poem of mine I'd like to share with you. I think you'll be able to take these words with you long after our conversation has ended.

*the light that came to lucille clifton
came in a shift of knowing
when even her fondest of sureties
faded away. it was the summer
she understood that she had not understood
and was not mistress even
of her own off eye. then
the man escaped throwing away his tie and
the children grew legs and started walking and
she could see the peril of an
unexamined life.
she closed her eyes,
afraid to look for her authenticity
but the light insists on itself in the world;
a voice from the nondead past started talking,
she closed her ears and it spelled out in her hand
"you might as well answer the door, my child,
the truth is furiously knocking."¹⁷*

So you see, Kate, I have not always been wise. I do not claim, and never will claim to know all things. But through my life I have become enlightened. Enlightened not in the sense that I have come to understand all aspects of life, but enlightened in the sense that I have come to understand that I do not understand. Life is a journey, Kate, and the only thing we can do is promise ourselves that we will take advantage of the experiences and lessons that it offers us. We must come to

understand that we will never know it all, but we will come to know many things, and we must never, ever hide from the truth. The truth forever persists. The truth will find us, wherever we are.¹⁸ And now, my dear, I must leave you.

Kate: I can never thank you enough for the wisdom that you've passed on to me today Lucille. You're an amazing woman and it's been an honor getting to know you a little bit this afternoon.

Lucille: Thank you, Kate. Sharing this afternoon with you by the river has reminded me of all the possibilities that lie in the future thanks to bright young women such as yourself. You will do great things, Kate, just remember to write from your heart.

Lucille slowly stood up, smiled, and turned toward the building. I gazed after her as she walked toward the double glass doors, the breeze off the water blowing her long colorful skirt, and the fading sunlight illuminating her brilliant white head of hair. "She's just one woman telling her story," I thought to myself, "but what a woman she is."

Soon after Lucille left, I too stood up and began the short walk back to my car. I continued to think about Lucille's final words. "You will do great things Kate, just remember to write from your heart."

I smiled to myself, took one last glance at the sun setting over the river, my river, and walked happily back toward the parking lot, knowing that I carried with me the strength and wisdom of my grandmothers, my mother, my sister, my friends and a wise woman named Lucille.

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the light that came

the light that came to lucille clifton
came in a shift of knowing
when even her fondest of sureties
faded away. it was the summer
she understood that she had not understood
and was not mistress even
of her own off eye. then
the man escaped throwing away his tie and
the children grew legs and started walking and
she could see the peril of an
unexamined life.
she closed her eyes,
afraid to look for her authenticity
but the light insists on itself in the world;
a voice from the nondead past started talking,
she closed her ears and it spelled out in her hand
"you might as well answer the door, my child,
the truth is furiously knocking.

telling our stories

the fox came every evening to my door
asking for nothing, my fear
trapped me inside, hoping to dismiss her
but she sat till morning, waiting.

at dawn we would, each of us,
rise from our haunches, look through the glass
then walk away.

did she gather her village around her
and sing of the hairless moon face,
the trembling snout, the ignorant eyes?

child, I tell you now it was not
the animal blood I was hiding from,
it was the poet in her, the poet and
the terrible stories she could tell.

daughters

woman who shines at the head
of my grandmother's bed,
brilliant woman, i like to think
you whispered into her ear
instructions. i like to think
you are the oddness in us,
you are the arrow
that pierced our plain skin
and made us fancy women;
my wild witch gran, my magic mama
and even those gaudy girls
i like to think you gave us
extraordinary power and to
protect us, you became the name
we were cautioned to forget,
it is enough,
you must have murmured,
to remember that i was
and that you are, woman, i am
lucille, which stands for light,
daughter of thelma, daughter
of georgia, daughter of
dazzling you.

she lived

after he died
what really happened is
she watched the days
bundle into thousands,
watched every act become
the history of others,
every bed more
narrow,
but even as the eyes of lovers
strained toward the milky young
she walked away
from the hole in the ground
deciding to live. and she lived.

¹ Rowell, Charles H. "An Interview with Lucille Clifton."

- ² Clifton was born in Depew, New York, and now resides in Colombia, Maryland.
- ³ Clifton has always said, “I write what I know,” and this is evidenced in much of her poetry, which is written about her own family and people in the community in which she grew up.
- ⁴ In her interview with Charles H. Rowell, Clifton talks about how her true task as a poet is to tell the whole story to her readers, not omitting things simply because they are too painful or personal. She believes it is important and her duty to share the entirety of her crucial life experiences, not just bits and pieces.
- ⁵ Clifton, “telling our stories,” *The Terrible Stories*, 9.
- ⁶ Clifton told Charles Rowell about her encounters with the fox in their interview. She said that she chose to believe that it was the same fox who came to both houses, and the fox ended up symbolizing desire for her, desire to confront her fears and write the truth.
- ⁷ Clifton’s married her husband, Fred Clifton, in 1958. He died in unexpectedly on November 10, 1984 at age 49.
- ⁸ Clifton’s, “she lived,” *The Book of Light*, 20.
- ⁹ Much of Clifton’s work emphasizes maintaining strength through adversity and using her strengths as an “ordinary woman” to empower her to continue living and writing despite the difficulties that she has faced in the past and will continue to face in the future.
- ¹⁰ Clifton was very close to her mother, who was extremely hard-working and always tried to do her best to support the family. All of her efforts, however, never seemed to be enough for Clifton’s father, who was a harsh man that always found things wrong with Clifton’s mother’s efforts, and would not allow her mother to publish the poetry that she often wrote. Clifton’s mother was chronically ill throughout Clifton’s childhood, and eventually died at a young age.
- ¹¹ Clifton often emphasizes in both her poetry and in interviews that she is an “ordinary woman.” In fact, she used the phrase as a title for one of her collections of poetry published in 1974. She prides herself in just being a part of her community, and in finding the extraordinary qualities hidden within the ordinary situations and people that surround her.
- ¹² Clifton’s “daughters,” *The Book of Light*, 13.
- ¹³ Clifton believes and has expressed in many of her poems, such as “daughters,” that women’s strength and resolve can be seen and personified in generations yet to come.
- ¹⁴ Clifton once said in an interview that she writes out of her whole being and holds nothing back. She writes what she knows, which includes being a woman poet.
- ¹⁵ Clifton has emphasized in several interviews that she intentionally employs simple language and punctuation in all of her poems in hopes of connecting with a diverse audience of readers. The quote in italics above is from *African American Writers*. Second Edition Volume 1 Ed.
- ¹⁶ Peggy Rosenthal noted, “The first thing that strikes us about Lucille Clifton’s poetry is what is missing: capitalization, punctuation, long and plentiful lines. We see a poetry so pared down that its spaces take on substance, become a shaping presence as much as the words themselves.... She has chosen a minimalist mode that clears out human society’s clutter, the mess we’ve made by identifying ourselves in contending genders, ethnicities, nations. Lightly, as if biting her tongue, with a wise smile, she shows us a radically egalitarian world where no one or no capitalized word lords it over others.” *Sidelights Contemporary Authors Online*, Thomson Gale, 2005.
- ¹⁷ Clifton’s “the light that came,” *Generation of 2000*, 36.
- ¹⁸ Clifton’s works have been labeled by critics as detailing the struggles and the triumphs, the beauty and the pain experienced by people, especially women, in all walks of life. She strives to write the truth, dispelling stereotypes and empowering ordinary people through each of her poems.

haiku

Bill Pauly

spelling bee . . .
misspelling
apiary

country field--
home run rolling
past the headstones *

* First published in *Midwest Haiku Anthology*, High/Coo Press, Brooks Books, 1992. Previously published in *Past Time*, Red Moon Press, 1999. Appears in *Baseball Haiku*, Norton, 2007 (April).

Home

Margaret McNair

“Just be polite, Matthew. That’s all I ask of you.”

My mom and dad walked into the illuminated house through the back door and stomped their feet to shake the wet snow from their shoes. The house looked warm and inviting. I should have been excited to see my family, many of whom had come from across the country, but this year was different. I wasn’t ready to go in yet. I waved my dad away as he held the screen door open for me. I began to walk back towards the driveway and contemplated whether I should make a run for it. As I mulled this over, I reached into my pocket for a cigarette, lit it and came to the conclusion that I’d rather be back in L.A. I fucking hated rehab but I’d rather be there.

I held in a long drag and watched my parents hug all seven hundred people in the house. All of the little kids weaved through the adults, running around in their best holiday outfits. The boys wore their collared shirts and ties, all of which were hanging off their bodies, frazzled by the games of tackle football in the basement. The girls wore their velvet dresses with matching hair bows. The high school kids were telling their aunts and uncles which colleges they planned to attend. No doubt they’d be trying to sneak beers later to try to look fucking cool or whatever. The college kids were talking about their majors, pretending like they were perfect students. *They all know you’re full of shit. Why don’t you just tell them you’re trying hard not to fail out?* While they sat there, spouting their bullshit, they’d occasionally glance over at me through the window. They had me figured out: I may as well take my sweet-ass-time finishing my cigarette, because there was no way I would be able to include myself in this conversation. I wish they would have known that I didn’t envy them in any way. I almost felt like they were worse off than I was.

My family has this thing where they like to pretend that everything is okay, when it’s really not. When I was younger I thought my family was perfect, as I’m sure most kids do. But then most kids grow up and realize that it was just because they were young that they thought their world was just dandy. They realize there are shitty moments in life and that no family is perfect. I got that. What I didn’t understand was why my family still pretended that everything was fine all of the time, regardless of whether it was or not. Uncle Mike cheated on his wife, *don’t talk about it*. My cousin Sarah had an abortion, *never happened*. Aunt Mary is drunk again, *she’s just tired*. Matthew overdosed on cocaine, *Merry Christmas!* I watched my mom hug my grandma, holding on for just a bit longer than the others. My grandma whispered something into her ear and my mom stepped back, nodded and forced a painful smile through her perfect maroon lipstick. I knew they were talking about me; I knew for a fact that everyone in that house would think about me or whisper behind my back: *When’s Matthew going to get his act together? Is he even planning on going to college still?* But no one would think of actually asking me, God forbid we talk about it.

I was supposed to go to school. I had my room assignment and my class schedule by mid summer. Boston College. The summer was hard on me and before I knew it, I was on a plane headed in the exact opposite direction of my dreams. I guess by that point I didn’t even know what a dream was, except for cold sweats and nightmares. My mom found me at 4 A.M. some time in August. I guess I was passed out in the bathtub with the shower on, running cold water all over myself. They say I still had my clothes on, the red running all over my crisp, white, Oxford shirt, stained almost black at the wrists but a colorful pink at the last button. I was so pissed at my parents for making me go to rehab. I understood that I had a cocaine problem, but there was no worse feeling than giving it all up, knowing they wanted me to never go back. As bad as the first day of rehab was, this day was up there. It was four months of being surrounded by heroin addicts, alcoholics, meth-heads, people screaming, shitting on themselves and weighing less than 90 pounds.

I'd much rather be with them than in Evanston with these people, men talking football and women talking Macy's.

I couldn't believe my parents talked me into coming home. The doctors said that if I did okay over this two week stay, that I wouldn't have to come back to L.A. If I stayed clean I would just go back to my therapist here. My parents told me that they sent me as far as L.A. because that was where the best doctors were. "Oasis Treatment Center," what a lovely sounding place. I think part of the reason too was because my parents just wanted me to be as far away from them as possible. I was killing my mom by what I was doing. My dad was always busy with work, the Assistant District Attorney. Oh, the irony. My mom was the one that was around for my summer from hell. She worked as a part time assistant for a wedding coordinator but had to quit towards the end of it all because she didn't want to leave me home alone. I still managed to get away with shit. The first time I saw someone do coke was during my freshman year at some party an upperclassman was throwing. I didn't try it until I was a senior. It was easier for us to get blow than it was for us to get beer. I never had a job because my parents always just gave me money. I figured that if they were stupid enough to just hand it over, then there was no point of getting one. By June, every penny went to my addiction. When they cut me off I'd steal from them. If I couldn't get it I was miserable. I felt worthless. When I hit my low point, I became depressed as soon as my high started to wear off. The thought of not being high made me sick. And now the thought of dealing with my family made it even worse.

I headed towards the back door, the snow crunching beneath my shoes. Opening the door, the smells of the Christmas tree, ham in the oven and old woman perfume were far more welcoming than the people. As I shut the door, the bells on the handle jingled. Everyone stopped what they were doing and looked to see who had arrived. Some forced a smile, some sneered, most looked disappointed, but all quickly returned to their conversations as if I had not walked in. My grandmother wobbled up to me, apron on, held on to my face and gave me a loud kiss in the ear.

"Matthew, I'm so happy you could come home for this. You look... good. How do you feel?"

"Gram, I feel great." I smiled and she either didn't recognize my sarcasm or ignored it as she smiled back and made her way to the stove. I walked towards the bar in the dining room. I eyed the whiskey but grabbed a Sprite. I turned to see a few of the adults sitting at the table, sipping on wine, and talking about *who gives a shit*. The chandelier glowed and the place settings at the table were perfect. My aunts and uncles looked up at me as I took a sip of my Sprite and smiled. If I was going to be stared at all night like some sort of freak, I may as well smile for my audience. I'm sure they loved my dapper outfit, long hair and unshaven face.

I kept moving, walking down the hallway that was lined with family pictures. There was one with eight of the ten kids, taken sometime in the 60s. It was black and white and even though all of them wore the same white sailor outfit, it was obvious which one was my mom: blonde hair and a big smile, something I hadn't seen in a while. I ran my fingers across the picture and kept walking as another train of small children ran past me, their piercing screams filling the air. They had no idea I was even their cousin, which was probably a good thing.

I made my way to the reading room. It was my favorite room when I was a kid when I came over here because it was always so quiet and empty. With a family like this, sometimes you just needed that. I walked in and closed the wooden doors behind me. A soft cough came from behind me and I turned to see my grandfather. He sat in a dark chocolate leather chair, much bigger than he. He stared out the window, eyes glazed over at the snow covered bushes, the tiny white lights fighting to glow through the blanket. His arms rested neatly on his lap, folded like someone in a casket. Someone put them that way for him. His body was so stiff, much worse than I remembered. He was about as scrawny as I was and we were dressed the same—a collared shirt, red tie, blue sweater and khaki pants with a brown belt. The only exception to our matching attire was that he wore his loafers and I rocked Chuck Taylors. The room was all dark wood and the walls and the

curtains were a deep green. The walls were lined with books he had collected over the years, all classics—his favorite: James Joyce’s *Dubliners*. This was something I shared with my grandfather—I loved literature as much as he did. No one in our family knew that he and I shared that bond. In high school, I had to memorize a soliloquy from Macbeth: “...life’s but a walking shadow; a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more: it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” He knew it and read it with me until I knew it, too. He told me that Macbeth’s speech was the ultimate moment of despair in all of literature. I knew despair that Christmas night. After roaming the house, I went to that room knowing that he would probably be in there. He was probably sitting amongst the chaos and needed a break. He was the only other person in the house that knew we were surrounded by nut jobs.

“Matthew, Merry Christmas.”

“To you, too.” I said this with the utmost sincerity. Although every word from my mouth came with some hint of sarcasm or resentment, I would never dream of talking to him like that. I respected my grandfather more than anyone I knew. Especially at that point, he was the only person that I respected or admired at all. I took a seat in the chair next to him and sipped my Sprite.

My grandfather didn’t speak much, especially lately. He was an outcast, too. He had been diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease about five years earlier. Of all diseases, he got Parkinson’s, a disease that slowly takes away your freedom and mobility. It was painful to watch. My grandfather was a marathon runner for all of his life, had ten kids and a headstrong wife. He was a lawyer and eventually a judge for the federal courts, a genius. A man admired by more people than he knew. And now he sat alone in a room at his own Christmas party. When he started to slow down, all he could do was sit quietly. I knew he took everything in because his mind was still there, sharp as ever.

“Why are you sitting in here all alone, too much for you out there?”

“Yeah, the kids were running around and Grandma started to get irritated because the green beans were getting cold. I had Uncle Tom help me in here so I could get a little peace and quiet before dinner. There are a hundred rooms in this house and all of your aunts and uncles seem to think there is only the kitchen. I don’t mind being in here, though. Ya know?”

“Same here.” I stood up and started to walk slowly around the room, pulling books out and fanning the pages. My grandfather watched me, lifting his head with a trying effort. I wondered if he knew. I heard quick footsteps coming to the door and turned to see Charlie, one of the many small children at this function.

“Um... Grandpa, do you want ahhh... a Sprite or somefing? My mom told me to ask you if you wanted a Sprite or somefing.” Charlie’s hair was messy and his cheeks and ears were bright red. He kept looking behind him as if he was waiting for someone to attack.

“No, Char. I’m ok for now. Thank you, though.”

“Okay. And they told me to say that dinner is ready in fifteen minutes or ten or something. Actually I don’t remember what time they said.”

“Okay, thank you, Charlie.”

“Yep!” he shouted as he ran out the room and down the hall.

My grandpa directed his attention back to me.

“How is Boston, Matthew?”

“Boston is good. I’m doing well.” I couldn’t tell him. It wasn’t that I didn’t think he would understand. It was that I couldn’t let him down. He turned back to stare out the window, the slight turn of his head was clearly a strenuous effort.

“Have you picked a major?” I grabbed another book and looked over to him. I hadn’t thought about a major since I got accepted.

“History and literature.” I liked the way that sounded. As I ran my fingers across the books, I realized I hadn’t thought about Boston in months.

“Do you want to teach someday, do you think?”

“I’m not really sure yet, maybe. I was thinking of getting into law.” *A teacher? Yeah, because I would be such a great role model.*

“I’m sure whatever you do, you will succeed. You were always a smart kid.”

“Thanks, old man.”

“Old man? You better watch your mouth, wise guy.”

I laughed with my grandfather, but I felt like a piece of shit. I realized at that moment that I was doing exactly what I hated my family for. I was being a total phony. This was the one man that I didn’t want to let down and I was lying to his face. I was pretending that everything was fine. The smile faded from my face.

“Grandpa, how do you deal with this family?”

“You know what, Matthew? I know you have it out for everyone here. But they are not terrible people. You have been given everything you’ve ever needed. And maybe even that was too much. They care, believe it or not.” The change in tone of my grandfather’s voice made me wonder if he knew. I couldn’t ask him, though. I didn’t want to deal with it. Whether he knew or not, his advice and encouragement made me think twice about being home to stay. I guess this place wasn’t as bad as the Oasis. “Now let’s go eat. Give me a hand, would you?”

“Sure, no problem.” I took his hand and helped him out of the chair. We walked out of the quiet room and into the dining room. A couple of my aunts were sitting at the other end of the table, still talking. I pulled my grandpa’s seat out for him and he slowly lowered himself into it. I sat down next to him and we waited.

Welcome to the Mighty City on the Mississippi

Jana Hosek

After my first day of work, having been a resident of St. Paul, MN, for only three days, I received the most exciting yet peculiar invitation. I had been invited to an August Wilson Day Remembrance Celebration.¹ Where did this invitation come from? Who could have known I was a fan and had studied the works of August Wilson? Regardless of the answers to those questions, I was thrilled to have gotten an invitation.

Following the five days that seemed to drag on, I found myself in front of the great Fitzgerald Theater, anxious for the celebration to get started. Throughout the deserted lobby of the theater were signs for various plays, speakers, and events planned for the upcoming months. I searched in vain for a sign advertising the August celebration. I began to wonder if I was in the right place or if I had mixed up the time and date. Just as my self-doubt had won out and I was beginning to leave, a precious little girl in an old dress timidly said, “Ma’am, are you here to celebrate August?” I told her that I was, as she began to lead me to my seat.

The little girl led me into the theater, which was empty except for a row of people in the very front. I looked at my watch, wondering if I was just *that* early. It was 9:55, and people should be here by now. She instructed me to sit in an end seat, about halfway back, which I was somewhat annoyed with considering there were hundreds of empty seats closer to the front. The annoyance faded quickly because as I was walking away, I realized there was something oddly familiar about her that I could not put my finger on.

Those thoughts faded quickly as I became aware of the stage area. In the center was a plain podium. On both ends of the stage were pianos, almost identical to one another. I could see that the one on the right contained more detail than the one on the left. The one on the left must be the one used in the Yale presentation of *The Piano Lesson* and the right from the Hallmark movie version!² Between the pianos and the podium on stands were posters of various Wilson plays.

Moments later my eyes almost popped out of my head as I saw Bill Clinton walk across the stage! As he walked to the podium I heard a hush fall over the crowd. Yes, though there was no one else around me, I heard a hush. I pushed the oddness of the situation into the back of my mind, as he began to speak.

“I would like to welcome you all here this morning. We sure do have a full house, which I am sure will prove to make for a good time. I am extremely honored to be here this morning, hosting this celebration of August.³ I had the fortune of knowing him while he was alive.⁴ I first met August in September of 1999, when I presented him with the National Humanities Medal.⁵ I awarded him the medal because he ‘present[ed] an epic story of the black experience in America over the course of a century.’⁶ In doing so, he did a great service to this country by comprehensively highlighting the injustices faced by African Americans throughout his ten major plays. For once, I’ll keep it short and let you hear from people who were blessed to know him more intimately than I was. Please join me in welcoming the playwright, Wendy Wasserstein.”

As Clinton stopped speaking, I nearly had a heart attack. The entire place broke out in applause! I feared I was losing my mind – how could there be an abundance of applause with only a few people present? At that moment it also hit me: how could Wendy even be here? I recalled that she had died shortly after August did.⁷

Finally it hit me! I realized there was some sort of magic happening. Though I could not see them, I was surrounded by others who had studied or been inspired by Wilson. Since I had realized what was happening, my heart finally started to slow just as Wendy approached the podium.

“Like former President Clinton I am honored to be here today. I have been asked to speak about who August Wilson was as a playwright. Reflecting now on both of our lives and work, I see many

parallels. Though we did not know one another very well, because of those parallels we understood one another on levels few understand. We both wrote from experiences of minorities. August focused on the cumulative experience of his people throughout the last 100 years in America.

“August took an extremely unique approach to sharing the story of his people. He had enough insight to know the road for African Americans has been long and hard and could not be fully expressed in a single play. So, he made it his life’s work to write ten plays, culminating the last 100 years of the African American experience. His first play, Jitney, which was released in 1982, takes place in 1977.⁸ His last play, Radio Golf, which was released in 2005, takes place in 1997 and concludes the 100 year cycle.⁹ The other plays in the cycle include, in order of when they take place, Gem of the Ocean, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, The Piano Lesson, Seven Guitars, Fences, Two Trains Running, and King Hedley II.

“The plays he wrote for the 100 year cycle enjoyed a wide range of accomplishment. All but two of the plays received Tony nominations for Best Play, with Fences being his golden play, taking the cake in 1987. He received Pulitzer Prizes for Drama for both Fences and The Piano Lesson.¹⁰ Of course, he received a plethora of other awards, but if I listed them all we’d be here all day, and I know you all have better things to do than listen to me for hours on end!¹¹

“Within a year’s time, the theater industry lost three prominent minority pioneers: August, myself, and Lloyd Richards.¹² It is the hope of all three of us that our works inspire future generations of minorities to speak out about their struggles and experiences. I’ll close with a quote from August on that very topic. ‘We can make a difference. Artists, playwrights, actors – we can be the spearhead of a movement to reignite and reunite our people’s positive energy for a political and social change that is reflective of our spiritual truths rather than economic fallacies.’¹³ Thank you.”

I clapped enthusiastically along with the crowd. Wendy was so down to earth and funny, just like so many of the sources I’d read said she was. Even though I knew this was a celebration for August, it would have been interesting if she had detailed their similarities more. They both faced discrimination growing up,¹⁴ both write mainly about the people they know the most about – they do not attempt to understand the types of people they are not,¹⁵ music plays a very telling role in many of both of their plays, and many of their characters are faced with torn identities. Are their characters dictated by the present or the past?

As I reflected on their similarities, Bill Clinton again approached the podium.

“Our next guest would not be here if it were not for August, for she is a creation of his heart. Ms. Berniece from The Piano Lesson agreed to make the trip here from Pittsburgh to share with us how August became the man that he was.”

I saw Berniece get up from her seat and then I realized who the little girl was that seated me. It was Maretha, Berniece’s daughter.

“Thank ya’ll for coming today. It’s such a nice pleasure to be speaking to all of you. I got to know August real well, with him writing both a play and movie with me in it and all. He’d often say I remind him of his mama. She, too, was a single mother for some time, and the most prominent role-model in his life, much like I am to my daughter, Maretha. Neither August’s mother, nor I, had a lot to give our children, but we did the best we could. She had them children reading by the time they’s three, and I always make Maretha go to piano lessons, whether she wanna or not. I tried to shelter my Maretha from the hardships of the past, as did August’s mama. He say later that wasn’t the best thing,¹⁶ but like I said, we did the best we could.

“August’s mama also made the decision later to get married again¹⁷ and move to the white area. Perhaps I would have done that too, had that ever been possible. Movin’ to a white area was hard on August. Bricks were thrown in their windows, nasty notes left on his desk at school, and he was accused of cheatin’ because they thought a black man ain’t smart enough to write a good paper.¹⁸ Maybe movin’ wasn’t the best thing but she loved her son, and like I said, she just did the best she could.

“I always admired August for not forgettin’ about those of us in Pittsburgh. Even though he moved away, first to here [St. Paul/Minneapolis], then on to Seattle, his heart was always with us in Pittsburgh.¹⁹ He wanted to be the voice for those on The Hill, and blacks in ghettos all over.²⁰

“My brother and uncles also love August very much. Those three men talked to August a lot during the writing of the play and screenplay for The Piano Lesson.²¹ They’d like to share with ya’ll a song called ‘Oh, Berta.’ With this here song, like many others in his plays, August tells the story of our people, unlike just talking or any white man ever could.”

At this point I could barely stay in my seat. When I saw them sing the song during the movie, chills went straight to my bones. It was a part that, for days after, I yearned to see again. I could not even imagine the power of seeing it in person. Doaker, Boy Willie, and Winning Boy solemnly walked up on stage.

*O Lord Berta Berta O Lord gal oh-ah
O Lord Berta Berta O Lord gal well*

*Go ‘head marry don’t you wait on me oh, ah
Go ‘head marry don’t you wait on me well
Might not want you when I go free oh-ah
Might not want you when I go free well*

*O Lord Berta Berta O Lord gal oh-ah
O Lord Berta Berta O Lord gal well*

*Raise them up higher, let them drop on down oh-ah
Raise them up higher, let them drop on down well
Don’t know the difference when the sun go down oh-ah
Don’t know the difference when the sun go down well*

*Berta in Meridan and she living at ease oh-ah
Berta in Meridan and she living at ease well
I’m on old Parchman, got to work or leave oh-ah
I’m on old Parchman, got to work or leave well*

*O Alberta, Berta, O Lord gal oh-ah
O Alberta, Berta, O Lord gal well*

*When you marry, don’t marry no farming man oh-ah
When you marry, don’t marry no farming man well
Everyday Monday, hoe handle in your hand oh-ah
Everyday Monday, hoe handle in your hand well*

*When you marry, marry a railroad man, oh-ah
When you marry, marry a railroad man, well
Every Sunday, dollar in your hand oh-ah
Every Sunday, dollar in your hand well*

*O Alberta, Berta, O Lord gal oh-ah
O Alberta, Berta, O Lord gal well²²*

As the three men walked off stage, I dug a tissue out of my pocket to wipe my wet eyes and runny nose. Though I still could not see others sitting around me, I could hear they, too, were quite moved by the song. I was so moved by the experience, that even now I cannot find words to express what I was feeling. I was overcome with anger over the injustices African Americans have faced, and grief for the pain they had to endure.

After a moment of silence to let the song really sink in, Bill Clinton again came out. Before he began talking again, he wiped his wet eyes.

“Thank you so much for that gift of song gentlemen. Wow. There aren’t even words. Thank you. Now that our tear ducts are dried out, let’s lighten the mood a little bit. Though we may not always see eye to eye, I am excited to introduce to you the Reverend Al Sharpton.”

I could barely believe my ears! I could not believe that THE Al Sharpton was here. I had not realized Wilson and Sharpton knew each other. Sharpton did not strike me as someone who would be ideal for an event like this, honoring a theater legend, but it looked like I had misjudged him. I had the biggest smile on my face before he even began speaking because I knew we were in for a treat.

“Though I wasn’t the first choice for a speaker today – Jesse Jackson was booked – I am nonetheless honored to be here. Now, I didn’t know August personally, but I know enough about him to know I like him! I am very much a “tell it like it is person” and in his own way, August was also. He tackled a lot of race issues that most people, black and white alike, neglect to acknowledge or are ignorant about to begin with.”²³

“One thing blacks neglect to do is lift one another up. Once a black man “makes it” he too often forgets about his black brothers back from where he came from. August did not fall victim to that mindset. He insisted on having a black brother direct Fences when it was purchased by Paramount Pictures.”²⁴ He was so strong in his convictions that he never saw the play become a movie. He loved black people enough to celebrate us and challenge us!”²⁵

“And, it wasn’t just that instance when he stood by his heritage. While many bi-racial people are embarrassed by their blackness or neglect to acknowledge it, August took it on completely. He spoke at length about the importance of recognizing and embracing our cultural history. He said, ‘Blacks in America want to forget about slavery – the stigma, the shame. That’s the wrong move. If you can’t be who you are, who can you be? How can you know what to do? We have our history. And we forget it all.’”²⁶ To that I say, Amen, brother! “

I clapped vivaciously as Sharpton walked off the stage. It is during moments like that when I wonder if perhaps I was meant to be born black, or as part of another minority group. Even though “my people” have not experienced those things, my heart is an endless abyss of compassion and hurt for them. It’s as if my heart is in solidarity with theirs. I continued to ponder those thoughts as Clinton again approached the microphone.

“Lucky for all of you, this is the last time you will have to hear from me today. I once heard this said of August, and I think it sums up his career beautifully, ‘He chiseled something in granite that will stand like Shakespeare.’ One can only hope that holds true. I now turn the microphone over to August’s beautiful wife, Constanza Romera.”²⁷

“Thank you, Bill. And, thank you all for being here today. It means a lot to me, Sakina, and Azula that you all came out today to hear celebrate the life of our beloved husband and father.”²⁸ August told Berniece that he did very much want to be here with us today but he felt he needed to stay around Yale. The up-and-coming playwright, Javon Johnson, has been having writer’s block, and August thought maybe his spirit’s presence would inspire some writing.”²⁹ Thank you all again for coming and have safe travels home!”

I was sad that the celebration was over so soon. After looking at my watch, I realized it wasn’t really “soon,” as two hours had passed. What a fast two hours those were! Hearing everyone’s

thoughts and reflections about August inspired me to read some more of his plays. I decided to read them in the order of when they take place, starting with Gem of the Ocean.

The celebration was truly a wonderful welcome to the mighty city on the Mississippi! ³⁰

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¹ The mayor of St. Paul declared that May 27, 1987, was "August Wilson Day" in recognition of the fact that he was the only person from Minnesota to win a Pulitzer Prize for drama. "August" 2006, 1.

² Wilson had fought to obtain the piano used in the Hallmark movie, but lost. The piano resides at the Hallmark headquarters in Kansas City, MO. The piano from the original play, preformed at Yale, finds its home in Wilson's living room. Tibbets 1.

³ He was born Frederick August Kittle. After his white father left his black mother, he embraced his African heritage and took her last name, dropping both his father's first and last names. Snodgrass 5.

4 Wilson died on October 2, 2005, at the age of 60 from liver cancer. Kuchwara.
5 Wilson and the Clinton's stayed in touch. He rang in the millennium as a personal guest of the
Clinton's at the White House on New Years Eve, 1999. Snodgrass 18.
6 United.
7 January 29, 2006. Isherwood.
8 Jitney was the only play in the cycle that did not make it to Broadway. Hernandez.
9 Even though Wilson has passed away, Radio Golf was part of the 2006-07 Broadway season.
Hernandez.
10 Kuchwara.
11 For a more complete list of the awards he received, visit <www.dartmouth.edu/~awilson/bio.html>.
12 Richards was an African American theater director. He worked with both Wasserstein and Wilson,
directing six of Wilson's plays. He died on June 29, 2006. Jones.
13 Wilson, 1996.
14 Wasserstein was Jewish. Whitfield 1.
15 Wilson once said, "I doubt seriously if I could make a woman the focus of my work simply because
of the fact that I am a man, because of the ground on which I stand and the viewpoint from which I
perceive the world." Williams 145.
16 Snodgrass 5.
17 August's mother, Daisy Wilson, married David Bedford in 1958. Snodgrass 7.
18 This was a very prominent moment in Wilson's life. He quit school and submersed himself in a
culture of literature for the next four years at the local library. Snodgrass 7.
19 All ten plays in the century cycle take place in Pittsburgh in the area of The Hill.
20 Freedman 1.
21 He wrote plays "by listening to his characters and asking them questions rather than by asserting his
authorial control and forcing them into certain situations or political control." "August" 2006, 1.
22 Wilson, 1990. 39-40.
23 One example is in The Piano Lesson, where the characters are forced to decide between a family
heirloom and the dream of owning land. Another instance happens in Joe Turner's Come and Gone
when one of the characters realizes, "Though he has lived in Pittsburgh all his life, white European
immigrants have 'come over and in six months got more than what I got.'" Anderson 1.
24 "August" 2006, 1.
25 Alexander 3.
26 Freedman 1.
27 Constanza and August were married in 1994. He was previously married to Brenda Burton (1969-
1972) and Judy Oliver (1981-1990). Snodgrass 10-15.
28 Sakina Ansari was born in 1970, during Wilson's first marriage. Azula Carmen was born in 1997,
during Wilson's third and final marriage. Snodgrass 10, 17.
29 Javon was dubbed by USA Today as "Wilson's protégé." Williams 190.
30 St. Paul's nickname is "Mighty City on the Mississippi." America's.

Then and Now: Romanticizing the US (On being asked about my transition into the American Society.)

Sanjit Pradhananga

I remember I was five when I bought my first audio cassette. As I reluctantly handed my entire year's saving to the vendor, little did I know that a journey had begun. I don't even remember why I bought "Boney M: Golden Hits." I had never seen the weird haired singer before and of all of what were then Egyptian encryptions on the cover, "rivers" was the only word I recognized. But, nevertheless, that is how it began, and that is how it shall be, forever thus. It was my first realization that far beyond the distant hills there was a land that was different.

A year later I was enrolled into a Catholic all-boys' boarding school. And I remember seeing my first American. A six foot four giant in a white cassock who for some reason wouldn't let me return home with my parents. And in whose huge yet tender arms I lay weeping as I watched my parents drive away into a vague memory. I wasn't the only one, though; we were forty chubby pampered kids, red eyed and wet cheeked, ushered into those gates that day. And amidst feelings of betrayal, loneliness and fear, our education had begun.

With the passing years and tides, we learned the ways of that friendly giant. We learned to eat with knives and forks and march to US Navy songs. Scrambled for bases on a weird shaped pitch and stood quietly in front of a skinny man nailed to a cross, sipping sweet cranberry juice. Some said it was blood. I never believed it though. There were days when we sat enthralled, as the giant told us stories of the wild wild west. And our dreams took shapes of Billy the Kid, Geronimo and the Hardy boys. And so we grew.

Years moved on and we collected dust. And 12 years later we were men ready for the world.

* * *

December 1st, 2005, has been erased from my memory. Sometimes I wonder if I ever lived through that day. I walked out of the American Consular's office, chest bursting with joy. The rest of that day has been lost in the blissful abyss of that moment. I try and remember why I was so happy that day. The document I held in my hand meant that in a month, I'd be leaving my home, my family, my friends, my country for a strange yet all too familiar land. The document in my hand reflected my past and promised a future that I knew would be hard and daunting. But that document also meant that I was from that moment independent and free to form my own destiny.

America to me had always been a myth. It to me symbolized a promised land. A land of dreams and opportunity, where people were judged by the weight of their character and not by their social bearings. A land that promised prosperity, to anyone willing to flirt with destiny. I obliged and a month later laden with a brimful of dreams and aspirations, the New Year brought me here. My myth became reality.

* * *

Four months, three paychecks and half a revolution later is now, as I sit here describing my cultural transition. And yet I wonder if any transition has taken place. America, to be honest, hasn't been unexpected. The big cars, high standard of living, greasy food, the unyielding prosperity is what everybody writes about. But didn't we expect it in the first place? What have I seen here that I hadn't already in a movie, or read in a book? You have only to take a look around the world to notice that half the world is Americanized. So what is there to transit into? We were already half American before we came here in the first place. A transition is for when you are thrown into a completely new culture, where your human instincts are your only alibi. But for America, it's just flying half way around the world, and continuing living like you did back home.

Yet it wouldn't be justified to claim that no transition has taken place. I look back at my four months here and the feelings that I went through, and realize that I am not the same person that

landed at Cedar Rapids that cold January midnight. Everything I go through takes me past these rain-drenched streets, to back home where my heart lies. I see big cars zooming by and miss those noisy streets back home, the horns, the commotion, and those cows that wandered into the streets. I see nice houses and lavish lawns and remember those huts, those slums where people lived in utter poverty but love. I hear church bells toll that remind me of those frantic chimes of temple bells, the elderly worshiping at dawn, their purity which I (until now) had always scorned and questioned. I walk into the ARC and find myself back in my high school library, but a couple of isolated racks holding Nepali literature books (that I never bothered venturing into) are gone. Yet my eyes search for that isolated corner. The prosperity that seethes through everything here, resounds with the echo of the woes of my ailing nation. The cry of a motherland whose sons and daughters choose to abandon her in their yearning for prosperity.

Being an alien reminds me of the profoundness of my own culture. And suddenly the constant warnings by scholars back home about the ills of westernization spring into life. It is funny that I had to travel halfway around the world to a foreign land to realize how beautiful, pure and untouched my country is. That has been the irony for I have transitioned not into an American but more into a Nepali.

* * *

And sometimes when I can't fall asleep at night, that strange old tune of Boney M comes to mind and I sing to my self..

“By the rivers of babylon, there we sat down

Ye-eah we wept, when we remembered zion.

When the wicked

Carried us away in captivity

Required from us a song

Now how shall we sing the lord's song in a strange land”

A Dream or Not A Dream: That is the Question

Lindsey Ehlers

Dragging my feet through campus last Thursday night, I headed towards the library. Sleepy-eyed and waiting for my cold medicine to kick in, I was dreading the research paper I had to do for my writing class.

Tone... tone... tone... AHAA! I was ecstatic to find a book on criticism for Langston Hughes's poetry. I grabbed it and three others containing information about Hughes, and started towards my usual spot on the third floor of our Academic Resource Center.

Think tone! Sad, depressed, resentful, angry, irate... I wonder what's for supper tonight. I hope something good, because I'm hungry. I began scolding myself for skipping lunch once again. *Urrrg! Focus! I have to get this paper done! Man. Why couldn't this Hughes guy just put footnotes in his poems saying what the tone is? He knows better than I do! He wrote the poems for God's sake! Life would be so much less complicated right now if he could just tell me.* Flustered and agitated, I turned the corner and continued towards my chair.

The next thing I knew, my books were sailing through the air and I was kneeling on the carpet, face to face with a pair of huge, shiny, black shoes!

"Uh, I'm sorry, Sir, I didn't mean to bump into you.... Gosh! I'm such a klutz... I'm really sorry!" Apologizing as I gathered my books, I rose. When my eyes fell on the figure before me, I found myself headed right back for the floor again, this time because of the amazement and fright that overwhelmed me. Somehow, he managed to catch me.

"Here, let's head over this way." He guided me to the nearest chair and we sat down at opposite sides of the table.

"H... h... hh... how did you... I mean... I thought you were... Wow, this Sudafed is some powerful stuff!" Finding myself in a dream world, I was speechless.

"Hey, are you okay? Did you hit your head or somethin'?" I'm sorry; I didn't mean to frighten you. Listen... I was perusing the section your library has on Walt Whitman, and I heard you walk by, complaining that you didn't understand the tone in a couple of my poems. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm guessing you are Lindsey Ehlers, the only person enrolled at Loras with six books checked out about me...? I don't have much time, so if you'd begin asking your questions, I'd be delighted to answer."¹ His dark face smiled at me in the small amount of light provided by the lamp.

After my initial shock began wearing off, I decided to take advantage of this opportunity. After all, I had the one and only James Mercer Langston Hughes right in front of me! He was sitting so close I could feel him breathe!

"Oh, yeah, my questions..." I reached in my bag for a pen and when I realized I had forgotten mine, he offered one he had in his pocket. The silver end glistened in the lamp light. "Thanks... Okay, for starters, I am trying to identify the tone in 'My People' as well as 'Share-Croppers.' The tone in 'My People' is very simple to find. The use of imagery really helps make the upbeat, confident, and endearing tone apparent. For instance, where it says 'The stars are beautiful,/So the eyes of my people.' the assonance produced by the letter 'a' in 'stars' and 'are' and the 'i' sound in 'eyes' and 'my' really make it flow remarkably."² Comparing the beauty of the night to their faces, the stars to their eyes, and the sun to their souls also makes it a pure and beautiful piece. By referring to the beauty of nature when describing his people, the speaker also employs a sincere, proud tone."

"Wow, I'm impressed! You hit the nail right on the head for the tone in 'My People.' There is one thing you left out, though. 'Beautiful' is used as a refrain in lines one, three, five, and six, and the words 'my people' are repeated in two, four, and six. If you look at it closely, the last line ties it all together, finally putting 'beautiful' and 'my people' together."³ This especially emphasizes the pride you just spoke of. By emphasizing these words and their connotations, the tone is achieved

using refrain. 'My People' is especially effective because the word 'beautiful' is harsh sounding from the 'b,' 't,' and 'f' in it. The connotation of the word is so powerful because it counteracts the harsh sound, producing a lovely sounding poem. Shall we move on to the next poem?" I nod while frantically attempting to document this valuable information.

"I had a little more trouble with that one. The tone in 'Share-Croppers' is a little more difficult to pinpoint than the tone in 'My People.' The only thing I understood in 'Share-Croppers' was it had to do with slaves being taken to the field to do work for their masters."

"Actually, 'Share-Croppers' doesn't refer to slaves at all. This poem deals with the problem that, even though African Americans weren't slaves, they still couldn't get decent jobs. They were so discriminated against that they had to take what they could get and be grateful for whatever the pay was. As far as devices go, one major device I used in 'Share-Croppers' to demonstrate tone was metonymy. In line fifteen, 'Plowing life away' can be seen literally.⁴ Day and night all they do is plow. In that sense, plowing is like the only thing they are doing with their lives. If taken figuratively, the line becomes incredibly strong. If poor black people are plowing their lives away, their lives could be pushed around by their boss, or the operator of the plow. Life is compared to a field which continues to grow but eventually is plowed. Metonymy is also expressed in 'To make the cotton yield.'⁵ These individuals are working their butts off to make it in life: to grow and raise their families, even though they receive little to nothing in return for all of their work. The readers realize that just because black people own no land, they cannot advance economically.⁶ Instead, they must work for other people and receive whatever these 'bosses' offer them.

"Another important device in 'Share-Croppers' is understatement. Towards the end of the poem, did you see 'And we are nothing more/Than a herd of Negroes'?'⁷ This understatement really brings the idea home that these workers were viewed as animals and felt that they were nothing more than a bunch of people used for their work. They didn't even feel as though they were viewed as individuals." By now I had completely forgotten about taking notes. At this very moment, the only important thing was listening to what this incredible man had to say.

"Ohhhh! I get it! So when you repeat the first stanza at the end of the poem, the words immensely contribute to the depressed, dreary tone. The specific words that really express the depressing tone are 'none,' 'herd,' and 'Boss man.' It even seems a tad bitter when the speaker says 'Boss man takes the money/And we get none.'⁸ Honestly, now that I understand it, the sad, bitter, resentful tone in 'Share-Croppers' is much stronger than the happy, upbeat, proud one in 'My People.' To me, harsh tones and bitter words have much more impact than cheery, content ones. The imagery is also much stronger in 'Share-Croppers' because it's very specific and the reader can actually see the 'herds' being taken to the fields."⁹

"Yes, I believe 'Share-Croppers' has a much more powerful tone, too. Nobody likes reading about utopian worlds with unicorns dancing in the sunlight all day, nor do these types of poems have much of an effect on their readers. This is why I tended to write my best poetry when I was feeling down.¹⁰ It not only helped me to vent, but that's the kind of stuff that people liked and always will like! Think about it... Do you always go to cheery, 'they all lived happily ever after' movies constantly? I didn't think so. That stuff gets boring. What never gets boring is people talking about hardships in their lives and expressing their anger with the world. I bet once in a while, you enjoy a good tear-jerker or reading poetry about frustration with the world. Not only is this type of poetry interesting, but readers can relate with it much of the time."

"Wow. That's all I can say right now. I never really thought of it like that before, Mr. Hughes!" I was so pleased to finally understand this challenging poem that I hadn't even noticed until now that Langston seemed a bit distracted.

"Are you okay? It seems like your mind is elsewhere."

"Yeah, it's just... I'm starving. Recalling what I heard previously, by now, I'd say you are too. Is there any way we could continue this conversation over some good food?" he inquired.

“Oh my gosh! You can read thoughts!?! That’s amazing!” I was dumbstruck. It must have shown on my face because as I quickly reviewed my recent thoughts to make sure he didn’t hear something bad, he corrected me.

“Relax, I was actually referring to your stomach grumbling. So how does the pub sound?” A sly smile crept upon his face as he realized he fooled me.

“Oh, yeah, um... that sounds good.” Embarrassed, I felt myself turn red. We walked down to the unusually empty pub together and sat down at a table. After we went through and got our food, I was reminded of two other poems I had been drawn to at the beginning of the semester. “Wait a second... ghosts can eat?”

“When I’m with you I can. And actually, I prefer to be called a spirit.” he responded.

“Okay then, so, moving on... Correct me if I’m wrong, Mr. Hughes, but in your two poems, ‘Cross’ and ‘Dream Deferred,’ there are great journeys taken. When I studied these two poems earlier in the semester, I identified the speaker in both poems to be a traveler, and I thought that traveler was you. Is that right?”

“It seems as though someone has done her research, huh? Yes, these two poems were reflections on my own life and thoughts. Since you’re so good at this, I’ll let you tell me what those journeys are.”

“In ‘Cross,’ it seemed as though you were lost in your own curiosity. You didn’t fit in with white people or black, so you were just stuck in the middle. This personal feeling is especially apparent in the last lines ‘I wonder where I’m gonna die,/Being neither white nor black?’¹¹ This reality is something I don’t have experience with personally, but I can just about imagine how you felt. We’re a little more alike than you would imagine, Mr. Hughes. I was amazed to find out some information about you that helped me to realize what sorts of journeys you have taken throughout your life.

“Anyway, I guess we all can connect with this situation, because everyone has encountered questions and curiosities about their futures and what is going to happen to them, but in the poem ‘Cross’ you especially express puzzled feelings because you don’t even know where your place is in society. Some books go so far as to even say your view of kids stuck in this situation results in ‘identity problems’!¹² Overall, they mean the same thing, but ‘identity problems’ sounds much more serious than feeling lost in society. That had to be some tough stuff! You know, this is when many people I know turn to faith. I have studied you for a while now and know that your disbelief in Jesus began at a very young age.¹³ How did you ever manage to make it through life sane, without fitting in anywhere and without faith of all things?” I was curious because faith has been a huge part of my life so far.

“Well, I just had to deal. I didn’t really have a choice. I often contemplated suicide, but rejected the thought.¹⁴ I had more important things to do with my life that hopefully affected others.” I wondered if I struck a sore subject as I watched him poke at his food as he responded to me. “So tell me about these ‘connections’ between the two of us. I’m honestly interested to find what you have come up with. After all, you’re in your first year in college, and I’m a dead, African American man.”

“Okay, well, there’s too much to mention in too little time, but the most interesting thing was we both dealt with a lot of crap in our first jobs!¹⁵ I was a ‘poop-scooper’ at an animal hospital near my high school and you cleaned toilets. I don’t know which is more disgusting. I can’t forget to mention how we have both been drawn to books since we were just youngsters.¹⁶ It’s amazing what you find out through books! In response to your ‘affecting others’ comment, you know, some sources call you a ‘crusader for freedom for millions of people.’¹⁷ I’d say you had an affect on others... to say the least! Well, getting back to that poem I was talking about, I have to let you know, I was truly touched when you said ‘If ever I cursed my black old mother/And wished she were in hell,/I’m sorry for that evil wish/And now I wish her well.’¹⁸ These lines really showed maturity and respect for your mother. You were undoubtedly raised believing that it was okay to curse at your mother because she was black. Obviously you learned a little too late that it doesn’t matter what color a

person is, everyone deserves respect. So, as a traveler in ‘Cross,’ you went through two journeys that many people in this world will not even come close to beginning. You have pondered death and also realized the value of a person is independent of their color.”

“That’s right. I chose to write poems about my own life because I hoped to give some insight to what it’s like to be a black man in the United States. When I was young, I didn’t have the respect I developed towards the end of my life. I was moved around a lot as a child, living in many different homes while growing up.¹⁹ I only lived with my mom for a short amount of time when I was very young so I didn’t have the respect I should have had for her considering she worked so hard to support me.²⁰ We all get a little too caught up in what color everyone is, instead of what’s important. It’s what is in here that counts.” He put his hand over his heart and I nodded in agreement.

“I completely agree with you. You know, I found it extremely ironic that you respected your father when he’s the one who left when you were just a child.²¹ Even as a young adult, when you returned to live with him for a summer, you found that you didn’t like his materialistic personality.²² I just find it so ironic that you respected your father and not your mother, even if it was just because of the color of their skin.”

“That’s the difference between the early nineteen hundreds and now. You kids are taught at such a young age that all people are equal and everyone deserves respect. So, I’m interested to see what you have to say about ‘Dream Deferred.’” By now we had finished our meals but continued to enjoy each others’ company at the table. Since the place was nearly vacant, I only received a few strange looks for talking to a spirit that no one else could see. Oh well, typical college student, I guess. Surprised that no one has intervened in my “conversation with myself,” I continued.

“Okay, as I was saying, you were also a traveler in ‘Dream Deferred.’ In this poem, you used similes to ponder the possibilities from imagining a dream deferred could ‘dry up/like a raisin in the sun,’ or ‘crust and sugar over--/like a syrupy sweet’ or even ‘stink like rotten meat.’²³ The ending line, ‘*Or does it explode,*’²⁴ leaves us pondering these different chances, but especially left me afraid and questioning the latter. Now, call me crazy, but I thought even I could connect to these poems. I, too, have been curious about what happens to us after we die. Fear, confusion, and sadness tend to overwhelm me when I think about this topic.”

“Those feelings are perfectly valid. I am amazed at all of this knowledge you contain in that little noggin of yours.” He seemed content with my analysis of his poetry. Looking at his watch, he seemed astounded. “Wow, I guess that saying ‘time flies when you’re having fun’ is really true! I know you’ve got school in the morning, so I suppose I should let you get back to your homework and such.” He stood to leave and I stopped him.

“You know, I’ve been researching you all semester. I just wanted you to know that you have affected a substantial number of lives and even made an impact on mine.²⁵ I think part of your impact has to do with how you are so smooth with words when confronting topics that everyone else is completely speechless about.²⁶ Thanks so much for taking time to meet with me today. I really appreciate it. You are just as amazing as I had dreamed you would be!” I thanked him and he gave me a smile and nod combination. We shook hands and I watched him wander back into the library. I decided to stay in this magical pub a little longer to journal about what had just happened. After I was satisfied with my thoughts on paper and still feeling as though I was in a dream, I returned to the library.

“Heeeeeeeeeelloooo!/? Yo, are you going to go home or do you want to be trapped in here all night?” An unfamiliar voice blasts right through my dream world to wake me. Rubbing the sleep out of my eyes, I turned to find a young man hovering over me.

Still feeling as though I was in a dream, I grabbed my book bag and headed for the stairs. The excitement of meeting Mr. Hughes wore off as I realized it was all a dream. Disappointed that I wasted another night of research, I walked to my car in the dark. Reaching into my pocket for my

keys, I grabbed something unfamiliar and unusually warm. Angered because I knew I had once again locked my keys in my car, I reluctantly walked over to a street light to check out what was there instead. Here, in my hand, was that shiny pen Mr. Hughes had lent me in our previous encounter. My experience with Langston wasn't a dream! Immediately the anger from my forgetfulness was transformed into bewilderment and excitement as I realized I had not only met one of the finest poets from the Harlem Renaissance, but also grasped the difficult and important concept of tone in Hughes's poetry! This information would help me later in the paper I had to do, and would be something I could carry with me for the rest of my life. What an amazing journey!

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Appendix A

"My People"

The night is beautiful,
So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful,
So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun.
Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

Appendix B

"Share-Croppers"

Just a herd of Negroes
Driven to the field,
Plowing, planting, hoeing,
To make the cotton yield.

When the cotton's picked
And the work is done
Boss man takes the money
And we get none.

Leaves us hungry, ragged
As we were before.
Year by year goes by
And we are nothing more

Than a herd of Negroes
Driven to the field—
Plowing life away
To make the cotton yield.

Appendix C

"Cross"

My old man's a white old man
And my old mother's black.

If I ever cursed my white old man
I take my curses back.

If I ever cursed my black old mother
And wished she were in hell,
I'm sorry for that evil wish
And now I wish her well.

My old man died in a fine big house.
My ma died in a shack.
I wonder where I'm gonna die,
Being neither white nor black.

Appendix D

“Dream Deferred”

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

¹ Hughes viewed Whitman as an inspiration. He even acknowledged his work in his poem “I Too,” which is an echo of one of Whitman’s works called “I Hear America Singing.” He also acknowledged Whitman as, “very importantly, a seeker and a finder.” Hughes also took pride in editing a children’s book which was a selection of Whitman’s poetry. This information helps to support that Hughes did as much as he could to help kids appreciate poetry. Tracy 7.

² See Appendix A.

³ See Appendix A.

⁴ See Appendix B.

⁵ See Appendix B.

⁶ Ostrom explained that this poem is spoken by a “collective persona,” which represents the black share-croppers. Economic advancement was not even a possibility for these people because they owned no land. They couldn’t own any land simply because they were black. He really showed how discrimination continued to play a role in society, even after slavery ceased. Ostrom 353.

⁷ See Appendix B.

⁸ See Appendix B.

⁹ See Appendix B.

- ¹⁰ In this newspaper article, Hughes admitted how all of his best poems were written when he felt the worst. This never stopped Hughes from finding comic relief in some of his pieces, though. He never thought of the subject as “too deep for comic relief.” Of course some of his pieces seem to contradict this point, such as “Laughing to Keep From Crying,” a collection of his short stories. Lask L32.
- ¹¹ See Appendix C.
- ¹² In his book, Mullen stated that “In his view children stuck between races formed identity problems,” when referring to Langston Hughes. It now seems incredibly obvious to listen to a man who was stuck between races all his life, because who would know better? Mullen 155.
- ¹³ After Hughes’s grandmother died, he temporarily moved in with one of his grandmother’s good friends. Auntie Reed and her husband were devout Christians and constantly encouraged Langston to join the church. There was another young man who attended a revival meeting, and because of all of the pressure from the adults, he claimed he had seen Jesus. Hughes’s disbelief in Jesus began here because Jesus had not intervened to save him, but Jesus did “save” this other boy who said he saw Jesus. Tracy 26.
- ¹⁴ Miller, who is one of many, said Hughes often contemplated suicide, but obviously declined the idea. Hughes died of congestive heart failure at age 65 in 1967. Miller 118.
- ¹⁵ Hughes took his first job at a hotel near his school in seventh grade. He cleaned the hotel lobby and toilets. Since my first job was a kennel person at an animal hospital near my high school, this really stuck out to me. In fact, I was nicknamed a “poop-scooper.” Tracy 27.
- ¹⁶ At age six, Langston was extremely amused by books. His mother took him to the library in their town and he was especially amazed at how they didn’t have to “pay rent” for the books. Miller 115.
- ¹⁷ Roy Wilkins, the executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said this in an article dedicated to Hughes’s inspirational life that was featured in the New York Times. Lask L32.
- ¹⁸ See Appendix C.
- ¹⁹ He was constantly shifted from house to house often because his mother was looking for work to be able to support her son. He was also moved around after his grandmother died. Bennet.
- ²⁰ From the time Hughes was eighteen months old to ten years old, he lived with his grandmother while his mom looked for work. Tracy 25.
- ²¹ Tracy made it apparent that Hughes’s father left when Langston was just eighteen months old. He claims he left because of the poverty. He traveled to Mexico to look for work and be able to provide for his son there. Tracy 25.
- ²² During the summer of 1919, Hughes left for Mexico to live with his father. Finding that he “disliked his father’s materialistic outlook,” the living arrangement didn’t last long. Tracy, 27.
- ²³ See Appendix D.
- ²⁴ See Appendix D.
- ²⁵ Since he was black and wrote poetry, he was looked upon as a spokesman for the entire race. Dickinson stated “The Negro who wrote, sang, or painted was looked upon as a spokesman for the long-oppressed race.” For blacks, this Harlem Renaissance was a rebirth. They could finally enjoy their culture for the first time in history. Dickinson.
- ²⁶ For his time, Hughes was rather outspoken and brave. He confronted many ideas and events that other Americans were completely speechless about. Barksdale.

Saturday Night

Matt Balk

I sit on my plaid love seat,
making love to a jack and coke.
It starts to get drunk outside;
the street lights blur into existence.

You're out there right now,
aren't you?
You left your clown and his bag of old tricks
Alone.

I'll just sit here and listen
to my obnoxious neighbors,
blasting their Billy Joel records.
I raise my cheap plastic cup to you.

Midnight comes.
Whatcha doin now, baby?

Bobby

Kelly McIntyre

The sound of each rain drop falling against my window helped keep me calm. I had to take a deep breath and compose all of my thoughts because my parents were getting ready to call an important family meeting. The rain had to compete with the Dave Matthews Band CD blaring from Bobby's room. *He must be getting high again*, I thought. Bobby had really been on a downward spiral for the past year. At first I thought he was just smoking once in awhile to fit in; I guess that all changed when he dropped out last year in his junior year of high school. He started to become irritable at something as simple as being told to clean his room.

I closed my eyes as I recalled the most recent spat. "Bobby pick up those clothes! I'm going to stop doing your laundry if you just throw your clothes everywhere!!" Bobby reached into his drawers and ripped out all the clothes as if he was searching for lost gold. He threw the clothes and kicked them around the room until there was nothing left in his drawers except his extra lighter. "It's my fuckin room! I can have clothes everywhere if I want. Get off my back, damn!" I hugged my mom as she cried out, "I can't believe you think you can talk to me like that." Later on I crept into Bobby's room while my parents were having another restless, sleepless night.

"Come on, Bobby," I said. "I'll help you clean this up." It was silent as Bobby and I picked up all the clothes and threw them into whatever drawer was open.

"You know, Mom and Dad have been talking about kicking you out lately, for real. You gotta stop getting high, Bobby. It changes you."

He continued to throw the clothes in the drawers with his eyebrows scrunched up like a puppy dog. He coughed heavily and looked away in shame.

I sensed that he would never talk to me about Mom and Dad because he didn't want me in the middle. "Did you get those Dave tickets yet?" I asked. His eyebrows lit up and he told me every detail of next month's Dave concert he got tickets for.

I opened my eyes again because I hated remembering the hundreds of spats. My parents used to be worried, but now they're just angry with him. If they follow through on their word tonight, which they usually don't, they're going to kick Bobby out of the house. The thought of him leaving makes my heart beat out of my chest, matching each rain drop as they beat against the window. Bobby and I are only two years apart and I didn't want him to leave.

The weather outside reminded me of the fire that had destroyed our last house. The rain was about the size as the fat tears I had seen slowly streaming down my mother's cheeks, picking up speed with each blink. "We're going to have to do something... he just can't live with us any longer," Mom had said, as she watched the flames engulf our tiny house two years ago like it was a bite size appetizer. Bobby stood there running his fingers through his long greasy hair. "I swear, I... I thought I put out my cigarette. I'm so sorry, Mom."

My parents couldn't even look at him and I was, once again, stuck in the middle. We eventually had to move into our new house a few weeks later, trying to make the best of the situation, but things were different now in the new house. Bobby said he was sorry but he didn't act like it. My parents couldn't have a conversation with Bobby because he spent all his time in his room, playing whichever music seemed to synchronize with his high. They tried to talk to him, pleaded with him to go to therapy, and even half-ass kicked him out on the streets for two nights. But nothing worked. Bobby came back and always estranged himself from us while hiding in his room. And since the clothes tirade, my parents decided to call this family meeting for tonight.

I sat up and looked outside at the rain for comfort. It was hard to find anything to relieve me, the last thing I wanted to do was have this family meeting. A part of me felt bad for Bobby because he's my brother. I knew he was on drugs and having problems but I didn't think we're that different.

Even though I receive good grades in school and I'm on the student council, I find myself being curious about Bobby and his lifestyle. I love the music he listens to and I know I'll always look up to him no matter what. He and I have been best friends our entire lives, always getting into fun and mischief together. I smiled as I remembered the time he barged into my room and woke me in the middle of the night with a pocketknife in his hand.

"Come on, Jackie. Let's go, I wanna show you something." I rubbed my eyes and couldn't help but smile, I always loved surprises.

"Where are we going?" He just nodded for me to come with and walked out of my room.

We ran past the well to the end of the backyard and reached the edge of the woods. "Don't worry, I got my pocketknife if anything comes around," Bobby assured me. He took a few steps into the woods and looked back at me with the same brown eyes we both shared. "Oh Bobby, what are you getting me into?" I asked as I stepped in right behind him.

We ran down to the small stream at the bottom of the woods and began to walk alongside it. The forest was different at night. Bobby and I splashed into mud puddles, walked into spider webs, and judo chopped all the branches that came in our way. Eventually we reached a point that I no longer recognized, all of the stones were covered in moss and the trees looked down on us from 10 feet up in the air. Bobby slowly walked up to a small round bush and motioned for me to come over there. I felt a tingling on the back of my neck as I apprehensively stepped toward the bush. I could see the moonlight sparkle in Bobby's eyes as he smiled at me. "This is the coolest thing you'll ever see!"

He moved a few branches out of the small bush and there it was. A raccoon and a baby squirrel were sleeping together, all wrapped up like a mother with her baby. My mouth dropped open and I couldn't think of words to speak. "Pretty weird, huh?" Bobby said. I just smiled and replied, "Oh my gosh. It's the most adorable thing I've ever seen."

My memory was interrupted by my mom pounding on the "Please knock!" sign on my door. "Jackie, let's go. The meeting is downstairs right now." I don't know why but I looked at the rain one more time for some sort of assurance. *Here goes nothing*, I thought. I could hear my dad arguing with Bobby to turn the music down and come to the living room.

I slowly walked down the carpeted stairs and looked at the empty living room. I plopped myself down in the center of the blue velvet love seat and waited. My parents came down the stairs after arguing for 15 minutes, mumbling to each other. "Well Bobby doesn't feel like coming down so we'll have to talk without him," my mom said. They both sat down on the piano bench facing me, as if they were the jury and I was the defendant.

My dad spoke first "Well, I think it's come down to giving him some sort of ultimatum." I felt uneasy knowing that if they couldn't even get Bobby to come downstairs, they'd never get him to agree to some sort of an ultimatum. My mom shook her head in disgust. "There's no compromising here. Unless it's, Hey do you want to move out tonight or tomorrow? Ha—that's the only ultimatum he's getting from me." I felt that same tingling on my neck and I thought about the raccoon and the baby squirrel. They were different animals, acted in their own way, and yet they found a way to connect. That raccoon would've protected the squirrel if anyone tried to kick him out of the bush.

"Don't you think that's a little harsh? I mean, come on. It's not like he's out there killing anybody. Let's just let him stay and hopefully he'll start changing his ways." My dad gave the carpet a blank stare. He was having a blink contest with the new Mexican rug my mom had bought. My mom shook her head even faster this time. "Yeah and what are we gonna do? Wait 'til he burns this house down, too? No, Jackie. He has to leave."

"Bobby apologized many times, but never changed. Now we can forgive you guys if you make a mistake, but we have to see some growth from it," said Dad as he folded his arms across his chest. I could only flashback and thought of me asking Bobby "What are you getting me into?" as I stepped into the forest. *He always has good intentions*, I thought. *I know he does.*

“But where’s he gonna go? He’s gonna be homeless. And Bobby never means any harm, ever.” I looked at the edge of the shiny black piano and back at my parents. Of course it was my mom answering quickly. She stuck her bulbous nose up into the air and didn’t look at me. “I don’t know where he’s gonna go. But maybe if he actually gets out in the real world, he’ll stop taking us for granted. He’ll learn that he has to get a job, and become a productive member of society. I know how you feel, because I love him too. But this is what we gotta do.” My dad nodded in agreement. “It’s called tough love. We just can’t support his lifestyle anymore.”

I started to breathe heavily at the thought of Bobby living on the streets. What if it rained like it was tonight? He’d have to find an underpass to hide out in for awhile. Didn’t Mom and Dad care? I stared outside as the rain started to fall harder. The lightening signaled to me that this was the end of the road. My parents were actually serious this time around.

I stood up and stared at my freshly pedicured toe nails.

“Is the meeting over now?” I asked. My parents nodded and I walked straight up the stairs to Bobby’s room. “Hey Jack, what’s up?” he asked as he packed more marijuana into his bowl. “Bobby, you know they’re kicking you out. You... you have to leave tomorrow.” My throat felt swollen as I tried to fight the tears back. Bobby cocked his head back, as if pondering the thought of actually leaving. “I love the guitar solo Dave does here. It’s so dope.” I looked at the stereo and back at Bobby as he really concentrated on packing his bowl.

I knew there was no getting through to him. Bobby would have to leave tomorrow, and he obviously didn’t want to talk to me about it. He continued to sway his head back and forth to the guitar solo, completely oblivious to how hard his life was about to become. I could hardly think about it without crying. I sat down on his desk chair and wondered when the last time he actually used this desk for something academic. Bobby was done filling up his bong and he looked at me with those big brown eyes. “I’ll miss you Jack, you know that. But don’t worry about me. I can crash at a buddy’s and see where life takes me. Now, can we stop talking about it before you turn it into a sob fest?” I smiled and took a deep breath knowing I could probably hold my tears in. “Yeah, that sounds good to me.”

Bobby smiled and grabbed his lighter. He took a hit and blew the smoke into perfect O’s toward his Bob Marley poster. I got a strange feeling right as the smoke rings reached the poster that Bobby was going to be okay. He was a bright kid who could always put fun into anything. Bobby tossed his hair out of his eyes and tossed me the lighter. “What do ya say Jackie? Want a hit?” I could hear each rain drop land on the glass pane as it started to slow up outside. And finally, I felt some comfort. I felt like I was lying in bed and he just ran into my room in the middle of the night with a surprise waiting for me. I looked at Bobby and smiled as I took the lighter and reached for the bong. “Oh, Bobby, what are you getting me into?”

haiku

Donna Bauerly

amazing grace
reading without tears
at her funeral

Last String

Zachary Bader

Twelve seasons, three rotator cuffs, two Tommy Johns:
That's why Lefty's pitching in Fargo,
not Chicago.

He's toed the mound in Wrigley and Fenway,
challenged the menacing bats of Bonds and Pujols,
tested his best against the best and won.

Now his riding fastball won't pop, and his curve don't drop.
He's riding a bus with nobodies going nowhere,
taking cold showers in Podunk.

Skip leans forward at the other end of the bench and gives him a long look.
Lefty begins to lace up his spikes one more time,
but this time the laces snap.

Skip shakes his head and leans back in his seat.
Lefty stares at the string in his hand.

Silver and Gold

Matt Balk

The first thing I saw upon entering Effigy Mounds National Monument was a severed hand. Hanging from the back of a Dodge minivan in the parking lot, the dangling prank limb swung in the heavy breeze blanketing the park that day. My mother, who had decided to come to the park with me, merely shrugged at the infantile humor. I laughed. (It was funny). The blood-red hand seemed to wave in the breeze, “*Welcome to Effigy Mounds National Park—If you dare!*”

Our first stop at Effigy Mounds was the Visitor’s Center. The original Visitor’s Center, built in 1949, was a reformed chicken coop. The newer, much more modernized center was built in 1962. Not only does it boast a seasons of the park display and an informative video on the park’s original inhabitants, it also has modernized restrooms (The seasons of the park display features painted walls depicting the Woodland people as they would have acted had they posed for a painting 2,000 years ago. It also displayed some of the pottery and various random artifacts archaeologists and hikers had discovered. The 15 minute video, which plays every hour (and must bug the HELL out of the park rangers after a while), gives the everyday Dick and Jane visitor a look into the lives of the Woodland Indians who built the mounds contained in the park.

After viewing the flick, we paid the ungodly admission sum of five dollars (Sheesh, I’m hiking, not going to a game) and proceeded out the door. The Visitor’s Center is located right at the beginning of the trail, which leads almost straight up into a hill. This behemoth of earth consumes the view outside the center; it is easily 200-300 feet high. Still, even though the hill dwarfs the revamped chicken coop, I thought it couldn’t be that bad.

I was extremely dumb.

The trail took us nearly straight up the hill, only stopping to twist into a zigzag formation after a quarter of a mile. It resembled a mess of intestines and I felt like a piece of gum, sticking to its sides, forcing my way back up the wrong direction. There were some wooden benches for people to rest their sore feet (and calf muscles), but I, being of a stubborn male mind, trod on.

Upon reaching the top (and uttering a stream of obscenities at my newly cramped leg), I paused and looked around. Behind me lay the Mississippi, in its entire marvelous blue/brown splendor. The river was completely abandoned, as the premature chill of the past few days had scared boaters away. My eye caught a glare from off in the distance. It was Prairie du Chien, a small community in Wisconsin. It stuck out like a sore thumb; a silver glare in a mix of blues, browns, yellows, and reds. Humans are not color coordinated with nature, I thought. We deliberately try and stand out in the crowd; we look out of place from nature’s viewpoint.

Just then, my mother, who actually rested on way up the hill (smart woman, I wish I had her side of the gene pool), came up behind me.

“Wow, isn’t that a beautiful view, honey?”

“Yes, Mom.”

We stared at the view for a few seconds.

“Well, I’m not here to bug you, so I’m going to walk ahead. Do what you have to do, okay?”

“Yes, Mom.”

“Oh, and don’t forget, you have those granola bars I packed in your bag if you get hungry.”

“Sheesh, Mom, you packed granola bars?”

“Well, I didn’t want you to get hungry, dear. Now, I’m off.”

“It’s a freaking two hour hike, Mom!” I shout after her.

Mothers, they always think like that, I grumble as I reach into my bag for a foil-glossed snack. There’s that silver again. I swear, we humans pick this color on purpose. Oh well. I sit on a worn wooden bench, munching on my treat. Mmm, blueberry yogurt-covered. Yeah, I’m roughing it.

* * *

Effigy Mounds National Park is located in Northeast Iowa, two miles north of McGregor, IA, along the Mississippi River. 2,526 acres in size, the park is home to 191 Effigy Mounds. Of these 191, 29 are shaped like animals (bears and birds). The rest are divided into three classes: Conical (dome-shaped), Linear (pill-shaped), and Compound (connect-the-dots). The park was created in 1949 specifically for the preservation of these mounds.

Effigy Mounds is split up into two sections, the North and South Units. The South Unit trail starts at a gate just off the highway. The trail contains three groups of mounds and two overlooks. It also contains the largest bird effigy still intact in the park. The North Unit trail starts in the Visitor's Center, and contains five lookouts: Eagle Rock, Fire Point, Twin Views, Third Scenic View, and Hanging Rock. To get out to Hanging Rock, the last lookout, one needs to hike three and a half miles. The trail also leads past the Great Bear Mound group and the Little Bear Mound group, two of the largest mounds still intact in the park.

* * *

After finishing up, I stuffed the wrapper into my backpack, along with my coat. It's getting warmer now. The October sun still hasn't lost its flame. The wind is also more intense up here on the top of the hill. The leaves, in response, rain down on me, resembling flower petals with their graceful descent. I felt like royalty; bow to me, woods! It is I, your king! (Sorry, on a sugar high.)

The trail wound around the edge of the hill for a spell, then took a sharp turn left, past a cemetery of fallen maples. I looked up to the sky, which was a deep royal blue. The bright, light gold leaves hung in the maple trees above. Suddenly, the wind picked up, and the next thing I knew it was raining gold. It was utterly beautiful, the golden leaves falling thickly; as though Midas had touched the air and turned it into bullion. I stood frozen in place, simply in awe of the unnatural precipitation; leaves whipping in my face, off my body, pelting me with their deathly sweet fragrance.

As I made my way past the maple cemetery to the first checkpoint on my lovely little pamphlet, Fire Point, I noticed the ground rising up out of the hill on my left. Holy cow, it's a mound. So that's where they keep them. As I looked down the path, I realized that this one mound was actually the middle of a procession of mounds. These earthen mounds gradually got bigger and bigger, reminding me of a spinal column, lined up precisely, with purpose. These people who built these mounds, I thought, did not build these sloppily or on a whim; they clearly put thought and effort into making these effigies.

* * *

The Woodland Indians, the "Mound-builders" who built the Effigy Mounds, took that tradition from the Paleo-Indians, the first true settlers of the Americas; they first came to the region some 11,000 years ago. These ancient people used to bury their dead in mass burials. Over time, they also placed ground hematite (which forms iron oxide) in the burials. The Woodland people adopted this practice; iron oxide has been located in effigies in the park. The inclusion of this hematite in the burial process shows the progression of religious practices over time.

These Woodland people depended on the Upper Mississippi Valley and the river for survival. A hunter-gather culture, the Woodland Indians lived on food they could forage in the area: acorns, roots, wild rice, and various fruits. In the summer, they fished in the Mississippi; in the winter, they hunted deer and elk. They also used the rich earth by the river in their burial mounds. The Upper Mississippi Valley had exactly what the Woodland Culture needed to survive, so they stayed here. This is why there are (and were) so many mounds erected in this area.

As the Culture progressed, the mound shapes began to change. The earlier Woodland Cultures created simple, conical mounds. However, as time progressed and their society evolved, they began to change the shapes of the mounds. Linear Mounds began to be erected, usually as ceremonial devices. This led to the Compound Mound formations, as well as the animal-shaped mounds.

* * *

I found my mother sitting on a weathered wooden bench at Fire Point. She was letting the view take her away; her eyes were closed. A crowd of hikers had also gathered there to take pictures of the view. I crept off to the side of them, straining my neck to look at the scenery. Once again, the view spilled out to the river. I could still see Prairie du Chien in the distance. I was about to pull away when I noticed a movement far to the east. It was a train; aged wheels dragging its forgotten carcass of steel through the Wisconsin valley. It knifed its way unnaturally through the landscape, like silver scars on a golden plate.

“Beautiful view, isn’t it, honey?”

“Yeah, it’s all right.” I quipped.

After Fire Point, my mom and I hiked together; we just kept running into each other anyway, so no point in trying to remain separated. The trail curved past the “spine” of the park again, so we got to see the mounds from a different angle. They were still rounded, though. We hiked on until the path split in two. The great Yogi Berra once said “When you come to a fork in the road, take it.” Stupidly, instead of reading the pamphlets we picked up, we followed the aged signs to “Little Bear Mound.” This was unintelligent on our parts because the path to Little Bear Mound takes you back to the “intestine” trail and the Visitor’s Center, which we did not figure out until we ended up back at the top of the zigzagged path.

However, we got to see the Little Bear Mound twice, which was very fascinating. The park rangers had cleared off the leaves around the mound, (which I’m sure the Woodland Indians did every day, as well as outline the mounds with white lines) so we could clearly see the bear hiding under the foliage. 80 feet long and 40 feet wide, the mound was actually found empty; only a fire pit in its “heart” area was discovered. It is speculated that the fire pits in the bear effigies were used as a device to communicate with the spirit world. Through this pit, they would ask for successful harvests. Archeologists also say that only half of the effigy mounds in the park actually contain burials at all. The rest, like Little Bear Mound, were used more for symbolic reasons, such as the fire pit communications.

After recovering from our (my) idiocy, we hiked back up the trail, past the compound mound and Little Bear Mound, and back to the fork in the road. Proceeding north this time, my iron boogers are at the ready (my mother likes to joke that all men, especially my father, have iron boogers in their noses that act like compasses). Guess mine are still immature, mistaking north for south sometimes. Oh well.

A few hundred yards up the trail, my mother and I came up on the Great Bear Mound. Like its smaller companion a mile below, the mound had had its leaves cleared off on the edges (to protect historical accuracy, I’m sure), allowing us to grasp its immense diameter. Standing (or lying) 138 feet long and 65 feet wide, this earthen behemoth was truly awe inspiring. To think, people had spent countless hours moving clay and earth in homage to their dead. It is sort of like the Midwest’s version of the ancient pyramids; unnatural funeral markers, yet now part of nature.

* * *

The first modern day people to actually map out the mounds of the area were Alfred Hill and Theodore Lewis. Hill was a wealthy industrialist, and Lewis was a teacher with a fascination for the mounds. Hill funded Lewis’ work, which involved mapping over 13,000 mounds in the upper Midwest from 1880 to 1895. Lewis also mapped the Fire Point and the Marching Bear Groups of effigies in what would later become the national park.

Following in Lewis’s footsteps, a northeast Iowa man named Ellison Orr began mapping the mounds in 1902. Fifteen years later, he began rallying for land to be set aside (10,000 acres) along the Mississippi as a national park. While it failed at the time, he continued to fight for the preservation of the mounds, arguing that time was working against them; the mounds would be

destroyed unless action was taken to protect them. He finally got his wish thirty years later, in 1949, when President Truman signed the Effigy Mounds National Monument into existence.

* * *

Quite frankly, the rest of the park we encountered seemed different, almost dead. After the Great Bear Mound, we noticed a change, even in the weather. The wind was less intense, as we were further inland. The leaves were a different color; not the beautiful rich gold tint, but a depressing rust brown, dead, devoid of life. Heck, even the ground below us was different. Through the first half of the park, the path was carpeted with woodchips and leaf mulch. Now, I know woodchips are not authentic, but neither was the tire worn path which we trod upon for the better part of a mile. I was disappointed; the park seemed naturally beautiful before, now it was mundane and colorless.

However, to the northwest, a flicker of light caught my eye. I looked—and found a house. A huge, white house, with what appeared to be 18 bazillion windows, each reflecting the mid-afternoon sunlight in our direction. Look at me, the house seemed to scream, “I’m here, notice me.” Once again, the brilliance of human design trumps the subtleties of nature. In trying to be bolder, we have trampled upon the ruins of the past, literally crushing them below our feet.

* * *

Archeologists estimate that at one time, there were over 10,000 mounds in the northeast Iowa area. However, that number is now down to less than a thousand, with Effigy Mounds containing 191 of them. Perhaps the saddest statistic found by Lewis was in his documentation of the Harpers Ferry Great Group of Mounds. In a 440 acre area, Lewis found more than 900 effigies; all but 50 had been cultivated. By 1927, that number had dwindled to 18. Another sad statistic of time is the number of mounds at Fire Point. When Lewis visited in the area in the 1880-84 time period, over 63 mounds still stood unscathed. However, only eight years later, that number had dropped to just eight mounds.

Why the number of mounds plummeted is no mystery. As the progression of farmland in the Midwest increased, more mounds were leveled. Most farmers were ignorant of the importance of the mounds; some simply thought they were hills. Some mounds were bulldozed to make room for highways and railroads. Other mounds were desecrated by vandals, looting (and destroying) the mounds for thrills.

* * *

We decided to skip the Twin Views hike, even though it was only a hundred yards off the trail, and proceeded straight on towards the Third Scenic View and Hanging Rock. As we were walking along the hard earth, I noticed something hanging off a tree.

“What’s that, mom? A nest or something?”

Since mothers know all (and she did), she said

“It’s a silkworm bunch, honey.”

Oh goodie, bugs. Just the information I wanted to hear. Could it get any better? I felt something stringy on my face. Thinking it was just my hair, I tried brushing it back. When I pulled my hand away and saw a string of white material I: A) merely wiped it off on my jeans and continued walking, or B) Thought it was a spider web and panicked like Lucifer himself was prodding me. (B was correct; I fear spiders). It actually was just an arrant spindle of silk coming from the now dead silkworm cluster. Yay, dead bugs on my face; let’s throw a party.

After mom had me calmed down and cleaned off, we processed on. We came to another fork in the road, with a sign reading Hanging Rock left, Third Scenic View right. Yes, finally some decent scenery. We also saw another sign, one we weren’t so thrilled about. “Hanging Rock path has been closed due to flooding. Do not attempt.” Crap. Well, what can you do besides roll with the punches? We hiked on down the right path, toward the Third Scenic View, determined to make the best of the situation.

The 200 yards or so that it took to get to the Third Scenic View (couldn't they have come up with a better name?) were very interesting. We saw a few linear mounds, as well as another bear mound, nearly equal in size to the Little Bear Mound we saw earlier. The acorns popped beneath our feet as we walked along; the dead leaves crumbled to mulch. It had the feeling of a natural funeral parlor; the drab colors, the relics of the deceased, and the visitors coming to pay their respects. We did not talk at all through this.

* * *

Around 750 years ago, the mound-builders stopped building mounds. No one knows why. It has been speculated by some researchers that the growing of food rather than gathering, due to population growth, may have contributed. However, no one knows for sure what relationship the Woodland Culture had with the mounds.

What is known is that the Woodland Indians did not simply “vanish” off the earth, as some 19th century settlers thought. Around the time that the Mound-builders stopped building, the Oneota tradition, which favored agriculture more than gathering, was beginning to take shape. It is speculated that the Woodland Culture became the Oneota Culture. However, the Oneota disappeared shortly before the arrival of Europeans in the 17th century.

This again raises the question; what happened to them? It is likely, researchers say, that the Oneota were the ancestors of either (or all) the Iowa, Winnebago, Otoe, and Missoria tribes. The Iowa and Winnebago tribes share common campsites with the Oneota, while the Otoe and Missoria tribes share a similar speech and lifestyle. Either way, the Woodland Culture did not simply disappear off the face of the earth. They instead evolved and adapted with nature. The Woodland Indians did not fight with nature, they embraced it, became part of it.

* * *

At last, we reached our (new) final destination. The path spilled out into a gorgeous view of the great Mississippi. The afternoon sun was sitting at our backs, illuminating our view. To our north and left, we could see Hanging Rock, the forbidden place, its limestone peak jutting out from under the vegetation. To the right, the river. The landscape was overflowing with a plethora of bright, seasonal colors. Yellow, red trees; bright blue sky, dimmed by mighty Sol above; priceless. I looked at Mom; she had a tear in her eye (seriously).

“Oh Matthew, thank you for letting me come with you. This is just so, so...beautiful.”

Cripes, Mom, it's not like I bought the view or anything.

But I can't pick on her; she gave me life, raised me, and even gave me granola bars. No, best be silent.

I was about ready to suggest we go home when I caught sight of a leaf, branching overhead. It fluttered in the breeze, broke off from the branch, and glided out over the cliff edge. Then, I lost sight of it, the brown, dull color of its chloroplast-less tone in the sea of brown below.

Perhaps we can learn something from the Woodland Culture; to live with nature again. We don't have a *need* to anymore; our society has evolved into a climate controlled, foil-glossed machine. Yet, we stick out, like the white house in forest of yellow and brown, or a silver roof in a sea of red and gold leaves. Maybe if we could learn to appreciate the simplicity of nature such as the soft pelting of leaves on skin or the sweet fragrance of fall, we could learn to shed our roofs of silver and replace them with gold.

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Refuge

Barbara Simon

I pulled open the door to the stairwell
That links one building to the next
To a sight that earned my notice
For on the steps up to the outside world
Sat Autumn leaves—brown, curled, dry—
Randomly seated
Like bleachered spectators awaiting football.
They made me laugh—
Comically leaned back on their elbows,
Knees crossed—faces relaxed,
Wanting to light up cigarettes
But for their precarious clothing.
Escaped from the cold and damp
Just outside their refuge
Enjoying the dry warmth
And loosened grip on their
Inevitable, crumbling demise,
Until they are swept outside
By the merciless wind
Or the large and bristled push broom
—that finds us all.

“The mind-forg’d manacles I hear:” Post-Lapsarian Confinement in Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and Experience*

Thomas McNamara

Although William Blake remained an unknown artist during his lifetime, his poems and engravings have, since the early twentieth century, incited a great deal of critical attention. Despite their apparent simplicity, his *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, which “[shows] the two contrary states of the human soul,” has been the subject of a mass of critical discussion. Most Blake scholars agree that the *Songs* explore the opposing states of humanity that exist in Blake’s mythical conception of the human fall from divine favor:

The fall, in this myth, is not the fall of humanity away from God but a falling apart of primal people, a “fall into Division”...What is confusing to many readers is that Blake alternates this representation of the Fall (as a fragmentation of the one Primal Man into separate parts) with a different kind of representation, in terms of two sharply opposed ways of seeing the universe (Abrams 38).

The *Songs* explore the latter representation, and a mass of literary criticism written on the *Songs* explores the nature and relationship of Blake’s oppositional states of innocence and experience. Some, such as D.G. Gillham and E.D. Hirsch, argue that innocence appears within the *Songs* as a wholly developed state: “This alternative is not put forward as an original character or as a state in the development of man, but as a condition of perfection, a completeness and harmony of being” (Gillham 6). The innocent mentality, according to E.D. Hirsch, allows one to recognize the presence of the divine in all creation (Hirsch 41).

Another group of Blake scholars, however, argues that innocence does not appear in the *Songs* as complete but rather is a stage of transition that must be supplemented by experience. The innocent, in this critical stance, “denies or rationalizes any evidence that would threaten to disrupt his or her unity and harmony with its surrounding environment” (Paglario). Experience alone, however, does not represent fullness either. Rather, these critics assert that a synthesis of the two states that would result in a “higher or enlightened innocence” must occur, allowing one to achieve “a higher consciousness that is without the strife of the middle state, but is also aware as the first was not” (Gleckner 46). Despite the efforts of the first group of scholars to interpret the notion of innocence within the *Songs* as a state of perfection, the second stance more closely resembles Blake’s mythical notion of the fall as forcing humanity to view the universe in terms of confining opposition. The second interpretation of the nature of innocence and experience becomes enriched by knowledge of Blake’s later prophetic works advocating the type of synthesis these critics perceive in the *Songs*. The *Songs*, however, do not offer an explicit remedy for the restoration of humanity to a pre-fallen state. Rather, the poems define the characteristics of the oppositional states of innocence and experience and portray the manner in which they confine humanity to a post-lapsarian world characterized by perpetual social injustice.

Before approaching the manner in which the state of innocence perpetuates the human inability to transcend the post-fall division, knowledge of the innocent’s notion of the divine, which shapes his or her perspective of the world, is necessary. “The Lamb,” for example, offers a childlike notion of God and Christianity. The poem begins as an apostrophe to a lamb from a childlike character: “Little Lamb, who made thee?/ Dost thou know who made thee?” (1-2). In the second stanza of the poem, the speaker makes a statement that clearly defines one of the major attributes of the innocent’s religious thought:

He is calléd by thy name,
For he calls himself a lamb;
He is meek & he is mild,

He became a little child;
I a child & thou a lamb,
We are calléd by his name (13-18).

The speaker answers the question he or she posed to the lamb in the first stanza, affirming the innocent's ability to perceive the divine in all creation through recognition of the common traits held between Christ, the lamb, and the child speaker. Though "The Lamb" seems to offer a vision of innocence that aligns with those who hold that the state is a manifestation of perfection, the innocent's ability to perceive the presence of the divine in all later proves to hinder the reunification of the oppositions that exist in Blake's notion of the fall.

"The Divine Image" in *The Songs of Innocence* also helps to shape the innocent's notion of divinity that influences his or her interaction with the world in a manner that later proves stifling. The poem explores mercy, pity, peace, and love, which the speaker asserts are essential components of the Christian God: "For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,/ Is God, our father dear" (5-6). Like the innocent of "The Lamb," the speaker also perceives the presence of the divine in each human creation: "And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,/ Is Man, his child and care" (7-8). Later in the poem, the speaker exemplifies the innocent's capability to love all creation:

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, Turk, or Jew.
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell,
There God is dwelling too (17-20).

Both "The Lamb" and "The Divine Image" portray the innocent as one who through a visionary capacity perceives the presence of God in all. Though this perception of God seems to support Gillham and Hirsch's perception of innocence as a state of perfection, this ability to detect the transcendent within all creation proves to confine humanity.

As a result of such a religious outlook, the inability of the innocent to actively seek restoration of the pre-fallen state best manifests itself in the poems of social criticism within *The Songs of Innocence*. "The Little Black Boy," for example, highlights the extent to which the innocent's religious view confines him or her within a socially subject state to which he seeks no alternative. In the first stanza of the poem, the speaker's awareness of his racial subjection appears: "My mother bore me in the southern wild,/ And I am black, but O! my soul is white" (1-2). His mother, who taught him "underneath a tree," instilled in him a religious system similar to that expressed in "The Lamb" and "The Divine Image." The little black boy, too, portrays the innocent's capability to detect God in creation:

"Look at the rising sun: there God does live
And gives his light, and gives his heat away;
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in the morning, joy in the noon day..." (9-12).

Since the speaker's religious convictions assert the presence of God in all, he inevitably views all aspects of life, even discomfort, as having divine capability:

"And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love,
And these black bodies and this sun-burnt face
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

"For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear,
The cloud will vanish; we shall hear his voice,

Saying: 'Come out from the grove, my love and care,
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice'" (13-20).

The innocent speaker, because of his religious understanding, incorrectly identifies all hardship as a means by which he can attain salvation. At the close of the poem, then, he remains in a state of lower status than his white counterpart:

I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our father's knee.
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me (25-28).

The poem's conclusion exemplifies the manner in which the innocent perpetuates social injustice due to his religious view; since all creation mirrors God and all hardship inevitably leads to salvation, the innocent sees no need for the unification of the opposite states of post-fall humanity.

"The Chimney Sweeper" too depicts the innocent's inability in light of his or her religious convictions to engage in social action that can potentially restore humanity to a pre-lapsarian state. The innocent speaker of this poem too stresses obedience to unnecessary hardship and social injustice:

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head
That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shav'd, so I said,
"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair" (5-8).

Tom's dream within the poem also aligns with the idea present in "The Little Black Boy" that one must bear the injustice of earth in order to attain salvation: "And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,/ He'd have God for his father and never want joy" (19-20). Tom, by the end of the poem, has completely assimilated into a mindset that regards obedience to authority as a religious virtue: "Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;/ So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm" (23-24). Like the innocent in "The Little Black Boy," Tom has essentially resigned himself to the social injustice prevalent in his world, accepting obedience to oppressors as a means by which he can transcend his current condition. The perpetual social injustice resulting from the innocent's religious view allows a sense of injustice to continually dominate the world, thus confining humanity to a state of post-lapsarian division. An interpretation of innocence as a vision of perfection becomes destabilized by a reading of the *Songs* that argues the confining abilities of both innocence and experience.

The *Songs of Experience* are also governed by an inability to pursue a transformation of humanity, though the incapability of the experienced results from disgust with human nature. "The Human Abstract" in particular offers insight to the revulsion with which the experienced regards humanity. Taking a stance directly contrasting "The Divine Image," the poem explores, from the perspective of experience, the four notions used by the innocent to characterize the divine. God, the experienced argues, is not found in these qualities; they are rather a result of human social injustice:

Pity would be no more,
If we did not make somebody Poor;
And Mercy no more could be,
If all were as happy as we;

And mutual fear brings peace,
Till the selfish loves increase (1-6).

The speaker's conclusion that social injustice occurs due to human fault leads him or her to a revelation that the source of humanity's failures exists directly within human nature. The extensive metaphor beginning in the second stanza, in which the speaker describes the "fruit of Deceit" present in the mind of each human, conveys this belief (17). The experienced clearly identifies the flaws of the innocent's religious perspective through a treatment of social disorder similar to that found in the *Songs of Innocence*, further weakening those interpretations that argue innocence as a state of completeness.

The disgust of the experienced reaches paralyzing status in "London," in which the experienced speaker conveys his or her perception of the human inability to correct social flaws through lamentation of the rebirth of fallen humanity in each generation. The poem, filled with images of disorder, offers a bleak perception of Blake's contemporary English society:

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe (1-4).

Through the use of "charter'd" twice in the first stanza and the reference to "mind-forg'd manacles" in the second, the poet conveys a sense of confinement that prohibits a restoration of Blake's notion of the pre-lapsarian state. The final stanza highlights the cyclical nature of humanity's captivity by the post-fall division into innocence and experience:

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
Blasts the new-born Infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse (13-16).

Though many argue what implications these lines have on the meaning of this particular poem, the lines support the idea that humanity remains in a perpetual state of confinement marked by social injustice due to the fall. The final stanza conveys the speaker's awareness that through infant birth the disunited nature of humanity will be continued, highlighting the perception of human nature on behalf of the experienced as so debased that one cannot successfully attempt social transformation. Like the innocent, the experienced also is rendered incapable of inciting a social renovation. Like innocence, then, experience enables a continuity of the social injustice characteristic of the post-lapsarian world.

Though the *Songs* offer no remedy for the reunification of the post-fall oppositional states of humanity, the experienced is capable of synthesizing innocence and experience in a manner that explores the possibility of reunification despite confinement to the world of division. For example, "A Poison Tree" offers a glimpse of the ability of experience to look beyond a state of confinement and realize the necessity of release: "I was angry with my foe:/ I told it not, my wrath did grow" (3-4). By the poem's conclusion, the speaker identifies the destructive power of the pessimism characteristic of experience:

And into my garden stole,
When the night had veild the pole;
In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretchd beneath the tree (13-16).

"The Tyger" also offers an outlook on creation that blurs the lines of innocence and experience, perceiving the divine within a work of creation that does not possess the qualities normally associated with the conventional view of God:

In what distant deep or skies

Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire? (5-8).

The poem essentially questions the narrow view of innocence without discrediting the innocent ideal of divine presence in all creation. While the experienced does not possess the capability to actively seek means to restore the pre-lapsarian world, he or she possesses an imaginative insight that can explore the possibility of freedom from the confining human state created by the oppositional natures of innocence and experience.

Though Blake essentially does not offer the means by which restoration of the pre-fallen world can be attained within the *Songs*, the *Songs of Experience* contain the seeds of “A Song of Liberty” from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Within the “The Tyger” and “A Poison Tree” from *Experience*, the speaker, through identifying the manner in which one can transcend the confining states of innocence and experience, harnesses an energy that cannot be realized in the fallen world. However, within “A Song of Liberty,” the speaker explores the apocalyptic reunification of the fallen human states of innocence and experience through the shattering of all that confines mankind, essentially releasing the synthesizing energy harnessed within the state of experience:
Let the Priests of the Raven of dawn, no longer in deadly black, with hoarse note curse the sons of joy. Nor his accepted brethren, whom, tyrant, he calls free, lay the bound or build the roof. Nor pale religious lechery call that virginity, that wishes but acts not! For every thing that lives is Holy (38-42).

E.P. Thompson, a respected critic of Blake, argues that such reunification manifests itself within “A Song of Liberty” as apocalyptic:
He had suggested it a little more plainly in the ‘Song of Liberty’ at the end of *The Marriage*, and it is clear enough from this that any vision of his would be likely to take prophetic and apocalyptic form: the ‘son of fire’—

Spurning the clouds written with curses, stamps the stony law to dust, loosing the eternal horses from the dens of night, crying Empire is no more! and now the lion & wolf shall cease (Thompson 214-15).

While the *Songs of Experience* hint towards the type of synthesis actualized in “A Song of Liberty,” the experienced is unable to actively become engaged in the synthesis demanded by Blake’s myth of the fall due to the confining nature of innocence and experience. The *Songs*, rather, explore the confinement inflicted upon humanity through the post-lapsarian oppositions of innocence and experience, only hinting in the *Songs of Experience* toward the apocalyptic fusion that occurs in Blake’s prophetic works.

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i once knew a man
(An imitation of Lucille Clifton's poem by the same name)

Kelly McIntyre

i once knew a man who locked criminals away
when he told about it
the words shot out the barrel of his mouth
and reloaded and flew off into
the bottom of another bottle. His thirst
was wildly out of place and unfortunate
and his family knew it and watched him pop the bottle
but they turned their heads as they walked away
and denied it all.
there was no holding him once he got started;
he had had criminals locked away one time and
they drove him to the bottle.

haiku

Donna Bauerly

following the hearse
as far
as I can go

haiku

Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff

compline
one candle
and the sound of wind

after the dog was put down
still
her prints in the snow

his 21st birthday
in the glass over his photo

... blowing leaves

into the cold night
making cookies
in the shape of stars *

* Winner of the Hawaii Education Association Haiku Contest, Season Word Category Honorable Mention.

The Seed Took Root

Francis C. Lehner, Ph.D.

In October 1938, Rev. E. A. Fitzgerald, then Dean of Studies at Loras, prepared the soil for a national Catholic academic honor society when he sent a questionnaire on the issue to one hundred and twenty Catholic colleges and universities. Encouraged by the strongly favorable response to his poll, Father Fitzgerald was ready to plant the seed; in April 1939, in an address to the National Catholic Education Association, he reported the results of his probe and talked up the idea of an honor society. The seed took root quickly. A Committee of Founders, consisting of thirty-two prominent educators, was formed, and Father Fitzgerald, elected chairman, appointed three committees: one on constitution, one on name and motto, and one on insignia. In March 1940, a constitutional convention convened in Kansas City. There a provisional one-year constitution was adopted, to be followed by a permanent one, and chapters were granted to 32 schools that had previously applied for membership. Delta Epsilon Sigma had blossomed into being. In recognition of Father Fitzgerald's generative efforts, Loras College was designated Alpha Chapter.

In the half century since that time, Alpha Chapter has been a vital unit in the society. Over the years several Loras educators have filled national offices. Rev. E. A. Fitzgerald, Rev. F. J. Houlahan, Rev. Norbert C. Barrett, Rev. Clarence W. Friedman, Rev. Robert L. Ferring and Rev. Neil W. Tobin all served as National Secretary-Treasurer. Father Friedman, after he had left Loras to take a position with the NCEA, served as a member of the Executive Committee. After he had left Loras to become pastor of Sacred Heart parish in Dubuque, Rev. Neil Tobin was elected National Vice President in 1982 and President in 1984. From 1963 to 1978 Dr. Frank Lehner edited the *DES Bulletin*. Dr. Donna Bauerly was a member of the Executive Committee from 1995 to 2000.

On the local level, the record is equally impressive. There can be no doubt that over the years members of Alpha Chapter have contributed considerable intellectual and cultural leaven to life at Loras. More specifically, one can point to the annual DES seminars and to the tutoring service provided by the chapter for students needing academic assistance. In 1985, under the leadership of moderator Dr. Donna Bauerly, the chapter preceded (one would like to say anticipated) the national officers by some five years when it launched a college-wide writing competition in four areas—fiction, essay, non-fiction, and poetry. Each year winners' works are printed in a journal. **For this year, 2006-2007, students again won two prizes in the National Undergraduate Writing Contest: second place in fiction went to Jessica Urgo for her story "The Silver Band," and second place went to Barbara Simon for her poem "A Moment." Honorable Mention was given to Michael Danaher for his non-fiction "Yorick's Illusion." Recipient of the 2006-2007 Fellowship is Thomas McNamara and recipient of the 2006-2007 Scholarship is Elizabeth Elsbernd. Second place winners each receive a prize of \$250.00. Last year's National Student Award medal winner was Kathleen Glady, Alpha Chapter President. The nominee for the National Student Award this year will be Abby Enrion, Alpha Chapter President.** The annual chapter dinner, long a tradition here, not only serves as a function for the induction of new members but in a sense honors all chapter members who attend. Father Fitzgerald's idea of an honor society to foster intellectual and academic achievement is alive and well at Loras College.

In a composition class many years ago, during a digression on, as I recall, overemphasis on high school sports, a student remarked on the great thrill of winning an important football or basketball game. I asked if it had ever occurred to him that other people might get a similar thrill of achievement from composing a sonnet or writing a short story. He just looked at me. But the entrants in this year's writing competition, and especially the winners whose work appears in this publication, surely know whereof I speak. Samuel Johnson was wrong when he said, in what must

have been a cynical moment, that only a blockhead ever wrote for anything but money. For writers, seeing one's work in print ranks high among the pleasures of life.

*(Alpha will continue to include Dr. Lehner's ever-timely article as a tribute to this dedicated DES member who was Editor of the Society's Journal for 15 years. Each year's update of winners will be **boldfaced** within the article.)*

Contest Winners

LORAS COLLEGE ALPHA CHAPTER WINNERS OF THE UNDERGRADUATE DELTA EPSILON SIGMA NATIONAL WRITING CONTEST (National Catholic Honor Society)

Year	Contestant	Entry	Category
1992	Emily Meixner	"Remembering Childhood"	
	Poetry		
1993	(no entries this year)		
1994	Anne Finnerty	"Without You"	
	"At the Kitchen Table"	Poetry	
	Matthew Russell	"Learning to Pray"	Informal Prose
1995	Mark Evans	"The Last Few Vanishing Inches Between Us"	Poetry
	John Ham III	"Age"	Fiction
1996	Jaci Dunne	"Lessons"	
	"My Vietnam"		
	"This Is Supposed to Be"	Poetry	
	Lina Vitkauskas	"Self-Preservation"	Fiction
	Lisa Higgs	"When an Angel Smiles"	Informal Prose
1997	Lisa Higgs	"The Ninth Month"	Poetry
	Robert Kelly	"The Transfiguration of our Savior"	Fiction
1998	Amy Fabricius	"Where Are You Going?"	
	"Where Water Slowly Carves"		
	"Divorce"	Poetry	
	Melanie Mausser	"Downtown" (2nd place)	Fiction
	Tricia Behnke	"Your Father Looked Hot In Roller Skates"	Informal Prose
1999	Lora Krogman	"My Juliet"	Poetry
	Catherine Wegman	"Dorothy's Lake District"	Non-Fiction
	Melanie Mausser	"Unborn Sleep"	Fiction
2000	Kristyn Kuennen	"The life you create on the front lawn"	
	"Office Visit"	Poetry	
	Melanie Mausser	"Reveille"	Fiction
	Elizabeth Loebach	"Broken America" (Hon. Men.)	Informal Prose
2001	Katherine Levanthal	"Saturday"	Non-Fiction
	Cressant Swarts	"Grass Fires"	Poetry

Melanie Mausser	“The Crate” (Hon. Men.)	Fiction
2002	Erich Haught	“Pressures” Fiction
Celia Venhuizen	“Mute”	Poetry
Lacianne Schmidt	“Climbing Out” (Hon. Men.)	Non-Fiction
2003	Rosette Golpashin	“The Night of the Falling
Stars”	Non-Fiction	
Ryan Lubben	“The Janitor” (2nd place)	Fiction
Peggy Lucas	“America’s Bleeding Pilgrim”	
	“In the Land of Blue and Red	
	Doors” (2nd place)	Poetry
2004	Ryan Lubben	“Movieland” (2nd place)
Fiction		
Emily Griskavich	“Matthew in the Kitchen”	
	“Joseph” (Honorable Mention)	Poetry
2005	Jody Iler	“The Gray Ghost” Fiction
Alison Brogan	“To China” et. al.	Poetry
Amber Gille	“For Our Memories’ Sake” (Hon. Men.)	Non-Fiction
2006	Quentin Smith	“Snake Skin” Fiction
Barbara Simon	“To My Birthday”	
	“February”	
	“Indian Summer” (2nd place)	Poetry
2007	Jessica Urgo	“The Silver Band” (2nd place)
Fiction		
Barbara Simon	“A Moment” (2nd place)	Poetry
Michael Danaher	“Yorick’s Illusion” (Hon. Men.)	Non-Fiction

*unless indicated, all winners were 1st place.

Loras College began its own DES Writing Contest in 1985. The **National** Contest began in 1991 with the first winners announced in 1992. With the exception of one year, when there were no entries, Loras College has always won at least one first place.

LORAS COLLEGE ALPHA CHAPTER WINNERS OF THE UNDERGRADUATE DELTA EPSILON SIGMA NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS (National Catholic Honor Society)

Year	Fellowship/ Winner	Scholarship
1992	Matthew Guzzo	Fellowship
1994	Kyle Murray	Scholarship
1995	Kristin Duppong	Fellowship
1996	Rosalyn Juergens	Fellowship
1997	Jennifer Peters	Fellowship
1998	Michelle Ruggaber	Fellowship
1999	Jennifer Gerlach	Fellowship
2000	Scott LeGrand	Fellowship
	Elizabeth Rogers	Scholarship
2001	Celia Venhuizen	Fellowship

2002	Maria Alarcon	Scholarship
2003	Tim Cundiff	Scholarship
	Laura Becker	Fellowship
2004	Rachel Rickertsen	Fellowship
	Nathan Bahr	Scholarship
2005	Kathleen Volk	Fellowship
	Stephanie Theisen	Scholarship
2006	Stephanie Theisen	Fellowship
	Megan Campana	Scholarship

DELTA EPSILON SIGMA NATIONAL STUDENT AWARD

(3.9/4.0 GPA and evidence of scholarly research. In the year 1998, the Executive Board decided to award only **one** per institution.)

Year	Winner
1994	Susan Liddiard
	Charles Longo
1995	Regina Doering
	Kristin Duppong
	Doug Fischels
	Patrick Green
	Beth Hill
	Karla Manternach
	Kyle Murray
1996	Rosalyn Juergens
	Matthew Roeckers
1997	Lisa Gerlach
	Jennifer Peters
	Laura Rusch
1998	Carissa McDonald
1999	Jennifer Gerlach
2000	Teresa Duppong
2001	Elizabeth Rogers
2002	Karen Kuhle
2003	Sara Wieland
2004	Rachel Rickertsen
2005	Kathleen Volk
2006	Kathleen Glady

Rules for the Contest

1. One submission per person per category.
2. Open to all students attending Loras College.
3. Manuscripts may be submitted in any of four categories: for creative writing (a) poetry, or (b) prose fiction or drama; for expository writing, either (a) informal, personal essays, or (b) scholarly, research-type work. Prose manuscripts: 1,500-5000 words acceptable. Scholarly papers should attach an abstract, include primary sources, and aim at the achievement of some fresh understanding or original insight. Emphasis placed on the quality of writing. Documentation should follow one of the established scholarly methods such as MLA or APA. A long poem should be submitted singly; shorter lyrics may be submitted singly or in groups of two or three.
4. Proposed length: 1-10 pages for prose; 1-3 pages for poems (50-150 lines total).
5. Audience: the paper should be directed toward an educated audience—not one, necessarily, completely knowledgeable in the subject area, but one interested in discovering new ideas.
6. Verification: the paper's facts must be verified by a faculty member of the concerned department (only needed for research abstract). Faculty signature: required on the cover sheet after facts are verified. No signatures needed for other categories.

The annual deadline is February 14. You must submit 1) two typed copies AND 2) a copy of the document in Microsoft Word on either a 3.5-inch IBM formatted disk, CD-ROM, or e-mail attachment. Send to the DES Vice President, designated each year. Direct any questions to Dr. Donna Bauerly, *Alpha* Moderator, donna.bauerly@loras.edu. Next year, Dr. Elizabeth Raschke will moderate *Alpha*.

Contributors

Anderson, Luke	Dallas Center, IA	Undeclared
Bader, Zachary	Jesup, IA	English Writing Economics
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Cunningham, Sarah	Cedar Rapids, IA	Undeclared
Danaher, Michael	Rockford, IL	English Writing English Literature
Dreznes, Lisa	Oak Forest, IL	English Writing English Literature
Ehlers, Lindsey	Dubuque, IA	Mathematics

		Teacher Education
Gross, Kate	Dubuque, IA	English Literature Teacher Education
Hall, Amy	Orland Hills, IL	English Writing English Literature
Hosek, Jana	Clutier, IA	Elementary Education
Iler, Jody	Dubuque, IA	English Writing
McIntyre, Kelly	Arlington Heights, IL	Instructional Strategist 7-12
McNair, Margaret	Chicago, IL	English Literature
McNamara, Thomas	Evergreen Park, IL	English Literature
Pradhananga, Sanjit	Kathmandu, Nepal	Undeclared
Simon, Barbara	Dubuque, IA	English Writing
Haiku		
Bauerly, Donna	Dubuque, IA	
Pauly, Bill	Dubuque, IA	
Woerdehoff, Valorie Broadhurst		Dubuque, IA

Delta Epsilon Sigma “It is the mission of a wise person
to put things in order.”