

Marshall University

Marshall Digital Scholar

Et Cetera

English Student Research

2015

et cetera

Marshall University

Follow this and additional works at: https://mds.marshall.edu/english_etc



Part of the [Appalachian Studies Commons](#), [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#), [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Fiction Commons](#), [Nonfiction Commons](#), and the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Marshall University, "et cetera" (2015). *Et Cetera*. 5.
https://mds.marshall.edu/english_etc/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English Student Research at Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Et Cetera by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact beachgr@marshall.edu.

Et Cetera

Since 1953, celebrating the *artistic* and *creative* talent at Marshall



MARSHALL UNIVERSITY'S LITERARY MAGAZINE

2014-2015 ISSUE

Et Cetera

Editor-in-Chief	Hannah Smith
Managing Editor	Alex George
Art Editor	Courtney Childers
Fiction Editor	Nathan Rucker
Nonfiction Editor	Chandler Workman
Poetry Editor	LeeAnna Wiles
Readers	Cassidy Dutcher
	Hailey Hughes
	Brooke Ingram
	Erica Law
	Michelle Smith

Cover Image Credit: "Grass" by Emily Bledsoe

Acknowledgements

The *Et Cetera* staff would like to thank Dean Hensley, Dr. Jane Hill, Eric LeMay, Kristen LeMay, the Department of English faculty and staff, and the Student Government Association for their continued support.

Thanks to Kim Baker and the staff of River and Rail Bakery for hosting *Et Cetera*'s first juried reading and for being enthusiastic supporters of the arts.

Thanks to our faculty advisor, Rachael Peckham, for her constant mentorship, support, and assistance – for the amount of time she's devoted to this publication as well as to her students.

Table of Contents

ART

Marv, the Disappointment.....	31.....	Brett Tucker
Turtle.....	32.....	Brianna Taft
Varicose.....	33.....	Nicole Sheaves
Pride.....	34.....	Andrew Gornik
The 1%.....	35.....	Rebecca Turnbull
Plymouth.....	36.....	Kristina Price
Texture.....	37.....	Andrew Gornik
Trailer Jockey.....	38.....	Brett Tucker
In Over His Head.....	39.....	Rebecca Turnbull
Real West Virginia.....	40.....	Andrew Gornik
Unnamed.....	41.....	Allen Armel

FICTION

Labyrinth.....	7.....	Amanda Schwartz
Combs.....	42.....	Nicole Scott
A View of <i>The Room</i>	63.....	Aaron Morris

GENERAL

When Jesus When Missing.....	49.....	Morgan Byrne
------------------------------	---------	--------------

INTERVIEW with Eric and Kristin LeMay

“The Energy of Not Knowing”.....	26.....	Nathan Rucker
----------------------------------	---------	---------------

NONFICTION

Summer Session.....	18.....	Nicole Scott
Tom Whose Name is Luke.....	50.....	Emma Bauer

POETRY

Museum of Tiptoes.....	5.....	Nicole Scott
A Couple Laundromat Polly Pockets.....	6.....	Cynthia McComas
Germanic Nomen Redefined.....	15.....	Emma Rodgers
Heat Wave.....	24.....	Andrew Raines
Bay Crest.....	25.....	Elizabeth Northcote
Handle with Care.....	61.....	Jordan Marx
Cutting Hair to Prolong Ginger Root.....	62.....	Rachael Knicely
Diamond Eaters.....	67.....	Nicole Scott
High Tea.....	68.....	Cynthia McComas

Contributors' Notes.....	69.....	
--------------------------	---------	--

"The truly creative mind in any field is no more than this: A human creature born abnormally, inhumanly sensitive. He must create, must pour out creation. By some strange, unknown, inward urgency he is not really alive unless he is creating."

Pearl S. Buck

Museum of Tiptoes

NICOLE SCOTT

Poised preciously on snowflakes,
snowflakes on your pearly nose.
The balls of your feet, shivering
on a silver beam, your steadiness
is wavering, about to collapse. *Hush*,
she's trying to stay balanced.
Late night snacks, trips to the fridge,
you shouldn't wake anyone.
Holding a jug of milk in one hand,
body on your feet. Ballet beauty
flutter your fluid feet across the stage
and only Stravinsky is audible.
Your feet fall, and sound like your tutu
every time you *chasse tour jeté*.
Sometimes you're late for class, and everyone
stares because the door cannot be like you
and tiptoe – doors do not have feet and cannot
be shut up. So loud and ungraceful,
sprung so open. Sometimes I splash surprise
on your flower face. My hands shield your eyes

and I say *Guess who?* but you did not
listen for me coming. Perched and pained
in five inch heels, your feet barely the color
they were before. Your dress still a creamy white.
You whisper *I do* and we promenade to our
honeymoon, tiptoe to the velvet canopied bed,
iced with honey charmeuse sheets.
Descend to sleep. Lace through dreams
with pleasant promise and silence. What feet
are feet when they hardly touch the ground?

A Couple Laundromat Polly Pockets

CYNTHIA MCCOMAS

Today I was supportive of your decision to buy leopard print tights. You say they are neutral in the way that my father says I must own a tool kit. We've pretended to be adults for three years now. They don't card us at the wine bar when you order the Samara Red for me. We have a lot to say about eye creams. Unlike you, I cannot spend forty minutes of the day curling my hair. You want to be a lady like Emma Watson and buy obtrusive suits at Ann Taylor. You want to change the meaning of the word feminism and start Twitter campaigns. This is how to be successful in 2014, preferably in tweed and charcoal.

I have not gone on a first date in five years. You say the hardest part of dating is being patient. You say to keep my options open. We have this conversation for twelve weeks. You found a redhead in your Women's Studies class who reminds you of your high school crush. I found a new habit in nail biting. Do you remember the cicada invasion when we were fifteen? They made the trees grow and felt like walnuts slingshotted at the back of my head. Your grandmother played exterminator and crushed them beneath her heels in the driveway. I wish people would stop painting their houses beige. I wish we could tear down the flood wall. I wish there wasn't a correct way to hold keys at night. Do you remember our Scandinavian friend? Her study abroad was cut short after an affair with the patriarch of her host family. They planned to run away to New York, but he sent her off too soon. Now she has purple hair and wants to be internet famous. She has changed much more than we have. We still complain too much. We still buy a lot of hair products. You still smoke, but not as much as you did when we were fourteen.

Labyrinth

AMANDA SCHWARTZ

Ness has this funny habit of taping the paper fortunes from Chinese restaurants to the dashboard of her car. She reads them to herself at stoplights – she says it's only at stoplights, but I don't believe her. I tried to get her to take them down, told her it was a distraction, but she says they keep her going. "Sometimes I just wanna stop pressing the pedal down, you know? Then I look at one of these," she said, motioning to her dash.

I told her I understood, although I didn't, and I know I'll never truly understand Ness. One of her fortunes says, "People are like mazes," but she's never been a maze. She's more like a labyrinth. On acid.

One time, when I was eleven and she was eight, I walked into our shared bedroom to find her pushing one of our mom's sewing needles through a Barbie doll, ketchup smeared across the plastic where she was stabbing repeatedly. "I'm giving her a shot," she explained, which might have been normal had we gotten our immunizations recently, but the last shot anyone in our family had gotten happened over a year before that. "Do you want one?" She started coming toward me with the needle. Her eyes were blank, the way they were when she talked about killing the mouse we found half-maimed in a trap in the basement. Mom didn't know about that. I'd kept her secret; now I wasn't sure that had been such a good idea.

I fled to the kitchen where my Mom was burning peanut butter cookies again, and explained what Ness was doing to her Barbie. Mom immediately confiscated the "shot" and put Ness in time out for going through the sewing cabinet she knew was off-limits; she also started keeping her needles and pins in a box on the high shelf above the stove. Even so, I woke up the next morning with the Barbie in my bed, its plastic face vandalized with black crayon scribbles, a needle sticking out of its eye. After that, I demanded to be allowed to move in to the guest room.

"I just need my own space," I told Mom.

Mom took that hard; we'd been close when we were little, and she was so proud to have the "good daughters" who always got along. We were stars at family reunions, while the other kids were pulling hair and biting and screaming (not that we never fought like that, just not often). So it was a shock to my mother when I didn't want to share a room with Ness anymore, when I used to tell her that rooming with my sister was like having a slumber party every night.

When Ness found out I was moving, she didn't speak to me for a week. Not one word. She barely spoke to anyone, actually, but specifically not to me. The worst part was that she felt the need to emphasize this by clearing her throat or coughing, loudly and repeatedly, every time I came near her, until I was so irritated that I left. She ruined three episodes of our favorite show, "Starlet Fox," this way because neither of us could hear the television over her grating, "hmm, HMMM's." I really think she would've gone on like that indefinitely, if she hadn't lost her voice from so much hacking. Mom was angry when she found out why her eight year old daughter sounded like a chain smoker, but more at me than her; that was fairly typical for my sister though.

Things only got more complicated when she learned how to manipulate people. She could cry on command and knew how many buttons to undo before she asked for extensions from her old male teachers. "I just prey on the weak. Survival of the fittest," she told me when I confronted her. I remember there was shrugging and smirking involved.

"Ness, that's not okay!"

"Why not? I get what I want, they get what they want. Everybody wins."

I wanted to ask her what she meant by 'they get what they want,' but then she said, "Reese, I don't understand why you think you can tell me what to do."

"I just don't want you to get in trouble." That wasn't entirely true; I didn't want her to get anyone *else* in trouble, but she was too self-centered to catch onto that.

"Well I guess that's nice of you, but I promise I can handle myself."

Her voice was a little softer than it had been before, and there was something about her eyes that didn't remind me of steel. I decided not to push it.

"I'm sure you can." Of that, I'd had little doubt.

These days, though, since Gregory left her to make it big as a pharmaceutical salesman/tattoo artist/realtor/Lhasa Apso breeder/whatever else he did, she hasn't been handling much of anything. Her son, Jake, is about as smart as she was at his age, and almost as crazy, but she makes no effort to control him like she once did. "Mom's different since Greg left, Aunt Reese. She doesn't yell anymore. She never makes me feel guilty for things," Jake told me one day when I picked him up from the bus stop; Ness had gotten a job as a secretary in a friend's law office, and was working long hours to make up the loss

of income, so she couldn't get Jake like she used to. But she hated the idea of him walking from the bus stop up the steep road to their subdivision, so I was enlisted.

"Well, sometimes it takes a while to get back to normal when you lose someone important to you," I replied. In the back of my mind, I used to always wonder if he was going to try to twist me into doing something, the way his mother used to. Now, I think he's got his dad's ambition; he doesn't long for control the way Ness does, he just wants everybody to like him. Last year, he performed a skit in the school talent show with a few other seventh graders, where he pretended to choke on beans and asphyxiate. Jake threw himself to the floor so hard pretending to be dead that Ness had to take him to be checked for a concussion, when he admitted to seeing stars. He claimed later that he'd gotten over-excited by everyone's laughter while he was pretending to gag to death, which was why he fell so forcefully; I have an inkling he may be the class clown.

Jake pulled his backpack out of the backseat, rummaged around, and started reading a list of letters off to me: "D, F, B, C, C..." and so on. It took me a moment to realize what he was telling me.

"Your *grades*?"

He nodded solemnly in my periphery. "They came in the mail a week ago." So she'd seen them. And Jake was still living, talking, and walking with both legs.

"Wow..."

"Yeah."

We made a detour out of their neighborhood to the closest McDonalds. I told him to get whatever he wanted; it was always our little secret, since his Mom was adamantly against the establishment after watching *Supersize Me*. But it wasn't the same now. This time, we both knew she didn't have the capacity to care about something so small.

When I pulled into the driveway in front of their bungalow (which was in the process of being pressure washed by a weak willed neighbor), Jake fed the uneaten half of his Big Mac to their Schnoodle on his way inside. The man washing their siding smiled at me as I backed out, but I didn't return the gesture.

The next week, Ness and I took a walk. We always walk to the bank closest to my house when she comes to visit. We pretend it's our exercise for the week, like neither one of us has or needs the treadmill tucked away in the basement or the Y membership we claim is only for the kids. That day, we trotted down the front steps in unison, already in competition. As we exited the driveway, I tugged on the waist of my nylon shorts dramatically.

"These shorts barely fit anymore! I don't know how I keep losing weight!" I exclaimed – innocent gloating is standard here.

She raised a quizzical eyebrow. "Skin and bones now?"

I wasn't, but I had dropped 8.7 pounds, and was almost able to wear jeans that hadn't fit since college. Of course, she'd worn hers out several times and had to buy new ones, still 4's. It was only in the past few years that her God-given metabolism started to slow down, and she had to make an effort like the rest of us.

"Hey, did I see your car at the Weight Watchers in Coalton last Tuesday?" I'd been saving that one all week.

Ness' face flushed a light pink, fading to normal so fast, no one but me would've caught it. "I doubt it," she replied coolly.

I chuckled half-heartedly. She wasn't nearly as addled by that as I'd hoped, and she seemed further away than usual.

I cocked my head to one side. "What's bothering you?"

"The child support check came yesterday," she sighed, as we approached the cross walk for the main road through town.

We stopped at the edge of the asphalt, waiting for a break in traffic. I noticed she stood a little too close, like she was daring the cars to brush her chest – thrust forward, shoulders back.

"Was it not enough or something?" She'd sounded disturbed, though this was a process she'd gone through with Aaron a thousand times.

"No, no... I was just thinking about how he's not really Jake's father."

We crossed the street, turning left toward the farmer's market – the sign used to read, "Fresh Produce for Every Occasion," but someone had removed the "Pro."

"For god's sakes," I muttered, motioning toward the sign. "Don't they know senior pranks don't start until the *end* of the school year?"

Ness frowned. "We used to do stuff like that all the time in high school."

"Yeah, but it's different now."

"Why?"

"I don't know. Why are you all of a sudden so concerned about Aaron being Jake's father?"

We passed the post office – the postmaster was emptying the In Town post box, looking the classic plumber as he crouched inside to retrieve the mail. We waved when he raised back up, but he didn't see us.

"His wife said she bought him a belt for Hanukah, but he never wears it," Ness told me.

"Maybe he's just used to the breeze back there now, and he doesn't want to give that up."

"I think it would be a service to the town if she could get him to use it regularly." We both laughed.

"So, Aaron?" I reminded her after a moment.

"Right." She paused, watching a sparrow hop across the Miracle Tan parking lot. "It's just so shitty. Gregory's been here for three years; he raised Jake with me. For all intents and purposes, *he's* been his father. But he can leave and owe us nothing, and fifteen minutes tied Aaron to us for life."

"Oh," I said, studying my shoes.

"Say something, Reese. You always know what to say." Her voice didn't sound quite right; there was something of the younger Ness in it. She was trying to twist me up again.

We reached the bank, standing in the shadow of the building that used to be a Kentucky Fried Chicken.

"Where in the world did you get that idea?" I finally replied, searching her face for answers to questions I'd been asking since I was a child.

She sighed, rolling her eyes like when she was seventeen. "Mom and Dad have been wrapped around your finger since birth and Daniel ever since I set you up – don't you think there's a reason for that?"

"I'm a nice person?" I got a harsh laugh for that.

"Feigned innocence, which you use to your advantage. Sweet words. They make everyone feel warm and fuzzy inside." She spat this at me with much more menace than I deserved. "Do you remember that speech I gave at your wedding? Well I was—"

"This is unbelievable," I cut her off. She was calling me a hypocrite – what did she hope to gain by that? Was the prize my anger?

"Gregory agreed with me."

If that was it, I guess she won.

"Well a fat lot of good that does you now, huh?" I snapped, only realizing after how nasty I'd sounded. I could tell by the way her face went slack that she was either seriously hurt and trying to hide it or feigning hurt to further her game. I guess the truth of it didn't really matter; I felt the blame. "I'm sorry," I sighed. "I didn't mean it."

"You did." She sounded sincerely unconcerned, her go-to upset voice.

"Well, I'm still sorry."

There were a few seconds of silence, then she plopped down in a handicapped space in the bank parking lot, pulling her knees to her chest.

"Jake got a horrible report card," she said, dismissing the previous conversation as quickly as she'd started it. She looked up and met my eyes, letting me see the defeat there. "He's smarter than I ever was at his age and he's failing because a man I brought into his life abandoned us."

"He told me." I felt like I was being disarmed by her words, and I resisted it.

"What am I supposed to do?" I was surprised to see tears in her eyes. "What would you normally do?"

"Kick his ass." She sniffled. *Sniffled.*

I wanted her to be real, wanted this conversation to be more than a quick manipulation to make her feel a little better, but I was very hesitant to trust any sniffing that came from my sister.

“Well...maybe *that's* what he's missing, Ness, not Gregory,” I suggested tentatively, watching her blank expression. As usual, she gave very little away.

“I tried to get him to go see someone, but...”

“I thought you said that never worked for you.” She'd hopped from counselor to therapist to psychiatrist for years.

She swiped at her eyes, although they looked perfectly dry to me. “Yeah, the drugs never did, but talking about it, looking at the ways I was going wrong made some difference.”

“Enough to put him through that? Why can't *you* just talk to him?”

“Do you really think that I'm the right person to balance his emotional state?” she demanded, looking up at me reproachfully.

I felt like I was being turned to her side, though I'd never really been against her. It made me even more wary. “I think... I think that whatever he's experiencing, you probably are too.”

“But I don't...” Ness trailed off, looking perplexed. Her eyes went blank in the way that used to frighten me when we were younger, and she remained eerily silent for what seemed a long time.

I began to wonder if she was having a psychotic break, rather than putting on a show.

Finally, she shook herself and held her hands out so I could help pull her to her feet, which I did, rather uneasily. The smile she gave me in return was not as reassuring as she intended it either.

But once she'd brushed her pants off, she asked, “Do you think I'm getting too skinny?”

I laughed, relieved that the serious talk was over and I could stop wondering about her honesty or sanity, for a while. “Skinny as an SUV. It was like lifting a tank just now!”

I know I'll never be sure of the truth in that conversation, and I've accepted that, among so many other things I don't know about my sister. I don't know if I believe her, if my advice had any effect, if she's crazy, or if she ever lies awake at night worrying about me the way I do about her. What do I know? Things got better after that.

She and Jake are happier now. They go to parks to collect leaves and she fixes them tofu dinners which they both hate. She brings him to her office after school to help him with his homework and glowers when the lawyers make comments about his shaggy hair. We still take walks to the bank, but they aren't so tense and dramatic. And I don't stare at the ceiling while Daniel sleeps as much as I used to, dwelling on the times when Ness thinks no one's looking, and her eyes go blank as slate. She acts almost too normal for those things to bother me now.

Although, she still tapes the damn paper fortunes to her dash, and I got an email from Gregory a few weeks after that walk saying that he'd found a flaming bag of dog crap on the doorstep of his new house in Ohio. Ness had blocked all his calls and he wanted to know if it was from her.

I told him that didn't sound at all like my sister.

“Germanic Nomen Redefined”¹

EMMA RODGERS

I: Feeling whole and universal—bright-eyed—I reclaim
Myself and I found myself, and I
Sound my heart across the white pages, untranslatable and untamed.
Cathartic, Cathexis, confrontation, renewal;

It was a slow
epiphany
at twenty-three,
suppressed for far too long.

II: *Dum spiro, spero.*

I pour one-half of myself, but all of my heart into my works—into my arts.
This ink contains my meaning, my *pectus* laid bare and so vulnerable,
I touch index finger to nose-tip and pray for a sign of that blessed Numen.
Nodding and hoping someone will also know; will discuss; will *think* deeply; will *feel* deeply—
Be moved!—to make a small difference.

While I breathe, I have hope.

To such heights I aspire, such passionate desire,
I am duality; an Alchemist; I want to touch the sky!
To join the Caelicolae of wisdom’s bastions—O Sky-tenders:
Sight my handholds, belay my climb!
These are the lines of my redefinition; my reclamation; my song of myself.

III: With Forney’s illustrated memoire in hand to face
My diagnosis and Lambert’s “Secrets” and “Sum of Our Parts”
As an anthem—I sing again O
Muses, the old spark lit anew!—once but
dying embers

suffocating
beneath the heavy andirons: an episode.

Internalized shame and vicious self-inquisition:
lofted skyward upon my own Catherine Wheel—
the familiar
downward

spiral of despair & guilt...

Broken by every errant thought revolving:
’tis my blessings and my curses, my cross to bear.
Persevere, that’s all I’ve ever known to do.

¹ Originally composed and inspired by the Muses on the evening that the West Virginia supreme courts overturned the same-sex marriage ban on October 9, allowing couples to obtain marriage licenses as early as October 14, 2014.

IV: It is but *one* part of my

Whole identity, I can *breathe*, I can *be*; let me tell you all of this before you would
Raise your voice to censor and conform my adducing speech:
please, let me speak.

'Tis not a God-forsaking sin to love and be loved in return.
To simply love all people—Here, I define my centrist telos'
unfixed compass point *praecordiī*.

By the By, it is my own, to consensually fall in love with another's Soul.

V: I know now I deserve Love as much as anyone else in the Universe.

Unfettered from absolute dogmatic terror, abject worthlessness, and abyssal self-loathing
Because of such a tender, patient experience: Worthy & Equal.

So I seek my own way and now progress, phoenix transformed,
Credo teneoque meam pacem Deumcum.

Speaking softly to the stony hearts and narrow minds—I acknowledge and recall
this pivotal verse:

Neither height nor depth, nor any powers in all creation
shall e'er sever me from the love that is in Christ Jesus.
Not even the eros I feel for both sexes.

This spectrum of all-conquering Amor: Agape, Amicitia, *et* Familial too; herein contained
in my

Bodied *Psyche*. Each distinct, but all are fixed in the same locus,
for all is Love defined by
relations and bonds and absolute trust.

VI: Reform this notion of what constitutes a union, secularly state by state:

Disentangle the harmful discourse &
Keep the church and an individual's faith separate from such dictates
as far as the East is from the West.

Maybe one day all steeples and temple domes will open wide their doors and aisles
by their synods' collective decision to then fully embrace all:

For Love conquers all things—in time—and God *is* Love;
Therefore, let us all yield to Love!

Until that dreamed day of understanding & acceptance comes...

Here's my conflict resolution:

A lesson in Rogerian argument;

Si liceat, insert a 'D' after the 'O' & before the 'G' for this poetic
debate's

sake—Can you see? Refer back to my patronymic surname:
Intelligitisme?

Now that we're on the same page, here's what I say:

Let the justices of the peace or those bravely vested with the powers
of matrimonial speech acts have their freedom to bestow. Live and let live.

VII: Gaudeo, I rejoice, in this equality! There's still a long way to go, there's much work
yet to be done to protect the rights of those who have been wronged;

Amabo te, do not dare take this away from those of us who need it the most, this step of
Affirmation for our right to love and exist alongside the hetero-hegemony:

Are we not also dearly beloved sons & daughters, brothers & sisters, fathers & mothers
to someone? Or did you forget?
Here is a ray of light shining above the wild and wonderful blue hills and mountaintops—
Circumspice! Look how far we have come in this millennium.
I well understand that we may have opposing views or the same—*my view is but one*—
I ask only that you would at least extend the same respect as I extend to you,
that we all deserve.
For all my compassionate words may be for naught:
Yet unswayed,
Set in your ways,
and still staunch in your beliefs,
as I have mine.
That is okay.

VIII: Listen well—I believe in the foundational tenets; in Luther’s *Solas*;
in communion & His salvation;
but did He not teach us the most important lesson of all that:
“Love is patient. Love is kind. . . .”?
To Love our Neighbor, *aequaliter*, as we ought to love Him—that is truly *Divine*!
What if we’ve been reading it all wrong? *Semantics*.
Young Matthew Vines is onto something here.
We Finders and Dreamers hiding in the pews, brothers & sisters, arise side by side.
Verses of truth, hope, and love unite into resounding
Heavenly refrains.
Lead forth by the hand those afraid of what they do not understand,
the unknown, and the radically enlightened.
Those of us with our far-reaching oaken roots—reach out!
Let not differences & lies blind us and divide us so . . .
Sexuality is diverse; is fluid; is more than labels.
It can be black and white, it is true, but do not forget about the gradients and the grey.
A vibrant chromatic—Do not forget that we are all *Human*.

IX: Let Love disarm misguided foes who misconstrue and know not what they do.
Do I contradict myself?
Very well then, I shall be a Walt, I don’t care a whit.
As long as I am learning from my mistakes
as Milo and Tock with the Princesses of Rhyme & Reason.
And so as long as there are shoulders nearby to lean upon & hands to press for assurance.
Go on anachronistic Page of Swords: consult your Queen and the King of Wands,
You are stronger and more talented than you know; strive to be ever humble,
you have a gift to share with the cosmos—*Nunc Dimittis*!

X: Step outside of myself; Step out from the margins to the centre, one and all, and hold your
banners high—We have a Voice. It shall no longer be denied.
Ecce Humanitas! Behold Humanity! Atque Ecce Amor Omnibus!

Summer Session

NICOLE SCOTT

This is my honest explication on the inner workings of the United States Senate. It was the middle of summer, and I was wearing a suit. My aunt's car didn't have air conditioning, and it was nearly 100 degrees. My white button-up might as well have been sewn to my skin the sweat was so thick. I woke up at 4am every morning and wouldn't get home until 7:30pm. I'd go through the door, peel my clothes off like an onion, shower, eat, go to bed, repeat. For a sixteen-year-old, working at the most important government establishment in the nation was nothing short of a pretty sweet opportunity. On my first day, I had to take an honest-to-God oath, an official swearing in, before I was actually "hired," saying I never participated in any riots or rebellions against the government. What if I had? Would they have charged me for treason or just said bye-bye?

How many people can say they've slept in the United States Senate in Washington DC? I used to. Every morning for two months, I slept for about an hour and a half. I went to the Senate Recording Studio, the same place they film the bunk you see on CSPAN, went into a back office that wasn't used, and slept on a fake leather couch. There was always concern someone would walk in and see you there, sleeping, but that's all right. They could simply walk out, like some people did several times. I slept in my almost pajamas and changed into my suit later. At least I had the decency not to sleep in my suit; that would just be improper, even though my room of choice in the studio was an icebox.

I'm unlike the Vice President's granddaughter, who I had the delightful misfortune of working with. She always flirted with our Senate Page advisor, calling him by his first name when everyone else called him Mister. What's worse is she got away with not following the dress code, just like you would expect a conspiracy theorist to guess. You know, the same people who say "I bet the President has an actual plan for the Zombie Apocalypse" are the same people who say "The Vice President's granddaughter could probably get away with murder." These statements unintentionally make other absurdities seem like truths. When you think of dirty, lying politicians with overt favoritism, it's not a joke. She came in to work sporting chipped nail polish, unkempt beach hair, and jewelry up the wazoo with her button-up unbuttoned to East Jesus Nowhere. That girl knew how to show her cleavage, especially when you're not supposed to. It was kind of an impressive skill.

The Vice President even walked into the Senate Lobby once. All fifty of the Pages were congregating in different spots of the room, and I seemed to be the only one who wasn't of rich, political background; so, I didn't know it

was “courtesy” to stand up and keep your mouth shut when the Vice President walked in like he was some god. No lies, he made every single Page and janitor in the lobby stand up and shut up so he could discuss with his granddaughter what they were doing that evening. They were about five feet in front of me so I got front row seats to the bizarre whispering show they were putting on for the group. His granddaughter stood hands behind her back, swaying like a ditz school girl while her grandfather hunched over, looking like he was about to pet her like a toy poodle. What’s so special about your dinner tonight? Are you going to plot to overthrow the government? Probably not, so why are you whispering?

Got something to hide?

After they were finished talking, I also got prime viewing of the awkward kiss. She kissed her grandfather in front of everyone, *on the lips*. He’s the Vice President!

Then we filed through the doors to the Senate Floor, which you weren’t allowed to set foot on unless you were a Senator or helped prep it at the start of the day. The first business of the morning was to replace the documents on each table, including Congressional Records of speeches from the day before and what other bills needed discussing. Literally every word from the previous day was typed into the Congressional Record and printed every night after the Senate adjourned. There was a man who came and opened the Senate with a prayer every morning, which was also included in the Record. As a Page, I stood in front of the doors and kept them closed at all costs while the prayer was said. The last day I worked there, the man prayed for the future of all the Pages who worked through the summer. It was the only mention of the Pages in any of the Congressional Records over the past weeks. They were government documents, but I stole four of them and gave one to my AP Government teacher at my high school so he could have an artifact. He appreciated it.

After set up, we tended to the Senators who were speaking for the day. Our Page Advisors gave us a test with each Senator’s picture, all 100 of them, and we had to write their first and last name. That’s the only way we were able to recognize them. You couldn’t work on the Floor again until you got 100% on the test. It wasn’t that bad though the pages were driven to the point of creating flash cards with Senators’ faces on them. That was a bit much and a little bit creepy. When Senators were on my bedside table at night instead of a glass of water or lamp, there was a bit of a disconnect.

Whenever a Senator came in to give a speech we had to get them a glass of water and lectern. In the Democratic and Republican lounges, you would not

believe there was a list on the fridge of how each Senator preferred their water. This isn't whiskey! They are literally the pickiest, and you be damned if you don't get Senator Sanders not one, but *two* glasses of water. Room temperature. He's the only one who always wanted two, even if he never took a sip of either glass. Some others preferred refrigerated and non-refrigerated sparkling water which came in bottles which looked like wine.

After they had their perfect glasses of water and appropriately sized lectern, they made their speeches. While patiently sitting on the *rostrum*, which is the fancy term for "stairs rich political teenagers (and me) sit on," where I was waiting for my next order, I found the speeches delivered by the Senators intensely formulaic; the Senator would come in to discuss the debt ceiling, say it was a problem, and say we need to do something about it, then proceed to tell us nothing on how to do something about it. It's amazing how good they were at that.

Senator Boxer came in to talk, and my friend who was representing New York was begging to get her lectern so he could introduce himself. He was actually the sweetest person. I didn't know I had to bring money for lunch the first day of work, so he paid for me even though we just met. I was going to go without food that day just out of sheer pride. But, when he placed the lectern on Boxer's table, she proceeded to ignore him. He walked away in disappointment, and I felt cheated.

Since there were fifty Pages, we went on shifts. Whenever we were "on break," we were sent down to a room with circular tables and no windows endearingly called "The Page Cage," or the "Annex." It was a time for the Pages to chat with each other, play cards, and check their cell phones even when we weren't supposed to have them on the job. On our way down to the Page Cage once, we talked about the myth of the "Senate bath." Apparently there was a secret, locked off room that had an ancient bathtub in it where senators used to actually bathe. There were days when we were on break and we went searching for it.

I remember feeling almost entirely disconnected from my fellow Pages. My first day of work was mostly spent in the Page Cage and I distinctly recall every interaction I had because it happened exactly how I predicted. Everyone talked about politics. I went up to a guy from Nevada and asked him what his favorite band was. He didn't listen to music. I approached a long, blonde haired girl from Utah and asked what movies she enjoyed – she proceeded to tell me her entire life was spent perfecting ice skating, violin playing, and campaigning, and didn't have time for film. She was beautiful, though. Then I thought I could connect with the girl who assumed the last name "Germonatta" because

of her obsession for Lady Gaga, but it turns out she didn't like many people anyway and just wanted to have sex somewhere in the Senate building on her last day of work. Or maybe she didn't; I couldn't tell if she was lying.

I discovered one of the funniest guys I've ever met down in the Page Cage. He attempted to explain to the other Pages he was a Jewish Atheist. Some people weren't understanding it, but I was in the corner giggling. I wanted to be friends with him, but he self-studied micro and macroeconomics in his free time, so I don't think we were actually made for each other. There was also some girl who was related to the Kennedy family, like John F, and this girl could rap the entirety of "Look at Me Now," even the part featuring Busta Rhymes. One time she and some guy rap battled in the Page Cage, entirely improv. I remember he was into Kurt Vonnegut and got into Harvard. He was my favorite.

Later, I was peer pressured into playing a game of "Never Have I Ever." This is where you hold up ten fingers, go around the room having each person say something they've never done, and if someone else has done that thing, you put your finger down. Everyone was saying things about sex, and I was a virgin. All my fingers were up when everyone else's dropped like dominos. So when the Vice President's granddaughter's cousin said "Never have I ever given head in a garden," and two people put their fingers down, I sighed with the thought I was in the wrong place. When it was my turn, I said I'd never broken a bone.

Eventually, we would get a lunch break. We would go down to the basement of the Senate building and take an employees-only subway to the other buildings of the Senate. Non-employees had to walk about ten minutes down the sidewalk that was right next to the tracks. The train wasn't super-fast, but it was neat and made you feel exclusive. The Jewish Atheist thought he could outrun it once, so we all got on the subway while he ran beside it on the pedestrian walkway. He trailed it the whole time with ease. What's the point of the subway when you can run with it? I mean, I couldn't run it, but that's only because the shoes I wore made my ankles and heels bleed every day. They were the only black lace up shoes we could find, miraculously.

One day on the way back from lunch I walked up the stairs while Bono was walking down the stairs.

Sometimes during the day we did amendment runs. This involved rushing amendment documents and taking them to exactly twenty two places in the Senate buildings. It's strange how important senatorial jobs are treated as mindless games and competitions. A Page would volunteer to do the run, with

the stack of documents in hand, then someone would start a timer and the Page would race out the hand-painted doors. One time I volunteered and got lost about fifteen documents in. I came back to the lobby, almost in tears because I wasn't fast enough. Nobody told me it was okay, instead another Page snatched the documents from me and proceeded to finish the job.

After my disappointment, I went back onto the Senate Floor to do jobs which wouldn't kill my self-esteem. When working on the Senate Floor, a Page would sit on the blue carpeted stairs until the phone rang or a buzz was heard from the lounge. I ended up staring at the carpet patterns until I got dizzy. I did this multiple times a day. I also developed a habit of shuffling my feet until the carpet fibers started rolling into little balls. My only good friend, who happened to have the same name as my boyfriend at the time, noticed me doing that, and he told me to open the cabinet beside me, the one with the phone. I opened the cabinet and the only things there were engraved page signatures and a cantaloupe-sized ball of blue carpet fuzz on the bottom shelf. I picked up my contribution and placed it in the monster, then proceeded to engrave my name in government property with my friend.

One day during shift, there was a fire drill. The whole building had to evacuate, but they evacuate employees and tourists in a certain order. Senators first, Pages close behind them, then the rest in a ridiculous hierarchy. It's peculiar how after one week of working there, I mean more to the "higher ups" than a person who has worked there for thirty years. This is like the Buddhist I met. He worked with my aunt and was probably the most genuine soul. But, it was all because of the shiny pin I wore on my blazer I got early access out of the building from hypothetical flames. I'm important. Apparently, more important than you, for some reason.

Coming back inside, we went through security and metal detectors. I remembered walking in to the building at 6am that morning with my uncle and aunt. They told me to never trust the security guards because they believe one of them in previous years had taken his gun and threatened people with it. Even the protectors of this place can't be trusted.

After a long day, I would find my uncle who was an electrician in the House of Representatives. He took me to see the Senate bath because he had keys. I didn't tell anyone about it. I also went with him to eat lunch sometimes, where he would flirt with cashiers to get free food. I didn't believe him when he told me it worked, but with just one "honey," two fountain drinks and some burgers were just handed to us. After this, I returned to the Senate Recording Studio to wait until my aunt got off work. In that time, she told me about her friends. Then there was my aunt's desk partner who was a muscularly built

woman whose father just died. Her boss probably hated her because she was headstrong. She left recently, and it made me sad.

I remember my last day working at the Senate. All of the Pages gathered their ID badges and scanned them to create a Page yearbook. We even did superlatives. My superlative was "Most likely to become a spy." I don't know how that was derived, seeing as I'm not sneaky or good at being subtle, but I guess nobody there ever really knew me at all.

Heat Wave

ANDREW RAINES

Anthony bought three scoops of ice cream
to cool the swelter of June.

Rum raisin, a one dollar afterthought,
slid from the teetering cone,
plopped to pavement already
seething from afternoon sun.

A legion of swarthy ants
swarmed the hapless mess in orderly columns,
gathering globs for the commonwealth.
As they bore the sweetness back
beneath the gnawed planks of the boarding house,
their procession was scattered
by a cloudburst of pesticides in the basement slats.

The melting mountain, now a swamp
of rum flavoring and drooping raisin boulders,
soothed the sting of abandon,
camouflaging them the mottled taupe as the parched concrete,
as the sun baked them into slick plaster.

Bay Crest

ELIZABETH NORTHCOTE

Waves break
polishing my pale toes
dug in dark purple sand
on the shore of the sound.
Seagulls flap their free wings
in a flock
or family
trapped between the line
where salt water
touches sky.
I hear them sing
or squawk,
the housewives sit
under wide brim floppy hats,
behind mirroring shades,
in black beach chairs around
a campfire of white wine
and tell ghost stories that
are only scary if you're sitting
outside of the circle.
My mother excuses herself
to stand with me
and watch the sunset.
Her wine glass glued to her palm,
gripped by nude nails.
Her smile stained from years
of cigarettes and fermented grapes.
I see the sun's red rays cut
the crest of the water,
and she scoops her arm
around my shoulders.
Dusk graces the air,
gnats start to nip
at my nose
and she's gone,
back to her beach chair.

“The Energy of Not Knowing”: Conversing with Eric and Kristin LeMay

NATHAN RUCKER

Transcription provided by Michelle Smith

Last fall, Marshall University had the pleasure of hosting Eric LeMay, where he read from his recent collection of essays, *In Praise of Nothing*. During his visit, Eric and his wife, Kristen, were extremely generous and sat down with the editors of *Et Cetera* to discuss, for around ninety minutes, a myriad of issues concerning craft, writing, and why essays should always be rewritten -- by someone else. Eric received his MFA in writing from Columbia University and a PhD in English literature from Northwestern University. Kristin studied at Harvard Divinity School and Harvard Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. As the interview took the form more of a conversation than a direct Q&A, we present here some thoughts the LeMays expressed during our time with them.

On the subject of what makes an essay topic good:

EL: I think the whole idea of the essay is that you start out with something you don't know the answer to, so there's this sense that you're launching off into the unknown. I think that's what's great about the essay. If you already know what you were going to come up with, it's probably going to be a dull essay, and it's going to be a dull one to write. It would be like I've already figured it all out and now I got to put it on a page versus there's something about this, and when I put it on the page I don't know where it's going to go. Frost said once about poetry that if it was no surprise for the writer, it will be no surprise for the reader. I think essays run with that. I think often you get the energy of not knowing into it.

Essays can be forgiving too because you can start with anything. You can start with words for being grumpy, and if you give it enough attention you're going to find something. I remember when I had to give my big talk to get a job. One of the guys was like "Cheese? Is cheese a real topic? What about whales, or the cosmos or something like that?" It's like what E.O. Wilson, the biologist, said. I once heard him give a talk and he was like, you could spend an entire lifetime studying what goes on under a tree stump if you paid enough attention to what was going on in there. It's not necessarily that you need Vesuvius to write about, but what you need is to bring the kind of attention to your topic that you would to Vesuvius. Even if it's a hunk of cheese.

On the joys of getting that first publication:

KL: My first publication was in *TriQuarterly* Magazine and it was a translation of a Charles Baudelaire poem, from his *Les Fleurs du mal*, titled "The Cries of an Icarus." It's one of his shorter poems, and I actually gave it to Eric as a birthday gift one year. I translated this poem for him for his birthday, and he loved it so much that he gave it to the editor at *TriQuarterly* where Eric was working at the time as an intern. The editor loved the translation enough that she took it, and that was my first publication.

I remember when it came; it was this beautiful, I think it was an anniversary issue or something, and I remember that it had no image on the cover. It was just this absolutely gorgeous dense paper like the kind of paper that you could spill coffee on and it wouldn't even go through. I remember flipping over to the back and there were the names of all the contributors, and I had this moment when I looked for my name and it wasn't there, of course, because nobody would be like, oh there's a translation by Kristin Hennessy in this *TriQuarterly*, I gotta flip straight to that. But Charles Baudelaire's name was there, and I remember thinking well, that's interesting. As a translator, you kind of did all this work, but you came second, of course, because it was always about the work that you were trying to put forward.

I think there's this tiny glimmer of dissatisfaction for me where I'm really proud of what I did and my name is not there. So, I think that part of the richness of that experience was this longing for something that was a little bit more my own than a translation could be. I think the thrill of having something out there that a reader might find never really goes away. It's so gratifying to know that somebody else found it worthwhile besides you, and the hope that what you love somebody else might love, and that might inspire them. In some way that kind of never gets old. I don't know if I've changed. I still get excited to see my name in print.

On technology and writing:

EL: You get this sense that more and more people are going to have access to limitless amounts of information. You've probably seen where Wikipedia is the largest repository of knowledge that has ever existed. Goodbye Britannica, goodbye encyclopedia. It seems tremendously exciting, and as writers we're at another one of those cusps.

There was the dawn of print, where people could start publishing, and then it wasn't just a few people who had codexes. You could start a printing press. And now, we're still at an age where the internet is free enough, you can start a

blog for free, begin publishing your material, and finding other writers like you. It seems like this tremendous moment of possibility. I just think right at the moment that it's starting, there's a lot of junk, like oh, video games aren't art. And of course they can be art, right? And online videos aren't really art, they're like cats farting or something. When film first came out, it was dismissed as just ridiculous. When vaudeville first started out, same thing. Now we have Saturday Night Live, and it's one of our big things.

So, as a writer, why not explore these new possibilities? I don't want to get rid of anything. I don't want to get rid of just reading. I don't want to get rid of just paintings. But we have all this other stuff we can do now, and it's like if you had a new horse. Well, what can the horse do, right? Let's see if it can run; let's see if it can trot; let's see if it can jump. We've got all this stuff as artists, and we shouldn't say no to it before we figure out what yes might mean. The internet doesn't have to be farting cat videos. We've got John Bresland doing video essays.

On our influences and the connection writers share through other writers (In *I Told my Soul to Sing: Finding God with Emily Dickinson*, Kristin writes on the poetry of Emily Dickinson, while Eric, in *In Praise of Nothing*, takes on Francis Bacon and E.B White's essays):

KL: I would say the connection is actually kind of simple and kind of complicated, which is actually just that I fell in love with these poems. I would kind of write them out in little books, and where we were living we walked a lot, so I'd carry these little books with me, and I'd be reading the poems when I sat down. And I was slowly starting to find that I was memorizing them. Over the course of taking these words so deeply into myself, I felt like I was starting to understand them in a way that was profound in both the terms of what I was realizing about the person who wrote them and her experience, but also the way that they were starting to illuminate my own experience.

One of the things I was going through at the time was that I was finding that although I had this wonderful spiritual community I was a part of, I really didn't pray. I had no sort of prayer of my own at all and I just sort of unconsciously started using Emily Dickenson's poems as prayers. It was something that was kind of an unconventional thing to do because a lot of people don't think she actually believed in God, but it was in that dynamic that I wanted to try and write a book that brought together my experience and Dickenson's religious life. These specific poems were a way of both giving voice to my experience, but also hopefully deepening and clarifying some element of the portrait of her that had been available to the public. That was the impulse.

EL: I mean the essay is a lot easier to answer. Nobody's gonna go off and write a short story or novel about the great white whale anymore; that's pretty much tapped out with *Moby Dick*. You also aren't going to go and be like I'm gonna write *The Divine Comedy* like Dante, but the essayist, it's open source stuff. Somebody writes an essay called "On Reading" or "On Friendship," and it's not like you ever thought they said the last word on that. It's never done, right? Emerson comes along and writes on friendship, but Bacon wrote on friendship too. There's plenty of essayists who've done that, but if you do it you're not gonna be like [claps hands] done! Right?

So to say it in the kind of post-modern way, essays are open-sourced topics. The people who are writing essays know that. So, I was just kind of engaging in that idea that what essayists do is talk back to one another, and this was my way of entering in the same conversation on what it means to find yourself reliving what you thought you did before. If there was a way to make your own book open-source, on creative commons, I would do that too. Programmers do that all the time, they're just like you guys can have this code. There would be no way I could code anything if it wasn't for people saying take this snippet, and I think essayists are very much like that. Essayists should just let you quote them, and you shouldn't have to pay a royalty to put them in your book, like sampling or something, like Bob Dylan. Dylan has never refused a sample for anyone, 'cause he knows he got all of his music from African American and folk traditions.

So with White, that's always been an essay that I've just loved. Then suddenly we found ourselves going back to the lake, and it was like I'm living in the past and in the present like in "Once More to the Lake." I think the tradition of the essay is generous that way. If you find something you like, you can carry it forward and use it and just assume that it's gonna go on after you as well.

On publishing and finding *your* audience rather than finding *an* audience:

EL: Well, you say here are these things I'm fascinated by and that I'm interested in exploring, and I'm interested in some way bringing them to readers. We have suffered the same sort of things, like what if nobody ever reads it. It seems kind of hopeless.

However, with the internet, you may be trapped in this small town, but there are other people like you, and you can find them. I think the stuff that people your age are doing online with literary magazines and literary publishing is fantastic. Just like, let's start a press and it just suddenly jumps out online and in print because you can do print on-demand, so you don't need a lot of money. You can put up a website for \$10 a month if you learn how to do it, so it's

much more exciting than when I was at Columbia. There were the five famous literary magazines surrounded by hopelessness everywhere. Now there's lots of places you can go if what you care about is sharing these stories and encountering readers and writers who are interested. I think, to me that's hopeful, and I don't think I'm ever gonna get my dad won over to reading my kind of essays, I think he's gonna be like, the game's on and I'm never gonna say, but dad this is great art! But the fact there are other people out there is cool.

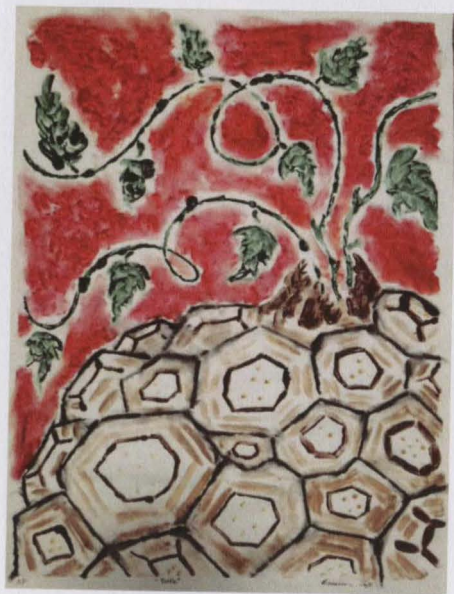
KL: That's the thing. There's all this energy towards publishing, like that's the destination, that's the thing that makes it off your desk. In other words, how do you know an essay's done, cause it finally got published. Otherwise you're just gonna keep revising it forever. If I wouldn't have finally published that Dickinson book, I would've just kept revising it for the rest of my life. So publication of course, is a destination, it's a thing you wanna get to because of course we'd all just be keeping journals if we didn't wanna share it on some level.

What's important is being known by your writing, through your reader, the way you know a family member. You know them, and you'll find readers who suddenly will know you. It may not be more than five people, or fifty people, but what you suddenly realize is that's enough. If the goal is communication, that seems like it's enough. It's not gonna bring you big paychecks and you might never be known, but you'll be known in that other sense and, for me at least, that's been incredibly rewarding. Of course I think it'd be great to actually be in a bookstore or something like that, but then suddenly you get one little email, from somebody who saw something and that just feels great.



Marv, the Disappointment

BRETT TUCKER



Turtle

BRIANNA TAFT



Varicose
NICOLE SHEAVES



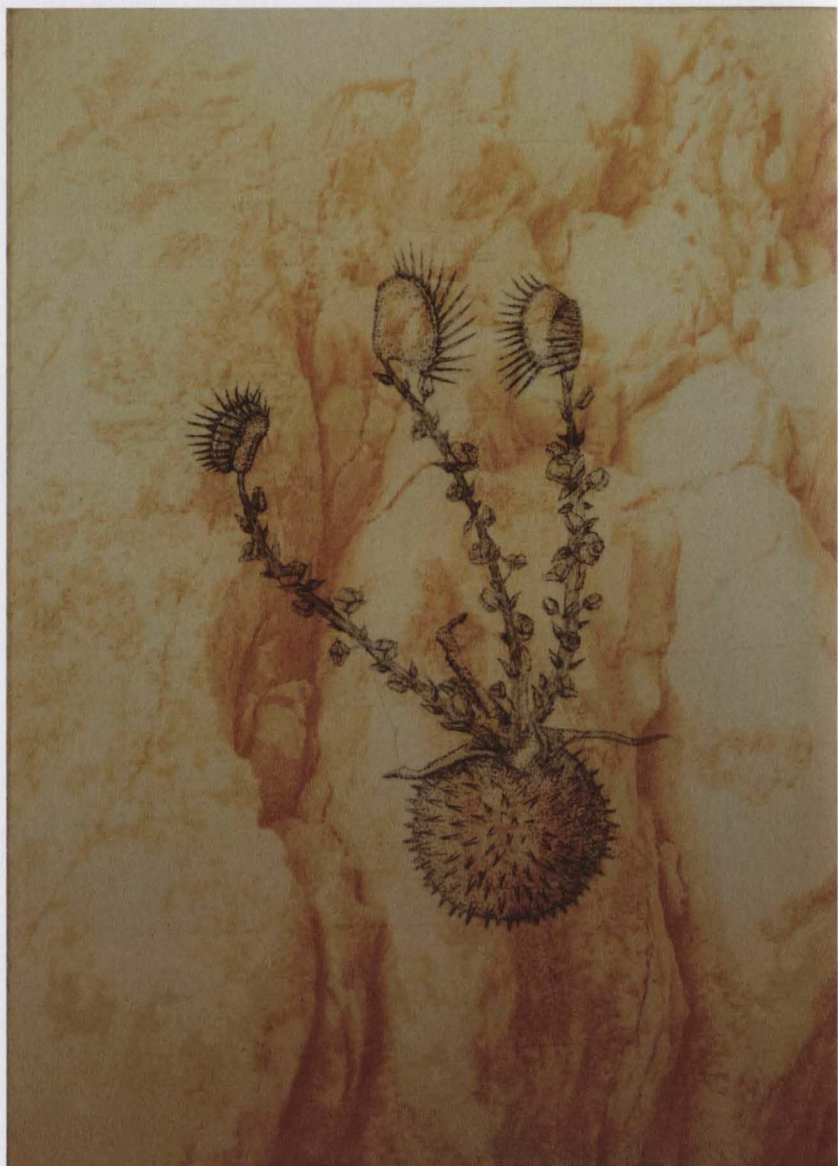
Pride

ANDREW GORNIK



The 1%

REBECCA TURNBULL

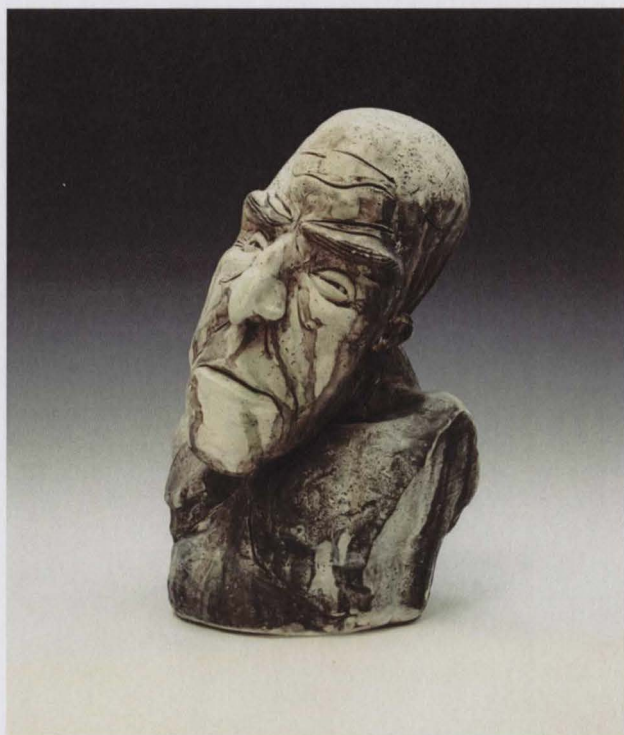


Plymouth
KRISTINA PRICE

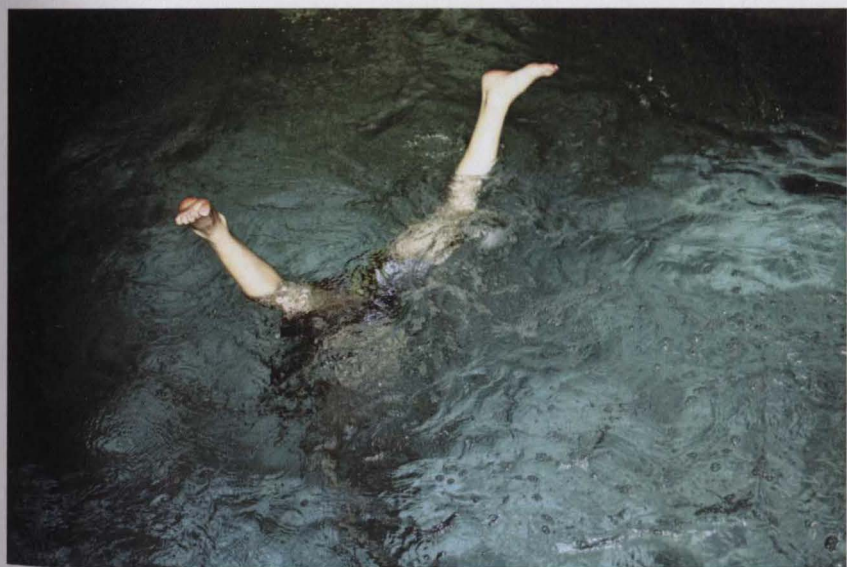


Texture

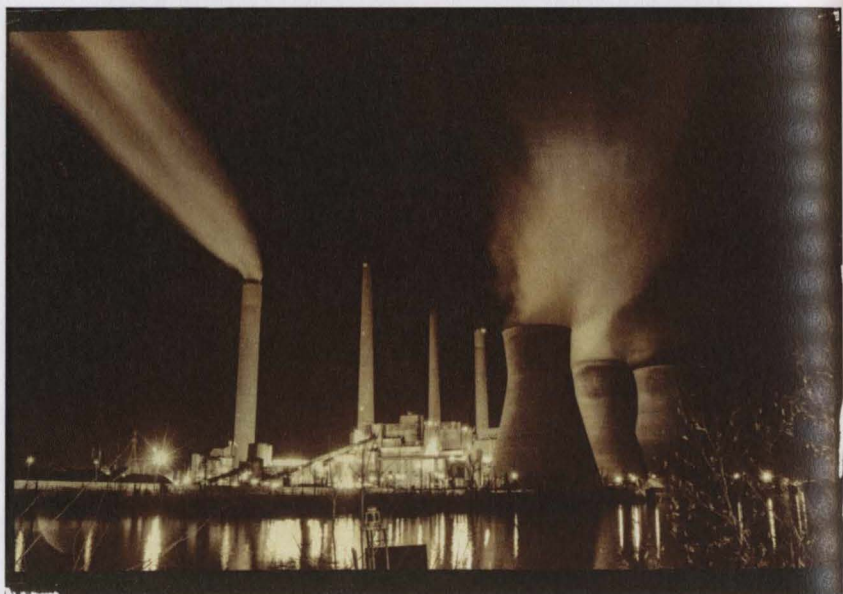
ANDREW GORNIK



Trailer Jockey
BRETT TUCKER



In Over His Head
REBECCA TURNBULL



Real West Virginia
ANDREW GORNIK



Unnamed
ALLEN ARMEL

Combs

NICOLE SCOTT

My favorite bee in the hive was the runt of the litter; his name was Bartholomew Bumblebee. He wasn't a bumblebee, but a honeybee, but I liked the way that sounded better. *Bumble. Bee.* His wings curled like a furl in an ocean wave. He had the sass and pizzazz of a Ringmaster, flashy sequined tailcoat and all, even if he was just a pintsized, meager fellow. He always tried so hard too. I saw it in the glint in his eyes every time he circled the hive. I would say to him, almost every day like a ritual, "I wish I could hang out with you more but Helen, my *evil* stepmom, makes me have a job. Does she not realize *this* is my full time job? Burgers are *just* burgers. Burgers don't have honey." Bartholomew flapped in twisted agreement, like he always did, buzzed profusely. He gave a small, crooked smile, as per usual. I knew him better than any other bee. His smile was sweet and syrupy, like the honey drizzling in slow motion from the combs.

My bee yard was my home. It was more of a home than the place where I actually slept, even though I sometimes slept with my bees under the stars. This is when Helen's character would really shine. She would think I ran away, but she never called the police for a missing person or filed a report. She made me breakfast every morning without fail though, even if I didn't eat it. It would sit, collecting flies on the checkered tablecloth. I think she only did it because that's what Dad used to do.

Being in my apiary made me feel like a hero of the people when I put on my veil and white protective suit. Thing is, I didn't use gloves with my children, because it hindered me from being the best mom I could be – a mom who is delicate, a mom who is tender. I didn't want to cheat them out of a warm, motherly embrace, something real. I liked it when they perched on my index finger, creeping about, little legs like velvety cat o' nine tails. Even their little poison arrows were graces from God. The concept of a beekeeper getting stung wasn't that strange to me. Real beekeepers enjoy bee poison like a sunny side up egg with a side of orange juice for breakfast. I thought it was good to get stung. I liked it actually. It tingled. It increased my body's resistance to the poison. It made me more like one of them, and that made me a better person than everyone else.

I wanted to be buried with my honey jars, full of sweet nectar, like the pharaohs from the television specials my dad and I used to watch. I stopped watching them after I heard my mom was watching an Egyptian special on National Geographic when she died giving birth to me, but it still gives me a warm feeling, thinking of what kind of person she could have been, the type of person to

watch Egyptian television specials. I was kind of like a pharaoh actually. There were no queens in my hive, for I was the queen. The gods smiled upon me for my good work and motherhood. Also, they knew me and how my least favorite word was "squashed." That's the sound the bees made when the gods wanted to punish me, or them. I could never tell what they ordained, because it was never spelled out in the combs. I didn't kill the bees and the bees didn't kill each other. They simply stopped buzzing. They knew when their lives were at an end, and that's when they'd *squish* and the sound, the word, the notion behind the word, made me want to asphyxiate. Obviously, I performed burial rites for the bodies I did find – it's only just. I would bury them with their favorite things if I could, but I couldn't always pick them out of the hive. Sometimes I buried them with little paper dolls – one mommy, one daddy. Besides my honey, that's something I could deal with being buried with.

My favorite part of the bee activity cycle were days 12-18. These are the days when beeswax is made and cells are constructed. It's precious and adorable. I could even see the little couches and mini color TVs they put in each little socket. My, how times have changed and technology has developed. Who knew the bees would get Technicolor?

Who was that on Bartholomew Bumblebee's couch? Is that... *Heather Honeybun*? I thought Heather Honeybun was with Trick Bling Stinger. They were getting cozy up near the section of the hive yesterday where the vigilantes go. I mean, there were points when their *wings were touching!* And by vigilantes, I mean the ones that snuck in snickers of honey on the clock, when they were supposed to be helping out someone else, maybe carrying some nectar or going on Watch. The muscle on Watch, the ones that made sure no other insects ruined their honey operations, they were the threats of this joint – outsiders.

When my dad got remarried, I was an outsider. He had guards outside the church because he always was paranoid that people were hunting him down, going to gun him to the cold earth and shoot him cold and dead. They weren't good guards though, they were mostly made of Helen's family who was in the army, and they let people in the reception to have drinks "just 'cause."

There were times I heard my stepmom calling out from the back door of her house, telling me to come inside and shower and get ready for work. Little did she know, I kept baby powder, a bucket of water from the creek, a towel, and pairs of clothes in the trunk of my car. This gave me more time before work with my bee yard. I was always reluctant to leave, but if I didn't go to work, Helen threatened to spray pesticide all over my bees. That's more or less what she did to my father. In his will, which was written on mostly greased up napkins, though they were notarized so it was kind of a big deal, he left all my

possessions to Helen, even my ant farm that I'd kept since I was six. Hard to believe eighteen years later, she would still own that thing had she not crushed it with her foot and said "Focus on you, you immature gremlin." The thought always made me cry for days in the middle of my apiary, but my bees kissed me better. Ever since then, she thought she owned me too.

And I had nothing else to be owned by, except for my bees, but they were considered "independents" by the government.

To make ends meet, I drove to the gas station, rinsed my hair, slapped on the baby powder, dried my hair, put on the clothes, and I was clean enough for the Neato Burger Burrito. Sometimes I spritzed on some perfume – it was my own creation. In my glove compartment, I kept a glass bear full of honey. Dilute it with some water and get an attachable spray pump and out came a syrupy, delicious reminder I was not far from my baby bees. It left a touch of sticky residue, which is how I preferred my skin to feel anyway.

I nursed bees for a living, not flipped burgers and turned them into tasty Tex-Mex treats for too-lazy-to-cook-for-their-kids moms. So when I got to work, it was always *déjà vu* – a replay of the day before. I heard the burgers sizzle on the fryer, and I closed my eyes and heard the Knees Bees Brothers making the whole hive laugh and buzz with their stand-up routines. It was worth it because when I closed my eyes and envisioned the reality outside of the restaurant, some grease would squirt onto my cheeks or arms, and it seethed like a sting. The throaty, chain-smoker voices I'd hear through the Drive Thru window always were engrained in my head. The fond memories of my beehive made me think of my dad, and how if he had had the money, he would have been a chain-smoker too. Then my boss yelled at me for not being fast enough, and it made me think of my stepmom, and how much I wanted her, very kindly I might add, to be smothered in a pillow slathered in honey so she'd stick to it and couldn't pull it away from her face. I wanted to sandwich her in between two grease laden tortillas, smacking and wrapping her, suffocating in a meaty nightmare. The off-white swivel doors that allowed me to leave my shift were my favorite doors of all time, because it's like they were doors to my bee yard.

After I clocked out, I reached into my car, put my veil and gear over my stupid burger clothes, and went immediately in the back yard when I got home instead of going inside to have contact with anyone. I was a proud parent who needed to be with my babies, unlike Helen, who would only ask me how my day was or if I saw any cute guys at work.

I didn't.

"How was your day Bartholomew?" I said, "Did you see Heather on your couch? Did you deal with that? Did you ask her why she was there?" He gave a slight chagrin and turned his shoulder the other way. I saw his cheeks flush a touch.

"I knew she would try to make a move on you! She's such a slut."

Bartholomew Bumblebee snarled enthusiastically and ferociously, banging his face against the netting of my veil. He got so close I could see the veins in his many, many eyes bulge a smidge.

"You did *what* with her? You know she's with Trick Bling Stinger, right? Oh, don't throw this on me. I am not the one to blame here! Oh, is that what you think? This isn't about me, this is about *you*." His wings were fluttering faster than normal; I knew he was flustered. He always thought he was the mom to me; I guess that's why we were so close. It was kind of a reciprocal nurturing, even though he should have realized sometimes I was the Queen.

"I know my stepmom is mean, but not *as* mean as Heather Honeybun. Wait, what are you saying? I'm not defending my crazy not-mom! She cheated on dad, but at least he doesn't know that. He never will. He's rotting in the ground right now. I'm just saying that bitch Honeybun *cheated* on Trick Bling Stinger. You fell for her. You fell for her trick! You need to stay calm and just go talk to them like a peaceful adult; maybe you can save their relationship."

Dad and Helen were actually good for each other too, until Dad disappeared after she cheated on him even though I didn't tell him, and neither did she. We were the only two people who knew, but then she decided to call the cops and file a missing persons report. He was gone for two months and after way too long, they reported him deceased.

Bartholomew shut up for a minute.

"Oh, stop pouting. You know I'm right, Bart. What would have happened if *you* had a little baby bee being born and nestling in *your* comb, huh? What would Bling say? You're messing up your life getting into this mess. And no! She's not like my stepmom, she's doing the best she can... You know, I don't know. I know I said I wanted her dead, like yesterday and the day before, but that is completely irrelevant. You all are stressing me out with your drama! You can sit on your couch and figure your life out. I'm going to leave you to it!"

I had never felt so angry; he knew better. I promised myself I would raise him and the rest of them good, and what do they go and do? They go in the

wrong direction, sleep and whore around like they are some low-life humans. But maybe Bartholomew Bumblebee was right, maybe I needed to take some sort of action in my life, like he did. My stepmom was no saint, or at least, not to me.

I went to my bedroom and took off my suit and veil, putting on a t-shirt and clean pair of jeans. My room radiated with the sweet smell of honey leftover from my perfume. Sifting through my various books and bee plushies, I found my ancient bee smoker that I never used anymore. This smoke would not calm the bees, but instead made a loud screeching and puffed an absurd amount of smoke, making it seem like someone tossed a match on a barrel of gasoline. I grabbed it and ran to the bathroom, picking up the pair of scissors I accidentally stepped on, and unplugged my tangled up hair straightener.

“This is the only way to do it. Nobody will get hurt,” I said, looking at myself in the mirror for the first time in a very long time. My lips were kind of greying, and the bags under my eyes were growing increasingly severe. My hair looked brittle and thirsty, but I knew it would smell better in just a minute. I picked up the scissors and cut off a nice chunk of hair, and it fell gracefully into my hands.

In the top drawer was a lone zip tie that I was going to use as a tie for my bee wings one year for Halloween. I ended up stapling the wings to my shirt, and punctured my skin doing so. It was worth it, this tie would suffice.

After plugging in the straightener, I turned it to the highest heat setting. I placed the thick lock of hair on the iron and zip tied it so the clamps were hugging the strands tightly. After several minutes, the room started to stink of burning hair. I couldn't remember the last time I'd had this toothy of a grin when I wasn't outside with my bees.

I cracked my door slightly, turned on the smoker. My room, in minutes, was full of smoke and loud screeching. I left it to burn when I ran out of my room with the smoke seeping out the edges. My throat was heavy with my heart attempting to escape my chest. I tried to swallow but the smoke made me all dry inside.

“Helen! My room caught fire!”

My stepmom came running down the hall with her remote in hand. She saw the smoke rising from the bedroom and immediately she covered her nose.

“Oh my lord, what did you do? I can smell that from the other side of the house!” She said.

“A socket sparked! Just get out, let’s go!” I yelled back.

Helen was not an idiot when it came to her personal safety, so she bolted, grabbing her pet hermit crab, Paul, named after my father, and his cage on the way out the door. She was safe and gone. I stood still, staring at the smoke. I heard the car door outside the open window *slam* and the car door window roll down.

“Sugar, get in the car, we can’t do anything!” She yelled up to me.

“You’re not even going to call 911? Fire truck, nothing?” I replied, though I knew she wasn’t going to.

“No,” she said, “we just need to leave. This house deserves to be burned anyway, old memories of your father. Insurance will cover something, we’ll blame the piping, I don’t care. We’ll sue and get an apartment if we have to, just come on!”

I held back a smirk. “Just go, Helen. I need to check on my bees.”

She yelled back to me. “Babe, they are just bees! There are millions of them in the world, we need to go! With all that brush and trees behind the house, it’ll set itself ablaze in half a second!”

“*NO! I WILL NOT LEAVE THEM!*” I caught a breath and continued, “I’ll drive my car and catch up, I’ll call you, okay?”

She smiled, and when she did, I could see anger in her irises. For some reason, ever since she cut my teddy bear dressed in a bee costume in half after I accidentally broke her mother’s picture three days after I met her, I knew she wasn’t fond of bees like she should be. I saw a tear or two stroll down her cheek, teeth seething behind her shaking cheeks, and she drove off without question when she saw me make my way down and open the gate to the bee yard. She wanted to get away from me, just like I wanted to get away from her. She just wasn’t happy. I was the one who gave her the agency to do so.

I didn’t do anything wrong. I let her leave and she was gone from me. But I knew where my bees were going to go. I could smoke out the swarm so they wouldn’t get charred, but they would always fly and be bees, be calm. I turned

around and saw my window catch fire. Maybe the hair actually got caught, or something started. A loud eruption came from my room and bits of metal and paper were falling to the grass. I saw the remnants of my old bee smoker and some other less important artifacts from my bedroom collide in the air like old spelling tests and bobby pins. I closed my eyes and breathed in the scorching air, and I felt my nose hairs burn away. I heard my bees rushing and crowding together and some came to me and stung my nose. Some of the burning remnants flew out the window and they made little fire shrines around me as I watched half the bees fly into the navy sky, and the others kiss the grass.

When Jesus Went Missing

MORGAN BYRNE

Jesus is missing.

More specifically, the Carlton family's tiny, plastic baby Jesus that normally lies about in his tiny, plastic faded brown manger each Christmas, amidst the beady eyes of the tiny, plastic sheep and one average sized camel-looking creature, also plastic. Jesus is about one foot in height, if he were to stand vertically, which he cannot do because he is but a baby (and lacking the fine motor skills to hoist himself from the makeshift cradle, for he is, in fact, made of plastic). During the night, when the Nativity scene illuminates the crab grass and gradually decaying poinsettias in Bob and Gwen Carlton's lawn, the head of Jesus resembles that of a light bulb that hasn't quite been screwed on tight enough, only half of his face glowing, and the other half dimming and fading into the fictional, paint-chipped straw beneath his head. However, without the presence of this barely functioning fetus beacon, the scene seems to have collapsed upon itself, and Christmas may very well be canceled this year, assuming the decorative child remains missing.

Tom Whose Name is Luke

EMMA BAUER

Music has been his thing recently. Right now his favorite song is “Happy Jack” by The Who. Occasionally, he’ll switch things up and play “Cry Cry Cry” or “American Music,” but “Happy Jack” always finds its way back on the playlist.

Recently, I walked in the living room, and Luke was sitting in the overstuffed, leather chair with his iPad on his lap and a pipe cleaner in his hands. “Happy Jack” was on full blast, and Luke rocked furiously in his seat. The smacking of his back against the leather conflicted with the beat of the song, but he didn’t seem to mind. He mumbled a lyric or two under his breath, but it also didn’t flow with the melody.

“Hey, Luke, can you sing some more?” I asked.

He turned his head and ignored me. This wasn’t uncommon; he ignores people a lot. Usually, I tell him he should be polite and answer, but I was too tired to care.

I watched him fidget with his lime green pipe cleaner. Pieces of fuzz scattered around him until there was nothing left but a jagged wire. The beautifully manipulated pipe cleaner could’ve been on display in a museum if it had been the work of an older, more famous artist. Sadly, though, it’s eventually tossed in the trash.

Luke Bauer: The Picasso of Pipe Cleaners.

I am a proud big sister.

His pockets had an endless supply of red, green, pink, and blue pipe cleaners. He never goes anywhere without them. Before leaving the house, Luke turns into a thief, stuffing his precious pipe cleaners into his pockets, hoping he won’t get caught.

Strangely, though, he doesn’t like the black ones. He hides them on the bottom shelf in the pantry. If you ask him about it, he just responds, “They aren’t the same. Blue and green are my favorite.” That’s a good enough reason for me.

My gaze shifted from his hands to his face, and I felt full of sadness and love all at once. Luke was away. “Happy Jack” and his pipe cleaners were the

only things keeping him attached to the real world. I wanted him to be there in that moment with me, not just physically, but mentally too. I wondered what he was thinking. I still wonder what he thinks.

I was in the kitchen. I had just come downstairs. In my memory, the whole room appeared to be glowing, and the walls were radiating heat. I know this isn't true. I can visualize what my old kitchen really looked like: a cramped, beige room with wooden cabinets practically falling off the hinges. But, in this memory, it's yellow and it's warm.

Abby was sitting at the counter across from our mom, and I came in and stood next to her. I planned to ask what was on the menu for dinner, but my mom looked a little distraught. My thoughts shifted gears. *What's wrong with mom?*

"Emma," she said.

"Yeah?"

She hesitated. *Why did she hesitate?!* My heartbeat was picking up speed. She wasn't looking me in the eye, and her voice sounded distant. *What's going on?* This wasn't her typical hesitation. This wasn't the normal loss of thought, the "Oh, what was I saying again?" moment. There was something wrong.

"I need to tell you something."

"What?"

"I was on the phone with the doctor today, and, well, Luke...Luke's different. He's not like me and you. He's not gonna grow up the same way you and Jake and Abby will. He's gonna be a little...a little slower learning the things you learned easily. Luke's...well, he's special."

That was the word she used. *Special*. That's the word they all use. It sounds like a cliché, but no other word rings more true. I knew it then, and I know it now. Luke was special; he is special. It's sad that such a word has a negative implication. What's even more upsetting is that having autism or a developmental delay is considered such a bad thing. Why did the words *different* and *special* sound like heartache leaving her lips?

I want my brother to have all the happy experiences of a "normal" person, but is that lifestyle necessarily more fulfilling than the one he'll have? The way

he sees things is different. Maybe the way he sees the world is more beautiful, more special, than the way I see it. Maybe I'm the one missing out.

I can't help but feel mixed emotions about his disorder. I want him to understand and experience the world "normally," but I also don't want to change him. Even if he doesn't see the world more beautifully than I see it. I love the things that make Luke special: his fidgeting, his rocking, his goofy laugh, his odd obsessions, that his favorite things to play with are pipe cleaners, his constant questions, his firm belief that long pants are better than short pants. I don't want to change any of these things. But I have to ask myself, does that make me selfish?

Though I couldn't have been older than eight, I promised myself to watch over Luke. I still hold myself to that promise.

Like most parents, my mom had little nicknames for us. Luke and Abby were the babies, so they held their nicknames longer than the rest of us. Abby was *the girl* and Luke was *puddin'*.

"Mom, why do you always haff ta call me puddin'?" he'd squeak.

"Because you're sweet like puddin'!"

We still call him puddin', though not as frequently. Sometimes it's shortened to simply pud, but mostly he prefers Luke. Or Tom. For some reason, he just really likes the name Tom.

I came home from school one spring day and made my way toward the kitchen for my afternoon snack. As I was rummaging through the fridge, my mom tossed a paper across the counter.

"Look at this," she smiled.

"What is it?"

"Just look."

The crooked lines at the top of the page vaguely resembled Luke's name. It appeared to be a handout about what students love about their mothers, a Mother's Day activity. I scanned the paper for whatever it was my mom was silently laughing to herself about. Then I saw it. My face tightened into a smile.

Towards the bottom of the page was the line "My favorite food my mom makes for me is ____." Luke wrote, or rather his teacher wrote for him, his favorite food: toast.

Growing up, I had several really close friends. When we were all young, I had no problem spending the night at a friend's house. Actually, I'd try to leave my house every chance I got. When you're a child, everyone else's home is more fun than your own. During those years, Abby was too young to spend the night with friends, and Jake would only stay out occasionally. But I was the oldest (not including our much older half-brother), which meant I got to spend the night out almost every weekend.

However, as time passed, my siblings started to do the same. There'd be nights where we'd all stay out. All except Luke. I don't think he ever minded that much. Our parents would take him to movies or order him a pizza when we were away, but I couldn't help but feel guilty. I know Luke would like to be invited places. Even if he didn't like the place, the people, or the situation, an invitation would have made him a happy little boy.

I couldn't keep doing it. I don't know if it ever really affected Abby or Jake; I don't think they thought much of it. But I did. I didn't want Luke to feel different or left out. I wanted him to feel equal. I stopped spending the night out if Jake and Abby were already gone.

I'm no saint. I didn't do this all the time. But it made me feel better when I stayed with him. Even if Luke and I didn't play together on those evenings, I wanted him to know it's not important to sleep over with friends and that it's okay to spend the weekends at home. I never told him this, but I hope he understood.

They went to see the doctors because Luke banged his head at night. He was finally old enough to sleep in a big boy bed, so he was going to share a room with Jake. The transition was exciting for all of us. Abby moved into the nursery, Luke moved into Jake's room to share, and I continued to have the luxury of my own room. However, that didn't last long. On the first night, Jake couldn't fall asleep. Luke kept rocking back in forth, banging his forehead on the red and yellow metal headboard. We couldn't make him stop. The noise was too much for Jake; he couldn't last one night. So, my room for one quickly turned into a room for two.

Luke continued rocking. It wasn't just in bed; it was everywhere. He'd rock on the couch, in his car seat, on the ground, and just standing around. It

didn't matter where he was, he was always rocking. Nothing, though, was as bad as his bed. Only in his bed would he smash his head over and over again until he would slowly drift to sleep. He had to get stitches and his head glued several times, and he still has the scars today. Even when it wasn't bleeding, it was always swollen and bruised. We had to cover his headboard in foam in attempts to ease the pain. Eventually, he grew out of banging his head, but the rocking never stopped.

Luke was sitting on the couch, eating toast, and watching *Jaws*. I was procrastinating, so I grabbed a handful of off brand pita chips and plopped down on the chair next to him.

"Hey, Luke, wanna hear a secret?" I asked. Luke can't pass up a secret.

"Do you really have a secret?" He asked. I'd played this trick many times before.

"Yeah."

"No you don't."

"I do! It's a really good one."

"Promise?"

"I promise."

He ran over and put his ear against my lips.

"I don't really have a secret," I whispered.

"Awh! You lied!" He scooted away from me and crossed his arms. "This time I'll let you off with a warning, but next time you're gonna get tickled."

"No way," I said.

He started laughing and jumped on my lap, his hands reaching for my arm-pits. His pointed fingernails felt like knives scratching at my skin. It was more painful than ticklish. I returned the tickling. My quick fingers were like little warriors running all across his stomach. He couldn't go on any longer; I had won the tickle battle. But I know he didn't care to win. He just loves being tickled.

I don't allow myself to think about it long, because I don't want to cry. Luke should be able to achieve his goals, every single one of them. But I don't know if that will happen. Luke probably won't be a state trooper. He probably won't wear the green uniform that he fantasizes about. He probably won't have the honor of these men he respects so much.

But, then again, maybe he will have all the things he deserves. Heroes don't need green uniforms. Sometimes, heroes wear a uniform of gray canvas shoes without laces because they're easy, Walmart t-shirts because they're soft, and long pants because, obviously, they're better than short pants.

Like other people with autism, Luke went through many phases growing up. He'd obsess over certain things for a while until he'd move on to something new. It can be difficult to hold his attention with anything outside of these obsessions. Whatever he obsesses about, he becomes a genius in.

First, there was *the fire phase*. It was Abby's second birthday, and we were singing to her before she blew out her candles. Luke was getting really excited, bouncing up and down and clapping his hands. He got out of his chair and tried crawling toward the princess-themed cake before my dad scooped him up. After Abby blew out her candles, Luke began to cry. He insisted that we relight them so he could blow them out. My papaw held the candle in front of Luke's face, but he didn't blow. He just stared, completely mesmerized by the small flame.

"Luke! Blow out the candle!" My mom urged.

He stared a moment longer and blew, but he cried as soon as the fire was out. So, the ritual started that at every birthday you had to blow out your candles with Luke. He isn't obsessed with fire anymore, but I continue the tradition every year.

After the fire phase, there was *the tool phase* where he knew every type of screwdriver, wrench, and drill bit. Then there was *the costume phase*, which led to *the Halloween phase*. From there, his obsessions gradually evolved into was the *music phase*, *the reptile and dinosaur phase*, *the firework phase*, *the church phase*. Many of them overlapped.

"Do you think there's a piano in that church?" he'd ask.

"I don't know. Maybe." I'd say.

“What kind is it?” He’d squint his eyes and try to read the sign. “Meffo-dist?”

“That’s correct.”

“I’m correct,” he’d repeat after me. Then, in hushed a tone, he’d mumble to himself about being correct until I could no longer understand what he was saying. Luke does this frequently. If you ask him what he’s saying, he’ll get flustered and start rocking around, clapping his hands several times until you calm him down.

My mom worries it’s more noticeable. She worries that people stare.

“He didn’t use to do that. I watch the home movies, and he looks more... normal. I don’t know. It’s just, like, he looks more alert.”

I try to reassure her, but she still worries. I try to see the bigger picture. I realize that we’re lucky that Luke is as good as he is. Yes, he’s distracted, but at least he speaks. At least he’s kind and aware of most of the things happening around him.

Then again, what do I know? I try not only to reassure my mom, but also myself. I try to make excuses for these things, these eccentricities that I’m sure people do stare at. However, I don’t care, and Luke shouldn’t care, and my mom shouldn’t care. Let them stare! Luke isn’t a normally developing child, and that’s okay. People don’t understand things they aren’t used to, and so Luke can be an interesting mystery to some, drawing eyes and conjuring thoughts in perfect strangers.

It’s rare that you find people actually taunting a child with a cognitive disability, but that doesn’t stop them from doing it when people with special needs aren’t around.

“Oh my God. Are you fucking retarded?” I hear friends joke.

I catch it. I always catch it, but I never say anything. These people don’t understand what their words really mean.

Luke’s current obsession is worrisome. My mom and I keep hoping this one will end. For the past few years, Luke’s number one interest has been in

guns and weapons. It started out as an interest in war, then it moved to good guys getting the bad guys and zombie slaying, and now it's centered on hunting. He likes to tell stories involving hunting or war and go to gun stores to study their inventory. He can recognize most guns with ease, he knows the ammunition they take, and he can guess how many bullets a gun holds. Not only does he know a lot about guns, but he also knows they're dangerous. He likes to look at guns but gets nervous holding one. He checks safety lock, and even then, he refuses to hold it more than a few seconds.

After the Sandy Hook and the Isla Vista shootings, I worry people commonly associate Asperger's Syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorders with violence and shootings. I know Luke, and I know he'd never do something like that. However, I can't help but worry that his obsession with guns might make others uncomfortable. Normally, I don't care what other people think. Normally, I'd disregard their false beliefs because I'd know they didn't matter. This time, though, I'm scared it might matter. I'm afraid that a person might misinterpret Luke's interest and feel threatened, which could lead to something even worse.

So these people may argue that Luke shouldn't play these video games; that we should discourage him from telling his stories; that we shouldn't take him to gun stores any more. But why should we take away some of the very few things he enjoys? We don't encourage his obsession, but we don't want him to feel isolated because of his interests.

A few months ago, Luke and I were on our way back from the gun store. He made me turn down the radio so that he could tell another one of his hunting stories. I cut in and tried reasoning with him.

"Hunting isn't always good, Luke" I told him. "It's not nice to kill friendly animals."

I couldn't tell if he was really hearing me.

"Do you like it?" I asked, although I thought I already knew the answer.

Luke was quiet a moment.

"I think that when I watch *Bambi*, I don't like hunting."

"Luke! Put your shoes on! We have to go!" I yelled upstairs.

My parents were out of town for my mom's birthday, and I had to entertain Luke and Abby for the weekend. Taking them to the movies was the easiest way to do that. Although Luke doesn't always pay attention (it can be difficult to find a movie that he'll be interested in), a large popcorn with a free refill can keep him occupied for a couple hours.

We were running late. Luke walked into the room. His jeans were tucked into his oversized socks, and his shoes were on the wrong feet.

"Luke, are your shoes on the right feet?"

He looked down, not knowing what to say. "Uhm, no?"

Looking slightly defeated, he sat on the couch and ripped off his old sneakers.

"Here. Let me help you." I sat down next to him and started to put on and tie his shoes. "The curved side always faces inside," I explained, tracing my finger along the sole.

"Okay," he said, looking at the wall behind me. I knew he didn't understand or care. I've given him the same piece of advice a million times before. He only listens to things he's interested in, which, unfortunately, isn't a lot.

Luke isn't like most fifteen year olds. Someone has to help him do most things or watch to make sure he does them correctly. He knows how to tie his shoes, but they're never tight enough and they're usually on the wrong feet. He can brush his teeth, but someone has to watch to make sure he does it well enough. At the end of the day, someone has to help him shower. When my mom can't, it's usually my job.

Growing up, I used to be upset that I had to stay home and babysit while my friends got to go to the park or the mall or wherever else fourteen year old girls go. They all knew I had to take care of my younger siblings, especially Luke, but I don't think they ever understood what it was like. Even now, I don't think they understand the extent to which I care for my brother. I'm willing to bet that none of them would ever wipe a fifteen-year-old boy's bottom, but this is just a routine occurrence for me. As I've grown older, though, I enjoy taking care of Luke. I don't mind helping him tie his shoes, make his lunch, put in his movies, get dressed, or clean himself. Luke has made me, my family, and everyone else who knows him more sensitive to people with disabilities. He's the reason why I want to be an occupational therapist, why I want to help others with disabilities live fuller, more independent lives.

Luke, like others with autism, prefers having a routine. In the evenings, after a long day of school, movies, hikes, or videogames, Luke retreats to his room with his blankie, two sippy cups, one full of water and the other with PediaSure, and our mom to go through his evening ritual. First, they set up the room. Luke takes all of the blankets from the closet and piles them on his dinosaur-themed comforter. My mom covers his window with one of the older blankets to keep light out in the morning, and then she sets up a dusty box fan at the other end of the room. After everything is in order, Luke burrows into his covers and talks to our mother. My mom will either question Luke about his day, or he will tell her a story. Depending on the phase, Luke's stories are all very similar. Lately, they revolve around hunting lodges and hunting trips. Sometimes there is a storyline, and sometimes it's just a list of descriptions.

Once Luke finishes talking, it's time to hide. Luke jumps across the bed to turn out his lights, then buries himself under his mound of blankets, carefully ensuring that there are no breaks in the blanket seal. He hears our dad's heavy footsteps clunking up the stairs and then to his door. My dad gently turns the doorknob and steps inside. By this point, Luke has filled the room with the sound of his nervous giggles. Sometimes my dad lets out his best zombie-like moan and slowly penetrates the blanket's once tight seal to eat (tickle) Luke's tasty flesh. Other times, he's a swarm of bees waiting to sting (tickle) Luke all over. Sometimes he joins Luke in the cramped bed as stuffed animals mysteriously come to life and attack (tickle) Luke.

"Oh my God! Luke! What *was* that?!" our dad will cry, while a stuffed bunny rabbit scurries across the blankets above. Luke gasps to play along and then continues laughing. As the rabbit makes its way through the covers and sheets, Luke will start to yell.

"I think something's in here!"

Then more laughing.

"I'll try to save you!" our dad yells back.

This game never gets old for Luke. Sometimes he'll invite me to hide with him. Once I'm hiding under Luke's blankets with him, there's no longer an age difference. I get nervous and fidgety when I hear the heavy footsteps. I giggle when the door opens. I laugh and scream and jump when whatever creature attacks the blanket fort. Luke's innocence transports me to my own childlike tendencies until they aren't tendencies anymore.

This past summer I met up with a friend I hadn't seen in over a year. We were walking in the park talking about school, mutual friends, and everything else friends feel they need to catch up on. Somehow the conversation shifted to Luke.

"So, do you think you're going to be the one who takes care of him?" she asked.

"Yeah. Probably. I've always imagined it would be me. I never really considered anyone else would take care of him. I guess Jake or Abby could if they want to."

"Oh, yeah. Do you find that daunting?"

"Well, kind of, I guess. I don't know."

Our conversation drifted off somewhere else, but I couldn't stop thinking about that question. I've always wanted to travel. If I take care of Luke that might not happen as much as I had hoped. Also, Luke doesn't really like babies or young children. A lot of people with autism don't, so it might be difficult to have my own family and care for Luke. However, that doesn't matter. I want to take care of him. Like I said, I can't imagine anyone else doing it, and I really don't want anyone else to.

Often, I ask him, "Luke, how would you like to move across the country and live in a cabin in the woods with me?"

He always likes the thought of that, and so do I.

Handle with Care

JORDAN MARX

You spend your time
trying to be something you aren't.

A bird falls to its death
trying to be a leaf.

Opposites attract, and you are
trying to be everything, nothing
is attracted to you.

They don't understand exactly what you are.

Neither do you.

Your best friends are just
friends.

And your friends are just
people that you talk to when you have to.

Sometimes your burdens grow too large
and you need someone to carry them with you.

But the people you need are all too busy carrying burdens
of their own.

And then you drop the things you tried so hard to carry because
you are too weak to hold anything at all.

All of your teachers taught you
how to solve math equations

instead of how to forgive people and

be okay with the fact that

you are not like everybody else.

I wasn't surprised when you found the bird planted on the pavement
and suggested that it knew what it was doing when it fell from the tree.

Cutting Hair to Prolong Ginger Root

RACHAEL KNICELY

Mimi teeters toward her crooked triangle house built on rich alluvial soil. She gives a wad of rubber bands from the Sunday paper to play with and a hill that hurts like hell to climb but nothing beats the run down. She has a simple routine: Fry one egg in a small skillet. Then spread mayo on toast. The TV only turns on for company. She stares at the paintings on her walls.

Her favorite is above the spiral staircase. The one of a village in a river valley, with orange and gold tasseled canopies for shelter. A tall man, if you didn't know better, you'd guess has wooden legs bends underneath a string of lit lanterns and winks. The light absorbs in his open eye and the other never opens again.

There are milk goats kept on the end of the village where the river widens. Three kids wear pear shavings stitched together in a smock. They are the fence that keeps the goats from reforesting the mountains and ripping through the villager's velveteen civility. One kid rides a goat in the river, holds him by the horns, and he swims toward the land.

It's hard to tell if the kid is saving the goat or the goat saving the kid. Mimi thinks the former. She could never swim. The goats can climb up the high river walls. A goat tied to a post all his years can still climb high. If she's not with her paintings, she's on the back porch swing and she just rocks herself.

A View of *The Room*

Aaron Morris

When we prepared for the Sojourn, Dane wore a stringy wig, ragged and atramentous, like a Spartan's helmet. Walking forlornly in a dark tuxedo and tie to his van, he left me wondering what his get-up was about. In fact, I asked him, "Hey, what the hell's your get-up about?"

He simply gave me a wry smile and refused to tell me. Personally speaking, I think he was just posing. I don't think he ever read "Your Get-Up," though it's the damn best erotica on the web. ("Thanks for the organ, Paul!" I say in my best David Letterman voice. "I could hear the audience coughing their discontent.") Yep, "Your Get-Up" was awesome. Never got that excited about licking hippos made of vanilla ice cream with something besides a tongue. It's never happened before or since I made that story up just now. Maybe it could be the greatest story on the web if I actually wrote and submitted it. At least I can do that now. When I was a teenager, my parents made sure that I only visited a few sites to ensure that I didn't get any viruses on their precious computer, so I lacked Dane's tech-savvy. The light of the monitor may have sung with some Greek god's rising chariot whenever I stayed up into the morning, but its revelations remained limited to me. As such, I didn't see the buzz online about *The Room*, so I didn't know what was so special about it or why we had to travel all the way to a theater in Los Angeles to see it. I was an eighteen-year-old in 2007, looking for some worthwhile goal to pursue, looking, really, for my first target for destruction, so I made the Sojourn with Dane.

It was a long trip that took several days. I could give an itinerary of the towns where we stopped and the breakfasts we ate and all that Kerouac crap, but I don't wanna. The stops we made weren't the exciting parts, unless you find dirty urinals enthralling. If you do, imaginary audience, I think I saw you peeking under a stall in some gas station in Illinois, no doubt doing research for *The Sorrows of Maculate Drain*, your magnum opus. "Like a laboring sieve, I wear this pad, waiting for spaghetti to disrupt this raging faucet's onslaught." Hm. Maybe I'll use that sentence in a novel, should the novel become popular again. (A novel idea, that. Ha ha ha kill me. No, arrest me! Book me, Dan Brown! Only don't, Dan Brown. Hate that lamestream shit. Are my puns about writing working yet? Suppose not. Thank you, thank you! I'll be at the Chiar-obscuro Lounge of the Psyche all day, chuckling to myself while the shades roll their sunny eyes.)

By the time we made it to Los Angeles, the night air policed the streets and tailed our car, making me afraid that we were being profiled. "Driving While Solid!" the brutally honest oxygen would bark, handing us tickets for phantom speeding violations. When we stepped out of the van, the darkness around us looked like honey spilling off the locks of Dane's dirty wig. We jogged up flights of stairs to Laemmle's Sunset 5 Theater, aware that the movie played at midnight. We made it just in time to see "Wiseau Films," the name of the producer of *The Room*, levitating on the screen. Behind the words, the earth spun in the middle of the screen, a clear geocentric refuta-

tion of Galileo. Before I settled into sleep that night, I would soon find many of my other preconceived notions of "science" and, in particular, "reason" overthrown.

Before I go on, I should probably summarize the plot of *The Room*, though it may be the least essential element of the gem. To summarize, Johnny, played by director/producer Tommy Wiseau, is a banker and Jeffersonian Jesus, a constant reminder of the sanctity of Everyman's flesh, an exemplar stuffed into the skin of macaroni salad and the hair of gothic scarecrows. Johnny, savior of young college student Denny from homelessness and abandonment, is betrayed by Lisa, a sociopath fiancée who sleeps with Johnny's best friend, Mark. Along the way, Lisa's mother says she has breast cancer. A new couple enters Johnny's apartment without introduction and take part in chocolate-flavored oral sex. Other plot elements file in and out of the film, unexplained, incomplete. As T. S. Eliot might have put it, "In *The Room*, the characters come and go / With story fragments from Wiseau." Oh, and in the end, Johnny kills himself. Not that important.

No, *The Room*, like any other memorable work, reveals itself through its actions, not its concepts. All of the film's major actions, however, have been thoroughly documented on the Internet, rendering my reflections, as always, unoriginal twaddle. My redemption comes about through my Romantic awareness that the Sojourn only exists because I perceive it as a Sojourn, not a mere laugh fest with Dane. To wit, an assembly of some of my experiences with the film:

1. As the opening credits roll, I am lost among ruins displayed near the sea. A structure much like a disfigured stone gazebo resides in the calm waters. Is this the titular room? Will we ever find it? And then, Johnny appears in his apartment, crowing, "Hi, babe!" A loud cheer erupts from the audience, as if they had all been waiting for this line. As Johnny proceeds in his ambiguously European accent, continuing his awkward intonations, I look around in the theater and see scattered audience members decked out in wigs like Dane's in apparent emulation of Wiseau. Some, like Dane, wear tuxedos, while others go for somewhat less formal black coats with shirts and ties underneath. It all makes sense. Why Dane wears his costume, but more importantly, why we're here. I look over at Dane with genuine gratitude.

2. The first of four lengthy sex scenes begins, Johnny and Lisa the participants. A band of R&B troubadours eat dinner at Toad the Wet Sprocket's house in the soundtrack while Johnny moans rhythmically. Afterwards, he rises from the bed, the crevice in his back blending into a bunghole situated between two vanilla cake hippos. (Everything ties together.)

3. "Mark" is such a bastard. He just recites lines in the same amateur actor's style that has become a cliché, a sleeping pill for those with eloquently bad taste. (For the record, I refuse to recognize any of the actors besides Wiseau by their actual names; they are all mere avatars of His Glory.) Wiseau, like Mark, is wooden, but he mixes it with legendary flair. When he yells that Lisa tears him apart, he thrusts his arms toward his chest, as if to transmute her murder attempt against his sanity into a mime's harakiri. To watch him is to eat a ham two-by-four sandwich.

When we left the theater, Dane, from the broad smile on his face, was simply satisfied. That's all, though, satisfied, much like the audience members who yelled their humorous jabs at Wiseau's creation or tossed a football around the seats when Johnny and his pals passed it to each other on screen. I, on the other hand, was just recovering from my first encounter with the sublime, terrifying enough to leave me gasping for air and hunched over the purple-and-white design of the concession stand's floor. Yes, my heavy breathing was from laughter, but not just that. I knew why I was laughing, and that's what was startling. I knew that everything had gone wrong with that film, but I also knew, more than anything else, that it appealed to me precisely because everything went wrong. It was as if I didn't want anything to go right for it as a film. No, don't explain her breast cancer! Yes, keep showing the skyline at random moments! Yes, continue tossing a football in tuxedos for no reason! No, don't act!

This proved so important to me because it showed me, as the years went by, just how much I hate the "art" of cinema, a craft responsible for such atrocities as *Triumph of the Will* and Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland*. (We will never forget the Mad Hatter's break dance!) And yes, I know what's considered "erudite" in film. I have seen the pseudo-Socratic dinner dialogue between Wallace Shawn and Andre Cantrememberhislastnamebutlookslikegeorgeorwellintherestaurantsmirror. OK, guys, I get it. You want to invoke what it's like to listen to stories during dinner without actually showing us the stories, allowing the imagery of the anecdotes to form in our heads as it would during a normal conversation. (That, and your budget's not large enough to show us.) And yes, Andre, I get it. You said that the Poles exploded like a Pollock painting. Real poetic. (Or Pole-etic, in this case!) Where could I hear something like that? Oh, I know, in a poem! (Not the corny pun, Andre's line. Though you could hear that pun in a poem.) And where could I come up with my own imagery for stories? Why, in a novel, which is what all good films should be! I swear, if this were a novel, I could come up with my own images for Wally and Andre at the table instead of living under the director's dictatorship. All of those pretty words generated in films like *My Dinner with Andre* are mere echoes of the written word. If you can't write, guys, stuff your mouths with food and shut yer yappers!

This is why we need to destroy cinema. How do we do it? Tommy Wiseau has led the way with *The Room*, the first anti-film. Andy Warhol may have tried to make anti-films, but he failed because he only filmed one thing for a really long time, leaving the tropes of movies intact. As a result, his movies are more well-known as artsy/boring shit in the record books than as actual challenges to cinema. (Boy, *Sleep* sure is an appropriate name, because . . . wait, it depicted a guy sleeping, so its name actually does work. Kind of ruins my joke. Damn.) By contrast, Wiseau actively challenges the structure of "well-made" films, knocking it down with a hefty throw of his TV out the window. There is no escape from the quality of his movie. You can't hide it away as a curiosity hidden in the enclaves of Wikipedia. You can only embrace its true message. That's why I, now a college student years later, dedicate myself to studying cinema as a Film major, all so I may better understand how to tear it down through my own anti-films, heralding the rebirth of literature.

I already have one project in the making. Dane's playing the head of an international mob organization (though, really, he could be just about anyone; his posi-

tion barely matters for my purposes.) In the only scene I have finished so far, Dane, suspecting an informant in his operations, calls a meeting in their shadowy office in the back of a warehouse, though the place really looks more like a living room inundated with light, with a sofa and rocking chair before a TV and a cross stitch design hanging framed on the wall, none of which are used or so much as mentioned in the scene. Dane remains standing as he greets the suspected government confidante (aka me wearing a bald cap) with a handshake, followed shortly afterward by a punch in the face. The scene then immediately cuts to a shot from outside of an elementary school, then a shot of a fire department. If I have anything to say about these buildings, they will never appear at any other point in the film, nor will they be referenced in any dialogue. The shot then cuts back to the warehouse scene, with me lying on the floor and Dane shouting accusations. The lighting in the room is not evenly distributed, nor does it cast either of us as angels or devils by coming in from above or below. Instead, it overwhelmingly shoots in from stage right, partially blurring Dane's face in luminescence. Eventually, I convince Dane that I'd never betray him, and he helps me to my feet. As we nod solemnly in our uneasy trust, the camera shifts to our feet and the carpet, not to signal any suspicious bloodstains on our shoes or anything relevant like that, but just because the scene's ended.

It's not a bad foundation for an anti-film. I mean, there's a lot here that could help snap people out of their idolatry of flicks. I'm really trying to save up money for more/better cameras. I have to keep this crappy handheld on a table when I'm acting because I don't have anyone else yet to handle it, which keeps the angle the same throughout most of the scene. (Mom handled the shift to our feet at the end of the scene, but she doesn't want to be our official cameraperson.) The acolytes of film will never accept YouTube amateurism like this as a true challenge to their Establishment. I've got to suck on a professional level, get a nice camera that can offer a close-up of my cargo-pants-enclosed ass when Dane lifts me off the floor. Definitely need cameras with better sound quality, too. It sounds like Dane is talking underwater. I mean, he sounds that way, anyway, what with his tongue flapping behind lips buried in his face like a Marlon-Brando-stuck-in-oven-mitt pout, but I need to make it clear that it's the acting that does that, not the recording. One of my greatest fears for my anti-film is the prospect that arthouse assholes will distort its meaning by praising it as "experimental" instead of recognizing it for its genuine badness, but I think Dane's acting, following in the great tradition of Wiseau's role as Johnny, should deflect those arrows of accolades.

The day after we saw *The Room*, as we were leaving Los Angeles, we saw a billboard for the film, an ad that prominently featured Wiseau's face resembling that of a beaten, drunk skunk in need of glasses. (I mean that in the best way possible.) It was apparently the film's main advertisement in the city. I saluted Wiseau's visage as we drove by, Dane shaking his head in amazement at my dive into the sublime, unaware that, years later, he would join me in the dive. I have since heard that the billboard has been taken down, which I consider a travesty. I had always hoped that it would remain a fixture of the city, Wiseau's face to L.A. what Fitzgerald's Dr. Eckleburg was to a fictitious New York. Despite this setback, I swim against the current, guided by the light of projectors sinking in the ocean.

Diamond Eaters

NICOLE SCOTT

You asked me to eat
what is leftover of your diamonds.
I saw you nestled in a hot collarbone
that was not mine yesterday.
An indigo bowl on the island
showed me you in its liquid mirror.
My teeth slant and seize
when you walk but want to run
away. You have been wandering for years.
I am running toward a bleached,
scintillating star, to be christened.
I will till future fields of lavish crop,
even after frosts, and eat the spoils.

Your diamonds were performing
reverse alchemy, becoming expired.
There was once life on you, in you,
you, now sinned and starving,
you, a cavernous coffer, only heeding
to the vacant drips of drying rain.
The weight of every leaf used to be
on the crease of your fingers. The hairs,
curled so assuredly, safeguarding your gems.
When boys learn how to tie knots,
they are not understanding what that means.

The crisp crunch of a golden ear of corn
makes you feel like all the milk you drank
did not make your teeth any stronger, any more
Olympic. Because if you gnawed on the neck
of marbled Michelangelos,
future children will make jigsaw puzzles
from the shattered crystal
of your feeble canines. Now there is gravel
on my tongue, tongue covered in dust,
and I cannot comprehend
sharp and hostile flavors.

High Tea

CYNTHIA MCCOMAS

While aligning the plate with macaroons,
you, Mother, scrape your fork, finding ways to knit
our exchange around the color of my blouse.
I have never known it to be too hot
for cashmere, mackinaw, or day-old vows.
With half-strung bags left to stain and drip,
our veins steep inside a Sunday afternoon.

I'll ask you the last time you played mahjong
with my grandfather, the days he roasted
coffee beans in the cellar. The crushed noise
fills the lofted air, seasoned like a ghost.
This story is all of three pages long.

Bristlecone pine limbs build you a bouquet
that twists and claws the tablecloth's vertigo.
You can't remember the last time you were shamed
for stealing green fire trucks from the boys.
They've given each one a feminine name.
You pass me the clotted cream too slow
for the gray dogs beside my feet to stay.

A recurring thought for the long drive home:
your hand rejecting the second pour.
You cut your finger on a chipped teapot,
and claimed you've never laughed or cried more
than the moment you realized you were still alive.

Contributors' Notes

Allen Armel is a double major at Marshall University studying Painting and Religious Studies.

Emma Bauer is a junior at Marshall University, and she is currently studying Elementary Education with an emphasis in Special Education. However, she plans to pursue a career in occupational therapy and hopes this will enable her to one day combine her desire to see the world with her passion for helping others. Until then, she spends her time volunteering, staying active, and consuming all things chocolate.

Emily Bledsoe is an undergraduate student at Marshall University pursuing a BA in English. She dreams of one day being a freelance writer for television, comics and video games. She could quite possibly eat macaroni and cheese every day for the rest of her life, and loves all of the people who have helped make her dreams come true.

Morgan Byrne graduated from Poca High School in 2013 and is currently a junior at Marshall University, pursuing a degree in Creative Writing. She is an enlisted writer for the Charleston Gazette's *FlipSide*, writing reviews, editorials, and the odd top-five list. She spends the vast majority of her time shirking responsibilities and trying to shake her existential crisis through the escapism that is formulating the written word.

Andrew Gornik is studying Fine Arts at Marshall University.

Rachael Knicely is from the western part of West Virginia and studies Creative Writing at Marshall.

Jordan Marx will be graduating from Marshall University this May with a degree in Theatre Performance. Although she currently lives in Annapolis, MD, but plans on running away to the city to chase her dreams after graduation. She'd like to dedicate this poem to herself, and to the hours of 1am and 2am, without whom writing this piece would not have been possible.

Cynthia McComas is a senior studying English: Creative Writing set to graduate this December. A Huntington native, she hopes that an English graduate program will soon provide her first chance of living out of state. She has appeared in the 2014 issue of *Et Cetera*.

Aaron Morris was born in Huntington, West Virginia. He is finishing his M. A. in English from Marshall University in the spring semester. His stories and poems have appeared in *ABZ*, *Turtleshell*, and *Kanawha Review* as well as *Et Cetera*.

Elizabeth Northcote is from the north shore of Long Island, ironically enough, a town called Huntington. She's studying Creative Writing at Marshall.

Kristina Price is studying Printmaking at Marshall University.

Andrew Raines is a senior double majoring in Creative Writing and Classics. He cur-

rently resides in Hurricane West Virginia and is in a dysfunctional relationship with sleep. He has a Russian Blue named Byron and spends his nights working at a convenience store full of intriguing characters.

Emma N. Rodgers will receive her BA in Creative Writing and Latin Minor from Marshall University in 2015. Her work has been published in the Marshall University 2013 Et Cetera Literary Magazine and a short story composed in Latin for the Ascanius SCRIBO competition in 2011. After graduation, she intends to find work for a while, save up money to go onto graduate college, purchase an apartment, and finally have a Pembroke Welsh Corgi of her own someday.

Nicole Scott is a senior studying Creative Writing and Classics. She is currently a writer for the D20 Girls Project, a non-profit organization, for their quarterly magazine. Her current life struggle is attempting to write poems that aren't about food. She also spends an exorbitant amount of time singing along to Green Day and playing *The Legend of Zelda* – two of her biggest inspirations.

Nicole Sheaves graduated from Meadow Bridge High School in 2013. She is currently a junior at Marshall University where she is pursuing a degree in English. She is the owner and operator of her self-started business, Sheaves Photography. She also loves writing and working with animals but has yet to decide what she wants to be when she “grows up.”

Amanda Schwartz is a sophomore studying English with an emphasis in Creative Writing at Marshall University. She is active on campus, serving as an SGA Senator for the Honors College and a member of Marshall's Rotaract Club. She is an unabashed lover of wheat thins and her friends often refer to her as “Mom-anda” because of her inclination towards bossiness and general mothering. This is her first publication.

Brianna Taft is currently a sophomore Art Education major and part of Marshall's Art Education Club, which provides her plenty of experience in her field with volunteer work. Growing up in an education system that viewed art class as an extra free period, she was able to push past that and hone her artistic talent. Her skills and passion are in costuming and makeup. She has won several awards for her craft.

Rebecca Turnbull is a freshman undergoing a double major in Undecided Journalism and International Affairs at Marshall University, with her majors subject to change (of course). She currently lives in Bridgeport, West Virginia, when she is not living on campus, and was previously an editor and writer for her high school's literary magazine, *The Legacy*. As for the future, she has no idea.

Brett Marshall Tucker will be graduating this May with his BFA in Fine Arts with an emphasis in sculpture. His aesthetic revolves around social stereotypes and how they are present in the media and our families. His figure sculptures personify these characters and give life to the messy ideals that we have in our minds of how people present themselves and they are perceived. He hopes to pursue technical and artistic work in clay wherever the opportunities are. There are high hopes that this will allow him to bounce around, gaining experiences and knowledge of his own process.



ART

Allen Armel, Andrew Gornik, Kristina Price,
Nicole Sheaves, Brianna Taft, Brett Tucker,
Rebecca Turnbull

FICTION

Aaron Morris, Nicole Scott, Amanda Schwartz

GENERAL

Morgan Byrne

INTERVIEW

Nathan Rucker

NONFICTION

Emma Bauer, Nicole Scott

POETRY

Rachael Knicely, Jordan Marx,
Cynthia McComas, Elizabeth Northcote,
Andrew Raines, Emma Rodgers, Nicole Scott